THAI COURT SINGING:

HISTORY, MUSICAL CHARACTERISTICS
AND MEANS OF TRANSMISSION

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Abstract

This thesis deals with various aspects of Thai court singing, which is now widely found outside the court as well. Aspects include: genres; history; vocal techniques; performance contexts; influence of speech-tones on vocal melody; sources of vocal melody; degree of improvisation and variation; text setting; and teaching methods.

Thai court vocal melodies that are created from *khɔ̌ɔŋ*melodies will share the *lûug tòg*(structural notes) with their *khɔ̌ɔŋ*melodies. Just as each instrumental melody created in this way will have its own characteristics, so too will the vocal melody. Each composer will create a different vocal melody from the same *khɔ̌ɔŋ* melody according to their stylistic school and their own individual aesthetic. Although vocal melodies are not improvised, they can still vary in performance with the *thaaŋ*(style) of the singer. This thesis explores the degree to which individual variation is possible, and the nature of that variation.

Tanese (1988) proposed melodic formulae for the way Thai court vocal melodies are affected by the speech-tones of the lyrics. This thesis not only examines and adds to Tanese's formulae, but also shows an application of these formulae in the examination of metabole in songs. Word positioning has important implications for the use of *ʉ̀yʉʉ*(wordless vocalisation), which has its own particular functions within a song, for example, allowing ornamentation that is free from the constraints of speech-tones. Different *chán*(metrical levels) of Thai court songs make use of different patterns of word positioning, and the patterns within each *chán*vary according to the number of rhythmic cycles in each *thɔ̂ɔn*(section). The influence of the *klɔɔn*poetic form is found to be fundamental.

Oral transmission is still the mainstay of the teaching of Thai court singing. Recent attempts at government homogenisation of teaching theory and practice are a

threat to variety of styles and approaches in contemporary singing. Future research will be needed to assess the effect of these measures as time elapses.

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Note on transliteration

The following systems of consonants and vowels are derived from the work of
Mary Haas (1994), with my own modification discussed directly after their
presentation here.

Consonants

Here are a list of Roman consonants used to represent Thai letters in this thesis.
They have the usual English pronunciations with any exceptions shown in brackets.

		the beginning of a word	the end of a word
b	=	บ	บ พ ภ
c	=	จ	–
(c is pronounced as j)			
ch	=	ฉ ช ฌ	–
d	=	ด ฎ	จ ช ฑ ฒ ฏ ฐ ศ ษ ส
f	=	ฟ	–
g	=	–	ก ข ค ฆ
h	=	ห	-
j	=	ย	ย
(j is pronounced as y)			
k	=	ก	–
(k is pronounced as the g in the word "go")			
kh	=	ข ค ฆ	–
l	=	ล	–
m	=	ม	ม
n	=	น	น ล รร
p	=	ป	–
(p is prononced as a combination of b and p; there is no English equivalent)			

ph   =   ผ พ ภ   –
(ph is pronounced as p)

r   =   ร   –

ry   =   ฤ   –

ryy   =   ฤๅ   –

s   =   ซ ศ ษ ส   –

t   =   ต ฏ   –
(t is pronounced as a combination of d and t; there is no English equivalent)

th   =   ฐ ฑ ฒ ถ ท ธ   –
(th is pronounced as t)

w   =   ว   –

Vowels

The pronunciation of vowels used in this thesis is based on the following system, using a combination of phonetic symbols and roman letters. A double vowel simply represents greater length (duration) rather than a change in quality in most cases. Examples are from British English.

a   =   อะ   like   u in c<u>u</u>t

aa   =   อา   like   ar in c<u>ar</u>

i   =   อิ   like   i in h<u>i</u>nt

ii   =   อี   like   ee in m<u>ee</u>t

y   =   อึ   (no English equivalent)

yy   =   อือ   (no English equivalent)

u   =   อุ   like   u in p<u>u</u>t

uu   =   อู   like   oo in b<u>oo</u>t

e   =   เอะ   like   e in n<u>e</u>t

ee   =   เอ   like   a in l<u>a</u>te

ε   =   แอะ   like   a in m<u>a</u>re (short)

ɛɛ	=	แอ	like	a in m<u>a</u>re (long)
o	=	โอะ	like	o in h<u>o</u>st (short)
oo	=	โอ	like	o in h<u>o</u>st (long)
ɔ	=	เอาะ	like	o in h<u>o</u>t (short)
ɔɔ	=	ออ	like	o in h<u>o</u>t (long)
ə	=	เออะ	like	e in h<u>er</u> (short)
əə	=	เออ	like	e in h<u>er</u> (long)

Please note that the above vowels can be combined in Thai, for example, iia (เอีย).

Thai names that have already been romanised will be given their commonly used spellings, e.g. Ketukaenchan (Keetùkɛ̀ncan) and Phibun (Phíbuun). Common place and reign names such as Bangkok and Ayutthaya are also left in their familiar forms as used by the Royal Academy (Râadchabandìdtajásathǎan) of Thailand. Names of royals follow Finestone's spellings in his 1989 book *The Royal Family of Thailand*

The Thai language is tonal. The system used to represent these speech-tones is again based on that of Haas (1994). It is as follows:

no tone mark	=	mid-tone
`	=	low-tone
´	=	falling-tone
·	=	high-tone
ˇ	=	rising-tone

See section 3.3 for further details.

My transliteration follows everyday Thai pronunciation. Some vowels in Thai are spoken in a different way to that in which they are written; I will be seeking to represent the spoken form, e.g. น้ำตา will be written as *námtaa* and not *námtaa*. It should also be noted that consonants at the ends of words should not be emphasised.

When transliterated Thai words begin with a vowel marked with a speech-tone, and that word is capitalised, the speech-tone mark will be moved to the second letter of the word. E.g. *ýyaa* will become *Yýaa* Also when a word beginning with ŋ is capitalised, Ng will be used, e.g. "Ngɔ́ Pàa".

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This thesis would not have been possible without the inspiration, knowledge, generosity, love and care from Aacaan Carəəncaj Sŭntharawaathin, my singing teacher. I was never more than a phonecall away from her huge knowledge and care.

Thanks to Khunjĭŋ Phajthuun Kĭdtĭwan, who sadly, passed away in November 1995, for accepting me as her pupil, and allowing me to explore her singing style. To Professor Pichit Chaisaree (Phĭchĭd Chajsĕerii) for sharing his ideas, providing much needed information through his never-failing letters, and his encouragement. To Aajaan Bunchûuaj Sŏowǎd for kindly allowing me to have a copy of his research, even before it was published. To Dr Manas Chitakasem for his help.

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To Gerwyn Havard for his wisdom and time, and his constant help in proof-reading the text, from the beginning right up until the last word of this thesis.

And to my father and mother for their everlasting love.

Table of royal reigns and periods

Information taken from *Thailand: A Short History* from Wyatt 1984. I follow Wyatt's spelling, which corresponds to normal English practice, rather than romanising.

<u>Kings of Sukhothai</u>
(1240 – 1438)
[The Sukhothai period]

1.	Si Intharathid	?1240s – ?1270s
2.	Ban Meuang	?1270s – ?1279
3.	Ramkhamheng	1283 – c.1317
4.	Lo Tai	?1317 – ?1347
5.	Ngua Nam Thom	1346 – 1347
6.	Mahathammaracha I (Lu Tai)	1347 – 1374?
7.	Mahathammaracha II	1368 – 74? – 1398?
8.	Mahathammaracha III (Sai Luthai)	1398 – 1419
9.	Mahathammaracha IV	1419 – 1438

<u>Kings of Ayudhya</u>
(1351 – 1767)
[The Ayutthaya period]

1.	Ramathibodi	1351 – 1369
2.	Ramesuan	1369 – 1370
3.	Borommaracha	1370 – 1388
4.	Thong Chan	1388
5.	Ramesuan (second reign)	1388 – 1395
6.	Ramracha	1395 – 1409
7.	Intharacha	1409 – 1424
8.	Borommaracha II	1424 – 1448
9.	Borommatrailokanat	
	(ruling in Ayudhya)	1448 – 1463
	(ruling in Phitsanulok)	1463 – 1488

10. Borommaracha III	
(in Ayudhya)	1463 – 1488
11. Intharacha II	1488 – 1491
12. Ramathibodi II	1491 – 1529
13. Borommaracha IV	1529 – 1533
14. Ratsada	1533 – 1534 (5 months)
15. Chairacha	1534 – 1547
16. Yot Fa	1547 – Jun 1548
17. Khun Worawongsa (usurper)	Jun – Jul 1548
18. Chakkraphat	Jul 1548 – Jan 1569
19. Mahin	Jan – Aug 1569
20. Maha Thammaracha	Aug 1569 – Jun 1590
21. Naresuan	Jun 1590 – Apr 1605
22. Ekathotsarot	Apr 1605 – Oct 1610
23. Si Saowaphak	1610 – 1611?
24. Song Tham (Intharacha)	1610 – 11 – Dec 1628
25. Chettha	Dec 1628 – Aug 1629
26. Athittayawong	Aug – Sept 1629
27. Prasat Thong	Sept 1629 – Aug 1656
30. Narai	Oct 1656 – Jul 1688
31. Phra Phetracha	Jul 1688 – 1703
32. Sua	1703 – 1709
33. Phumintharacha (Thai Sa)	1709 – Jan 1733
34. Borommakot	Jan 1733 – Apr 1758
36. Suriyamarin	May 1758 – Apr 1767

King of Thonburi
[The Thonburi period]

Taksin	late 1767 – Apr 1782

Kings of Bangkok
Chakri Dynasty (1782 – present)
[Known as the Rattanakosin period]

1. Phra Phutthayotfa (Rama I)	Apr 1782 – Sept 1809

2. Phraphutthalertla (Rama II)   Sept 1809 – Jul 1824

3. Phra Nangklao (Rama III)   Jul 1824 – Apr 1851

4. Mongkut (Rama IV)   Apr 1851 – Oct 1868

5. Chulalongkorn (Rama V)   Oct 1868 – Oct 1910

6. Vajiravudh (Rama VI)   Oct 1910 – Nov 1925

7. Prajadhipok (Rama VII)   Nov 1925 – Mar 1935

8. Ananda Mahidol (Rama VIII)   Mar 1935 – Jun 1946

9. Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX)   Jun 1946 – present

Notes on additional systems
of reference used

Bibliography

Memorial publications, which appear on birthdays and anniversaries, and on funeral days, are collections of writings which sometimes include pieces by the person honoured, and sometimes don't. They honour prominent people, such as Sǔntharawaathin, Kìdtìwan and Prasìdthìkun, and they will be attributed in this thesis to the person honoured, who will be put into square brackets, for example, [Kìdtìwan].

Some books have no known editor, e.g. Amatayakul 1990, and these will be attributed as "(no ed.)", while those with no known publisher will be shown as "NP".

Audiography

Song examples in the text will be given a reference number; "R" for "recording", followed by a number in square brackets, e.g. [R1]; these can then be easily found in the Audiography. If the examples are theoretical or come from general knowledge, they will be marked [AM], standing for "author's memory".

Recordings made in the field will be designated (F); these include songs recorded during private interviews, as well as those recorded from TV and radio programmes by myself. Commercial tapes and CDs will be designated (C); these include tapes distributed during funeral services, and "standard songs" recorded by the Ministry of Higher Education (see Section 6.7), even though these tapes are not really commercial in the understood sense. Unreleased recordings from the sound archive of Chulalongkorn University will be marked (CUSA).

Introduction

0.1 Beginnings

It was late afternoon on the first day of November 1983. After I had put all the equipment back into the cupboard, I rushed out of the physics lab trying to get to the music club before Aacaan Carəəncaj arrived.[1] It was my turn to unlock the door and to prepare some coffee and snacks for the senior teacher. I arrived at the music room only a few minutes before five, putting the kettle on and trying to do the washing up. The old white mercedes was approaching the car park. It was too late; I didn't have time to buy a new packet of biscuits. Well, she'd have to eat the leftover ones. I could put them onto a serving plate and that would look OK.

I went to greet Aacaan Carəəncaj at the parking bay in front of the student union building and helped her carry the rattan basket that she always used as a handbag. I gave her my arm for climbing the steps and, in the same position, I led her to the music room. Pii Jǐŋ, the head of the Thai music club arrived, which gave her company, so I had time to finish the washing up and prepare coffee.

When I came back with the coffee, they were talking about the lyrics we were going to use for the celebration marking the king's birthday on TV in two weeks time. Pii Jǐŋ read the letter from the TV station telling of the plan to broadcast it nationally. Aacaan Carəəncaj had chosen three songs for that year's performance, and they would be joined together to create a suite; the lyrics had been newly written by a Thai Music Club member. My teacher sounded excited and enthusiastic about teaching her singers. One of the songs I knew already, but the other two I didn't.

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[1] Aacaan Carəəncaj's full name is Carəəncaj Sǔntharawaathin. *Aacaan* is the Thai term for teacher, and we generally use first names for everybody.

More students arrived but none of the singers had turned up yet. The other teacher, Khruu Sŏmphoŋ, also arrived so we started to practice the instrumental part of the song "Thɔɔŋ Jɔ̂ɔn" which Aacaan Carəəncaj wanted to use to begin the suite. I played the *cakhêe*, the three stringed zither, my favourite instrument. When we could remember the song "Thɔɔŋ Jɔ̂ɔn", Khruu Sŏmphoŋ taught us the other two songs: "Wêedsùkam" and "Khə̀əŋ Bɔɔrathêed".

It was half past six and more people had arrived, but there was still no sign of the singers. Everyone finished the instrumental parts of the three songs and was eager to hear the vocal part. Aacaan Carəəncaj became more and more frustrated, and you could feel her disapproval without even looking at her face. Pîi Jíŋ made excuses for the singers: that their faculty was a long way from the student union, and that the lecture might have been extended. She also suggested that we could run through the suite without them, and asked Aacaan Carəəncaj to sing for us. Someone had told me that she was one of the best singers in Thailand.

I felt excited, as it was going to be the first time I had heard her sing properly. (I had only overheard her humming when she was teaching the singers, and some of her recordings, but not live singing.) I, and the other players, did not usually pay much attention to the singing. We just wanted to know the ending of the vocal line so we could come in at the right time. But this time would be different. The singer was Aacaan Carəəncaj, the most respected singer in the whole of Thailand.

Khruu Sŏmphoŋ started the first song on the *ranâad èeg* and everybody joined him after a few bars, and when we finished the introduction, Aacaan Carəəncaj began to sing. The first sound she sang hit me like a thunderbolt. I had never heard anyone sing this way before. It was hard to explain. It was the combination of calmness, powerfulness and confidence, and she held the complete attention of everybody. Every word she sang became meaningful and this made the whole lyrics sound full of conviction. I was drawn

into her hypnotic sound from start to finish; when the instrumental part took over, I couldn't wait for it to end so I could hear more of her singing.

I must admit that, before that day, traditional singing had never interested me at all. I had heard quite a few acclaimed singers since I started learning Thai music but none of them had impressed me. In fact, I had found it boring, and the strange voice production and funny wordless vocalisation or *ɲʉan* had often made me laugh. But Aacaan Caraancaj's singing revealed the beauty of *ɲʉan* to me and the weird sounds * əə, ɲɣ, ŋəə, ŋəə* etc. began to make sense. I have to say that she opened a gate into the world of Thai singing for me. A year later, I left the Faculty of Education and entered the Music Department of the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts.

During my second year in the music department, there was a lack of male singers in the department. I was persuaded by the head of department to change my main study from the *cakhêè* to singing. I had no hesitation in doing this, because I had been dreaming about it ever since that day in the music club. Best of all, they were going to send me to learn with Aacaan Caraancaj, my favourite singer. To begin with, Aacaan Caraancaj felt unable to teach me, telling me that: "a singer needs an outstanding voice, and you do not have one". Another factor not in my favour was that usually, in order to gain a BA in vocal music, training has begun in childhood. Eventually, however, she sang the song "Phamâa Hâa Thôn" for me and I made a tape recording of her voice, took it away and learnt the song by heart. After a week, I went back to her and sang the song. She was satisfied and cautiously accepted me, but only with the reasoning that: "although your voice is not remarkable, by studying my singing and teaching styles and preserving them this will be of more importance than becoming a great singer".

Aacaan Caraancaj will be referred to by her surname of Sǔntharawaathin from now on, as will other Thai teachers and academics, as Western tradition dictates. Sǔntharawaathin will appear often in the text, obviously because of the large amount of direct experience

which I have of her work and teaching methods. Without this experience, this thesis would have been almost impossible.

0.2 Scope and aims

The music described in the previous section belongs to what Thais call *dontrii thaj dəəm*, which can be translated as "Thai classical music". This genre is also known as "Thai court music" (*dontrii rîadchasîmnaij*), because it was nourished and perfected during its golden era at the royal court of bangkok. In this thesis, I will be focussing on the vocal music of this genre, which I will generally call "Thai court singing". Thailand also possesses a wide variety of regional and popular vocal traditions, some of which interact with Thai court singing, but I will be unable to cover these here.

Due to the near-total absence of European-language studies of Thai court singing, I will cover a wide range of aspects. These will include the historical dimension, the fundamentals of Thai vocal music, the lyrics and poetic forms, and the current and past methods of teaching. All in all, the study will, it is hoped, form a sound basis from which further and deeper research in this field can be attempted. The information used has been gathered from varied sources (both Thai and English), with much of it deriving from my own experiences of learning, teaching and performing Thai singing in Thailand and, since 1991, in the UK.

0.3 Thai vocal practices which can and cannot be defined as singing

There are four terms used to refer to the four different kinds of vocalisation: *kaan kháb, kaan phâŋ, kaan sùuad* and *kaan rɔ́ɔŋ* which could be translated respectively as: "reciting",

"narrating", "chanting", and "singing".[2] Each of them belongs to a particular genre and has specific functions.

The term *khàb* by itself in musical usage refers only to a "recitation" performed to a *sèephaa* melody[3]. In everyday usage, *khàb* means "to drive" or "to make things move"; therefore, we might say *khàb* refers to the idea of "driving" words forward. The Royal Academy of Thailand defines the term *khàb* as:

> A kind of uttered performance that tells stories to an uncomplicated tune. Because the emphasis is on the story, the pattern of *khàb* melody is therefore unfixed. However, the audience can recognise different kinds of *khàb* from the outlines of the melodies. (Râdchabandìdtajásathàan [The Royal Academy] 1997:23)

The *khàb* melody is "unfixed" (within the melodic outline) because it is a "textful" vocalisation in which the melody is subservient to the clarity of word tones and the need to communicate a story to the audience; in other words the melody can be changed in order to get the meaning of a word across more easily. This is also the reason why it is classed as a recitation rather than a song, even though it might sound like the latter to Western ears, and can be notated with precise pitches, unlike speech. On the other hand, while following a melodic outline, there is a definite feeling of metre, relating to the reading aloud of poetry. There are three types of melodic outline: *sèephaa thaj*, *sèephaa laaw* and *sèephaa mɔɔn*. This number of types came about originally because the main characters in the classic poem *Khùnchâang Khùnphèen* came from the three peoples of the Thai, the Lao and the Mon.

The term *phâag* or *kaan phâag* refers to a kind of vocalisation that is used exclusively in the Thai mask plays known as *khǒon*. Haas (1994:369) defines this term *phâag* as "to speak the part of an actor". The term is also used to indicate speech overdubbing for foreign films. The function of *kaan phâag* in *khǒon* plays is not only the speaking of the lines of the dumb actors, but also the description of their actions. *Kaan phâag* in *khǒon*

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[2] The word *kaan* preceding these terms is merely an adjective that changes a verb into a noun.
[3] This is different from the term *sèephaa mahǒori* which refers to entertainment music.

plays (known as *kaan phâag khöon*) uses melodies, whilst *kaan phâag* in filmic terms is merely speech. *Kaan phâag khöon* also requires a special kind of voice production which emphasises word pronunciation over other styles of vocalisation, through the use of harshness, volume and exaggeration. In most educational institutions such as music colleges and music departments in universities, *kaan phâag* and *kaan khâb séephaaa* are part of the same course, separate and distinct from singing courses. Both genres make use of only a few melodies, and therefore students learn examples of each melody and then apply them to new texts by themselves. Even though most all-round singers learn the techniques of *kaan phâag*, they don't usually perform it. The people who perform *kaan phâag* are called *nâg phâag* or *khon phâag*, meaning narrators. It is said that people who are trained to specialise in *kaan phâag* are unlikely to excel at singing because of the constraints imposed on their voices and the damage to their vocal cords this can bring.

The third kind of vocalisation is *kaan sùuad* or chanting. This includes all kinds of religious chanting, mostly Buddhist. It is not regarded by either lay Thais or Buddhist monks as singing. Monks are forbidden by the eighth precept of Buddhism to make music – neither can they listen to it or gain enjoyment from it. Despite this, Buddhist chanting makes use of many melodies known as *thamnoong* (for example, *sùuad thamnoong söoriphanja*) which involve singing in parts and leads to instinctive harmonising, a practice which comes close to most definitions of singing. This in turn leads to musicians jokingly remarking that chanting monks are "singing their songs again". There is no fixed scale for Thai Buddhist chanting, but it seems to adhere to poetic metre and is therefore rhythmical. Different functions are accompanied by different rhythms and melodies, reflecting the nature of the occasion, with different voice qualities employed also, e.g. funeral chants are slow and sombre and low in tone.

What is left after these three quite narrow definitions is by far the largest type of vocalisation, known as *kaan róoŋ* or singing, and it is into this type that Thai court singing falls. One thing that distinguishes *kaan róoŋ* from the other three categories is the large

number and variety of melodies employed and the functions to which they are put. Thais instinctively know into which category a vocalised piece belongs because of their life-long experience of these different kinds of "performance", and where, how and when they occur. Another common term used for singing in general is created by inserting the term *kháb*(which we translated above as "recitation"), as in *kaan khâb rɔɔ*ŋ. The term *khâb*is also combined with other terms to create new expressions for singing, such as *khâb klɔm* meaning "to build up an atmosphere", and *khâb sɔɔ*(northern dialect term) meaning "to sing".

0.4 Previous works

So far, there have not been many books written about Thai music in English that include vocal music. Those written in Thai that deal with singing are usually internal communications between native singers and musicians, excluding most of the wider populace. Sǔntharawaathin (1987b,c) and Prasĭdthikun (1992b,c,d), the most experienced singers in Thailand, have both written articles about their experiences of learning and performing songs, and of the basic theories involved, i.e. voice use, singing interpretation, vocal techniques etc. These articles are, perhaps, the most valuable sources for Thai singing written in Thai, and they await revelation for a larger reading public. A translation of Sǔntharawaathin's article is given in Appendix V, while some parts of Prasĭdthikun's article are quoted in the main thesis. In 1998, the students of Kĭdtĭwan, another distinguished Thai singer, gathered articles together written about their teacher's life and published them in a book to honour the day of her cremation. The book doesn't include singing techniques or any theory, unlike the two sources mentioned above, but the articles

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[4]Another expression for singing is *khâb lamnam*, but it is rarely used. The term *lamnam* means "poem to be sung"; it is exclusively used for songs but not for other kinds of vocalisation, even though they all make use of poems in their practice

reveal a fascinating biographical insight into her life and demonstrate the close relationship that existed between Kidtiwan and her pupils. Reference is made to this book throughout the main text.

In 1992, the Ministry of Higher Education gathered together "active" Thai music teachers in Thailand in order to standardise Thai music teaching in schools and universities and even in private lessons. As a result, a guide for teaching Thai music (including singing) and a school curriculum have been introduced in 1995. These include songs for different levels of attainment and competence and guidelines on presentation and technique. The curriculum came into use in May 1998, and its effectiveness would make for interesting future study.

The standard work on Thai music in English is, perhaps, Morton's book entitled *Thai Traditional Music* published in 1976. Having access to a large collection of Thai melodies[5] enabled him to analyse the structure of Thai music extensively. This book provides basic knowledge such as history, tuning system, metre, rhythm, tempo, instruments and ensembles, modes, forms and compositional techniques, and also includes a small section on vocal music. This work is like the trunk of a tree from which other research branches off. Morton discussed "modulation" in Thai music and suggested the term "metabole" instead (see Section 3.4 for a further explanation), for when a change of "pitch-level" occurs. Pitch-level corresponds to the Western concept of key; it is talked about in detail in Section 5.7. Metabole and pitch-level has been increasingly used amongst analysts of Thai music.

In 1988, Tanese-Ito, a Japanese researcher, revealed some common features of vocal melody as affected by different speech tones in an article in the journal Musica Asiatica

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[5] He had access to the largest collection of Thai instrumental melodies written in Western staff notation. These were gathered together in a project under the patronage of Prince Damroŋ and his daughter Princess Phádthanaajù in 1930. Senior musicians of the Fine Arts Department were gathered to play the "to be preserved" tunes for a group of Western-trained musicians to notate them. As a result, more than 400 pieces of music were notated. It should be noted that this collection has never been revealed to the public in Thailand; the "official" copy kept in the Fine Art Department was said to have been lost in a fire in 1960. However, a copy of this collection, obtained by Morton, has been preserved in the library of UCLA

(1988).[6] This is a valuable treatise on Thai vocal music, as this aspect of it had never been analysed before. She discovered that the melody of a song is changed to keep the tones of the words correct. I have found that this practice seems to be natural for the singers involved, but difficult to understand for those who are not fluent in Thai. Tanese has also studied other basic concepts of Thai singing such as *ɰʲɯaŋ* but, unfortunately, the work is in Japanese. My thesis, even though doubtless repeating some parts of her Japanese work, will have a different approach to Tanese's, since it is undertaken from the point of view of a practitioner and an insider; it will also be in English. Moreover, recent information on *ɰʲɯaŋ* gained from Sùntharawaathin and Prasìdthìkun will be taken into account and discussed.

Myers-Moro's latest publication *Thai Music and Musicians in Contemporary Bangkok* (1993) is an anthropological approach to Thai music and society. Apart from elements and classifications of the music, her book covers the social organisation of Thai musicians, musical transmission, religious cosmology and the status of Thai music in society. Apart from citing very useful details of the fundamentals of Thai music, Myers-Moro discusses some significant concepts which help the reader to gain a better understanding of Thai musicians. For example, she explains the term *hǔuaŋ wíchaa*, the concept of "guarding knowledge", and differentiates between *prachan* and *prakuuad* two types of music competition. My thesis will take her work into account, and expand her discussion of these concepts and several others.

Silkstone's unpublished thesis is the most theoretical study on Thai music yet available. He examines how Thai musicians, in this case fiddle players, learn to improvise. He concludes that "practitioners conceptualise formulas, organise them in memory and choose between them ... on the basis of a grammar of elaboration" (Silkstone 1993:248). Even though his study is about the improvisation of instrumental music, it examines a concept which is also significant in the creation of Thai vocal melody. His theories on the

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[6]She also wrote a brief article on *ɰʲɯaŋ* or wordless vocalisation in Thai singing which appeared in Koizumi (1980:181-4)

conceptualisation of the basic instrumental melody and the idiomatic elaborations that ensue can be applied to the creation of Thai singing, since both vocal and instrumental parts share the same basic structure, although the vocal melody is a composed and not improvised melody.

Most analysts including Morton and Silkstone confine their study to *phleeŋ probkàj*, which is considered by Thai musicians also as the major genre of Thai music. The significant song form in the *phleeŋ probkàj* category is one with a fixed number of rhythmic cycles, a form that gives analysts a clear framework to examine. My work too will use *phleeŋ probkàj* to explain the general features of Thai vocal melody, but will also attempt to reveal the vocal melodies of other genres such as *phleeŋ thajɔɔj* in order to illustrate a wider view of the subject.

Chapter 1

The Historical Dimension

1.1 Singing during the Pre-Sukhothai, Sukhothai and Ayutthaya periods (up to 1767)

The study of the history of Thai song melodies is made more difficult by the fact that they only ever existed in oral form; there are some old lyrics that were written down, but the melodies were passed on through the generations by oral transmission from teacher to pupil and from old singer to young.

Morton says that "what we know today of Thai music is in actuality only of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries - the 'classic' or Bangkok period [which] can be considered as a culmination of musical evolution that probably started ... in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries with the rise of Ayuthaya [Ayutthaya] as the capital" (1976:1). Being a strong power with many fierce and successful warlords allowed the Empire of Ayutthaya to maintain a high degree of unity for nearly two hundred years (15th-17th centuries); this provided a fertile soil in which cultures flourished.

The history of the people of present-day Thailand can in fact be traced back further than this, to a time before the Ayutthaya period, a time when large numbers of peoples with separate identities were scattered all over the Indochinese peninsula. Historians identify Thai people as people who share a common linguistic and cultural identity known as *Tai*. Wyatt says "...the people who brought the core elements of the contemporary Thai identity to what is now Thailand did not even arrive in that central portion of the Indochinese peninsula until a thousand or so years ago.... Only over many centuries has a 'Thai' culture, a civilisation and identity, emerged as the product of interaction between Tai and

indigenous and immigrant cultures" (1984:1). The indigenous cultures were the Mon and Khmer, while the immigrants were Chinese and Indians. Evidence of this interaction can be seen by the comparison of the musical instruments used by these races, e.g. the Thai *sɔɔ dǔuaŋ* with the Chinese *erhu* fiddle, and the Thai *taphoon* with the Indian *mrdanga* drum[7]. However, no study has specifically revealed how the music of these cultures emerged, or even provided concrete evidence of what the sound of their music was. Only a few pieces of evidence from archaeological sites such as the ancient temple of Angkor Wat and other similar finds show pictures of musical instruments being played, but the melodies being played and, particularly, the songs being sung still lie in ancient darkness.

The immediate period before the Ayutthaya is known as the Sukhothai (1240-1438), the period that present Thais see as the "real" beginning of their country's history. It is also the period when the Thai people was the most powerful race of mainland Southeast Asia. The study of music in the Sukhothai period is totally reliant upon stone inscriptions (*silaa caa-rýk*) which were carved during the reign of King Ramkhamhaeng (1279-98). There are some words on them which refer to singing: *sǐaŋ lýýan* and *sǐaŋ khǎb*[8] The term *sǐaŋ* can be understood as meaning "sound". Montrii Traamôod (1984) thus interpreted *sǐaŋ lýýan* as meaning a sound consisting of melody and rhythm, and *sǐaŋ khǎb* as referring to free melodic vocalisation. By interpreting these two terms in this way, Tramôod related them to present-day terms: *sǐaŋ lýýan* with *kaan rɔ́ɔŋ* meaning "singing", and *sǐaŋ khǎb* with *kaan khǎb* meaning "reciting". The term *lýýan* is no longer in use, but *khǎb* appears in many works of literature during the later Ayutthaya period with the meaning of "to sing", as in the phrases *khǎb lamnam* and *khǎb rɔ́ɔŋ* meaning literally "to sing a song", and *khǎb sěephaa* meaning "to sing a *sěephaa* melody".

In 1352, Siam took Angkor and occupied it until 1357. There were mass deportations of Khmer people to Thailand, including artists and high officials. In one year, 1393, ninety

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[7] This latter comparison was made by Yupho (1987: 39). He also said: "In India this type of drum is played held on the lap, or suspended from straps over the shoulders when played while standing. As for the Thai drum, it is put on a stand and played on both heads with the palms of the hand and fingers" (ibid).
[8] There are also other terms referring to musical instruments used for royal ceremonies.

thousand Cambodians were transported to the Thai capital at Ayutthaya (see Sam 1988:18). In the wars which followed, Thailand ruthlessly annexed and exploited Khmer culture, but not without recognising its value: "when the Siamese (Thai) conquered and destroyed the Khmers, they were themselves conquered by the beauty of the Khmer arts ... and protected and loved and cultivated it" (Zarina 1941:285). It is highly likely that Thai music at that time was influenced by Khmer music. Evidence of this cultural mix can be seen in highly respected present-day Thai songs such as "Phrá Thɔɔŋ" and "Naaŋ Nâag", names that appear in an ancient Khmer folk tale. Phrá Thɔɔŋ is a prince from the land beyond the sea (believed to be India) and Naaŋ Nâag is an indigenous Khmer woman. Amratisha (1998) believes that this folk tale, which tells of the marriage between Phrá Thɔɔŋ and Naaŋ Nâag, represents the marriage of the indigenous Khmer with Indian culture.

The Indians also influenced the Thais directly, through Buddhism. The Pali language used in Buddhist chants was also used in literary works such as Mahǎachâad Kham Lǔuaŋ ("The great incarnation [of the Buddha]: court version") and other such "high" literary works of the court. A poetic form, found in Pali script, known as *chǎn* gradually took over for the creation of court literature and became extremely popular during the reign of King Narai (1656-88). Samùdthakhôod Kham Chǎn, a story of the Buddha, and one of the most famous pieces of Thai classical literature used for shadow-puppet theatre, was also written in the *chǎn* form (Liawsǐiwoŋ 1995:32). While court people used the *chǎn* form for their literature, commoners made use of the *klɔɔn* form, an indigenous form of mainland Southeast Asia. The language used for *klɔɔn* poetry was therefore of the Thai-Lao family of languages, not the Pali. (Further discussion of these poetic forms can be found in Chapter 4.)

There is also a long tradition of Hindu chanted texts in Thailand, known as *ooŋkaan*, and performed by a Brahmin. An especially important text is *ooŋkaan chěŋ náam*, or the "text for cursing water". This is performed once a year, when the army take an oath of fealty to the king, which is reinforced by their placing of their weapons in a giant cauldron

filled with water. The Brahmin then lays the curse upon the water saying, amongst other things, that the weapons contained within it will turn upon and slay their owners if they betray their king and nation. This is not seen as singing, but chanting from a text (*daa oopkaan*), but could be seen as an early form of Thai vocalisation.

The original form of the court vocal tradition can perhaps be seen in present-day folk songs such as *phleep ryya, phleep chɔj* and even songs known as *mɔɔ laam* which are said to belong to the people in the northeastern part of Thailand known as *khon laaw,* or "Laotians". Court and commoner music influenced each other all the time: they shared musical instruments, repertoires and vocal technical terms such as "*ɲyan*" .

It was not until the 17th century that Thai songs were first preserved in written form, with both lyrics and melodies being transcribed, and even then only by foreigners. Gervaise's 1688 account of Siam includes a transcription of the song "Sout Chai" on two five-line staves in duple metre with a romanized Thai text underneath (Miller 1994:138). In addition to this, in Simon de la Loubère's report to King Louis XIV of France (c.1687), there is a song transcribed in Western staff notation recording a nameless piece, not related to any surviving piece, and known currently to Thai scholars as "Sǎaj Samɔɔn" (Loubère 1969:113). It is important to know that, even though Loubère mentioned the use of *ɲyan* (wordless vocalisation), both of the songs transcribed contain only a small amount of *ɲyan* and thus would currently be classified as *phleep nɲyn teɱ* or "full text" songs. These two songs were also only used for entertainment purposes and performed in isolation. According to oral tradition, many other songs from the same period, particularly those used in plays, were not "full text" songs but contained a larger amount of *ɲyan*; examples of this are the songs "Cháa Pii" and "Oô Pii".

Prince Narisaranuvattiwongsa, also known as Prince Narisara, a gifted royal musician and respected scholar, wrote in 1917 that, in the Ayutthaya period: "Thai music was

divided into three distinct types: *phleeŋ rɔɔŋ, phleeŋ mahòorii* and *phleeŋ piiphâad...*" (1972:80).[9] Thus:

phleeŋ rɔɔŋ	–	unaccompanied songs used for narration in plays
phleeŋ piiphâad	–	totally instrumental music, accompanying mimed actions in plays, and for ceremonies
phleeŋ mahòorii	–	songs of entertainment accompanied by a *mahòorii* ensemble

So, according to his theories, only *phleeŋ rɔɔŋ* and *phleeŋ mahòorii* included singing. *Phleeŋ rɔɔŋ* can be defined as a song without melodic accompaniment and *phleeŋ mahòorii* can be defined as a type of song accompanied by a *mahòorii* ensemble (in the Ayutthaya period, a *mahòorii* ensemble included the string instruments, a single blockflute, cymbals and drums). Also *phleeŋ rɔɔŋ* songs were sung as part of plays whilst *phleeŋ mahòorii* songs were sung as popular entertainments at celebrations and festivals. *Phleeŋ piiphâad,* totally instrumental music, was used in plays, but also as part of ritual ceremonies such as funerals and cremations, as well as in a select number of other Buddhist and Hindu ceremonies. It seems, according to Prince Narisara, that the *piiphâad* ensemble (which consisted of melodic percussion instruments, oboes and drums), had no singer. Instead, an independent singer sang the *phleeŋ rɔɔŋ* songs in alternation with the instrumental *piiphâad* music.

1.2 The early Rattanakosin period (1782-1851)

It is in this period that Thai historical evidence begins to be found in written form. It is a period when Thai music changed and adapted in isolation, before Western culture began to exert its great influence.

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[9] Prince Narisara did not say where his information came from, but presumably it was general knowledge amongst the musicians of his time which had been remembered and passed on orally.

Piiphâad ensembles began to accompany *phleeŋ rɔɔŋ* in the reign of King Rama II (1809-1824). This was due directly to the rise in popularity of a kind of singing called *sěephaa*. Proof of *piiphâad* ensembles being used in *sěephaa* performances can be seen in a poem written in this period:

เมื่อครั้งจอมนรินทร์แผ่นดินลับ   During the time of the last king [Rama I],
เสภาขับยังหามีปี่พาทย์ไม่   *Khàb sěephaa* was lonely without the *piiphâad*;
ครั้นมาถึงองค์พระทรงชัย   Not until the reign of His current Majesty [Rama II]
จึงเกิดมีขึ้นในอยุธยา[10]   Were they made one in this city.

Sěephaa developed from an oral storytelling tradition, firstly into a poetry recitation using a type of improvised oral poetry known as *klɔɔn sěephaa*[11], and finally to a form of song recitation which set this poetry to music borrowed from the *phleeŋ rɔɔŋ* repertoire. The next logical progression was for a *piiphâad* orchestra to be brought in to illustrate the narrative action (*nâaphâad*), while the singer took a break. Traamôod suspects that this was the point when the singer started to become part of the *piiphâad* ensemble (1991:15). To begin with, the orchestra would join in at the end of the *phleeŋ rɔɔŋ* section, and then start the *nâaphâad* music. But as time went on it began to echo and repeat the whole of the *phleeŋ rɔɔŋ* section before beginning to play the *nâaphâad* part. Thus the singer and orchestra became more and more entwined as their respective sections overlapped. However, it never came to the point where the orchestra simultaneously accompanied the singer, and this was the case until the late 19th century, when the first examples of synchronised vocal accompaniment began to appear in performances of *piiphâad* music.

Singing in alternation with the orchestra is still the dominant performance style of Thai music, although simultaneous accompaniment is tending to gain more and more popularity. Singing in alternation is a challenging task for the singer: without any melodic

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[10] Woŋthêed (1995a:61)

[11] Also known as *klɔɔntalàad* or "market poetry", this was popular poetry using the language of the common people, which made it accessible to a large audience. It had eight syllables to the line (though this could vary by one or two syllables either way).

accompaniment, the singer requires perfect pitch in order to keep in tune for when the ensemble re-enters. This practice also influenced the singing practice used by *mahǒorii* ensembles in music competitions, where the singer sings in alternation with the ensemble. Usual practice is for the singer to be accompanied by a *sɔɔ sǎam sǎaj* (three-stringed fiddle), to help keep him or her in tune. In the music competitions, the *sɔɔ sǎam sǎaj* is still present, but plays as part of the orchestra.

Another significant feature of Thai music created in the early Rattanakosin period is known as the *thǎw* form. Songs composed in this form are called *phleeŋ thǎw. Phleeŋ thǎw* consist of three levels (or *chán*) of melody known as *sǎam chán, sɔɔŋ chán* and *chán diiaw*, each of which share the same *lûug tòg* or "structural notes" (see discussion of this term in Chapter 5), but which are progressively shorter in length due to metric contraction. *Sǎam chán* ("third level") has the longest melody, while *sɔɔŋ chán* ("second level") is half the length of the *sǎam chán*, and *chán diiaw* ("first level") is half the length of *sɔɔŋ chán*

Example 1: An example of the three levels of the same basic structural notes. The sign o represents weak beats or *chíŋ*, and the sign + represents the strong beats or *chàb*. The numbers in bold are *lûug tòg* or "structural notes".

sǎam chán
```
          o            +           o            +
  ---5  -65-5  -4-7  65655  ---1  -7-1  -2142  -4-2
```

sɔɔŋ chán
```
     o    +    o    +
  ---5 ---5 ---1 24-2
```

chán diiaw
```
   o +   o +
  -555  -222
```

Most songs in the Ayutthaya period were in the *sɔɔŋ chán* form with short musical phrases and a small amount of *jýaa*. Thai academics believe that these songs were first expanded into *sǎam chán* form during performances of *kaan lên sǐgkrawaa*.

Kaan lên sǎgkrawaa or *sǎgkrawaa* performances were very popular amongst court people in the early Rattanakosin period. They can be seen as poetic games in which each poet tries to better his competitors in terms of the brilliance of his spontaneous ·compositions. The poem is read aloud by the poet and then handed over to a musical ensemble which sets it to music using an appropriate existing song and then sings it to the audience. While this is going on, the rival poets have time to compose their answering poems. Traamôod (1991) said that in order to give the poets enough time to compose and refine their poems, the *sǎgkrawaa* singers doubled the length of the existing melodies by putting more *ɲyaa* in between the words, resulting in the *sǎam chán* form. (See more information on *kaan lên sǎgkrawaa* in section 4.4.) Later on, these new expanded melodies in *sǎam chán* were performed as individual pieces outside of the *sǎgkrawaa* framework. Later still, in reaction to this lengthening process, there appeared contracted versions of the song melodies, so that three versions co-existed: the expanded *sǎam chán*, the original *sɔɔng chán* and the contracted *chán dǐiaw*. The resulting combination of all three was a musical form known as *thaw*. The sequence of performance is determined by the length of melody – starting with the longest one and finishing with the shortest. The *sǎam chán* version contains the largest amount of *ɲyaa* and the *chán dǐiaw* version the smallest.

Actually, the idea of combining different levels into one piece was not new; there had been a similar musical form commonly practiced long before, but only as instrumental music. This was a musical repertoire known as *phleeng rɯ̂yang* ("story suites"). *Phleeng rɯ̂yang* suites consist of three kinds of melody: *phleeng chán* ("slow tune"), *phleeng sɔɔngmáaj* (" *sɔɔngmáaj* tune") and *phleeng rew* ("fast tune"). *Phleeng rɯ̂yang*, however, is a big enough topic for a whole separate analysis, for which there is no space here.

So, returning to the concept of *thaw*, it is common that the middle version *sɔɔng chán* (level 2) is taken from a traditional piece from the Ayutthaya period (though it can be newly composed), and the other two forms are the expansion and reduction of this version. But there are also some songs that were originally in the *sǎam chán* (level 3) form and thus

were reduced twice, the first reduction resulting in the *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* level and the second resulting in the *chán dìiaw* (level 1). In addition to this, it should be noted that it is not necessary that all three levels be created together nor by the same composer. The *săam chán* level of the song "Sùd Saŋǔuan" for example was composed around the 1860s, whilst the other two levels were created by two other composers in the 20th century.

1.3 The mid-Rattanakosin period (1851-1932)

This period begins in April 1851, with the crowning of King Mongkut (Rama IV). It was during this period that Western influence appeared, growing swiftly in Bangkok, particularly amongst the royal courtiers. Every country in Southeast Asia was threatened by a Western cultural invasion, and by the early twentieth century many of them had even fallen under the political control of Western colonial powers. However, Thailand, almost uniquely, successfully evaded direct colonial control.

In order to learn about these cultural invaders and to catch up with the ways of the modern world, King Chulalongkorn (Rama V) sent his sons to study in the West in countries including England, Germany and Russia. These princes not only brought back knowledge from the modern world, but with it, Western aesthetic values and culture.

In 1891 Câwphrajaa Theewêed accompanied King Chulalongkorn to Europe and there had the opportunity to see the Western equivalents of the Thai *lakhɔɔn rɔ́ɔŋ* (singing plays), i.e. operas, and he liked them very much. When he came back to Thailand, he told His Highness Prince Narisara about these plays and persuaded the prince that they should create similar plays together. Prince Narisara was responsible for the scripts, music and production, while Câwphrajaa Theewêed was in charge of the costume design. All the players were actresses already employed by Câwphrajaa Theewêed in his own private company. Prince Narisara made use of the ensemble that he had already created in the form

of an old-style *piiphâad*ensemble. A theatre was built within Câwphrajaa Theewêed's house and named *rooŋ lakhɔɔn dỹgdamban*(The *Dỹgdambaŋ*Theatre). The musical style, the ensemble and the plays themselves were subsequently named *dỹgdamban*after the theatre that they were performed in: *phleeŋ dỹgdamban*for the style, *piiphâad dỹgdamban* for the ensemble and *lakhɔɔn dỹgdamban*for the plays themselves. (See also Phɔɔnprasìd 1995.)

Before this time, Thai plays or *lakhɔɔn*had been accompanied by an ensemble and singers, but the actors and actresses just mimed and sometimes danced, while the music did not always match what was being acted out. This situation was not helped by the fact that it is not Thai tradition to compose new music for a play; instead, existing song melodies were put into use. As a consequence of this, the acting often ended long before the music. Songs used with *dỹgdamban*plays were, therefore, either shortened or lengthened to fit with the action on stage. The significant feature of the *lakhɔɔn dỹgdamban*style was that the actors and actresses had to themselves sing and that the music and the acting fitted seamlessly together. Court singers of this period therefore had to learn how to perform traditional dance and the dancers had to learn how to sing.

Singing, dancing and acting simultaneously demands a very high level of skill from the performer – in fact the level of difficulty involved led to the *lakhɔɔn dỹgdamban*style dying out. Today, only the *phleeŋ dỹgdamban*or *dỹgdamban*songs are still in use, but they are highly prized by musicians for their consummate craftsmanship. The decline of the *dỹgdamban*style allowed two new styles to develop: *lakhɔɔn rɔ́ɔŋ*and *lakhɔɔn phûud.*The first, *lakhɔɔn rɔ́ɔŋ,* or "singing play", was similar to the *lakhɔɔn dỹgdamban,* but required less dancing skill. The second, *lakhɔɔn phûud,* or "speaking play", was similar to a traditional Western play, and was introduced into Thai society by King Rama VI, who had been educated in Britain since he was a young boy. Neither of these styles won widespread popularity, and they were performed mainly for the cognoscenti of the capital city.

1.4 Court singers

It was at the beginning of the 20th century, during the reign of King Rama VI (1910-25), the so-called "golden era" of Thai music, that hundreds of musicians and composers were employed by the royal department of music, including 2 *Phráphau*, 6 *Phrá*, 16 *Lùuau* 13 *Khǔn* and 20 *Mỳyn* (Amatyakul 1989:217). These ranks or titles would be followed by "royal names" (*râadchathinnanaam*) given by the king, such as Samǎansǐiaupracàg or Sǎnphleeŋsǔuaŋ amongst others. (See also Myers-Moro 1993:193-7.) The meanings of these names reflected the ability of the musician, for example, "graceful at music" or "brilliant at playing ranâad thûm". However, there were special names for composers which implied special ability, such as "Pradìdphajrɔ́" (*pradìd* means "to create" and *phajrɔ́* means "pleasing to the ears") and "Prasǎandurijasàb" (*prasǎan* means "to harmonise" and *durijasàb* means "musical sound"). There were also some singers who were granted titles such as Mỳyn Khàb Khamwǎan (*khàb* means "to sing" and *khamwǎan* means "sweet words"). Although there were more female than male singers, it should be noted that only male musicians were given titles. The reason for this was that female musicians were normally employed, at least technically speaking, by the royal women, who had no official authority.

Royal women did not just employ musicians and singers: most of them were themselves either musicians or singers (or sometimes both), but their employees all had to be female. [12] These royal women enjoyed singing so much that they became masters of singing, for example Chao Chom Sadab[13] (a royal consort of King Rama V), Mɔ̀m Can Kunchɔɔn Ná Ajúdthajaa (a wife of Câawphrájaa Theewêed Woŋwíwâd), and Mɔ̀mlǔuaŋ Tùuansǐi Wɔɔrawan (a wife of Prince Naradip). Some women court singers already lived in court circles; for example, Phajthuun Kìdtìwan and Carɔɔncaj Sǔntharawaathin were

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[12] Female court servants were called *naaŋ khâalǔuaŋ* and when they got married and left the court they would be *khâalǔuaŋ dàam* meaning "ex-court servant"

[13] Her full name was Mom Rajawongse Sadab Ladavalya (1891-1983); she was appointed to the rank "Chao Chom" by King Chulalongkorn in 1906 (Finestone 1989:72)

daughters of famous court musicians, and Carəən Phâadthajákoosòn was the wife of a court musician. However, most court singers were brought into the palace specifically to sing and became "informal servants" to royal women; they were then named *khâalǔuaŋ ryyan nɔ́ɔg* meaning "court servants who live outside the court".

Outsiders, men or women, who wanted to enter the court not only needed to have musical talent but also good connections. Most musicians and singers who served royalty had once been commoners but had had a good musical background. Some learned music from a very young age from a famous teacher, and many were the sons or daughters of recognised musicians. An example of this is Prasìdthìkun. She learnt singing from her father and sang for his band from the age of 7 years old. Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durìjaaŋ, a court musical instructor who was a friend of her father, considered her talented and accepted her as a pupil. When there was a need for a child singer in the court of Princess Saisavali Bhiromya[14], Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durìjaaŋ introduced Prasìdthìkun to the princess and she became a court singer.

1.5 Court composers

The earliest composer of Thai traditional music that we can trace is Khruu Mii Khèeg (also known as Phrá Pradìd Phajrɔ̀). He was born at the beginning of the 1800s, in the early Rattanakosin period (Chajsěerii 1983: 152). Records of earlier composers, of the Ayutthaya period, may have been lost during the great war between Thailand and Burma or may merely not have existed. It should be realised that there is no tradition in Thailand of giving any great credit or paying any undue attention to composers, and this is true even today, when the names of composers are well documented. The audience wants to know what piece is being performed and who the musicians are rather than who the composer is.

[14] Princess Saisavali was a wife of King Rama V; she was given the title of Krom Phra Suddhasininart by King Prajadhipok in 1926 (Finestone 1989:66)

In addition to this, as most composers are also performers, their reputation comes from their prowess in performance and not from their compositions, no matter how many songs they have composed or how good these compositions are. This was also true in the past. Khruu Mii Khὲǝg, mentioned above, composed many fine pieces of music which are still widely performed today, for example "Thajɔɔj Nɔ̌ɔg", "Thajɔɔj Khamě̌en" and "Khὲǝg Mɔɔn", but the audience of that time still talked only about his excellence as a *pìi* player (ibid: 153). There are no other composers from the Ayutthaya period or even the very early Rattanakosin period who are known to us. It should be noted that only the composers of entertainment pieces were acknowledged. The composers of sacred pieces such as *phleeŋ nàaphàad* were not: perhaps their compositions were dedicated anonymously to musical gods or spirit teachers.

Furthermore, when a song is documented as being composed by someone, it is not clear whether the composer has composed both the instrumental (*thaaŋ khrɨ̌yaŋ*) and the vocal melodies (*thaaŋ rɔ́ɔŋ*) or only the former. The book *faŋ lέ khàwcaj phleeŋ thaj* ("Listening to and Understanding Thai Music"), compiled by Montrii Traamôod and Wichiian Kunlatan (1980), and perhaps the most comprehensive Thai musical treatise yet written, gives brief histories of songs, their lyrics and their composers. Much of the information in this book was gained through direct connections between the authors and composers and included information that had been passed on orally for generations. Most songs mentioned in the book have only one composer credited, and only a few songs have a credit given for the composition of the vocal melody as well as the instrumental melody. Presumably the authors assumed that where it is not stated, a single composer composed both parts as is still common practice today.

It was not until 1989, when Chulalongkorn University published the book *naamaanúkrom sǐnlápin phleeŋ thaj naj rɔ́ɔb sɔ̌ɔŋ rɔ́ɔj pii hàŋ kruŋ rátanákoosǐn* (Alphabetical List of Names of Thai Musicians, Song Writers and Composers of the First 200 Years of the City of Rattanakosin), that information on composers and singers was

illustrated in a clear biographical form. [15] We learn from this that most composers were *khon piiphäad* (*piiphäad* people) whose speciality was melodic percussion instruments. It has been said that to compose a song one needs to play the *khɔ́ɔŋ woŋ jàj* and the drums in order to fully understand the structure of Thai music. We also learn that of the 43 composers mentioned in the book, 12 sang occasionally and most of them were able to sing, and that of 45 singers, only 5 composed and the rest did not. (It should be further noted that the singers who composed only created the vocal part and not the *khɔ́ɔŋ* melody, which had to be then and still has to be now created beforehand.)

Composers who lived during the second half of the 19th century enjoyed royal patronage. These royal musicians and composers were employed at Krom Mahɔ̌ɔrasòb Lǔuaŋ (The Royal Entertainment Department). When the king was pleased with their performances or compositions, they could be granted noble ranks. For example, in 1853, Khruu Mii Khèeg composed the song "Chə̂əd Ciin" which pleased King Pinklao[16] so much that he promoted him to the rank of *Phrá* only a month after he had been promoted to the rank of *Lǔuaŋ*

Not only court composers composed, it was also popular for princes and even kings to contribute their musical compositions to the canon (with some advice from the court composers of course). For example, King Rama II (1767-1824) composed a piece called "Bulǎn Lɔɔj Lýyan"; King Rama VII (1893-1941) composed the songs "Raatrii Pradàb Daaw" and "Khamě̌en La-ɔɔ Oŋ"; Prince Narisara composed "Khamě̌en Sajjôog"; and Prince Benbadhanabongse (1882-1909, also known as *phrá-oŋ phén*) composed "Laaw Duuaŋ Dyyan" (see Traamôod 1980).

Amongst royals, Prince Paribatra (1881-1944) was the most prolific composer. He started off by composing military music for Western-style bands when he was in charge of the navy (around 1904), and graduated to the composition of traditional Thai pieces under

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[15] Only included were those who were over sixty years of age or who had died before 1982 when the research began.

[16] King Pinklao shared the kingship with King Mongkut (Rama IV) during 1851-68.

the guidance of his chief musician Caaŋwaaŋ Thûua. In 1932, he was sent into exile by the revolutionary forces and spent the rest of his life in Bandung, Indonesia[17]. He is quoted as having said that he should thank the revolutionaries for taking away his responsibility to his country and allowing him to enjoy a life of listening to, playing and composing music. He composed Thai traditional music using the Western staff notation, the first composer to do this, and by the end of his life he had composed more than 70 pieces, if you include all of his Western-style compositions, most of which were not performed in public until recently.

It is a fact that even great composers need musicians to perform their music in order for it to be heard and disseminated. Lûuaŋ Pradìd not only composed more than 300 pieces, but he taught his students to play them. He became well known because he had so many students, enough to popularise his compositions. Montrii Traamôod was the most respected musician and composer of the Fine Arts Department (Krom Sĭnlápaakɔɔn), and he composed more than 200 pieces of traditional music. Although he did not have as many students as Lûuaŋ Pradìd, he could arrange for the musicians of the department to perform his compositions and thus popularise his work. Because Prince Paribatra lived so far away from Thai musical society when he composed his music, he had to entrust his musical compositions to Khruu Theewaa (Theewaaprasìd Phâadthajákooson), his musical advisor, to bring back to Thailand. They were kept at Phâadthajákooson House, but ironically the in-house musicians treated them as sacred objects because of the high rank of their composer and so did not perform them for a very long time, leading to the relative obscurity of the works.

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[17]The revolutionary group was Khanáráad. This happened during the reign of King Rama VII (1925-34) when Prince Bɔɔriphád, being the minister of Defence, was the most powerful figure after the king.

1.6 The status of Thai music since 1932

Soon after 1932, when the court tradition had declined along with the power of the monarchy, and musicians no longer had royal support, every musician was transferred to the Fine Arts Department (Krom Sínlápaakɔɔn). Musicians who grew up during this new era, therefore, were not part of the royal court. Even though there was still a king, he was disempowered and not allowed to keep his own private ensemble. Some good musicians did indeed enter the Fine Arts Department, but many resisted the transfer and instead formed independent professional music groups, for example, the musicians and singers of the Dùrijápraniid family in Bangkok which was similar to other groups outside the city. These musicians had been, however, the students of the court musicians and composers left over from the time of the absolute monarchy.

When General Phibun was in power (1938-44 and 1948-57), his government tried to gain the respect of the Western powers and to build a new national identity through nationalism. Witayasakpan writes: "Having experienced contempt as a citizen of a 'backward' country, Phibun was determined to modernise the country so it would win the respect of Western powers. Western culture, therefore, became [the] models [model] for Phibun's cultural reforms" (Witayasakpan 1992:103-4). The government produced a large number of patriotic plays using already existing traditional songs in combination with a new style of music influenced by the West, known as *phleeŋ thaj saakon*. The term *saakon* means "universal" and was meant to connote modernity, cultural sophistication and civilised values. As a result, even Khruu Montrii, an arch-traditionalist, had to compose a song in the *saakon* style when the government held a competition for a "Song for the National Day" in 1940.

Morton documented Thai music during Phibun's period thus:

> At this time also the new government established a Department of Fine Arts, including a national symphony orchestra that utilizes and performs Western

classical and semi-classical music. Western-style music has come to predominate in the department's outdoor live performances and in television and radio. (Morton 1976:16)

In a larger context, Phibun's policies were anti-monarchist, which led to neglect and restrictions on all kinds of art related to the monarchy, including traditional music and dance drama, although these were nominally preserved as part of a national heritage (Witayasakpan 1992:130-1). Every kind of performance had to be approved by the Fine Arts Department before being performed. Singers and other performers had to apply for a *bàdsǐnlápín* ("artist card"). The government claimed that in this way they could raise and control the quality of performance and save "national face". Also with the excuse of creating a national identity, the titles of songs which included the name of a foreign place or culture (such as "Laaw" or "Khamĕen") had to be amended by dropping these "foreign" words. Sadly, it was not only court culture that suffered, but folk tradition too had a hard time surviving intact. Lower-class folk traditions, such as *lakhɔɔn chaatríi*, *líkee* and puppet theatre were also abandoned, as they were thought to create a bad impression of the state of Thai civilisation to Western visitors.

During this period, many traditional musicians and singers were so upset that they gave up music. Some left Bangkok for their home towns because the law wasn't as effective outside the capital and they could still play music relatively freely; even so it was a difficult time. Lǔuaŋ Pradìd expressed his anger by composing the song "Sĕenkhamnyŋ" ("extreme thought") to condemn the government. The song is still being sung nowadays, but the original lyrics were suppressed by his daughter for reasons of personal safety (the current lyrics are taken from the famous piece of literature *Khǔncháaŋ Khǔnphěen*).

After Phibun's period, Thai music began slowly to grow again. Later governments tried to encourage people to listen to Thai music once more. Uthíd Nâagsawàd (1923-82), one of Lǔuaŋ Pradìd's students, became the producer and presenter of a TV programme called *dɔ̀ɔgtɔ̀ɔ uthíd nát dontrii thaj* ("Dr Uthíd introduces Thai music"), and he was voted

best TV presenter of 1972. The musicians in the programme were his daughter, his son-in-law, his students and his friends. The music he presented on the programme was mostly of his own or his teacher's composition. He tried to gently modernise Thai music by making the musicians sit on chairs instead of on the floor; the singers stood in front of the ensemble and were allowed to move their bodies in time to the rhythm instead of sitting still in the traditional pose reflecting modesty. These innovations did not enjoy widespread popularity amongst singers, who generally found the movements both embarrassing and tasteless. However, a large audience was delivered for the TV show, so it seems the general public had no problems with this behaviour.

The larger population enjoyed non-court popular music known as *phleeŋ lûug kruŋ* ("songs of the sons of the city") and *phleeŋ lûug thûŋ* ("songs of the sons of the field"), both influenced by Western music. The *phleeŋ lûug kruŋ* made use of not only Western instruments, but also the Western scale; in the early days some voice production techniques were preserved together with traditional melodies (taken mainly from court songs), but it has become more and more like Western music, catching up with Western trends, so that only the language remains Thai. The *phleeŋ lûug thûŋ* is influenced by the West only in its use of instruments; the song melodies are mainly adapted from the Thai folk style (*phleeŋ phʉ́ʉn bâan*).

Thai court music survived quietly for many years, but recently gained great attention once more when, in 1975, the present crown princess, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn, began taking part in the activities of the Thai Classical Music Club of Chulalongkorn University. These activities include not only the university's ceremonies, but also public events such as TV programmes and an annual performance by university students called *ŋaan chumnum dontrii thaj ʉ̀dommasʉ́ʉgsǎa*. The princess is the official patron of this event and still attends and plays Thai music with the students every year. Nowadays this kind of musical event is popular amongst pupils of traditional music at all levels, including secondary and primary schools all over Thailand. These school and university meetings

help to generate new musicians and singers who will go on to make up the Thai musical community of the country as a whole.

In the 1970s many banks such as the Bangkok Bank of Commerce took on musicians and singers in lowly paid, unskilled positions. They had to rehearse regularly in addition to their bank duties, and in return for their tenure, they provided the banks with a music-making corps for use at public relations functions and official openings. Job security was reliant on the heads of the banks, who acted as patrons, and if these were replaced, or died, the musicians could be laid off. In addition, those musicians without banking qualifications were vulnerable at times of economic downturn. [18]

In 1981, the Thai Farmers Bank organised a court music composition contest in order to encourage Thai musicians to produce new songs. The response from musicians was positive, everyone was excited, and many composers put their compositions in. The winner of this contest was one of Lùuaŋ Pradìd's students called Can Toowisùd, a teacher in many schools in Bangkok. Contests of this kind took place for several years and temporarily stimulated a new generation of composers and songwriters into action before petering out. Like all creative endeavours, the composition of Thai traditional music requires the right climate of encouragement and reward in order to flourish. These conditions existed in the past, but at the moment the climate cannot be said to be a fertile one for widespread creativity. Musicians will not compose new works if there is little likelihood of them being performed in public.

In parallel, during the 1980s the government set up formal court music competitions as a new strategy to encourage school and university students and their teachers. The government withdrew after a few years, leaving it up to the Bangkok Bank to continue the tradition to this day. The bank made a successful job of it, targeting it more specifically at school children and inspiring a large and widespread entry. This has succeeded in creating

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[18] In 1997, for instance, ten banks were closed down because of the national financial crisis.

a new generation of musicians, who aspire to very high standards of performance, which rise year on year.

Since 1990, Thai music has been actively promoted in the school curriculum. Poonpit Amatyakul, Bunchûuaj Sòowád and other active traditional musicians are currently still working hard on this project. A kind of movement has been created which is a milestone in the study of Thai music in Thailand, whereby Thai music will be taught to every school child.

Thai court music has grown in popularity as the result of all these measures, but this has brought its own problems. Professional jobbing musicians and singers, who make their living from private parties and funerals, have found themselves being put out of work by schoolchildren willing to perform either free of charge or for a very small fee. This is an unforeseen consequence of the admirable zealousness amongst teachers and schools to take their work out into the community. Other problems may also lie ahead, including the formal standardisation of court music, which may cause a change of spirit at the heart of the music itself, and this will be discussed more fully in Chapter 6.

Chapter 2

Foundation of Thai Vocal Music

2.1 Voice production

The style of voice production used in Thai court singing is noticeably different from other styles such as *phleeŋ phýyn bâan*(traditional folk songs), *phleeŋ lûug thûŋ*(songs for "the sons of the field"), *phleeŋ lûug kruŋ*(songs for "the sons of the city"), and *phleeŋ phɔ́b* (pop songs). Of the above styles, the voice production used for *phleeŋ phýyn bâan,* regardless of the diversity of techniques used in different regional folk styles, is most similar to that of the court tradition. The voice projection of these folk styles is done in a "held back" way. Sǔntharawaathin says that court song singers should feel the vibration in their chest, while singing, in order to get a more controlled sound. This is different from, for instance, *phleeŋ lûug thûŋ* in that the sound of *phleeŋ lûug thûŋ* is more "open" (so less controlled). The other styles, *phleeŋ lûug kruŋ* and *phleeŋ phɔ́b,* are said to be singing in the *sataaj fàràŋ*(Western style),[19] i.e. the voice is projected more. In addition to this, the major feature of Thai court singing which distinguishes it from the other styles is the rigidity of the throat and the large amount of nasality.

The question "how can they sing with such a voice?" or something similar to this is often asked of me when people listen to Thai court singing. The answer is that the voice has to be seen as a kind of musical instrument. Learning how to produce this voice does not seem to have been a problem amongst learners of the past. My singing teacher, Sǔntharawaathin, complains that she never had any problem in teaching a student to sing

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[19] This refers only to the Western pop style, not the classical one.

with a "Thai voice" in the old days, and that the problem has occurred since the 1970s.
This was when Western-style singing began to swamp Thai culture with many kinds of
voice production that were so different from the classic way that they could not be blended
or assimilated. It is hard work for a singing teacher nowadays to teach Thai voice
production to a student since other styles, such as the *phleeŋ phɔ̀ɔb* style, have such a strong
influence in society. I too have encountered similar problems teaching Thai people, and of
course non-Thais here in the UK and the Netherlands. Thai voice is an alien style of
singing to most people in the modern world, and the younger the student is when they
begin training, the easier it is.

Thai court singing makes great use of the throat in the production of the sound; this is
known in Thai as *lûug khɔɔ*, literally meaning "neck ball". Prasìdthìkun said the right way
to sing Thai court songs is to sing "from the throat" (1992c: 128). Sŭntharawaathin did not
use the term *lûug khɔɔ*, but mentioned the use of "neck muscles" (*klâam nɯ́ɯa khɔɔ*) in
singing and in producing some technical effects. The term *lûug khɔɔ* also refers to some
vocal techniques which require a "flexibility" of the throat to produce: techniques such as
khrân (a kind of vibrato) and *plìg sĭaŋ* (literally meaning "to turn over" the sound).
Nasalisation, known in Thai as *sĭaŋ naasĭg*, is another significant feature of this singing.
The singers use nasality for certain *ɲɲɑɑ* and words (see more discussion in section 2.4).
The uses of *lûug khɔɔ* and *sĭaŋ naasĭg* seem to be the most important features talked about
during performance and tuition. The degree of openness of the mouth while singing is
another factor discussed, with different singers having different opinions on it. Generally,
though, preference is for a nearly closed-mouth technique with almost rigid lips,
particularly when singing *ɲɲɑɑ*.

It seems that most singers will sing using the highest register they can manage. The low
register is used only when the melody is higher than the top of their range so that they have
to drop down the scale. They will switch into the high register again whenever the melody
allows. Some singers say that singing in a high register is a feature of Thai court singing.

The reason given by many singers for this is that in the past there were no microphones or amplifiers available, and therefore the singers had to sing in a loud and high register in order to make their singing heard – particularly when the ensemble joined in. This theory appears to be correct, as contemporary singers, who would normally sing in a high register, will switch to a lower scale when a microphone is being used, e.g. in a recording studio. However, when singers who were recorded in the early 1900s[20] are listened to, most of them sing in a very high register; perhaps this is because they were not making use of the microphone in the same way as modern singers do, or perhaps they simply lacked microphone technique. Some singers condemn the extreme use of a high register by saying that such singing merely "tells the story" but cannot convey the true feeling of the lyrics, because the vocal cords are so stretched that the voice cannot be softened. They prefer to use the middle range of their voice and to only occasionally use the top of their range.

Additionally, Thai singers make much use of the falsetto voice to sing at the higher end of the scale, and not just at the top end of their particular range. The falsetto voice needs to be used appropriately: the "absolute" falsetto results in an unpleasant sound known in Thai as *sĭang phĭi* or "the ghost voice". The preferred sound is half and half between the falsetto and the full voice. Singers have to negotiate their way through a piece in order to balance the use of the two kinds of sound; such a negotiating technique is called by some singing teachers *dàn sĭang* or "to gain the vocal heights".[21]

It should be mentioned here that the sound of Thai singing is similar to the sound of the *pìi nay* (oboe) and the *sɔɔ sǎam sǎay* (three-stringed fiddle), and that one of these two instruments can be used to accompany and/or to imitate vocal melodies, during a performance. (Other instruments such as the *sɔɔ ûu* or the *khlùy* can be used, but only if the *pìi* and *sɔɔ sǎam sǎay* are not available). The *sɔɔ sǎam sǎay* has been used to accompany singing in *mahŏorii* ensembles since some time in the Ayutthaya period (14th-

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[20] The first known recording in Thailand was produced around 1899–1901 (Amatyakul 1997:48).

[21] The first person to use this term was reportedly Thúuam Prasìdthikun, around 1960s.

18th century) (see Traamôod 1991:8). Through performing simultaneously with the vocal part and assisting the singers with the vocal melody, the timbre of the instrument might have influenced the singing voice to some extent. The *pìinaj* can imitate the timbre of singing or even human speech so well that it is used to mimic the voice in *wâa dòɔg*[22], *chùj chàaj*[23] and *sùuad khárjhàd pìi*[24]. For the *wâa dòɔg* and *chùj chàaj* melodies, the *pìinaj* player (or the *sɔɔ sàam sìaj* player in *mahôorii* ensembles) has to observe the vocal line closely and imitate it in as much detail as he can. Khoŋlaajthɔɔŋ (1995) reveals performance techniques for the *pìinaj* in the imitation of *chùj chàaj* melodies, providing full details of certain techniques which are used to imitate certain vowels and consonants. The *pìinaj* is also used as the voice itself. For example, in *sùuad khárjhàd pìi*, the four *pìi* players play the instruments in the form of a conversation: making statements, replies and jokes as if they were talking. Phrájaa Sanɔdurijaaŋ (1866-1949), a master of the *pìinaj* used the instrument to give orders to his servants instead of speaking (see Amatyakul 1997).

As to the human voice itself, it is not formally classified. Even in a chorus, there are no different parts for different voices, and the songs are invariably sung in unison. Division is simply made by male and female, with no type of voice being mentioned, although people are sometimes noticed for having an exceptionally high register. Some thinkers have attempted to divide the Thai voice into groups based on the Western system: *sìaŋ sǔuŋ* or high voice, *sìaŋ klaaŋ* or medium voice and *sìaŋ tàm* low voice; but such ideas of distinguishing the voice by range, are not popular amongst the singers. However, singers always comment on voice quality, using the term *sìaŋ dii* meaning "fine voice" to indicate a good voice.

The concept of *sìaŋ dii* contains two meanings: 1) to have a very high voice or 2) to have a loud or powerful voice. (There are also other expressions which refer to good-

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[22] Literally meaning "speaking of flowers", a section of some farewell songs where the names of flowers are used as metaphors for emotions.

[23] A song used in plays to accompany "getting dressed". The vocal melody of this song is always imitated by the *pìinaj* line by line.

[24] An imitation of Buddhist chanting played on four *pìinaj* (the same number as the monks in the actual chant). This is only performed at funerals and is rarely heard nowadays.

quality voices, such as *sĭaŋphrɔ́* meaning a voice that is pleasing to the ear, and *sĭaŋ wăan* literally meaning "sweet" voice.) Having a good voice is always an advantage, as Amatyakul (1992:88) tells us: "When Khruu Thúuam Prasìdthìkun had just entered the royal palace [Wimaanmêeg Palace] in 1909 she was the youngest singer there, but became a lead singer straight away because she had a good voice [*sĭaŋ dii*]." Even in the present day, singers who have better voices can get jobs more easily than others with superior technique.

However, every singer accepts that merely having a good voice is not enough to make a good performance. Sŭntharawaathin states that there is a minimum requirement of voice quality, which, for a female, is the ability to reach the top note of the *ranâad èeg* (about an e'' in Western music). But she also says good singers need to know their own range and the limits of their own ability: "Having a high voice is an advantage but won't help you to be the best singer unless you sing with your brain" (Sŭntharawaathin 1987b:60). She also praises the ability to produce well every pitch within a singer's own range. Also, having a large repertoire is important, as is having the stamina to give extended performances. To sum up, there has been an overall trend in Thai singing away from harshness and a high register towards a softer tone and more use of the mid range.

2.2 Pitches and intervals

It has been widely accepted amongst scholars of Thai music that its tuning system is an equidistant one. The first person to make the observation of equidistance was Alexander Ellis in an appendix to his article "On the Musical Scales of Various Nations" (1885). Ellis came to this conclusion with the assistance of some Thai musicians who came to England in 1885. Panya Roongruang records that:

In 1884, Ellis measured the pitches of Thai musical instruments in South Kensington Museum in London, but couldn't conclude his study because the tuning wax had fallen from some of the instruments. In 1885 [when there was an exhibition of Thai musical instruments and some concerts were performed at the Royal Albert Hall over a three-month period], Ellis made his second attempt at pitch measurement, by using musical instruments included in the exhibition, but not the instruments that were being used for performing. Therefore the data was still inaccurate and he couldn't reach any conclusion. Eventually, Ellis managed to come up with a theory, with the help of the ambassador, Prince Prıdsadaaŋ [?]. He even tested his theory [of a system of seven equidistant notes] on the musicians. (Panya Roongruang, quoted by Sŏowád 1998:14-5)

It should be noted that this tuning system seems to be only functionally equidistant, not physically or acoustically so. We must distinguish functional equidistance and physical or acoustic. The former is an emic concept which can only be examined by asking Thai musicians and observing their behaviour, while the latter would seem to be discoverable by precise measurement. The problem, however, is that at some level of measurement any two performed intervals will differ, even by one cent, or a hundredth of a cent (cents are Ellis' unit of acoustic measurement, see below). Each culture sets its own limits of what is and is not acceptable deviation. Musicians in some cultures may set the boundary of difference relatively leniently, so that they truly do not notice differences of, say, ten cents or less. Not noticing is different from noticing but ignoring. With all this in mind, let us now consider the Thai case.

According to Ellis, the interval between each note of the Thai scale is 171.428 cents; this is narrower than the major 2nd of the Western tempered scale (200 cents). The figures below show the interval differences between the Thai and the Western scales.[25]

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do        re        mi        fa        sol       la        ti        do
|  171.428  |  171.428  |  171.428  |  171.428  |  171.428  |  171.428  |  171.428  |

C         D         E    F         G         A         B    C
|  100  |  100  |  100  |  100  |  100  |  100  |  100  |  100  |  100  |  100  |  100  |  100  |
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[25] The Western sol-fa system is used here to signify Thai notes (indeed, modern Thai musicians sometimes use this system, but the intervals between these notes are of the Thai tuning system.

In 1930 there was an attempt to preserve Thai music in a written form, and Western notation was used for the transcription. Prince Damrong, the initiator of this work, gathered together Thai musicians who had a wide knowledge of the traditional musical repertoire, in order that they might "tell" the melodies to the transcribers. The song tellers or *phûu bɔɔg phleeŋ* came both from the Fine Arts Department and from outside it; the transcribers, known as *phûu banthŷg phleeŋ*, all worked for the Fine Arts Department as performers of Western classical music. The leader of the transcribers was Phra Chen Duriyanga, a German-Thai who played a very important role in establishing Western classical music in Thailand. Phra Chen Duriyanga stated (without saying how he came to this conclusion) that an octave in the Thai tuning system was divided into seven equally spaced notes:

> The Thai musical scale is equally divided within its octave into seven degrees of seven full tones equidistant as regards the different pitches. (Chen Duriyanga 1961:21)

Despite the difference between the Thai and Western pitch systems, he decided to use Western notation to record Thai music, but chose only the natural scale for his notations. This made some sense, since Thai instruments are tuned only to seven pitches. But modulation to a different pitch level in Thai music (unlike in Western music) keeps to the same seven notes; this phenomenon is called metabole by foreign scholars (see Section 3.4). Due to the transcribers' tendency to hear metabole as modulation to a different "key" in the Western sense, some accidentals including sharps, flats and naturals were included in some passages. Phra Chen Duriyanga opined:

> ...from this same notation, Thai instruments may be safely played by ignoring the accidental signs of sharps, flats and naturals placed above and below the notes, but when Western instruments are used, these signs must be strictly observed; although this way of rendering Thai music is not quite in harmony with Thai tone conception it is nevertheless quite tolerable to Thai ears .... (ibid:22)

The transcriptions were carefully notated and double-checked by the committee. When a piece had been notated, it would then be played to the traditional Thai musicians, by those with Western training, on Western instruments – for example the *pìi naj* part would be played on the oboe, and the *khɔ̌ɔŋ woŋ lèg* part would be played on the piano. Although the Western notation system could not represent Thai pitches accurately, it served its purpose of preservation.[26] The results were reportedly acceptable to the traditional Thai musicians involved, although it is difficult to imagine their true reaction to the Western tunings.

Most of the transcriptions presented here use Western staff notation. Although it cannot represent Thai singing with complete accuracy, it is the most functional written system available in a work of this kind. The procedure of double-checking was re-enacted by myself, taking the parts of both Western and Thai traditional musicians: a musical software called Finale was used to enable transcription directly onto the monitor; the software then allowed the songs to be listened to in their Western tuning and double-checked by myself in the role of a Thai traditional singer. The musicians of 1930 must have been aware of the discrepancies that inevitably occur when Thai music is notated using the Western system, just as I am aware also. Of course, I have been exposed to far more Western music culture, but I don't think that this had any large significance for my responses.

In 1998, Bunchûuaj Sǒowád anonymously published a research paper entitled "khwaam thìi sǐiaŋ dontrii thaj" or "The sound frequency of the notes used in the Thai musical scale"[27], which examined the traditional tuning system and attempted to create standardised note frequencies for the Thai scale. (See Appendix I for the abstract of this research.) By doing so, he hoped to make it easier for instruments from different ensembles to be combined, and for performers to move from one ensemble to another; he

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[26] By the end of the project, 495 pieces had been transcribed. Sadly, only two pieces from this collection have been revealed to the public: "Phleeŋ Rŷyaŋ Hǒomrong Cháaw" and "Phleeŋ Rŷyaŋ Tham Khwǎn". The others have been kept as a "secret treasure" by the Fine Arts Department.

[27] Sǒowád did not identify himself as the researcher in the paper; he dedicated it to His Majesty the King, with an acknowledgement written by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

also hoped that all instrument makers and ensembles would adopt this standardisation. He measured the tunings of Thai melodic percussion instruments from different musical groups all over Thailand, in hertz, using an electronic pitch measuring device called a Phase Meter, Type 2977. Although the frequencies between different groups varied noticeably, he concluded that the tuning systems they all used were in the equidistant system, thus supporting Ellis. He came to this conclusion by concentrating solely on the *ranâad thûm lèg* (metal low-pitched xylophone), as every ensemble used it as the basis for their tuning procedure. Here is an example of his data:

Table 1: "Data from the Lǔuaŋ Pradìd School (Lǔuaŋ Pradìdphajrɔ́ Foundation) using a *ranâad thûm lèg* which has been used since 1868 during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V)". (Cents figures added by myself.)

Notes	Frequencies obtained by measuring notes played on the *ranâad thûm lèg* (Hertz)	*Interval in Cents*
fa	666.2	–
mi	605.1	*166.5*
re	544.2	*183.6*
do	494.1	*167.2*
ti	446.8	*174.2*
la	**403.0**	***178.6***
sol	364.3	*174.8*
fa	330.1	*170.6*
mi	299.0	*171.3*
re	269.6	*179.2*
do	244.6	*168.4*
ti	222.2	*166.2*
la	200.0	*182.2*
sol	179.2	*190.1*
fa	162.6	*168.3*
mi	147.0	*174.6*
re	131.5	*192.9*
do	unmeasurable	–
ti	unmeasurable	–

Sǒowád (1998: 34)

He suggests a standard frequency of notes used in the Thai scale by using the average of pitch A calculated from topmost A pitches on the *ranàad thúm lèg* of all instruments measured. (The "A" pitch, or note "la" in Sŏowàd's research, is defined as the sixth metal bar from the left as the musician faces the instrument.) He then combined his findings into three groups: major schools of Bangkok, average 409.9 Hz; central Thailand, average 417 Hz; and the rest of Thailand, average 414.4 Hz. This gave an overall average for the Thai A pitch of 413.8 Hz, which he rounded up to 414 Hz.

From this research Sŏowàd projected upwards and downwards, using the equidistant theory to give the pitch range of every Thai musical instrument and of the singing voice. (See the table of the full range for each musical instrument in Appendix II) This resulted in a theoretical range for the female voice of between 154 and 615 Hz with the male voice from 63 to 340 Hz. These figures might mislead the incautious reader: they give only the range of notes required of male and female singers, not the range of notes that they can physically reach. In practice, some male singers are capable of singing as high as a Thai g', which is about 375 Hz, and most female singers are capable of singing a Thai f'', which is about 679 Hz. However, it should be remembered that when singers sing at the top end of the scale they normally use *dàn sǔiaŋ* technique where falsetto is combined with the full voice. It should be emphasised that Sŏowàd did not measure any actual vocal pitches; he simply assumed that vocalists use the same equidistant scale as instrumentalists.

Thai musicians and singers have accepted for a long time that the equidistant tuning system should be the foundation of Thai music; the musicians that Ellis interviewed in 1885 told him as much. This knowledge has always been imposed on them by the Thai music authorities. In a sense, the singers are mirroring an establishment viewpoint, which gives them more status as "fitting in" with a monolithic system of tuning. Contemporary Thai court singers such as Sǔntharawaathin also seem to indicate that they also feel they are using an equidistant system through their use of the term *thâw*, which means "equal", in their explanations of the distance between notes. But, although Thai court-music singers

agree in theory that the tuning system is an equidistant one, the intervals they use in their singing are not always synchronised with the equidistant system. Morton (1976:217) found that the use of vocal pitches or tones is not in the fixed tuning system (that is, the tuning system found on the instruments of fixed pitch). In order to find the actual intervals used in Thai singing, I selected and examined the melodies of ten songs from different sources, and measured the intervals in these performances. The computer software called SoundEdit 16 was used in accordance with the popular tuning machine, the Korg Acoustic Tuner. Basically, the sound was stored in the computer, then played back in order to be measured by the Korg machine.[28]

There were two reasons why a computer was needed for the analysis. The first reason was that the computer could play the same tape with the same frequency every time (unlike ordinary cassette players where the frequency of sound can vary). The second reason was that SoundEdit 16 could either lengthen notes of short duration or play them continuously in loop form without changing their frequency. With either of these two methods, most short notes could be played for an adequate length of time for the Korg machine to recognise their frequency except notes that are sung with strong nasality. Table 1 is an excerpt from a working sheet where pitches were measured and converted into hertz.

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[28] A Korg Acoustic Tuner and SoundEdit 16 software were used because of their easy availability. Any similar machine and software could have been substituted. It is easier to measure Thai court singing than Central Javanese or Western classical vocals, for example, which make heavy use of vibrato.

Table 1: "Khə̀əg Khǎaw", the first ten notes by Aphinjaa Chiiwákaanon

Word or ร้อง	Pitch indicated in Korg machine	Frequency (Hz)
əə	B +6	253
hə̀ə	D +2	296
əə	B +4	251
hə́	–	–
əəŋ	B +6	253
ŋəə	B +5	252
hə́	–	–
əə	B +5	252
hý	E +9	339
ɲə̀ə	A# –5	228

When all the sounds are converted into hertz, the intervals can be calculated by using Ellis's

formula:

$$C \quad = \quad \text{the number of cents in the interval} \quad = (\log I \times 1200) \div \log 2$$

$$\text{where} \quad I \quad = \quad \text{the ratio between the two frequencies } f2 \text{ and } f1$$

For example, the interval between the first two notes in the above table is

$$\log [(296 \div 253) \times 1200] \div \log 2 \ = \ 271 \text{ cents}$$

(I will round off all intervals to the nearest cent, since humans apparently cannot

discriminate smaller differences.) The above formula is based on the Western interval

system that divides an octave into 12 semitones, and the interval between each is set as 100

cents; therefore an octave is 1200 cents.[29] For Thai intervals, each of them is the result of

1200 divided by 7 multiplied by the number of intervals minus 1; e.g. the Thai 4th interval

is $(1200 \div 7) \times (4-1) = 514$. This is illustrated by Figure 1a below:

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[29] The formula can also be applied using the Thai equidistant theory as its basis. The interval between Thai notes could be set as 100 Cents, and in this case the interval of an octave would be 700 Cents and of a Western semitone would be 58.33 Cents. The formula would thus become:
$$C = (\log I \times 700) \div \log 2$$
I discovered this modification during my research but didn't make use of it as the Western formula proved adequate to the task. I was later informed that Mongkol Um, a Cambodian musician and scientist, had already made the same discovery in the 1980s.

Figure 1a: A comparison of Thai ideal and Western tempered major scale intervals in cents

Thai
-->	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	octave
cents	171	343	514	686	857	1029	1200

Western
-->		M2nd		M3rd	perf4th		perf 5th		M6th			M7th	oct.
	100	200	300	400	500	600	700	800	900	1000	1100	1200	
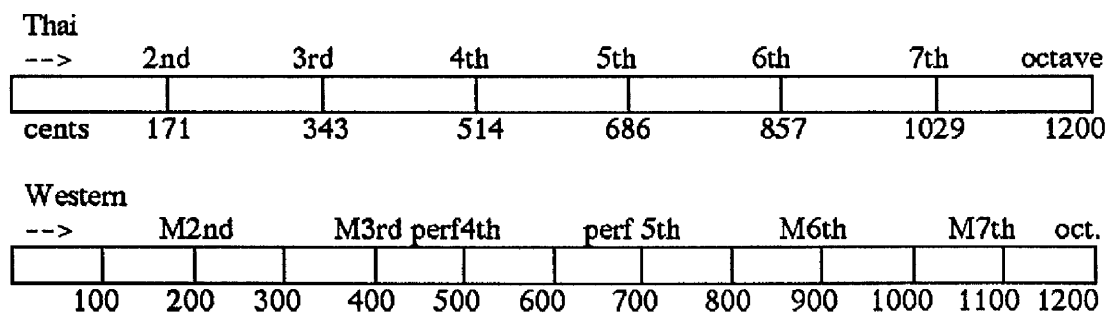
This can also be presented as the following chart:

Figure 1b: Thai - Western Major Scales
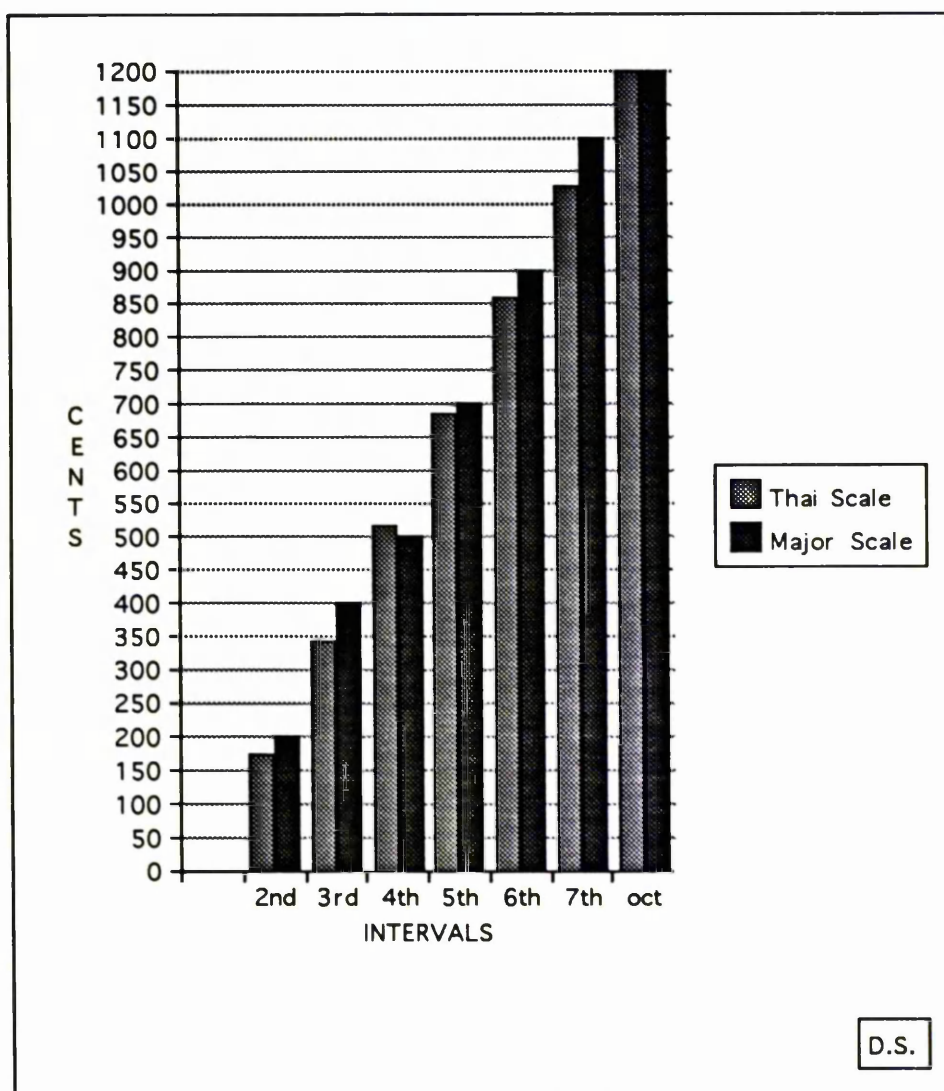
Below is an example of a transcription in Western staff notation, where the pitches in hertz have been added for ease of analysis. (See Appendix III for a full transcription.)

Example 2: "Khɛ̀ɛg Khǎaw" [R9], *sǎum chǐn thɔ̌ɔn*1, sung by Aphinjaa Chiiwákaanon

Although SoundEdit 16 can lengthen note duration, enabling the Korg machine to measure the short notes, even some lengthened notes are still unmeasurable, and these are marked by hyphens in the lower line of hertz measurements. (As mentioned previously, the unmeasurable notes are usually those of a brief duration, including demisemiquavers and grace notes, and notes sung with a strong nasal voice.)

Unsurprisingly, a certain variety of frequencies occurs between the same note, sung by the same singer. Most singers seem comfortable with a few cents divergence from the average for a given pitch. In the style of *rɔ́b rɔ́ɔŋ* the singing part is unaccompanied, and as long as the melody does not sound obviously out of tune, and the singer can bring the melody back in tune at the end of the section where the ensemble joins in, this level of singing performance is quite acceptable. Usually the instrumentalists will check the vocal melody if they suspect it has gone out of tune, and if it really is, they will discreetly provide the singer with a pitch from their instrument. For example the *ranâad èeg* player can hit a significant key softly in order to give the singer the correct pitch, or the *khlùj* player can join in with the singing part (this has to be done at certain points) and "blend" with the pitch

that the singer is singing before the *khlùy* player "drags" the melody back in tune with the ensemble.

A heptatonic tuning system leaves more distance between pitches than a dodecaphonic one (171 cents vs 100 cents), so we might expect tolerance of a wider range for each pitch, since there is less likelihood of it being confused with a neighbouring pitch. I have used a system of averages to calculate the frequencies used in the interval analyses, and all of the melodies were transposed into the same pitch-level. Below is a graph of my calculated intervals in comparison with the Western major scale and the Thai equidistant scale, compiled from ten chosen songs (see Appendix III):

Figure 2: Western major, Thai performed and Thai ideal scales
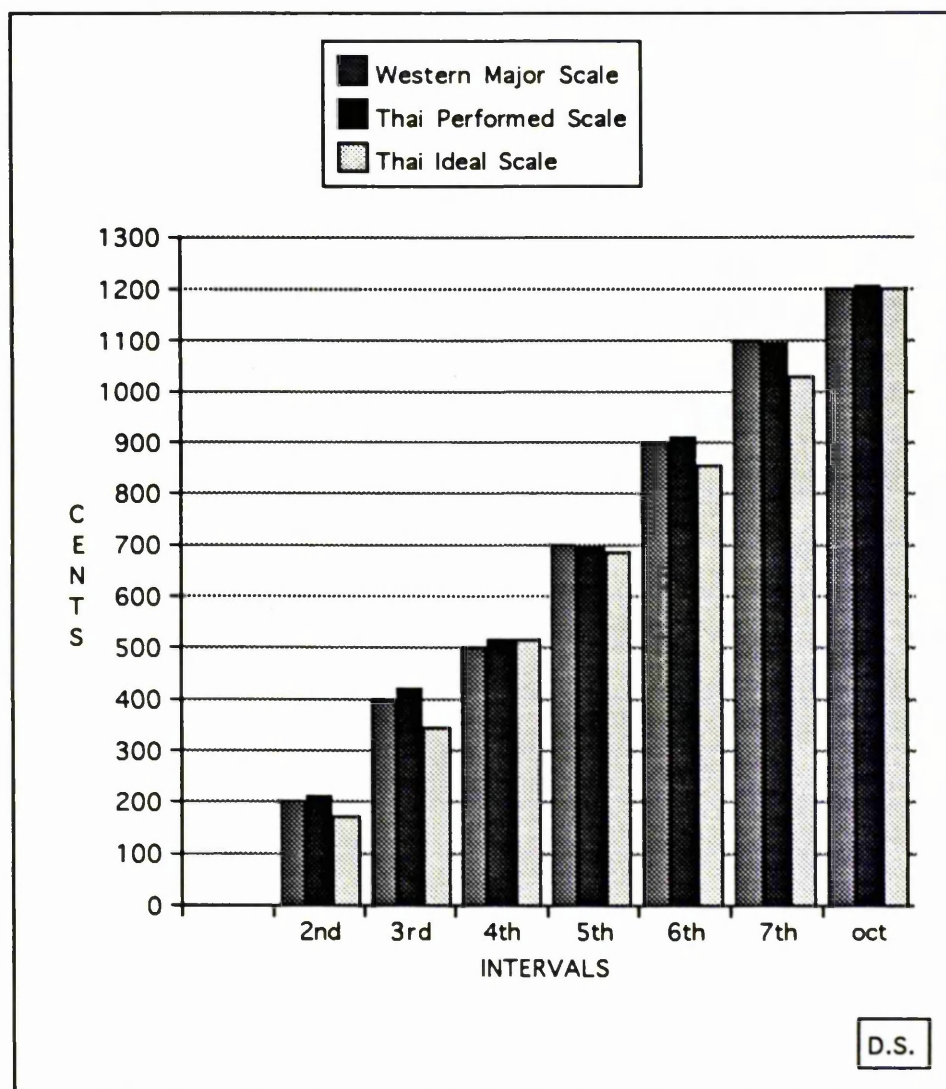
The above chart shows that in performance Thai singers make use of a different "scale" to the theoretical equidistant Thai scale. It is interesting that the performed scale is closer to the Western scale than the Thai. This might, however, be a distortion due to the practice of taking average frequencies for notes. Another reason for the apparent closeness to the Western scale might be to do with the fact that Thai singing accompanied by non-fixed pitch instruments predates its accompaniment by instruments of fixed pitch (equidistant

scale) by hundreds of years, and when singers use Western-like intervals it might be a hangover from this earlier tradition.[30]

2.3 *Yyan*(Wordless Vocalisation)

In Thai court music circles, the appreciation of and ability to perform *yyan* are still seen as the yardsticks of musical accomplishment. Competitions revolve around *saam chán* compositions which exhibit extreme use of *yyan* and this is seen as the supreme skill by which a singer can be judged. There is a sense in which the abstract quality of *yyan* can be seen to heighten the transmission of pure emotion to an audience, and it may thus be compared to passages of wordless ornamentation in Western opera. But the art of *yyan* is an esoteric practice, full of mystery and beauty for the initiated, but inaccessible and remote to much of the Thai populace.

The term *yyan* according to a standard Thai dictionary, means "the uttering of a word", a "pronouncement" or "speech in a pleasing voice" (Maanídcarəən 1982:1130). In Thai music, the term is used to refer to the "wordless vocalisation" which is positioned between sung words. The term is also used as a verb, i.e. "to ŷyan". Tanese (1988:181) said "The *yyan* itself is not a technique but is a fundamental characteristic of Thai classical singing". *Yyan* consists of many different sounds, mainly based around *əə* and *yy*; it does not have any linguistic meaning, but does contain aesthetic values.

It is hard to trace the original character and usage of *yyan* since Thai court singing was a completely oral tradition. However, a very early example of its use is documented by Loubère, who notated an example of Thai song (in what would now be called the *sɔɔŋ chán* form) from the city of Ayutthaya in 1678 (Loubère 1969:113). His notation showed a very

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[30] Evidence for earlier tuning systems is of course absent. But it should be noted that, for example, the *khɛɛn* mouth organ of the Laotian people of Northeast Thailand and Laos uses a basically Western diatonic tuning, as does the *mɔɔ lam* vocal music linked with it. Similarly, the intervals of ancient Chinese music are closer to Western than to Thai equidistant intervals. This does not seem likely to reflect Western influence.

small degree of *ɲɲaa* in use. Present scholars of Thai music now conclude, on the basis of the work of Loubère and Gervaise (see section 1.1) and of the study of "ancient" songs, that are thought to have survived out of antiquity, that Thai court songs of the Ayutthaya period and earlier were similar to present day "wordful" *phleeŋ nɲɲa tem*, in that *ɲɲaa* was used only as ornamentation. (I am using the term "wordful" to describe a song with no distinct sections of wordless vocalisation, i.e. a song full of words, where the *ɲɲaa* only ever appears as part of a line of lyrics and never appears in isolation.)

Not until the end of the 18th century, when *sàgkrawaa* performances ("poetic contests") became popular amongst court people, did singers expand the *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* form into a double-length version by inserting more *ɲɲaa* between the lyrics. During these contests the poets would write poems to each other, employing singers to utilise old melodies to create songs from the newly written poems. Traamôod (1991:28) said, "in order to give the poets enough time to compose and refine their poems, the *sàgkrawaa* singers doubled the length of the existing melodies by putting more *ɲɲaa* in between the words - resulting in the style known at the present day as *phleeŋ sǎam chán*...". Since that time, the forms of *phleeŋ sǎam chán* and *phleeŋ sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* have become more fixed, and have given birth to a further variation, the short form known as *chán diiaw*. Generally speaking, the amount of *ɲɲaa* decreases from *sǎam chán* through *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* to *chán diiaw*. At the same time different *ɲɲaa* sounds have also been created and adapted.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Phrájaa Sanɔ̌durijaaŋ (1866-1949, also known as Chêem Sǔntharawaathin) was the first person to introduce a theory (*làg*) of Thai singing, taking particular account of the usage and interpretation of words and *ɲɲaa*. Amatyakul (1983) claimed that Phrájaa Sanɔ̌durijaaŋ was a "revolutionary" who abandoned the old fashions of singing, not only to introduce new elements but to create a whole new style. Phrájaa Sanɔ̌durijaaŋ did not leave any of his new theory in a written form. Nevertheless, the results of his adaptations can be seen in the singing styles of his students, singers such as Nĺiaw Dùrijáphan, Thǔuam Prasĺdthíkun and his daughter Caraancaj Sǔntharawaathin.
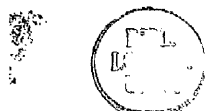
A significant factor which distinguished these singers from their contemporaries was the frequent use of the sound *hɔɔ* in their *ɲʯaan*; this soon became common in Thai singing as a whole.

Carɔɔncaj Sŭntharawaathin, as documented by Amatyakul (1983:63), explained that each *ɲʯaan* has a particular usage; e.g. the sound *ɔɔ* that follows the sound *hɣ* must be altered into *ŋɔɔ*. She then illustrates eight significant *ɲʯaan* sounds: *ɔɔ* [เออ], *hɔɔ* [เฮอ], *yɣ* [ฮื่อ], *ŋɔɔ* [เงอ], *ŋɔɔj* [เงย], *ɔ* [เออะ] and *ɔŋ* [เอิง]. Prasìdthìkun, another of Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durijaaŋ's students, supported a different usage, and documented seven *ɲʯaan* sounds, some of which also vary from the above: *ɔɔ* [เออ], *ɔɔj* [เอย], *yɣ* [ฮื่อ], *ɔɔj* [เอย], *hɔɔ* [เฮอ], *hɣɣ* [ฮื่อ] and *hɣ̌ɣ* [หือ] (Prasìdthìkun 1992: 133-5).

Prasìdthìkun was also taught singing by many other teachers, including her father Sùd Cansùgsĭi (no dates), Mɔ̀m Sômciin (1857-1911), Mɔ̀m Maalaj (1887-1922) and Mỳyn Khàb Khamwăan (no dates). Apart from mentioning the different sounds, she explains how to sing individual *ɲʯaan*, though not when to use them. She cites terms that refer to singing techniques, such as *prùb, prooj, hɔɔj, hŭuan* etc. - but such terms can hardly be understood by anyone other than her students. In fact, the definitions of some terms vary from one student of hers to another. This is because Prasìdthìkun viewed these as advanced techniques and taught or sometimes just mentioned them only to "suitable" students (interview, Bunchûuay Sɔ̌owád, Sept 97). Even recently when these terms were proposed to the Ministry of Higher Education committee for adoption in a teaching manual (see below), they were merely listed and not explained.

In Yoko Tanese-Ito's 1983 article on Thai vocal music, different *ɲʯaan* sounds were shown in her transcriptions, even though they were not explained in detail. She grouped *ɲʯaan* sounds into types according to their melodic function: the tonal *ɲʯaan*; the *ɲʯaan* proper; the inserted *ɲʯaan*; and the "tail melody" (Tanese 1988:114-7). She divided these four types into two groups: dependent and independent. Tonal *ɲʯaan* are dependent on and changeable according to the speech-tones of neighbouring words, whereas the other three

are independent of and unchanged by neighbouring tones. The word "unchanged" is potentially misleading: the melody of her independent *ɲʾyan* are merely uninfluenced by the speech-tones but still vary from one school to another school, one singer to another singer, one performance to another performance and one poetic form to another poetic form. Besides, for some singers, the "tonal *ɲʾyan*" notated in Tanese's transcription can be seen as "tail melodies" and therefore variable.

In 1992, the Ministry of Higher Education in Thailand gathered musicians and singers together in order to set up a national standard for Thai court music in terms of song grading and examination marking, both in performance practice and theory. As a result, Thai court songs are officially put into categories according to the stage of learning and the level of examination at which they are used. A by-product of this meeting was a list of *ɲʾyan* sounds which students have to learn, including some guides to their pronunciation (see Appendix VIII). According to this, there are twelve *ɲʾyan* sounds used for Thai court singing: *əə, əəj̀, y̌, yỳ, ə̀əj̀, ə̀, həə, hyỳ, hy̌, hy̌ỳ, əəŋ-əə* and *əəŋ-əəj̀*

In fact, the above list can be simplified, as only two vowels and three consonants are used to create *ɲʾyan*: the vowels are *əə* and *yỳ* and the consonants are *h, ŋ* and *j*. Prasidthikun (1992:133) said that the sound *əə* is the *mə̂ə sǐaŋ* (literally "the mother sound") or *sǐaŋ èeg* ("the first sound"), and is a basic sound that a singer needs to learn before any other. The other *ɲʾyan* are only variations on *əə* and *yỳ* are favoured in specific melodic contexts.

2.4 Speech-tones and *ɲʾyan*

During my singing lessons with Sǔntharawaathin and Kìdtìwan, both teachers often corrected some of my *əə* sounds, stating that they were to be sung with a low tone, not a mid tone. This is probably why most singers use tone marks, normally used with words,

to indicate speech-tones for semantically meaningless *ɲɲuu* sounds in their singing notebooks, and so remind themselves of what they need to do.

Therefore, in my transcriptions of vocal melody, tone marks are used for *ɲɲuu* sounds too. However, only three tones are needed (instead of five as in speech-tones): mid (no mark), low (`) and high (´), as in Example 3 below.

Example 3: Showing tone marks used in *ɲɲuu* sounds
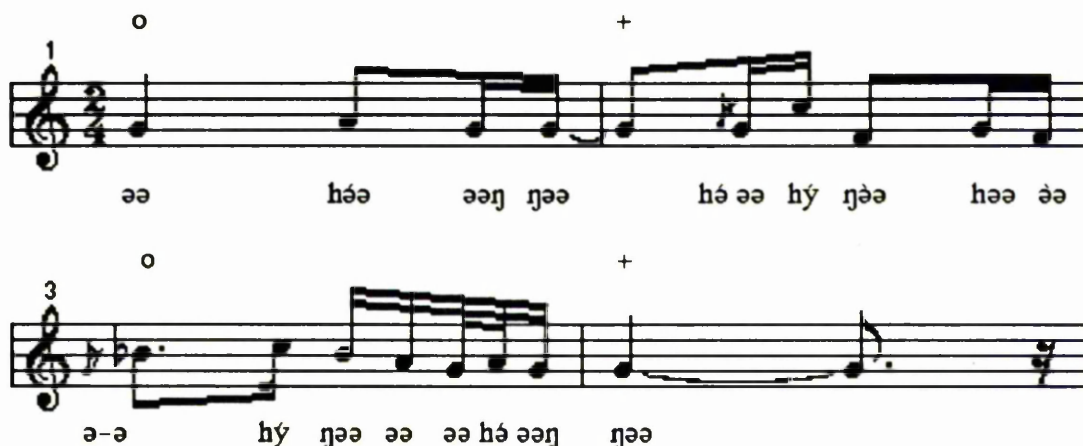
This is to keep the transcriptions as close as possible to the singers' notating of the *ɲɲuu* sounds in their notebooks; for example, the above melody can be written as:

เออ... เฮ้อ เอิง เงอ เฮ้อเออ อีเหง่อ เฮอ เอ่อ เออ... อี เงอ
เออเฮ้อเอิง เงอ

or

əə... hə́ə əəŋ ŋəə hə́-əə hə́ɣ-ŋə̀ə həə ə̀ə əə... hə́ɣ ŋəə [əə] əə-hə́-əŋ ŋəə

Some singers might also use rising tones in their notebook, particularly for the ending sound *əəɣ* when the melody goes up, i.e. เอ้ย (*ə̌əɣ*), and despite the fact that the sound ends in *hɣ.* So, in this thesis, these rising-tone *ɲɲuu* will be transcribed as a mid-tone note followed by a high-tone one, e.g. *əəɣ+ hɣ* since rising-tone *ɲɲuu* always make use of multi-notes consisting of mid and high tones as in Example 4 below.

Example 4: A melody which some singers might notate as *əə həə əə əəj* but which my transcription will present as *əə həə əə əəj hý*

The falling tone has never been used to represent an *ŷŷan* sound, however, even though combinations of notes can sound like falling tones. This is a fruitful issue for future investigation and research.

2.5 A grammar of *ŷŷan* sounds and their common usages

The production of the sound *əə* is similar to the British English pronunciation of the "er" in "her". As stated earlier, the *ŷŷan əə* is used as the main sound in Thai singing. The sound *əə* should be sung with the mouth half open and the throat kept still. It can be used independently, or in combination with the consonants *h, ŋ* and *j: həə, ŋəə, əəŋ* and *ŋəəj*.

The sound *əə* is used to begin songs (only songs that begin with *ŷŷan* of course)[31], for example, "Khèeg Khǎaw" (*sǎam chán*), "Khèegmɔɔn" (*sǎam chán*) etc. (see Appendix VI). It is also used to begin "musical phrases" (*wák*) within a song. Example 5 shows an instance of the sound *əə* (presented here as a low tone *əə*) that begins the phrase in bar 28 (the underlined part).

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[31] Equally, many songs begin with words, for example "Phajaa Sòog" (*sǎam chán*) and "Khèeg Pàdtaanii" (*sɔɔŋ chán*) as shown in Appendix VI.

Example 5: "Khɛ̀ɛgmɔɔn" [R11], *sǎum chǐɑ*, sung by Sǔntharawaathin (lyrics are in bold)

27

ŋaa- m   phág   yy   ə̀ə   həə   ə̀ə   həə ə̀ə

əə- i   hý   phɔ̀ŋ yy phii-aŋ ...

In theory, the musical phrases are separated from each other by breathing places, although it is not necessary that each phrase be sung in one breath (as in the above example where the underlined part is one phrase, but the singer still breathes in the middle of it). It should be noted that a musical phrase can either begin with *ýyɑɑ* and end with a word, or contain only *ýyɑɑ* (it is very rare for one to begin with a word and end with *ýyɑɑ*). Sǔntharawaathin always pointed out to her pupils the correct breathing places which divide a song into phrases, but she also mentioned alternative breathing places for the pupils with poor breath control. She always warned that breathing in the wrong places can destroy the continuity of melody which is the beauty of the song. [32] It should be noted that although most singers agree that the concept of phrasing is important for singing, some conceptualise these musical phrases differently, i.e. with different start and end points. Some singers also deliberately do not breathe at a particular point and link two phrases together in order to show their control.

The concept of musical phrasing in vocal music is slightly different from instrumental music. In the *pròbkàj* repertoire, for example, the conceptual unit of instrumental music is marked by a rhythmic cycle (*nâatháb*) which can also be subdivided into two equal

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[32] I have also come across singers whose breathing places are random or inconsistent. Obviously, such singers are not aware of the importance of musical phrasing to the end result.

"sentences" (*prajòog*), and further subdivided into four phrases (*wàg*); each phrase ends on the *chàb* beat, and the next note after the *chàb* note will be the beginning of the next phrase (Ex. 6a).

Example 6a: "Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ", *sǎam chán, thɔ̌ɔn*1, *khɔ̌ɔŋ* melody (taken from what was originally a numerical notation in Chajsǎarii 1993:27). (+) marks the most important *lûug tòg* or structural note, which falls at the end of a rhythmic cycle[33]

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[33] This symbol will be used throughout the thesis to mean the same thing

The beginning of a vocal phrase can either fall on the *chìp* beat or start just after the *chàp* beat, but its end can be past the nominal end point fractionally, as long as it finishes before the next *chìp* beat (Ex. 6b). Notice that in bars 9 and 13, where the strong melodic note (*lûuŋ tòŋ*) on beat 1 of the instrumental part is C, the vocal part arrives on C a bit later; the same is true for the F of bar 17.

Example 6b: Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ [R29], *sǔum chìŋ thɔ̌ɔn*1, vocal melody

To return to *ỳyaa* sounds. The sound *əə* at the beginning of a phrase will be changed into *ŋəə* when it is ornamented by a preceding higher note which is sung as the sound *hỳ*. (This <u>hỳ-ŋəə</u> sound can also be used at other points in the melody, as in Example 2.) In Example 7, after the words *phrí soŋ líg* where the preceding phrase ends, the following phrase begins with *hỳ ŋəə*.

Example 7: "Khèɛgmɔɔn" [R11], *săum chín*, sung by Carəəncaj Sǔntharawaathin

To signal the end of an *ỳyaa* section – just before the worded part begins – a mid-tone *əəj* sound is employed (a rising-tone variation can also be used, which would have the sound *əəj-hỳ*, as discussed earlier). The mid-tone sound sometimes appears in the form of *ŋəəj* when it is sung on the same pitch as the note before (which has to be changed from *əə* into *əəŋ*) as in the above example. It should be noted here that the word *əəj* (whose meaning, if any, has been lost through time) is used in poetry to indicate the end of a stanza – this is perhaps because poetry in the oral tradition was always intended primarily to be

sung, and so there would be a cross-over. The sound *əəj*(or *ŋəəj*) is often followed by a
hǎaŋ sǐiaŋ or tail melody where the sound *yy* and its variations are employed (Ex. 8).

Example 8: "Khèeg Khǎaw" [R9], *sǎum chǎn* bar 5-7

həə ə əə ə-ə əə əə- j yy hýy y ỳy y-y lo- ŋ kàb

(A tail melody can also be added to the end of a word in order to create its proper tone; see
section 3.3.) Apart from being situated before a worded section, the sound *əəj* is also used
to end the "*yy* only" sections:

Example 9: "Khèegmɔɔn" [R11]

hý ŋəə ə əə ə-ə hý ŋəə- j hý yy
[tail melody]

əə həə ə əə əə hə əə əə- j yy yy hý yy
[---tail melody---]
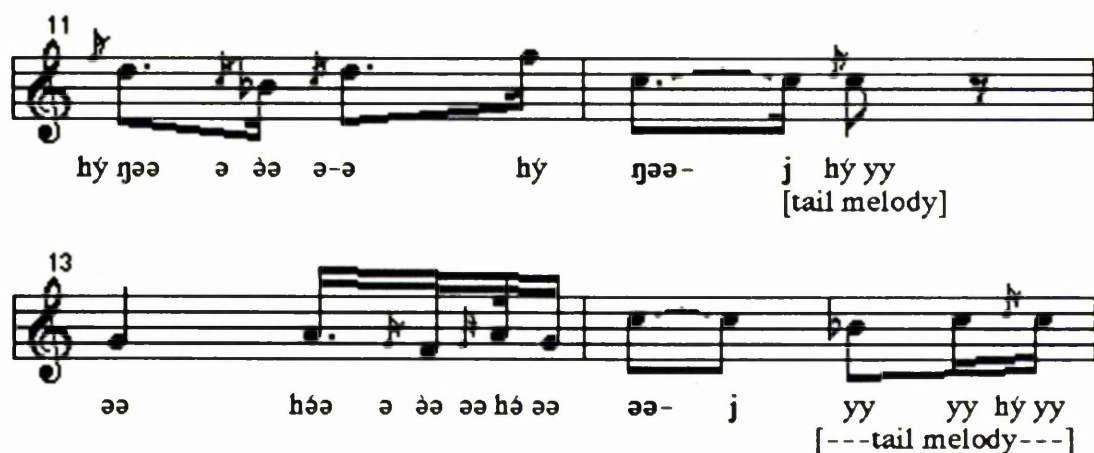
The sound *yy*, pronounced with an almost closed mouth, is an "unclear" sound (see
Appendix VIII for a guide to pronunciation). It is used for tail melodies, but has other
purposes as well. In songs where a sad feeling is required, some singers choose to use *yy*
(together with certain accepted techniques) to replace some *əə* sounds in order to convey
this sadness. (See section 5.8 for a discussion of *phleengthajɔɔj* or songs for sorrowful
journeys.) The *yy* sound (and its variations) is also used by some singers to create a
Laotian accent. Examples of this can be seen in the song "Laaw Carəənsǐi" (Ex. 10):

Example 10: "Laaw Carəənsii" [AM] (*sɔɔŋ chán, thɔɔn* 2, *caŋwà* 3), common version together with Sùntharawaathin's version with a Laotian accent

common melody   ə̆- ə   hə̀ə əə əə ə̀ə   ə̆- ə-   j

Laotian accent   hy̆- y   hýy yy yy ỳy   hy̆- y

The sound *hə̀ə* is used as a softening device and is pronounced with a slight nasality and less forcefulness than the other *ỳyaa*. Sùntharawaathin said that this sound had not been used much until the beginning of the 20th century, the period when Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durijaaŋ (her father) developed Thai singing and passed it on to his pupils (personal communication during 1986-87). Before this development the sound only existed in the technique known as *ỳyaa sáam súaŋ* or three-sound *ỳyaa* where the melody descends as in Example 11.

Example 11: *Ýyaa sáam súaŋ*

hə̀ə   ə əə

Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durijaaŋ took this sound to use in melodies where "too many" *əə* sounds were present in order to create a variation of sounds, as in Example 12.

Example 12: "Khamĕen Sajjôog" [AM], *sáam chán, thɔɔn 2,* from an orally transmitted late 19th century court version, and compared with the common contemporary version

əə   əə   əə   əə   əə   əə əə hə̀ə əə̀ŋ ŋəəj   (old style)

əə   hə̀ə əə   əə   əə   hə̀ə əə hə̀ə əə̀ŋ ŋəəj   (new style)

Students of Phrájaa Sanòdurijaaŋ therefore learned to put *haʔ*in their singing, and this style has had a big influence on all singers up to the present day. But this sound is usually separated by other sounds and almost never appears on successive notes of a melody. However, having said that, Sùntharawaathin alone does make great use of this sound in her singing, thus breaking the norm and making it part of her individual style (e.g., Ex. 13).

Example 13: "Phrájaa Sòog" [R25] (*sǔam chán*) sung by Sùntharawaathin

róɔ-   n   əə   hə́ əə hý́   ŋə̀ə   həə   hə́ə ə əə

The sound *haʔ*also appears in a shorter form in a technique known as *khrən*("shivering"), where a grace note is employed between two notes of the same pitch. The grace note in the *khrən*technique is always one note higher than the other two (Ex. 14).

Example 14: *Khrən*

əə   hə́ əə

In a similar technique where the grace note is one pitch lower than the other two, the sound *ə* the short form of *əə* will be employed instead; this technique is known as *kruthób* literally meaning "touching" (Ex. 15).

Example 15: *Kruthób*

əə   ə̀ əə

The sound *ə* is also used in the *ýyaa sǔum sǔiŋ* technique mentioned above (Ex. 11).

As already mentioned, when two successive notes are sung on the same pitch, the first one will be an *əəŋ* sound and the second a *ŋəə* The first sound *əəŋ* will appear in short form i.e. *əŋ-ŋəə* or as *əŋ-ŋəəj* if it is at the end of a phrase. Both the *əŋ-ŋəə* and *əŋ-ŋəəj* sounds can be stretched into *əŋ-ŋəə-əə-əə* (in the middle of a phrase) or *əŋ-ŋəə-əə-əəj* (at the end of a phrase) when the melodic sequence is descending as in Example 16 below.

Example 16: "Bùlǎn" [AM], *sǔum chǐŋ thɔɔn* 1, *caŋwà1*, Sǔntharawaathin's version

əə   hý ŋəə   əə- ŋ   ŋə́-ə   ə əə   j

The sound *ə́əj* can either be sung alone, or have the sound *hý* attached to it:

Example 17: *əəj* + *hý* contrasted with *ə́əj*

ə̌- ə- j   ə- ə- j hý

Both Prasidthikun and Sǔntharawaathin consider these two *ýyaa* as different sounds, even though their usages within a melody are almost indistinguishable. Both sounds are used at the end of musical phrases, but the sound *ə́əj* is brief while the sound *əəj* with *hý* can be prolonged.

It should be realised that although the basic grammar of *ýyaa* has been covered, some exceptions may still occur. Also I have not yet analysed some possible tendencies with regard to relative pitch. It is a huge subject. *Ýyaa* has developed from purely functional origins into a complicated and sophisticated art form, embodying the cultural values of the cognoscenti of Thailand, Laos and Cambodia. It is seen to have a beauty of its own, although this would appear to be true only for the initiated - people not familiar with Thai

court music find the phenomenon both baffling and tedious. This wide-scale unfamiliarity probably reflects a cultural and aesthetic shift in Thai sensibilities, brought about by exposure to Western music and pop culture.

Chapter 3

Lyrics and Speech-tones

3.1 Sources for lyrics

There are two kinds of lyrics (*bòdróɔ*) employed in Thai songs: one kind is the already existing, and the other is the newly written. Both can make use of either newly composed melodies or traditional melodies (the latter of which either already have lyrics attached to them which are then replaced, or are lyric-less). Both also require a vocal melody to which the lyrics can be set. Already existing lyrics are normally taken from three sources of literature: *sǐgkrawaa* poems (*bòd sǐgkrawaà*), classical plays (*bòdlakhɔɔń*) and *seéphaa* poems (*bòdseéphaà*). Lyrics taken from *bòd sǐgkrawaa* and those from classical drama have already been set to tunes, while *seéphaa* poems are recited on a single melody called *thamnɔɔŋ seéphaa* which, for singers, is not considered a song. Newly written lyrics are written for a variety of reasons, as would be expected, including the marking of special occasions in Thai society.

Lyrics taken from classical plays, especially the play *Inaǎw*, are the most popular choice for composers. Sometimes they just take famous lines for a song, or they may take a whole episode to create a suite which requires a number of songs (this is called *tàb rɤ́yaŋ*). *Seéphaa* poems were originally created for impromptu recitations inspired by popular oral tales. The most popular story for *seéphaa* poems was *Khǔnchǎaŋ Khǔnphɛɛn* The poems were remembered and performed over and over for a long time before being written down. This allowed *bòd seéphaa* to be varied from one reciter (*khon khàb seéphaà*) to another. From the beginning of the 18th century *seéphaa* poems were collected and written down on

many occasions, often taking different forms as a reflection of the oral variations. (Note that only the lyrics were written down until very recently.) Lyrics from *sǎgkrawaa* poems are those composed during *sǎgkrawaa* performances, where the impromptu poem texts were sung and then preserved in written form. The Royal Academy of Thailand wrote that:

> During the period that *sǎgkrawaa* performance was popular [around the 18th century], every group of musicians (so called *wog sǎgkrawaa*) employed witty and sharp-tongued poets for this poetic-game. Apart from the poets, composers were also employed in order to compose new pieces of music for the competition. As a result, many pieces were composed and lyrics written, and many of them are still performed in the present day. (Râadchabandidtajásatháan [Royal Academy] 1997:159)

The stories which inspired *bòd sǎgkrawaa* were usually based on famous folk tales or established dramas, such as *Inǎw* and *Sǎg Thɔɔg*. However, the number of lyrics taken from *bòd sǎgkrawaa* is smaller than that from original classical drama or from *sěephaa* poems.

Choosing the perfect lyrics for a song is not only a kind of competition amongst different singers and music groups, but is also a kind of device which the singers use to identify themselves. For example, singers of the Phâadthajákoosòn school will only use certain lines from the *sěephaa* poem *Khǔnchǎag Khǔnphěen*[34] to sing the song "Khèəgmɔɔn Baag Khǔnphrom" and will never use any other lyrics for this particular song.

Turning to newly written lyrics, some are written especially for newly composed melodies. If a composer cannot find an appropriate poem from any of the old plays, or if he or she wants to express new feelings, a new set of lyrics will be written. Examples of this are the songs "Khaměen Sajjòog" and "Laaw Duuag Dyyan".

Lyrics are also newly written to mark special occasions, such as an anniversary or a birthday celebration. This tradition of poetic celebration is very popular in Thai society. For instance, every year, groups from established institutions all over Thailand, including

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[34] The passage that they use begins with the first line: "Kraanán Phlaaj Chumphon dáj fag khɔ̌ɔ jág jùd ...".

schools, universities, banks, electricity boards and other governmental departments, show

their respect to the King and Queen on their respective birthdays, December 5 and August

12, by performing goodwill messages on TV in poetic form. Those groups who have no

musicians or singers will just read their newly written poem aloud; however many such

institutions have Thai music societies, and these will set their poems to already existing

melodies and perform them as *phleeŋ thawàaj phráphɔɔn*.[35] Informal competition exists

between these musical groups, not only in performance technique, but also in the choice of

the most appropriate melody for their newly written lyrics. Some groups will try never to

repeat the same melody twice in successive years in order to show their wide knowledge of

music, while those without an expert to guide them use the same tune every year and try to

gain glory through their lyrics alone. An example of the latter can be seen in a group of

rooŋ riian naajrɔ̀ɔj phráicunlacɔɔmkhlàa or Army Cadets: HRH Princess Sirindhorn wrote

that when she first joined this group, they only ever performed to the tune "Naaŋ Nâag" on

these occasions, and that it was only after Khunjǐŋ Phajthuun Kìdtìwan became their

teacher that they were able to branch out ([Kìdtìwan] 1998:6). Absɔ̌ɔnsǎmaaŋ

Cèɛŋsǒmbuun, Kìdtìwan's daughter, recalls:

> "Naaj [Kìdtìwan] would try to find different songs every year from 1981 until
> 1993. Only in 1985 did she fail, using the tune "Khrɔ̂ɔb Càgkrawaan"
> ["Everything in the Universe"] which she had already used once before. This was
> because she couldn't think of an alternatively titled tune that would fit with the
> message of the new lyrics ...". (ibid:159)

There is an added kudos to using the most obscure and esoteric melodies possible,

thereby stealing a march on your rival, who may never have heard the tune before. In

1993, a group of *sǐnláipin hɛ̀ŋ châad* (Artists of the Nation) gathered together to celebrate

the Queen's 60th birthday; Princess Sirindhorn wrote a poem and her musical instructor set

it to two melodies: "Mahǎa Chaj" meaning "Great Victory" and "Mahǎa Kaan" meaning

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[35] This term applies only to tributes to royalty; songs aimed at commoners are known as *phleeŋ uuajphɔɔn*.

"Great Occasion".[36] The titles of both songs are auspicious, but "Mahǎa Kaan" was only known amongst knowledgeable musicians and hadn't been used for *phleeŋthawáaj phríiphɔɔn*before, making it an extra special tribute both to the Queen and to the musicians themselves.

The Thais call those who choose melodies for these occasions *phûu bancù phleeŋ*or "song selectors". The following criteria influence their selections:

The first thing they consider is whether or not harmony exists between the title of a traditional melody and the content of the new lyrics; for example, the tune "Thɔɔranii Rɔɔŋ Hâaj" meaning "Mother Earth Cries" will, ideally, be selected when the content deals with the sadness of the nation, when a national disaster has occurred in reality or merely in the fiction of a play. However, it is not necessary for melody titles to be taken too literally, and "Thɔɔranii Rɔɔŋ Hâaj" can be recycled for use with lyrics that describe more general kinds of grief. Sometimes the title of the melody chosen has a hidden message, such as "Nók Khamín" which translates as "Babbler Birds". It has been said that this kind of bird does not care where it sleeps, bedding down wherever it happens to be when darkness falls. This tune might be put to use to convey new lyrics to a well-known philanderer on his birthday, or in a play to reveal the hidden amorous motives of a character. *Phûu bancù phleeŋ*also choose melodies according to their personal perceptions and memories, disregarding the literal meaning of the title, or allowing it to change subtly, so that individual choices can seem fresh and even unexpected.

Against this is set the weight of convention. Many traditional melodies have been used repeatedly with different lyrics that always convey the same message – selection therefore becomes a formality. For example, the melody entitled "Khèɛg Bɔɔrathêed", meaning "Indian Country", which used to be just an ordinary entertainment piece, became solely

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[36] These were followed by two instrumental pieces called "Trà Sǎnnibàad" and "Ruua", which formed a musical conclusion to the suite.

associated with auspicious occasions in the early 20th century after King Rama VI chose it

for his new set of lyrics extolling the Three Gems of Buddhism[37].

Another occasional source of newly written lyrics is the *sǎgkrawaa* performance, an

improvised poetry competition (see section 4.4 for the history and details of *sǎgkrawaa*

performance). These *sǎgkrawaa* performances are rarely found nowadays, due to the

shortage of poets able to compose poems within such a short time. Some educational ·

institutions such as Chulalongkorn University, however, try to organise them occasionally,

but it is not easy to find a decent number of able poets to perform. Lyrics written for the

sǎgkrawaa performance are sometimes so attractive that singers use them for performances

outside the *sǎgkrawaa* and eventually these new lyrics become associated with the tunes

they have been set to. However, this does not stop them being taken for use with still other

tunes, a common practice.

3.2 Classification of lyrics

Classification can be done by subject. Most lyrics used in Thai singing are in a

storytelling form which includes passages of narration and dialogue parts; only some songs

in the category "Hymns to beauty" contain purely descriptive passages. This thesis divides

the lyrics into 11 categories by the subject of the song: General Songs, Love Songs, Songs

of Sorrow, Hymns to Beauty, Songs of Parting, Songs of Rage, Patriotic Songs, Songs of

Moral Instruction, Martial Songs, Songs of Praise and Songs of Goodwill. The songs

classified all come from a book of *phleeŋ thǎw* songs called *Sǎaraanúkrom sǎb dontrii thaj*

phâag prawǎd lé bòd rɔɔŋ phleeŋ thǎw [An Encyclopaedia of Thai Musical Vocabulary: The

History and Lyrics of Phleeŋ Thǎw"]. This is a broad compilation by the Thai Royal

Academy (1998), and gives a fair representation of the Thai court oeuvre. The numbers in

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[37]The Three Gems of Buddhism are the Buddha himself, his Dhamma (teaching), and the Sankha (virtuous monks).

brackets after each category are the numbers of lyrics of that type found in the book as a whole. Obviously, there are overlaps from one subject to another, e.g. sorrowful love songs, but the lyrics are classified by their apparent main themes. Here are some typical lyrics from each of the types:

1. General Songs (109 sets of lyrics) are songs with no obvious emotion, merely conveying factual accounts of who, where and when.

Example 18: "Khŏɔm Klɔm Lûug", the story of Phrá Rûuaŋ, writer unknown

> I beg your pardon, venerable sir,
> *prathaan thŏodprŏod dûuaj thɔɔd câw khǎa*
> I am looking for the great Phrá Rûuaŋ.
> *khǎa maa hǎa phrá rûuaŋ phûu pen jàj*
> I am a Thai
> *tuu khǎa níi pen khon thaj*
> Come from the faraway land of Lawóo.
> *maa klaj càag lawóo thaanii*
>
> ...

2. Love Songs (102 sets of lyrics) are descriptions of love affairs and sexual activities.

 2.1 romance:

Example 19: "Klɔm Naarii", from the play *Inâw*, written by King Rama II

> The Prince smiles gently, playfully,
> *phrá jéem jim phrim phraw jǎw jɔɔg*
> Laughs teasingly.
> *sàbphajɔɔg jújvuan sǔuan sǒm*
> "You look sad for lack of rest,
> *phǎg câw sâw salòd òd banthom*

I'll sing you to sleep.

phii ca klòm ɛɛw klom hâj nídthraa

Lie down, let my lullaby caress you:

sâaj samɔɔn nɔɔn thèɜd phii ca klòm

You are true perfection,

cîw gaam cig phriŋ phrɔɔm daŋ leekhâa

Pale skin, an open face, luminous

nuuan la-ɔɔŋ phɔ̆ŋ phâg sŏophaa

Like the haloed moon."

daŋ canthraa soŋklòd mòd monthin

2.2 sexual activity

It is common for Thai songs to use metaphorical comparisons, particularly when strong

emotions or sexual activities are being described. Below is an example of sexual

intercourse described metaphorically:

Example 20: "Aathíd Chiŋ Duuaŋ", traditional lyrics from the most famous play
Khŭnchâaŋ Khŭnphĕɛn, writer unknown

The sun covers the moon,

phrá aathíd chiŋ duuaŋ phráican dèn

The stars hide their faces,

daaw kraden klaj dyyan daraa dàb

The fireflies in the trees make them appear to rise and fall,

hiŋhɔ̀ɔj phrɔ̀ɔj mâaj wâj rajáb

Small *tháb* insects overlay the earth, making the jungle tremble.

maleeŋ tháb thɔ̆ɔŋ thlíaw sathýyan doŋ

It is no surprise to find that present-day audiences are unable to make this metaphorical

comparison unless the context is given. This is an occasional problem for all songs, due to

the manner in which lyrics are taken from their larger texts. Sometimes unambiguous

descriptions of love-making appear in the lyrics, as below:

Example 21: "Sùd Sa-ŋǔuan", traditional lyrics from "Khǔncháaŋ Khǔnphěǝn", writer unknown

...

He strips off all her clothes,
wâa phlaaŋ thaaŋ plỳyaŋ khrỳyaŋ khâad

Drapes them over a screen, and carefully touches her,
khwěǝn phâad châaŋ loŋ pracoŋ cáb

Lifting her and laying her in his lap,
ûm naaŋ waaŋ tàg saphâg ráb

He gently places his body on top as if she is of precious solid gold
kɔ̂ɔ thɔ̂ɔd tháb rathuuaj loŋ daŋ thɔ̂ɔn thɔɔŋ

3 Songs of Sorrow (81 sets of lyrics) can be divided into two types: sadness and a sorrowful journey (this does not have to mean a long journey, but can be merely a walk around a garden).

3.1 sadness

Example 22: "Hòg Bòd", from the play Inǎw, written by King Rama II

[Bùdsabaa] weeps and says:
kansěeŋ phlaaŋ thaaŋ thuun sanɔ̌ɔŋ paj

"Why are you doing this to me?
kìd chanáj jaj chaníi phrǎchěedthǎn

You kidnapped me,
thamkaan hǎanhǎg lǎg nɔ̌ɔŋ maa

And put me in this gilded cave.
sathìd jùu khuuhǎa thǎm thɔɔŋ

I was parted from my father and mother,
nɔ̌ɔŋ nirâad mâadturoŋ bidturěed

And that sadness still fills me.
jaŋ mǎj khlaaj waaj tha wěed mòn mɔ̌ɔŋ

It is only you that I can rely on,

hěn těe phuuwanaj dǎaj pǒgkhrɔɔŋ

And now you are leaving me here alone."

cǎ salàd sìd nɔɔŋ wǎj dǔiaw daaj

3.2 sorrowful journeys

Example 23: "Oô Laaw", from the play *Maniiphichaj* written by King Rama II

Walking in the jungle

dəən thaaŋ maa naj klaaŋ mɔɔrakhaa

The royal boy takes a deep sigh.

phrá raachaa thɔ̌ɔd thɔ̌ɔn caj jàj

"I must have earned bad karma

ôo wǎa ween-kam dâj tham wáj

So to become the hermit's slave."

ca tɔ̂ŋ paj pen khǎa câw phraam-chii

4 Hymns to Beauty [65 sets of lyrics] are divided into four types:

4.1 nature and wildlife

Example 24: "Khaměen Sajjôog", written by Prince Naridsaraa

This song tells of my journey with the King

banjaaj khwaam taam thǎj sadèd jàad

To forest lands, to far Sajjôog.

jaŋ sajjôog praphǎad phanasǒn

A riot of wilderness surrounded us

mǎaj lǎj lǎaj phan khlǎ khỳn papon

And at Cha-ŋôog hill, a river flowed

thîi chaaj chon khǎw cha-ŋôog pen trôog thaan

Springing up brightly out of the earth

nǎam phú phûŋ sǎa

Flowing with a great noise,
lâj châa châad châan
Overwhelming to behold.
hẽn trakaan
The sound came hiss boom-boom
man lâj cŏg khrom khrom
And again hiss-hiss-hiss boom-boom.
man daŋ cŏg cŏg cŏg khrom khrom

4.2 objects and buildings

Example 25: "Khamẽen Phuuaŋ", traditional lyrics describing a decorative curtain from *Khŭnchâaŋ Khŭnphẽen*, writer unknown

You have sewn and stitched a huge forest,
câw pàg pen pàa phanaa wẽed
A mountainous landscape, green and cloudy,
khɔ̃ɔb khẽed khãw khlŭm cha-ŭm khũaw
Plants curling in curving arabesques
rŭgkhachâad dàad baj rabàd rìiaw
Arching gently, heavy with flowers.
phrĩŋ phrìiaw dɔ̃ɔg dòg radà duuaŋ
...
What perfect skill and deft fingers
nâarāg pàg tìam la-ɔɔ ɔɔŋ
You have, my semi-divine seamstress.
nɔ̃ɔŋ ə̀əj châaŋ chalàad lǐm manùd

4.3 gods and kings

Example 26: "Thêep Chaatrii", inspired by the folk tale *Phrá Ród Meerii*, written by Camniian Sŭthajphan

The god so handsome

oŋ thêeb thəə ləə chôom praloom lâad

With the ideal of male bodies,

sǒm mâad chaaj lôəd prasəəd sǐi

A physique of perfect symmetry,

sǎm-aaŋ oŋ soŋ sǔuan thǔuan insǐi

A complete pattern of what a man should be.

chaaj chaatrii dii còb jùu khrób khran

His genius, skill and bravery

phrá priichaa sǎamâad chakàad klâa

Famed throughout the heavens.

lyychaa thǔua thabuuaŋ sǔuaŋ sawǎn

...

4.4 human beauty

Example 27: "Cɔɔrakhêe Hǎaŋ Jaaw", traditional lyrics from *Khǔncháaŋ Khǔnphêen*, unknown writer

Her small still body sleeps on the low bed

cǎw rǎaŋ nɔ́ɔj nɔɔn nǐŋ bon tiiaŋ tàm

The dark skin shining softly in its youthful beauty,

khom khǎm ŋaam chalěm cèm sǎj

Delicate eyebrows echoing her fine jaw

khíw khaaŋ baaŋ ŋɔɔn ɔɔn lamaj

And flawless hairline.

rɔɔj raj riiab ráb radàd dii

...

5 Songs of Parting (26 sets of lyrics). These can be split into two: the first kind are songs of farewell performed at the end of a concert known in Thai as *phleeŋ laa*; the second kind, shown here, can come at any point in a performance.

Example 28: "Thajɔɔj Nɔ̌ɔg", a general song of parting, traditional lyrics from *Khǔnchǎag Khǔnphěen*, writer unknown

"I am leaving now, my dear Kɛ̂ɛw

phǐi ca laa paj kɔ̀ɔn lɛ̀ɛw câw kɛ̀ɛw ə́əj

Please remember my daily task,

sìg raj khəəj thǐi phǐi tham câw cam dǎaj

Look after Khǔn Cháag, comfort him

khɔ̀ɔ fàag khǔnchǎag dûuaj chûuaj plɔ̀ɔb cǎj

And prepare food for him even as I did."

thǎag khâaw plaa hǎa hâj mʉ̌ʉan phǐi jag

6 Songs of Rage (22 sets of lyrics) reflect anger and other similarly strong emotions.

Example 29: "Mɔɔn Ram Dàab", inspired by the classical story *Raachaathiráad*, written by Prince Narídsaraa

Oh! pity poor Samǐg Phráraam:

câw ə́əj câw samǐg phráraam

On hearing the king's words, his body burns with angry shame.

fag ráb sàg mǐi khwaam mòn mâj

No more can he face his fellow ministers;

mâj jɔɔm jûu aaj nâa sěenaa naj

He longs to leave for Hǒgsǎa city.

ca nǐi paj hǒgsǎa mʉ̌ʉan wâa kan

7 Patriotic Songs (9 sets of lyrics)

Example 30: "Kansɛ̌ɛg Sawàad", written by Phínid Chǎajsùwan

Sacrifice your personal happiness for your country,

khuuan bèg rág hǎg caj hâj kɛ̀ɛ châad

Swear with iron intent,

phrɔɔm tǎŋ sàd dûuaj pràadthanǎa mân

Forget your paramours forever,

salàd rîg ɔ̀ɔg càag tuua chûua níran

For the sake of the Thai race.

phɯ̂a phǎwphan thaj thûua thúg tuua ton

Example 31: "Tàw Hèe", written by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn

Brought up to be brave,

tɔ̀əb jàj hâj kklêw klâa

To excel at all knowledge,

ryyaŋ wíchaa thúg sìŋ sǎn

Carrying the blood of your Thai ancestors,

mii lŷyd thaj naj paaŋ ban

Never fearing any enemies

mí khǒəj wân phɔ̂ɔŋ phajrii

8 Songs of Moral Instruction (7 sets of lyrics) show national attitudes towards life and morality including cultural mores. Example 32 shows the inferior position of women in Thai society in the early 20th century.

Example 32: "Phraam Khâw Bòod", from the play *Sakuntalaa*, written by King Rama VI

Always remember my advice,

aŋyŋ phyŋ cam kham sɔ̌ɔn

My dearest girl:

baŋ-ɔɔn phûu jɔ̂ɔd sanèehǎa

You should serve you husband well.

coŋ fǎw pronnibàd phǎdsadaa

Don't cause him any irritation.

jàa tham hâj khɔ̌ŋ khàd caj

Even if he has other wives,

thŷŋ mée thəə mii míia yyn

A thousand or ten thousand of them, you must rid yourself of jealousy.

sǎg phan mỳyn tàd hỳŋ hâj coŋ dâj

9 Martial Songs (7 sets of lyrics) are songs of physical conflict.

Example 33: "Chaaŋ Prasǎan Ngaa", inspired by the life of King Nareesǔuan the Great of Thailand; these lyrics written by Saraawúd Sěeniiwoŋ

His Majesty goads the royal elephant to fight,

phrá soŋsàg chág khacheen been khâw rób

Phádthakɔɔ [the rival elephant] feints away, then comes again,

phádthakɔɔ lɔ̀ɔ talòb lèew hěe hǎn

The two elephants cross tusks,

sɔ̌ɔŋ chǎaŋ prasǎan ŋaa sa-ŋàa jan

His Majesty's elephant lifts the other off the ground.

phlaaj soŋthan bèeg thanǎd ŋàd klaaŋ suuaŋ

10 Songs of Praise (7 sets of lyrics) are songs to supernatural beings or abstract concepts

Example 34: "Joon Dàab", traditional lyrics, writer unknown

I bow at your holy feet.

anỳŋ khǎa khɔ̌ɔ pranòd bòdtharád

The incarnation of the emperor of the wide world,

phrá cunlacɔɔm cǎgkraphád mahǎasǎan

He who flies on the mighty Khrúd [mythical bird],

khyy oŋ phrá soŋ khrúd chǎj chaan

Has descended from the Kasǐian Samùd [the sea of milk].

awataan cǎg kasǐiansamùd maa

11 Songs of Goodwill (6 sets of lyrics) are songs of blessing.

Example 35: "Khɔ̌ɔm Klɔ̀m Lûug", from the play *Inǎw*, written by King Rama II

Do not fear,
cǎw jǎa wǎad wǎa phrǎa cid
Defeat will be averted.
ca phǎj phée pàdcaamíd kɔ̌ɔ hǎa mǎj
I will bless you with a victory
aj-jakaa ca chǔuaj uuaj chaj
So that your enemies will taste defeat.
bandaan hǎj phajrii àbparaa

The titles of many songs give clues to their theme: for example, "Phajaa Sɔ̀ɔg" means "a mournful nobleman", "Chom Dong" means "admiring the forest", and "Fáràŋ Ram Tháaw" means "Westerners dancing with their feet". However, there are also some songs where the title and subject are at odds: for example, "Cɔɔrakhêe Haaŋ Jaaw" meaning "a long-tailed crocodile", where the lyrics tell of a comparison between the scent of flowers and fame.[38]

Generally speaking, all lyrics can be sung by either male or female singers, even though some lyrics are taken from lines that belong to a particular gender. Singers are considered as storytellers, and one shouldn't take the gender of the character being represented too literally. However, there are some lyrics that contain explicitly female emotions and desires, and male singers feel embarassed to sing them. The song "Sùrintharaahǔu" contains just such emotions:

Example 36: "Sùrintharaahǔu" from *Khǔnchǎaŋ Khǔnphěen*

I am a woman; this makes it hard to show my true feelings.
nɔ̌ɔŋ pen jiŋ jǎag ciŋ ciŋ ca hǎj hěn
But you are a man, and a clever one!
phɔ̂ɔ kɔ̌ɔ pen chaaj lâad prasèədsǔi

---

[38] The full title is "Cɔɔrakhêe Hǎaŋ Jaaw Thaaŋ Sàgkrawaa", which addition signifies that it is in the *sàgkrawaa* style and so is a different song to that previously mentioned.

If I were the man

thâa tuua khɔ̌ɔŋ nɔ́ɔŋ níi pen phûuchaaj

And you were the woman,

tuua khɔ̌ɔŋ phɔ̌ɔphlaaj thâa phɔ̌ɔ pen satrii

Tonight I would come to you and make love to you as my heart dictates.

khâm khâm wannii ca paj nɛ̂ɛb hâj nǎm caj

There have been quite a few attempts to find new lyrics to replace these lines, so that male singers can sing them without awkwardness, but no one has yet succeeded. Princess Sirindhorn admitted that "I once attempted to write new lyrics for the song 'Sùrintharaahǔu' but couldn't reach the same standard as the old lyrics, so I gave up" (personal communication, February 1992). It is interesting that it is only men who feel awkward in such situations: women do not usually have any problem with singing so-called "men's songs"!

3.3 Speech tones and their melodic formulae in songs

Thai words are pronounced with five different speech tones:

a mid tone or *sǐaŋ sǎaman*("common sound")   e.g.   *kaa*

a low tone or *sǐaŋ èeg*("first sound")   e.g.   *kàa*

a falling tone or *sǐaŋ thoo*("second sound")   e.g.   *kâa*

a high tone or *sǐaŋ trii*("third sound")   e.g.   *káa*

a rising tone or *sǐaŋ càdtawaa*("fourth sound")   e.g.   *kǎa*

Different tones give different meanings to a word, although not every tone variation for any given word will have an actual meaning. It is thus vital for non-Thai speakers to know that some low tones and high tones in multi-syllable words, which appear when written down, can become mid tones in conversation. Falling and rising tones of multi-syllable

words are not changed. The last syllable of a multi-syllable word will always be kept tonally intact, and the middle syllable of all three-syllable words will be pronounced as a mid tone, instead of low or high. The first syllable of both two and three-syllable words may also be changed from high or low to mid. These are the main changes, but various other changes may also occur. Example 37 shows the alteration of tones in multi-syllable words, with the altered syllables underlined.

Example 37: Shows the pronunciation of some two and three syllable words according to my own observation

Two-syllable words

writing	speaking
pràcàg	pra-càg
kràcàaŋ	kra-càaŋ
kràphyy	kra-phyy
láleeŋ	la-leeŋ
mápraaŋ	ma-praaŋ
phrájaa	phra-jaa
láhìia	la-hìia
mákrùud	ma-krùud

Three-syllable words

writing	speaking
mɔɔrákhaa	mɔɔ-ra-khaa
pìtùlaa	pì-tu-laa
theewáràad	thee-wa-ràad
ràadchákaan	ràad-cha-kaan
pràpheenii	pra-phee-nii
kàrúnaa	kà-ru-naa / ka-ru-naa
hàrýthaj	hà-ry-thaj / ha-ry-thaj
dùríjaaŋ	dù-ri-jaaŋ / du-ri-jaaŋ

In addition to this, some single-syllable words can also be changed tonally when speaking; e.g. the word *cà* can be pronounced *ca* the word *sàg* can be pronounced *sàg,* and the word *mǔj* can be pronounced *mǔj* Some words are pronounced with different

regional or ethnic accents; for example, the word *maa*meaning "to come" is pronounced *maa*by the Mon people and *maa*by people from the provinces Supanburi and Kanchanaburi west of Bangkok even when they are speaking standard Thai.[39] In performance, therefore, the same word can be sung with different tones by different singers, depending on which form the singers choose to follow: the written, spoken or regional.

In 1988, Tanese-Ito revealed the relationship between speech tones and the vocal melody and found some rules for generating the ornamental details of a song-melody according to the segmental tone of each text-syllable. Her discoveries were:

> 1 Mid-tone syllables are to be sung to the primary pitches of the vocal melody, without any additional melodic formula.
> 2 Low-tone syllables are to be sung to the pitch immediately below the primary pitch (according to the pentatonic set), rising to the primary pitch itself.
> 3 Falling-tone syllables are variously treated:
> (i) on primary pitches 1,2 and 5 [of the pentatonic set 1,2,3,5,6] they are to be sung by combining the primary pitch in sequence with the pitch immediately below (according to the pentatonic set). The voice usually returns to the primary pitch.
> (ii) on primary pitch 3 and 6 they are to be sung by combining the primary pitch with two to three subsidary pitches in several variants. The primary pitch itself may occasionally be omitted.
> 4 High-tone syllables are to be sung to the pitch immediately above the primary pitch (according to the pentatonic set), followed by the primary pitch itself. Sometimes the primary pitch is sounded first [followed by the pitch above]. At times the return to the primary pitch may be omitted.
> 5 Rising-tone syllables are variously treated:
> (i) on primary pitches 1,2 and 5 they are to be sung by combining the primary pitch in sequence with the pitch a fourth above. The pitch a second above the primary pitch may be inserted between pitches 2 and 5 or 5 and 1, but rarely between pitch 1 and 4. The voice then commonly returns to the primary pitch.
> (ii) on primary pitch 3 and 6 they are to be sung by combining the primary pitch in sequence with the pitch next above (a third above). The voice then commonly returns to the primary pitch.
>
> (Tanese 1988:131)

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[39] Thai court music is the music of the central Thai court and other people and places under its cultural influence, including the elites of Cambodia and Laos. There are various other ethnic groups in Thailand with distinct languages and musical cultures, most notably the Lao of North and Northeast Thailand, the Mon of Western Thailand, and various so-called "hill tribes" such as the Lahu and the Hmong of North Thailand.

In my experience, these rules do account for a great deal of Thai vocal melodic practice for most singers. But there are various exceptions, which need to be discussed.[40] Firstly, in actual performances, singers always use extra notes to decorate words, which can bring confusion to the above formulae; only professional singers can distinguish these decorative notes from the main notes. For example, the mid-tone words, according to Tanese's formula, should be sung on one note only, but they are, in reality, often sung with an extra decorative note (Ex. 38):

Example 38: "Khèɛg Pàdtaanii" [R16] sung by Sùdcìd Dùrijápraaniid, shows the word *can* which should be sung only on A, but Dùrijápraniid adds C to decorate it.

ŋə́-ə   ə ə̀ə- j   ca- n kra-càa-

Furthermore, falling-tone words are often decorated by a note a fourth above preceding the sequence of notes cited by Tanese (Ex. 39):

Example 39: Showing the notes used for singing the words *thɔ́ɔd* and *plɥ̂yaŋ* in the song "Khèɛg Khǎaw", 1st section, bars 3 and 19 respectively.

according to Tanese's formula   actual performance

thɔ̂ - ɔd   thɔ̂ - ɔɔ- ɔd

plɥ̂y - aŋ   plɥ̂y-yy- aŋ

It may be that Tanese has discussed some of the following issues in her lengthy PhD thesis in Japanese (1988), which I have not been able to read. I only had access to her 1978 and 1988 articles.

Falling-tone words differ also from Tanese's formula in that they are often sung using a different melody (Ex. 40):

Example 40: Showing the notes used for singing the word *mâj* from the song "Khèeg Pàdtaanii", verse 1, bar 10 [from Ex.48, p.92]

according to Tanese's formula   actual performance

mâ - aj   mâ - aj

The performed melody is actually a reduced form of the seldom-used ornamented version of "Khèeg Pàdtaanii", where A is extra to Tanese's formula, and the E she anticipated has been omitted (Ex. 41):

Example 41:

ornamented melody   actual performance

mâ - a - aj   mâ - aj

Additionally, some words are sung using melodies that do not adhere to Tanese's formulae, because of personal aesthetic preference. This is only likely when the meanings of the words are still apparent - usually from the textual context (Ex. 42):

Example 42: The word *náamŷytaa* from the song "Phajaa Sòog" sung to two different melodies by two different singers:

Sŏmchaaj Thábphɔɔn's version [R25.2], corresponding with Tanese's formula

náa- m ŷy taa
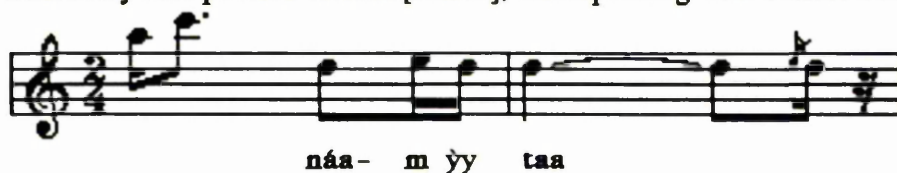
Carəəncaj Sŭntharawaathin's version [R25], not corresponding with Tanese's formula

ná-a-m ỳy taa

There are also cases where singers choose to follow the *khɔɔ*melody very closely, a practice which also causes confusion to Tanese's formulae (Ex. 43).

Example 43: Excerpt from "Khɛ̀ɛg Pàdtaanii" in two versions

(D =1)

*Khɔɔ*melody

Sŭntharawaathin's version [R16.2] following the *khɔɔ*melody closely

i-nǎw rỳy (cà) maa taam

Prasìdthìkun's [R15], corresponding with Tanese's formula

i - nǎw rỳy maa taa – m

It is interesting to notice that Sŭntharawaathin still finds a way to reflect a rise in pitch on the two rising syllables; and the addition of the word *cà* allows her to sing the mid-tone syllables *maa* and *taam* on level pitches as normal.

Sometimes, words are sung with different primary pitches in order to create regional accents. Example 44 shows the words *taaj* and *plàaw* from the song "Khɛ̀ɛgmɔɔn Baaŋcháaŋ" being sung differently. The first version is the commonly used melody, while the second version is sung only by singers who wish to create a Mon (Mɔɔn) accent

reflecting the piece's title and flavour by using a B-flat (primary pitch 4) to give a hexatonic feel to this pentatonic song.[41] (The hexatonic scale is the main scale of the Mon repertoire.)

Example 44: The words *taaj* and *plàaw* from the song "Khèegmɔɔn Baaŋcháaŋ", where F = 1

Common version using primary pitch 5 sung by Sŏmchaaj Thábphɔɔn [R12.2]

taa – j plàa – w yy khɔɔ phĭ – i
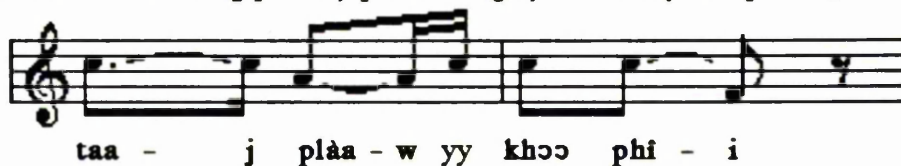
Mon accented version using primary pitch 4 sung by Maniiràd Sĭiwoŋsǎa [R12]

taa – j plàa – w yy khɔɔ phĭ – i

A possible reason for all these exceptions is that Tanese conducted her study using a closed group of Thai singers, all of whom were pupils of Prasìdthìkun. Prasìdthìkun, in turn, had been part of the legacy of the revolutionary General Phibun's quest for exactitude, which led to the creation of formal rules for Thai singing which were not supposed to be broken. In reality this was only ever one school of thought (*thaaŋ*), with independent groups of singers following their own beliefs and practices (Sŭntharawaathin and her father being prime examples of this). On top of this, when the Thai singers that Tanese used, and especially Amporn Sovat amongst them, were asked for their formal views on vocal melody and speech-tones, they presumably told her that the tune must express the speech-tones and then they felt that they subsequently had to stick to this principle when they later came to perform for her analytical scrutiny. This would be true of most Thai musicians, and it is interesting that even Sŭntharawaathin, when asked for her formal views, will state that the vocal melody must mirror the speech-tones of the lyrics -

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[41] The use of a flat here is merely a convention to indicate the tonal centre (see section 2.2)

but in her performance these theories are submerged while instinctive aesthetic feelings come to the fore.

There is an ancient style of singing which disregards speech-tones almost altogether (see Ex. 45). It may be that echoes of this style still influence contemporary singers, a consequence of the oral tradition still dominant in the teaching of Thai singing.

Example 45: Old versus new. A line from the song "Khèɛg Lóbburii" [AM], *sɔɔŋ chán* level.

Old style

tô- n ỳy nɔj nɔ- ɔj ỳy lû-ug jɔɔ- j ỳy

New style

tɔ̂- n ỳy nɔj nɔɔ-j ỳy lû- ug jɔɔ- j əə hỳy y ỳy

Old style (continued)

ra- jáa ỳy dii

New style (continued)

ra- já- a yy hỳ yy dii

Despite all of the above, Tanese's formulae do allow analysts to find the basic pitches of the melody of a highly ornamented song, provided that the analysts have the knowledge to overcome the possible confusions of decorative notes, personally preferred melodies, regional accents etc.

3.4 An application of Tanese's formulae: a case study of metabole in Thai singing

The term metabole has been utilised by most scholars of Thai music to refer to "modulation" of a melody. Morton wrote:

> ... 'modulation' is a Western term specifically associated with and applied to a change of key area or tonality in a harmonic system and ... it should not, therefore, be used to describe a change of basic pitch level in a non-harmonic, linear system. (Morton 1976:128)

He followed Brailoiu (1955) and Trân Văn Khê (1962), both of whom were talking about Vietnamese music, by using the term metabole (borrowed from the ancient Greek) to denote this technique, in which a change of pitch-level occurs. Silkstone (1993:89) says of his time in Thailand: "No Thai musicians initiated discussion of the concept of metabole, but they all recognised it when questioned". The term that Thai musicians use for metabole is *plìian sĭaŋ* even though they do not always agree whether such a change has occurred. After all, as Silkstone (ibid:91) also says, Thai musicians do not think about metabole in a conscious way.

This section aims to give an example of the usefulness of Tanese's formulae in the analysis of Thai songs, particularly when metabole occurs. The song "Khèeg Pàdtaanii" at *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* level has been chosen, for the reason that metabole occurs, and also because this song has been sung using many different verses, giving enough data from different words with different speech-tones to enable us to use Tanese's formulae to find out the pitch-level of the melody at any given point.

"Khèeg Pàdtaanii" contains only one section (*thɔ̂ɔn*) with four and a half lines of melody in Thai notation, as shown in Example 46.

Example 46: A commonly used *khɔɔŋ* melody of the song "Khèɛg Pàdtaanii" [AM], *sɔɔŋ chán*

```
     o        +        o       (+)        o        +        o       (+)
| 2 - - - 1 | - 2 - 7 | - 1 - 2 | - - - - | - - - 2 | - - - 2 | - - - 6 |
     o        +        o       (+)        o        +        o       (+)
| - 2 1 6 | - 5 - 4 | 4 4 - 5 | 5 5 - 6 | - 1 1 1 | - 7 - 1 | - 3 - 1 | - 7 - 6 |
     o        +        o       (+)        o        +        o       (+)
| - 7 - 2 | - 7 - 6 | 6 6 - 5 | 5 5 - 4 | - 7 6 4 | - 3 - 2 | - 3 - 2 | - - - - |
     o        +        o       (+)        o        +        o       (+)
| + + + 2 | - 3 - 4 | 3 2 3 4 | - 5 - 6 | - 1 1 1 | - 7 - 1 | - 3 - 1 | - 7 - 6 |
     o        +        o       (+)
| - - - - | - - - 6 | - 6 6 6 | - 6 - 6 |
```

The early rhythmic pattern used for this song is called a *nâatháb sɔɔŋmáaj*, where one cycle of the pattern consists of four bars. However, some groups of musicians may use a *nâatháb khèɛg* or "Indian" (or "Javanese") rhythmic pattern in order to give a *khèɛg* feel to the song as implied by its title and melodic style. In the latter case, the *thǎw* melody at the end of the song (the last four bars) has to be abandoned since *nâatháb khèɛg* consists of eight bars of melody per rhythmic cycle, and the song with the *thǎw* section would require four and a half cycles, which is unacceptable. (It should be understood that musicians never alter the rhythmic pattern to fit with the melody, but do alter the melody to fit the rhythmic pattern, as in this case.) It is the *nâatháb khèɛg* version that I will analyse . This version is shown in Western staff notation in Example 47:

Example 47: The *khɔɔŋ* melody of lines 1–4 of Example 46 presented in staff notation

I have made some of the f' and c'' notes sharps (#) in the above transcription; this is my personal subjective response to transcribing a Thai melody using Western notation and obviously reflects my perception that metabole is occurring; the sharps do not represent an actual pitch difference, but are simply indicators of the perceived pitch-level (see section 2.2). However, I played back the notation (including the following vocal versions of this song) on a computer application called Finale to some senior Thai musicians, and they agreed that these accidentals are needed. (Finale of course produced Western, not Thai, intervals.) As will become apparent, my gut feeling of a need for accidentals was vindicated when Tanese's formulae revealed that metabole was indeed taking place at these points in the vocal melody.

A transcription of the vocal melody of the song "Khɛ̀ɛg Pàdtaanii" sung by two different singers is shown in Example 48.

Example 48: A transcription of the song "Khɛ̀ɛg Pàdtaanii": verses 1 to 4 are sung by Thǔuam Prasìdthíkun [R15], and verses 5 to 8 by Sùdcìd Dùrijápraníid [R16]. The lyrics of verses 1 to 4 are taken from the play "Inǎw", while the lyrics of verses 5 to 8 were written by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn. Lyrics are in bold. Tempo ranges between 35-48 crotchets/minute.

hý yy   əə   hə́ əəŋ ŋəə   əə-ŋ ŋəə hə́ə ə əəj **dûuaj yy khwaam rág**

hý yy   əə   hə́ əəŋ   ŋə-ə-ə əə-ŋ ŋəə hə́ə ə əəŋ   ŋəə-ə -əəj **wiaaŋ cha-**

əə   hə́ əəŋ   ŋə-ə əə-ŋ ŋəə hə́ə ə əə   ŋəə-ə-əəj **sǒŋ hý khraa-**

əə   hə́ əəŋ   ŋəə- əə   hý ŋəə əəŋ   ŋəə ə əə-j   **ca-n kra-cà**

əə   əə   hə́ əəŋ ŋəə- əə   hý ŋəə əəŋ   ŋəə ə əəj **kra-phyy**

əə   əə   hə́ əəŋ ŋəə - əə   hý ŋəə əəŋ   ŋəə ə əəj **ry-dii sâ -**

əə   əə   hə́ əəŋ ŋəə - əə   hý ŋəə əəŋ   ŋəə ə əəj **dèn te – m**

yy hý yy ǝǝ ǝ ǝǝ ǝ-ǝǝ hý ŋǝǝ ǝǝ hǝ ǝǝŋ ŋǝ-ǝǝ ǝ ǝǝj khɔ̂-ɔ-ɔ

ǝǝ ǝ ǝǝ ǝ-ǝǝ hý ŋǝǝ ǝǝ hǝ ǝǝŋ ŋǝ-ǝǝ ǝ ǝǝj phrɔ́ daa

ǝǝ ǝ ǝǝ ǝ-ǝǝ hý ŋǝǝ ǝǝ hǝ ǝǝŋ ŋǝ-ǝǝ ǝ ǝǝj mí châj maa

ǝǝ ǝ ǝǝ ǝ-ǝǝ hý ŋǝǝ ǝǝ hǝ ǝǝŋ ŋǝ-ǝǝ ǝ ǝǝj lɛɛ- w ca

aa – ŋ hyy ǝǝ ǝ ǝǝ ǝ-ǝǝ hý ŋǝ-ǝǝ ǝǝŋ ŋǝ-ǝǝ ǝ ǝǝj sɛɛn âaŋ

maa ǝǝ ǝ ǝǝ ǝ-ǝǝ hý ŋǝ-ǝǝ ǝǝŋ ŋǝ-ǝǝ ǝ ǝǝj mỹyan nám-

w y yy ǝǝ ǝ ǝǝ ǝ-ǝǝ hý ŋǝ-ǝǝ ǝǝŋ ŋǝ-ǝǝ ǝǝj nuuan nɔɔŋ câ-

duua-aŋ ǝǝ ǝ ǝǝ ǝ-ǝǝ hý ŋǝ-ǝǝ ǝǝŋ ŋǝ-ǝǝ ǝ ǝǝj kra-tà- aj

In the early parts of the *khɔɔŋ*melody of the song "Khèèg Pàdtaanii" (bars 1-3), it is not clear which pitch-level the melody is in. But it is possible to trace the pitch-levels of the vocal melody by using Tanese's formulae (Ex. 49a).

Example 49a: Tanese's formulae for singing speech-tones (1988:130)[42]

According to Tanese, the melodic formulae for each of the mid, low and high tones have the same contour for all five primary pitches; however, in pentatonic contexts, the same contour can have different intervals (i.e., 2nd versus 3rd). This means it is not possible to deduce the actual primary pitch from words with these three tones. In a

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[42] This chart has to be considered together with the explanation on page 80

pentatonic context, the formula for a mid tone is the same regardless of which of the five primary pitches it falls on i.e. a single pitch. Low tones make use of a stepwise rise to the primary pitch, but this rise is a (Thai) 2nd on pitches 2,3 and 6, but a (Thai) 3rd on pitches 1 and 5. High and falling tones make use of a 2nd on pitches 1,2 and 5 but a 3rd on 3 and 6. (For both low and high tones, the primary note may be omitted.) Thus, for example, if a text syllable with falling tone is sung as a descending 3rd, then the melody pitch at that point must be either 3 or 6. Thus high and low-tone syllables can help sort out where the pitch-level is at a given moment.

For rising tones, there is again only a two-way contrast: pitches 1,2 and 5 use one contour with identical intervals, while 3 and 6 use another also with identical intervals. Finally, falling tones show the greatest variety, a 4 or 5-way contrast: only pitches 1 and 5 share an identical formula, but even then 5 may omit its second note; pitch 2 has the same contour but a different interval structure; and pitches 3 and 6 share a contour but differ in intervals. Example 49b summarises this information.

Example 49b: Identity and differences of melodic formulae for singing speech-tones

primary pitch	mid	low	falling	high	rising
1	A	B	D	H	J
2	A	C	E	H	J
3	A	C	F	I	K
5	A	B	D'	H	J
6	A	C	G	I	K

There are either 11 or 12 different formulae in total.

Thus given several verses, with various speech-tones, sung to a single melody, these variations in melodic formulae should help us determine which of the five primary pitches is in the singer's mind at a given moment. Given all this, let us now analyse the song "Khèeg Pàdtaanii". To begin with, let's look at bars 1-3 of the first two versions:

The first thing to be noted is that the word *inaiw* and other rising-tone words from bars 1 to 3 make use of the same formula, i.e. a d'' followed by a g''. We know from Tanese's rules that in this melody note D can be either primary pitch 1,2 or 5, meaning that this melody can only be in the D,C or G scales.

Secondly, if the melody is in either the D or G scales (where D = primary pitches 1 or 5 respectively), the second note of the word *sỹŋ* and other falling-tone words should be a b', not a c''. This is because, according to Tanese, on primary pitches 1,2 and 5, falling-tone words are to be sung by "combining the primary pitch in sequence with the pitch immediately below (*according to the pentatonic set*)" (my emphasis). Therefore, we may conclude that the pitch-level of bars 1 to 3 is C.

Moving on to bars 4 to 6, the transcription shows that the two singers make use of different pitch-levels not only in the *ỹyaa* part, but also in the worded part. This difference is clearly seen in bars 5 and 6 where the pitch-level of the *ỹyaa* part sung by Prasidthikun is G (or D), while Dùrijápraniid's is F. In order to confirm this, we may use Tanese's rules to trace the tonal centre of these vocal melodies:

Prasìdthìkun

+ o (+) o + o

V3

əə hə́ əəŋ ŋə-ə əə-ŋ ŋəə hə́ə ə əə ŋə́ə-ə-əəj sŏŋ hý **khraa-**

Dùrijápranîid

V7

əə əə hə́ əəŋ ŋə́ə - əə hý ŋəə əəŋ ŋə́-ə ə əəj ry-dii sâ -

Prasìdthìkun (continued)

(+) o

V3

m

Dùrijápranîid (continued)

V7

w y yy

It should be noted that the word *sŏŋ* in Prasìdthìkun's version is sung with an ornamentation (note a') due to her personal aesthetic preference; this may cause confusion to non-Thai singers. In other words, an experienced Thai singer would automatically perceive the "real" melodic formula of this word to be b' and d'' as in Example 50 below:

Example 50:

sŏŋ hý khraa - m

Note b' in this melody can be either primary pitch 3 or 6, meaning that the pitch-level of this melody can either be G or D. If a non-Thai singer had taken a' to be a main note instead of an ornament, and used Tanese's formulae accordingly, they would have calculated incorrectly that the pitch-level could be A, G or D.

For similar aesthetic reasons, Dùrijápraniid ornaments the word *sǎw* in her singing with a c''; the "real" melody of this word should be a g' and an f' plus a "tail melody" (notes g' and a') which Tanese includes as part of her formulae. Therefore note a' in this melody can be either primary pitch 3 or 6, meaning that the pitch-level of this melody can be either F or C. But, as stated previously, the *phaa* part sung by Dùrijápraniid is clearly in F, so we may conclude that the word *sǎw* here is sung in the same pitch-level.

It should be noted that the pitch-level of this melody for *khɔ̌ɔŋ* and other instruments, for bars 1 to 6, is also in F. This is determined by the pentatonic pitch set they use. Therefore the melody that Prasidthíkun has sung differs not only from that of Dùrijápraniid but also from those of the instrumental parts. This practice, though not common, is acceptable amongst singers because the vocal and the instrumental parts are not performed simultaneously, but alternately, and therefore the "tonal collision" is not obvious.

To sum up, Tanese's formulae, though they can prove difficult to use in certain instances, as discussed, are ultimately useful even for non-Thai traditional singers in the majority of cases to be able to discover the pitch-level of a vocal melody, and seem particularly interesting in the tracking of metabole within a piece. It should be remembered that all of her work in this sphere took place within the pentatonic pitch set, and much new work remains to be done by future scholars in the areas of hexatonic and heptatonic pitch set melodies.

Chapter 4

Poetic Form and Word Positioning

4.1 *Klɔɔn*

Most traditional Thai songs, both folk and classical, make use of the *klɔɔn* poetic form, in which rhyming is the most significant feature. This poetic form had been used amongst commoners for centuries before it became part of court literature at the end of the Ajúdthajaa period; prior to that court literature only made use of the *râaj, kàab, khlooŋ* and *chán* poetic forms (Liawsíiwoŋ 1995:32-3). The present-day forms of *klɔɔn* can therefore be said to be adaptations of the forms of *klɔɔn* used in regional songs acquired by the court poets. It is true to say that flexibility was an important feature of this genre, i.e. the number of syllables in each line and the rhyming positions were variable. The poetic forms of these songs gave birth to a new and more popular type, known later as *klɔɔn pèed* which had a more rigid rhyme pattern and a less flexible number of syllables. This kind of *klɔɔn* is known by many other names, e.g. *klɔɔn sùphâab* ("polite" *klɔɔn*), *klɔɔn sèephaa* (*klɔɔn* for *sèephaa*), *klɔɔn lamnam* (*klɔɔn* for songs) etc. Liawsíiwoŋ (ibid:33) claims that before *klɔɔn* developed and was informally categorised, the commoners' repertoire had been known simply as *phleeŋ* which means "songs", examples of which were *phleeŋ klòm dèg* (lullaby songs), *phleeŋ ryya* (boat songs) and *phleeŋ sùu khwán* (songs used to call back a wandering spirit).

Sìgkhàkoosŏn (1983:53-54) divides the *klɔɔn* poetic form into two types: *klɔɔn hòg* and *klɔɔn pèed*. The words *hòg* meaning "six" and *pèed* meaning "eight" refer to the

number of syllables in one phrase or *wág*, where four *wág* make up one stanza. The form of *klɔɔn hòg* is illustrated as follows:

Example 51: *Klɔɔn hòg* form (0 = 1 syllable)

    00 00 00   00 00 00

    00 00 00   00 00 00

The most common type of *klɔɔn* used in Thai court singing is, however, the *klɔɔn pèèd* and because it is so popular people typically use the terms *klɔɔn* and *klɔɔn pèèd* interchangeably. Example 52 shows the standard form of *klɔɔn pèèd*.

Example 52: *Klɔɔn pèèd* form (0 = 1 syllable)

    000 00 000   000 00 000

    000 00 000   000 00 000

This complete stanza is known as a *bòd* and therefore one *bòd* contains four *wág*. The first *wág* is called *sadàb* ("listening")[43], the second *ráb* ("accepting"), the third *rɔɔŋ* ("supporting") and the fourth *sòŋ* ("passing on"). The *bòd* can alternately be divided into two *bàad* or lines (with one line consisting of two *wág*). In turn, a single *wág* can be divided into three groups, let us call them g1, g2 and g3, as follows:

Example 53: Division of a *wág*

    000 00 000   000 00 000
    g1 g2 g3   g1 g2 g3

Klɔɔn poetry is usually presented, when written down, in the above form: two *wág* are presented in one *bàad* with the *wág* separated into its three groups by gaps (Ex. 54).

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[43] Some scholars call it *salàb* which means "swapping".

Example 54: *Khǔnchǎaŋ Khǔnphěen*, traditonal poem used in the song "Khèegmɔɔn Baaŋ Cháaŋ"

câw lyym nɔɔn sɔ̆ɔn phǔm krathǔm tàm   dèd baj bɔɔn chɔ̆ɔn nǎam thǐi rǎj fǎaj
phǐi khǐiaw mǎag câw jàag phǐi jaŋ khaaj   khěen sǎaj khɔ̂ɔd lěew phrɔ̆ nǔn nɔɔn

Dividing a *wǎg* into three groups is the most important rhythmic feature of *klɔɔn*. When a poem is being read aloud, g1 and g2 of each *wǎg* should be treated as one unit leaving a small gap before g3. For example, a *wǎg* from the poem "Wiwaa Phrá Samùd", would be read in the following way:

Example 55: "Wiwaa Phrá Samùd" (The Marriage of the Sea God) by King Rama VI

[dâj   jin   kham] [săm-niiaŋ] [sǐiaŋ sa - nɔ̀]
      g1   g2   g3

Traditionally, g3 is the quietest group, and while there is no known reason for this practice, it may be because the beginning of a *wǎg* (g1 + g2) usually contains one concept while g3 is usually the modifier or "conclusion" of the concept. For example:

Example 56: (ibid)

> *dâj jin kham sǎmniiaŋ ... sǐiaŋ sanɔ̆*
> Hearing your voice speak ... a pleasing sound

or

Example 57: "Inǎw" by King Rama II

> *cyŋ phɔ̆əj mǎan ɔ̀ɔg chom ... sěeŋ bulǎn*
> [She] Opens the curtain to admire ... the moonlight

This poetic rhythm has influenced word positioning in court songs, so that g1 and g2 are put close to each other, whilst g3 is always separated from the other two by *ɲyan*. This will be illustrated more fully later.

While *klɔɔn hòg* always has six syllables per line, strange as it may seem, *klɔɔn pèed* can contain anything from six to ten syllables per line. When *klɔɔn* is sung, each multi-syllable word should be, in principle, situated within a single group (g). However, singers sometimes split multi-syllabled words over two groups, thus sacrificing the meaning for the sake of poetic form. An example of this can be seen in the lyrics taken from the play *Inàw* used for the song "Thajɔɔj Khameen" (Ex. 58):

Example 58: *Inàw* by King Rama II used for the song "Thajɔɔj Khameen", *sǎam chán, thɔɔn* 2

> *bulǎn soŋklòd mòdraakhii*
>   g1   g2   g3
> The moon is shining brightly – no stain upon her,

> *mýyan ca chuuan hâaj lii- laa paj*
>   g1   g2   g3
> As if she is persuading me to carry – on my journey.

In a singing performance, the gap between g2 and g3 is lengthened; the word *lùlaa*, meaning "to move", is thus split noticeably apart, half in g2 and half in g3. As a result, the meaning of the word is not immediately realised after g2 is sung because the sound *lii* does not have any meaning by itself – the audience has to wait until the singer finishes singing g3 before the expression is complete. There is a danger that by the time g3 is sung, g2 will have been forgotten and the meaning obscured. For some lyrics, the singer might add extra words to the *wàg* in order to make sense of it, but in this case, because the poem is so beautifully written, changing it would seem impossible without ruining its perfection; most singers would therefore leave it untouched. Most audiences know this poem very well, so singers would not be too concerned on this point.

Apart from the rhythm, another important feature of *klɔɔn* is the rhyme, which can be divided into two types: *sǎmphàd naj* ("inside rhyme") and *sǎmphàd nɔɔg* ("outside rhyme").

Sǎmphàd naj is a rhyme that links words within a *wàg*. It is optional but makes the poem more taut. This kind of rhyme takes two forms: *sǎmphàd àgsɔ̌ɔn* (the repetition of consonants, similar to the Western concept of alliteration) and *sǎmphàd sarà* (the rhyming of vowels, similar to the Western concept of assonance). *Sǎmphàd àgsɔ̌ɔn* is achieved by the use of at least two, but maybe more, words that begin with the same consonant. *Sǎmphàd sarà* is achieved by the use of at least two, maybe more, words which contain the same vowel (this means of the same length also, as vowels of different lengths are considered to be different vowels) but usually with different speech-tones. (See Example 59.)

Example 59: A *wàg* from *Khǔnchàag Khǔnphèɛn*. (The broken line links the words with *sǎmphàd àgsɔ̌ɔn* while the solid line links the words with *sǎmphàd sarà*)
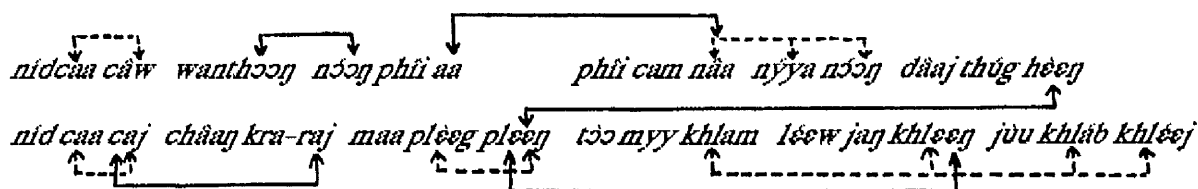
Sǎmphàd nɔ̌ɔg links two separate, consecutive *wàg* within a stanza. It is compulsory and its pattern distinguishes *klɔɔn pèɛd* from other kinds of poetry. It is made by the repetition of the same vowels but with different speech tones; the length of the vowel is not important. Exceptionally, these vowels can share the same speech tone. A final rule is that the last syllable of *wàg* 1 must never share the same speech tone with the last syllable of *wàg* 2. Example 60a shows a pattern of external rhyme for *klɔɔn pèɛd* in a typical stanza, including the rhyme that links two stanzas together. (An arrow links a possible rhyme between two syllables, with alternative rhymes indicated by broken lines.)

Example 60a:

1st stanza

000 00 000   000 00 000

000 00 000   000 00 000

2nd stanza

000 00 000   000 00 000

000 00 000   000 00 000
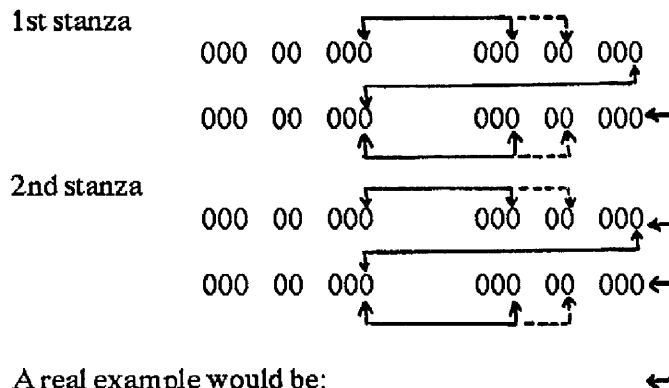
A real example would be:

Example 60b: "Kaakii" by Câwphrájaa Phrákhlaŋ used for the song "Cɔɔrakhêe Hǎaŋ Jaaw" (*sǎam chán*); rhyming syllable shown in bold

1st stanza
mǎj kreeŋ oŋ narin pin na-rêed   *an ryyaŋ dèed kriaŋ kraj mahǎj sawǎn*

an maa-nób còb ceen sakaa pha-nǎn   *khraj mǎaj mǎn mûŋ mǎad hǎj maa mii*

2nd stanza
thəə khɔɔ pen phajaa khrúd ùdom dèed   *wísǎj phêed phoŋ rǎaj- chapǎgsǐi*

naw sathǎn phimaan chimphlii   *phríbaarunii òbrom sǎaŋsòm maa*
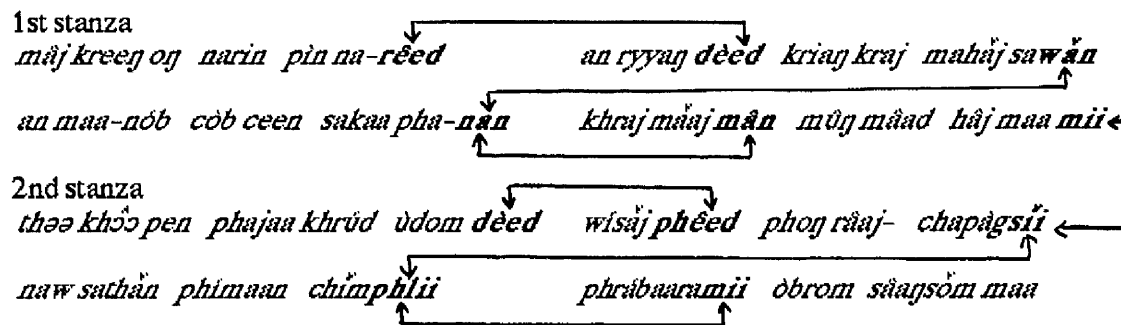
The other poetic forms that are occasionally used in song are *klàab, chán* and *khlooŋ*. The first originated in China, while the other two come from India. Of the three, *klàab* poems are the most frequently used. Originally, the term *klàab* just meant poetry in general, but for Thais it now indicates a specific form. This form is superficially similar to that of *klɔɔŋ* but with a different number of lines per stanza and different rhyming patterns. Of the Indian-derived forms, the significant feature of *chán* is the positioning of two kinds of vowels, *khárú* (heavy vowels) and *lahú* (light vowels) to make up a strict pattern. It also makes use of archaic words from Pali and Sanskrit, which are difficult to understand and thus make it more suitable for reading aloud than for singing. Finally *khlooŋ* again has similarities to *klɔɔŋ* but with its own distinctive patterns of syllables (*khanǎ*) and rhymes

(*siimphâd*). Although there are many forms of *kàab*, *chîng* and *khloog* only those few that are compatible are chosen for use with Thai songs.

4.2 Word positioning of lyrics in the *klɔɔn* form for *phleeg nâatháb prôbkàj*

Phleeg nâathâb prôbkàj is a kind of Thai court musical repertoire identified by the rhythmic pattern that it uses; this pattern is known as *nâathâb prôbkàj*. Narkong (1992:52) writes that it is "the standard and popular *nathap* [*nâathâb*] used to accompany a large number of entertainment repertoire [pieces] for both concerts and dance drama". The popularity of *phleeg nâathâb prôbkàj* is so great that it overshadows the other repertoires and makes them seem less important. Also being a "standard" repertoire, as mentioned by Narkong, musicians almost always refer to *phleeg nâathâb prôbkàj* when seeking to explain the significant characteristics of Thai music. This might be one of the reasons why most academics including Morton, Tanese, Ketukaenchan and Silkstone have chosen to use *phleeg nâathâb prôbkàj* as the main repertoire for their studies.

The term *prôbkàj* also refers to a type of folk song from the central part of Thailand known as *phleeg prôbkàj* which was popular during the 18th century. These old folk songs, because they share the same name, are believed to be the original form of the *phleeg nâathâb prôbkàj* from the court tradition. Montri Traamôod is responsible for this supposition. He illustrated the similarity between the rhythm of the chorus (*lûug khûu*) of the folk songs and the rhythmic pattern of the *taphôon*, the most important rhythmic percussion instrument of court tradition. Narkong (ibid:52) is not quite convinced by this; he says: "…it is strange that the drum's pattern does not really fit or sound like the original chorus pattern at all, except that they remain the same length …".

Phleeg nâathâb prôbkàj (together with most Thai repertoires) are divided into self-contained sections known as *thɔ̂ɔn*. Each *thɔ̂ɔn* is made up of its vocal version followed by

its instrumental version (or the instrumental version by itself but never just the vocal version). The length of a *thɔ̌ɔn* is measured by the number of *caŋwà* (rhythmic cycles) it contains. Thai musicians classify *phleeŋ nâatháb pròbkàj* by the number of *caŋwà* in the first *thɔ̌ɔn* of a song, e.g. *phleeŋ sɔ̌ɔŋ caŋwà* (two-cycle songs), *phleeŋ sǎam caŋwà* (three-cycle songs), *phleeŋ sìi caŋwà* (four-cycle songs) or *phleeŋ pèed caŋwà* (eight-cycle songs). It is important to know that the standard number of rhythmic cycles for *phleeŋ nâatháb pròbkàj* is four, and when asked for an example of word positioning, singers always use *phleeŋ sìi caŋwà* (four-cycle songs) as illustrations.

4.2.1 Word positioning of lyrics in the *klɔɔn* form at the *sǎam chán* level

A *thɔ̌ɔn* usually makes use of one line of poetry which, as stated previously, can be split metrically into two *wàg*. If the *thɔ̌ɔn* consists of two *caŋwà nâatháb* or *caŋwà* (rhythmic cycles), there will be one cycle per *wàg*. This is found in the third *thɔ̌ɔn* of the song "Cɔɔrakhêe Hǎaŋ Jaaw", where the lyrics have the following pattern:

Example 61: "Cɔɔrakhêe Hǎaŋ Jaaw" [AM], *sǎam chán*, 3rd *thɔ̌ɔn*

maanɔ́b	*còb ceen*	*sakaa phanan*	*khraj mǎaj-mân*	*mûŋ-mâad*	*hâj maa mii*
g1	g2	g3	g1	g2	g3

1st *caŋwà*

	o		+		o		+
	maa		nób			còb	ceen

	o		+		o		+
						sakaa	phanan

2nd *caŋwà*

	o		+		o		+
	khraj mǎaj	mân				mûŋ	mâad

	o		+		o		+
						hâj maa	mii

This pattern (Pattern 1) is the most common found in Thai singing, where g1 and g2 fit into the first two quarters of the *caŋwà* and g3 occupies the final quarter (the third quarter is filled by *ɲyaa*). Multi-syllable words are sung close together in order to mimic speech, as in the case of *màaj-mân* and *mûŋ-mâad* in the above example. Sŭntharawaathin, however, stated during private tuition in 1986 that this phenomenon is a modern one and that in the old days singers "always sang the syllables on a strong beat", which separated them artificially. This is shown in example 5 below:

Example 62: "Cɔɔrakhêe hǎaŋ jaaw" [AM], *sǎam chán*, 3rd *thɔ́ɔŋ* old style

maanób	*còb ceen*	*sakaa phanan*		*khraj màaj mân*	*mûŋ mâad*	*hâj maa mii*
g1	g2	g3		g1	g2	g3

1st *caŋwà*

		O		+		O		+
		maa		nób		còb		ceen

		O		+		O		+
						sakaa		phanan

2nd *caŋwà*

		O		+		O		+
		khraj màaj		mân		mûŋ		mâad

		O		+		O		+
						hâj maa		mii

In this way, singers could insert more *ɲyaa* between the *chíŋ* and *chàb* strokes in order to elaborate their singing. Such *ɲyaa* is classified by Tanese (1979) as "inserted *ɲyaa*". Because of the love of *ɲyaa* even today singers sometimes use this "old style" in order to be able to insert more *ɲyaa*

This practice of inserted *ɲyaa* commonly occurs at the *sǎam chán* level, where the singing is slow and the gap between *chíŋ* and *chàb* strokes is relatively long. This contrasts with the original *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* level, where the singers have to sing faster and the rhythmic cycle is shorter by half, leaving little time for *ɲyaa*. The following figure shows the same lyrics sung at *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* level:

Example 63: Shows the same lyrics as the above example when positioned in *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* level

1st *caŋwà*

	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
	maa	nób	còb	cɛɛn			sakaa	phanan

2nd *caŋwà*

	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
	khrajmàaj	mân	mûŋ	mâad			hâj maa	mii

In Example 63 above, there is no *ʄʄʋan* in bars 1, 2, 3, 4, 7 or 8 but there is a short section of *ʄʄʋan* in bars 5 and 6 of both cycles. Both the *sǎam chán* and the *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* versions represent Pattern 1 (there are three altogether), where words occupy only the 1st, 2nd and 4th parts of a cycle and *ʄʄʋan* makes up the 3rd part.

Pattern 2 is where one *wák* of lyrics is used over two *caŋwà*. The following example shows the second *thɔ̌ɔn* of the song "Bùlǎn", which consists of four *caŋwà* and uses one line (two *wák*) of lyrics.

Example 64: "Bùlǎn" [R1], *sǎam chán*, 2nd *thɔ̌ɔn*

soŋ klòd	*mòd mêeg*	*phraaj phan*		*sɛ̌ɛŋ can*	*càb sɛ̌ɛŋ*	*ród soŋ*
g1	g2	g3		g1	g2	g3

1st *caŋwà*

		o			+		o			+
							soŋ			klòd

		o			+		o			+
							mòd			mêeg

2nd *caŋwà*

		o			+		o			+

		o			+		o			+
							phraaj			phan

3rd *caŋwà*

		o			+		o			+
							sɛ̌ɛŋ			chan

		o			+		o			+
								càb		sɛ̌ɛŋ

4th *caŋwà*

```
            o              +              o              +
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
            o              +              o              +
|    |    .    |    |    |    |    |    |    |  rôd  | soŋ |
```

The above transcription illustrates that the last group of syllables of a *wàg* (g3) is always situated at the end of a *caŋwà*. It also shows that when a *wàg* is used for two rhythmic cycles, the space between the three groups within the *wàg* is roughly doubled from Pattern 1. Therefore, it can be said that Pattern 2 is an expanded version of the first and is made up of two *caŋwà*.

Singing one *wàg* per two cycles can result in yet another system of word positioning, Pattern 3. This can be seen in the song "Hěeraa lên náam" (Ex. 65) where g1 is situated in the second half of the 1st *caŋwà*(not at the end of the first half as in Pattern 2), but g2 and g3 remain in the same place.

Example 65: "Hěeraa lên náam" [R5], *sǎam chán*, 1st *thɔɔn*

kìd thỹŋ nùd	bùdsabaa	ɔɔg maa nâŋ	bon banlaŋ	lìiam phǎa	nǎa sǐŋkhɔɔn
g1	g2	g3	g1	g2	g3

1st *caŋwà*

```
            o              +              o              +
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
            o              +              o              +
|    | kìd thỹŋ |    | nùd |    |    | bùd- | sabaa |
```

2nd *caŋwà*

```
            o              +              o              +
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
            o              +              o              +
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    | ɔɔg maa | nâŋ |
```

3rd *caŋwà*

```
            o              +              o              +
|    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |    |
            o              +              o              +
|    | bon |    | banlaŋ |    |    | lìiam | phǎa |
```

4th *caŋwǎ*

```
         o              +              o              +
|    |        |    |        |    |        |    |
         o              +              o              +
|    |        |    |        |    |    nâa | siŋkhɔ̌ɔn |
```

The three main patterns that have been mentioned are the basic systems of placing words into *phleeŋ nâathǎb pròbkàj* However, when the number of *caŋwǎ* cannot be divided by two, more than one pattern occurs in a *thɔ̂ɔn*. For example, when a *thɔ̂ɔn* consists of three rhythmic cycles, Pattern 1 and Pattern 2 can be combined as follows:

Example 66: "Pɛ́" [R24], *sǎam chán*, 1st *thɔ̂ɔn*

| *khíd paj* | *caj hǎaj* | *maj waaj sòog* | | *mýyan dyyan dàb* | *lǎb lôog* | *mâj lee hěn* |
| g1 | g2 | g3 | | g1 | g2 | g3 |

1st *caŋwǎ*

```
         o              +              o              +
|    |  khíd  |    |   paj  |    |        |   caj |  hǎaj |
         o              +              o              +
|    |        |    |        |    | mâj waaj |  sòog |
```

2nd *caŋwǎ*

```
         o              +              o              +
|    |        |    |        |    | mý-dyyan|    |   dàb |
         o              +              o              +
|    |        |    |        |    |        |  láb  | lôog |
```

3rd *caŋwǎ*

```
         o              +              o              +
|    |        |    |        |    |        |    |
         o              +              o              +
|    |        |    |        |    |        | mâj lee |  hěn |
```

The above example makes use of Pattern 1 for the first *caŋwǎ* and Pattern 2 for the second and third *caŋwǎ*. It is also possible for this to be reversed and for Pattern 2 to be used first, followed by Pattern 1 as in the next example:

Example 67: "Khὲὲgmɔɔn Baaŋcháaŋ" [R12], *sǎam chǎŋ* 3rd *thɔ́ɔn*

câw lyym nɔɔn	*sɔ̂ɔn phǔum*	*krathǔm tàm*		*dèd bajbɔɔn*	*chɔ́ɔn náam*	*thǐi râj fâaj*
g1	g2	g3		g1	g2	g3

1st *caŋwà*

2nd *caŋwà*

3rd *caŋwà*

Another combination of patterns can be seen in the 3rd *thɔ́ɔn* of the song "Sǎaráthǐi", where there are five rhythmic cycles, sung using two lines (or four *wàg*): Pattern 1 is used for each of the first three rhythmic cycles and Pattern 3 is used for the 4th and 5th cycles as shown below:

Example 68: "Sǎaráthǐi" [R26], *sǎam chǎŋ* 3rd *thɔ́ɔn*

mὲὲn chaaj daj	*dâj jùu*	*pen khǔu khrɔɔŋ*		*ca nὲὲb nɔ́ɔŋ*	*chəəj chíd*	*sanìd sanǒm*
g1	g2	g3		g1	g2	g3
phǐi ca jùu	*sǔu râg*	*mâj rὲὲm chom*		*mí châj lom*	*luuaŋ nɔ́ɔŋ*	*jàa mɔ́ɔŋ caj*
g1	g2	g3		g1	g2	g3

1st *caŋwà*

2nd *caŋwà*

	o		+		o		+
	ca nêəb		nɔ́ɔŋ		chəəj	chíd	

	o		+		o		+
						sanìd	sanǒm

3rd *caŋwà*

	o		+		o		+
	phíi		ca jùu			sûu	rág

	o		+		o		+
				mâj rəəm			chom

4th *caŋwà*

	o		+		o		+

	o		+		o		+
		mí châj	lom			luuaŋ	nɔ́ɔŋ

5th *caŋwà*

	o		+		o		+

	o		+		o		+
						jàa mɔ̀ɔŋ	caj

There are examples, though not many, when a *thɔ̌ɔn* consists of six *caŋwà* and one *wág* of syllables therefore has to be extended over three *caŋwà*. In this pattern, Pattern 4, each group of syllables will be sung at the end of each *caŋwà* respectively as shown below:

Example 69: "Bulǎn" [R1], *sǎam chán,* 1st *thɔ̌ɔn* 1

khrán khàm	*sǒnthayaa*	*raatrii kaan*		*cyŋ pɔ̀əj mâan*	*ɔ̀ɔg chom*	*sěəŋ-bùlǎn*
g1	g2	g3		g1	g2	g3

1st *caŋwà*

	o		+		o		+

	o		+		o		+
						khrán	khàm

2nd *caŋwà*

	o		+		o		+

	o		+		o		+
						sǒn	tha-jaa

3rd *caŋwá*	o		+		o		+
						raatrii		kaan

4th *caŋwá*	o		+		o		+
						cyŋ pə̀əj		mâan

5th *caŋwá*	o		+		o		+
							òog	chom

6th *caŋwá*	o		+		o		+
							sə̌əŋ	bùlǎn

It should be noted that Pattern 2, 3 or 4 will be used for the 1st *caŋwá* if there is a *thâw* melody at the beginning. Otherwise Pattern 1 will be used.

So, to sum up the rules of word positioning in *phleeŋ pròbkàj sǎam chán*

A *thɔ́ɔn* usually makes use of two *wág*, which is one line of poetry, and contains at least two *caŋwá* (the longest *thɔ́ɔn* for *pròbkàj* songs contains eight *caŋwá*).

Lyrics are grouped in the same way as in a poetic text, i. e. a *wág* is divided into g1, g2 and g3. The system of word positioning, for the purposes of analysis, is based on the positions of these three groups within a *thɔ́ɔn*

When the number of *caŋwá* in a *thɔ́ɔn* is an even number, i. e. 2, 4, 6 or 8, only one pattern of word positioning will be employed.

When the number of *caŋwà* in a *thɔ̂ɔn* is an odd number, i.e. 3 or 5, two patterns of word positioning will be employed.

Each *caŋwà* will have some lyrics positioned at its end. It is extremely rare, but possible, for a *caŋwà* to contain no words at all.

A *wág* in the *klɔɔn* poetic form sung over one *caŋwà* will be positioned according to Pattern 1.

A *wág* in the *klɔɔn* poetic form sung over two *caŋwà* will be positioned according to either Pattern 2 or Pattern 3.

Pattern 3 appears to be used only for songs in the *khèeg* (Indian or Javanese) style.

A *wág* in the *klɔɔn* poetic form sung over three *caŋwà* will be positioned according to Pattern 4.

Usually, the number of *wág* will be the same at each level of a song. If the melody is reduced by half, from *sǎam chán* to *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*, the word density will double and less *ɲyaa* will be employed. Consequently, there is hardly any *ɲyaa* at the *chán diaw* level because most of the space is occupied by words.

4.2.2 Word positioning of lyrics in the *klɔɔn* form at the *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* level

At the *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* level, each *thɔ̌ɔn* makes use of two *wák*. A *caŋwà* of *phleeŋ nàatháb* *pròbkàj* contains eight bars with a *chiŋ* beat falling on every odd bar, and a *chàb* beat falling on every even bar. The shortest melody found in *phleeŋ nàatháb pròbkàj* contains two *caŋwà*. The lyrics for a melody that contains two *caŋwà* are positioned in the following pattern, Pattern 1:

Example 70: Pattern 1: the song "Khèeg Bɔɔrathêed" [R8], *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*, 1st *thɔ̌ɔn* (lyrics by King Rama VI)

| phùdthaa- | nùphâab | nam phŏn | | kɵ̀ɵd sǎn- | phamoŋkhon | nɔ́ɔj jàj |
| g1 | g2 | g3 | | g1 | g2 | g3 |

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
phúd-	thaa	nú-	phâab			nam	phŏn

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
kɵ̀ɵd	sǎn-	pha moŋ	khon			nɔ́ɔj	jàj

Songs that contain four *caŋwà*, the commonest number for Thai songs, use Pattern 2 as follows:

Example 71: Pattern 2: the song "Wêedsùkam" [R34], *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*, 1st *thɔ̌ɔn* (lyrics by King Rama VI))

| sǐnláipakam | nam caj | hâj sàaŋ sòog | | chûuaj banthaw | thúg naj lôog | hâj hỳyad hǎaj |
| g1 | g2 | g3 | | g1 | g2 | g3 |

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
		sǐn-	lapakam			nam	caj

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
						hâj sàaŋ	sòog

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
		chûuaj	banthaw			thúg	naj lôog

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
						hâj hỳyad	hǎaj

A variation on Pattern 2 occurs if there is a *thâw* melody at the beginning of the *caŋwà* - *jyaŋ* will be used here. A *thâw* melody at *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* level covers four bars, half of the

caŋwà; therefore, the words (g1), which are supposed to be sung here, are displaced to the next two bars. In the example below, there is a *thàw* melody at the beginning of the first *caŋwà* and again at the beginning of the third *caŋwà* and each time g1 of the *wàg* is displaced in this way:

Example 72: Variation on Pattern 2: the song "Khèəg Saj" [R17], *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*, 2nd *thɔ̌ɔn* (lyrics taken from the "Ramayana")

dəən ràaj taam chaaj phanaawan
g1 g2 g3

wǎŋ hàj klaj ban- na-sǎalaa
g1 g2 g3

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
				dəən	ràaj	taam	chaaj
o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
						phanaa-	wan
o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
				wǎŋ	hàj	klaj	ban-
o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
						na- saa-	laa

When there is a *thàw* melody at the beginning of the first *caŋwà* but not at the beginning of the third, a combination of the variation and Pattern 2 is used:

Example 73: Variation plus Pattern 2: the song "Naaŋ Nâag" [R19], *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*, *thɔ̌ɔn* 1 (lyrics taken from "Kaakii")

khonthan khràn hěn kruŋ krasàd
g1 g2 g3

cěeŋ rahàd chaaj něed daŋ banhǎan
g1 g2 g3

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
				khon	– than	khrán	hěn
o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
						kruŋ	ka-sàd
o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
		cěeŋ	rahàd			chaaj	něed
o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
						daŋ	banhǎan

In rare cases when a *thɔ̌ɔn* consists of three *caŋwà* with a *thàw* melody present at the beginning of the first, a combination of the variation on Pattern 2 together with Pattern 1 will be used (Ex. 74):

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Example 74: Variation of Pattern 2 plus Pattern 1: the song "Khèegmɔɔn Baaŋcháaŋ" [R12], sɔ̌ɔŋcháŋ 3rd thɔ̌ɔn (lyrics taken from "Khǔncháaŋ Khǔnphěen")

| maa lǒŋ chəəŋ | khǔn cháaŋ | châaŋ chɔ̌ɔn | | kɔ̌ɔd thɔ̌ɔn– | suŋ sàg | sǎmkhan khon |
| g1 | g2 | g3 | | g1 | g2 | g3 |

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
				maa lǒŋ	chəəŋ		khǔncháaŋ

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
						châaŋ	cha-ɔ̂ɔn

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
kɔɔd	thɔ̂ɔn	suŋ	sàg			sǎmkhan	khon

When a song contains more than four caŋwà, one caŋwàoften contains no lyrics or has extra lyrics to fill the customary place at the end – this is especially true of the final caŋwà. These extra lyrics are known as kham sɔ̌ɔj. When a song has six caŋwàor more, both these features appear as in the example below, where the second cycle is wordless (containing ŷyaa) and where two extra words, "câwəəj", are added to the sixth caŋwà

Example 75: The song "Khèegmɔɔn" [R10], sɔ̌ɔŋcháŋ 1st thɔ̌ɔn (lyrics taken from "Khǔncháaŋ Khǔnphěen")

| làw khwaam | fǎn maa | pramàa kluua | | wâa thuun-hǔua | sǔm faj | wáj naj múŋ |
| g1 | g2 | g3 | | g1 | g2 | g3 |

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
				làw	khwaam	fǎn	maa

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
						pramàa	kluua

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
		wâa thuun	hǔua			sǔm	faj

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
						wáj naj	múŋ

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
						câw	əəj

4.2.3 Word positioning of lyrics in the *klɔɔn*form at the *chǎn dìiaw*level

At the *chǎn dìiaw*level (one *chǎb*per bar), words are positioned following three patterns.

However, only the first two patterns reflect the rhythm of the *klɔɔn*poetic form (g1+g2, gap, g3). Pattern 1 is used for songs containing two *caŋwà* using 1 *wág*, as below:
Example 76: Pattern 1: the song "Khèeg Bɔɔrathêed" [AM], *chǎn dìia w,* 1st *thɔ́ɔn*(lyrics taken from "Khǔncháaŋ Khǔnphèen")

sɔ́ɔŋ myy kɔ́ɔd phǔua hâj tuua nèen
   g1   g2   g3

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
sɔ́ɔŋ		myy		kɔ́ɔd	phǔua							hâj tuua	nèen		

The same pattern will also be used for songs with four *caŋwà*that use 2 *wág*(Ex. 77):

Example 77: Pattern 1: the song "Khèegmɔɔn Baaŋcháaŋ" [R12], *chǎn dìia w,* 2nd *thɔ́ɔn* (lyrics taken from "Khǔncháaŋ Khǔnphèen")

tàaj plàaw khɔɔ phǐi nǐi khàad pòn   sàn plùg lùg ciŋ sì phǐi con
   g1   g2   g3   g1   g2   g3

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
taaj		plàaw		khɔɔ	phǐi							nǐi khàad	pòn		

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
		sàn plùg		lùg	ciŋ							sì phǐi	con		

Pattern 2 is used for songs with three *caŋwà*using 1 *wág*(Ex. 78):

Example 78: Pattern 2: the song "Khèegmɔɔn Baaŋcháaŋ" [R12], *chǎn dìia w,* 1st *thɔ́ɔn* (lyrics taken from "Khǔncháaŋ Khǔnphèen") [ibid.]

thǎa man tyyn khǐn hèn phǐi cùub cǎw
   g1   g2   g3

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
				thǎa. tyyn	khǐn hèn										

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
				phǐi cùub	cǎw		

Pattern 3 is used for songs with four *caŋwá* using 4 *wâg* (Ex. 79):

Example 79: Pattern 3: the song "Ngíiaw Ramlýg" [R20], *chán díiaw*, 1st *thɔ́ɔn* (lyrics by Khoŋsàg Khamsirì)

khɔ́ɔ phráoŋ   sadèd damroŋ   saweedtachád
   g1   g2   g3

sirì sawàd   phíphádphə̂əm   chaláəm síi
   g1   g2   g3

caráən phráchon   phansáa   kwàa rɔ́ɔj píi
   g1   g2   g3

sánpháphaj   jàa mii   ma phêw phaan
   g1   g2   g3

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
khɔ́ɔ phrá oŋ		sadèd damroŋ		saweed		ta chàd		sirì sawàd		phiphádphə̂m		chaláəm		sii	

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
caráən phrá...		phan sáa		kwàa rɔ́ɔj		pii		sánphaphaj		jàa mii		maa phêw		phaan	

Pattern 3 is also used for songs with two *caŋwá* using 2 *wâg* (Ex. 80):

Example 80: Pattern 3: the song "Khèeg Bɔɔrathêed" [AM], *chán díiaw*, 1st *thɔ́ɔn* (lyrics taken from "Khǔncháaŋ Khǔnphěen")

sɔ́ɔŋ myy   kɔ́ɔd phǔua   hâj tuua néen
   g1   g2   g3

khǔnphěen   jím jɔ́ɔg   sɔ́ɔg sakìd
   g1   g2   g3

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
sɔ́ɔŋ myy		kɔ́ɔd phǔua		hâj tuua		néen		khǔn phěen		jím jɔ́ɔg		sɔ́ɔg		sakìd	

It is interesting to note that Pattern 3 is not considered ideal by singers, as the words are too crowded together, making the performer feel clumsy and the audience uncomfortable.

4.3 Application of word positioning of lyrics in the *klɔɔn* form to the other poetic forms

The other poetic forms such as *kláb*, *chán* and *khlooŋ* are only used at the *sɔ́ɔŋ chán* level; moreover only some types of these forms are ever used in songs. These forms have different word groupings from each other (and of course from *klɔɔn*). Prasìdthíkun (1992c:125) says that "when singing lyrics that are in the *kláb*, *khlooŋ* and *chán* forms, we

must take the word positionings used for *klɔɔn* into consideration". For example, a type of *klàab* poetic form known as *klàab chàbaŋ sìbhòg* contains sixteen syllables as shown in the following lyrics:

jaam jen tên ram sǎm raan   *sǎŋ-khíid khàb-khǎan*

banthəəŋ ráɾəəŋ klaaŋ pleeŋ

0 0   0 0   0 0   0 0   0 0

0 0   0 0   0 0

These lyrics have been taken from the play *Ŋô Pàa* and set to the tune "Naaŋ Nâag". The whole line is treated as two *wág* of *klɔɔn* but with two extra groups of syllables present: *banthəəŋ* and *ráɾəəŋ*. These extra groups are put in between g2 and g3 of the second *wág*, replacing the *jȳan* part that would be used in a song in the *klɔɔn* form, as follows:

jaam jen tên ram sǎm raan   *sǎŋ-khíid khàb-khǎan*
  g1   g2   g3   g1   g2

ban-thəəŋ rá-ɾəəŋ klaaŋ pleeŋ
  (extra group)   g3

In song form they appear thus:

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
				jaam	jen	tên	ram
o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
						sǎm	raan
o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
		sǎŋ-	khíid			khàb	khǎan
o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
	banthəəŋ		ráɾəəŋ		klaaŋ		pleeŋ

When lyrics are in the *chǎn* poetic form known as *waaníníi chǎn*, where the number of syllables is the same as in the *klàab chàbaŋ sìbhòg* form (16), the words will be grouped in

a song in the same manner (even though the word grouping is different when the poem is read).

Example 81: "Mahǎa Rə̂əg" [R18], lyrics written by Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn

soŋ khúm   khèed-khǎn-   tha-monthon　　　*dàb rɔ́ɔn   phɔ́ɔn pron*
　g1　　　　　g2　　　　　　g3　　　　　　　　g1　　　　g2
pràad thúg   thamŋon   bìithaa
　(extra group)　　　g3

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
				soŋ	khúm	khèed	khǎn
o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
						tha-mon	thon
o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
	dàb	rɔ́ɔn				phɔ́ɔn	pron
o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
pràad	**thúg**		**thamŋon**		**bii-**	**thaa**	

Below is an example of *khlooŋ sìi*, where the stanza is divided into four lines with each line divided into two main *wǎg* as follows:

```
0 0 0 0 0       0 0 [0 0]
0 0 0 0 0       0 0
0 0 0 0 0       0 0 [0 0]
0 0 0 0 0       0 0 0 0
```

The first *wǎg* of each line contains five syllables (sometimes including two-syllable units) which are treated as one unit rhythmically, when read aloud.

Example 82: Lyrics from the poem "Sindəəreelâa"[44] by King Rama VI

than daj cǎw nùm chýya　　　*chəən naaŋ*
nèeb kɔ́ khûu kan phlaaŋ　　　*sè̀ tên*
phûudii sèedthǐi tàaŋ　　　　*càb khûu   kan naa*
tên sanùg nɔ́ɔj khanǎ wén　　　*sanùg nǎn   ryy saam*

When these lines are sung to the tune "Fáràŋ Ram Thǎaw", the rhythm of the poem will be changed to follow the word positioning of *khlɔɔŋ* as follows:

---

[44] This was inspired by the Western fairy-story "Cinderella".

than daj	*câw nùm chýya*	*chəən naan*	
g1	g2	g3	
nêəb kɔ̀	*khùu kan phlaan*	*sè tèn*	
g1	g2	g3	
phùudii	*sèedthìi tàan*	*càb khùu*	*tèn naa*
g1	g2	(extra group)	g3
tèn sanùg	*nɔ́ɔj khanà wén*	*sanùg nán*	*ryy saam*
g1	g2	(extra group)	g3

Example 83: Transcription of the lyrics sung to "Fáràn Ram Tháaw" [R4] by Carəəncaj Sŭntharawaathin

1st *thɔɔn*

```
 o     +     o     +     o     +       o      +
|     |     |     |     |     |     |  than | daj  |

 o     +     o       +       o     +       o      +
|     |  câw nùm | chýya |     |     |  chəən | naan |

 o     +     o      +      o     +        o       +
|     |  nêəb  |  kɔ̀  |     |     | khùu kan | phlaan |

 o     +     o     +     o     +     o     +
|     |     |     |     |     |  sè  | tèn  |

 o     +     o      +      o     +        o       +
|     |  nêəb  |  kɔ̀  |     |     | khùu kan | phlaan |

 o     +     o     +     o     +     o     +
|     |     |     |     |     |  sè  | tèn  |
```

2nd *thɔɔn*

```
 o     +     o     +     o     +       o      +
|     |     |     |     |     |     |  phùu | dii  |

 o     +     o     +     o     +        o        +
|     |     |     |     |     |     | sèed-thìi | tàan |

 o     +     o     +     o     +     o     +
|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

 o     +     o     +     o      +      o      +
|     |     |     |  càb | khùu | kan  | naa  |

 o     +     o     +     o     +     o      +
|     |     |     |     |     |  tèn | sa-nùg |

 o     +     o     +     o      +      o      +
|     |     |     |     |  nɔ́ɔj | khanà | wén  |

 o     +     o     +     o     +     o     +
|     |     |     |     |     |     |     |

 o     +     o     +      o      +     o      +
|     |     |     |  sa-nùg | nán | ryy  | saam |
```

4.4 Word replacement (with special reference to *kaan lên sàgkrawaa*)

As mentioned previously, it is common for Thai traditional singers to encounter new

sets of lyrics which they have to graft onto already existing melodies. This is why singers

who want to enter the Fine Arts Department (or to be promoted) have to pass a test that

covers this ability. In the early days, these tests were not formalised, so that they were

sprung on applicants with no prior warning, giving them a nasty shock. Sùdaa

Khñawwïcìd, a former singer with the department, recalled her experiences in a book

published to commemorate Prasìdthìkun:

> When I applied for a test in order to be tranferred from *chân trii* [class 3] to *chân thoo* [class 2, the next class up, class 1 being the highest], I was unexpectedly asked to sing the tune "Thêeb Banthom" with a new set of lyrics. Such a terrible surprise made me nervous enough almost not to be able to sing, but eventually after a struggle, my performance proved just good enough to pass the test. ([Prasìdthìkun] 1992a:53)

This ability to adapt is required especially of Fine Arts Department singers, due to the fact

that they so often have to sing the songs for a new play (or a rearrangement of an old play)

where new sets of lyrics have been written, or old sets amended. Traditionally, already

existing melodies will be selected, stripped of their "traditional" lyrics and put to use, rather

than using newly composed music. It should be noted that traditional melodies have

different "original" lyrics depending on the singer, their school of music and their teachers,

with no single version being universally accepted as the standard one by everyone.

An interesting area which illustrates the skills of word replacement is known as *kaan

lên sàgkrawaa*, literally, "the playing of sàgkrawaa" (the word *sàgkrawaa* having no known

meaning even for Thais). *Kaan lên sàgkrawaa* or *sàgkrawaa* performances can be seen as

poetic games in which each poet tries to better the others in terms of the brilliance of his

spontaneous compositions. A famous story will be chosen, with each poet representing one

character in that story. The newly composed poems do not have to follow the original

story. In fact, the poets are allowed to distort the story in order to mock others, or to create topical jokes using current news stories, particularly those involving politics. Each poem is read aloud by the poet and then handed over to a musical ensemble, which sets it to the music of an appropriate existing melody and then sings it to the audience. While this is going on, the rival poets have time to compose their answering poems. These performances are as challenging for the singers as for the poets, because they are singing "new" songs, never before performed, with very little time to prepare. *Sągkrąwaa*is perhaps the most difficult performance form for Thai singers – and one that doesn't suit perfectionists. Some singers do not like singing in *sągkrąwaa*performances because they need time to think about new lyrics before positioning them in a melody to their complete satisfaction.

The original form of *sągkrąwaa*was a song game known as *phleeŋ ryya* ("boat songs") where men and women exchanged impromptu verses sung as a courting dialogue. This ritual originally took place in the flooded rice fields during the rainy season, when agricultural work gave way to relative leisure, and was still known to be taking place at the beginning of the 19th century. As the name implies, the participants sat in boats. A man rowed his boat seeking the boat of a woman who took his fancy, then started a courting song; the song could not continue unless the woman sang in response. Taking part in *phleeŋ ryya* required a quick wit, a rich sense of humour, a good strong singing voice, and a gift for versification. *Phleeŋ ryya* was a commoners' entertainment, whereas *sągkrąwaa* appears to have been the preserve of wealthy aristocrats who could afford to employ poets, singers and musicians. They were similar in that they both took the form of a dialogue, made use of a single melody (a different melody in each case) and were originally performed in boats (*sągkrąwaa*imitating *phleeŋ ryya*in this respect). *Sągkrąwaa*differed from *phleeŋ ryya* in that, firstly, all the players agreed to play beforehand, and the theme of the story was fixed beforehand as well. Secondly, there was no exclusive or sexual tension between two players since it was a group activity, where a woman could agree to represent a male character for the duration of the game and vice versa. Thirdly, the poets

did not sing their own songs, but employed a singer accompanied by cymbals and drums to sing for them. Finally, there was a set pattern for the game of *sàgkrawaa* which involved an initiation phase, the allocation of characters to the poets, the telling of the main story through the poems and the formal farewell to each other. In defence of the cruder *phleeŋ ryya*, it has been opined that although the poetic form of *sàgkrawaa* was much more refined than that of its country cousin, it was "less spontaneous [and] the singers merely sang the words called to them by the versifiers" (ibid:140), instead of making up their own.

Sàgkrawaa performance was a major entertainment during the flood season in the Ajúdthajaa period (1351-1767).[45] Therefore, when King Rama I established Bangkok (1782) as the new capital city, a canal known as the *khlɔɔŋmahàanáag* was dug so that *sàgkrawaa* could still be performed traditionally in boats. Each boat would contain a poet, a singer and a group of musicians. *Sàgkrawaa* performances were so popular amongst the court that a large pond was built within the palace compound during the reign of King Rama II (1809-24). Again during the reign of King Rama IV, two large ponds were constructed within Sàprathum Palace for the performance of *sàgkrawaa*.

In the beginning, only the tune known as "Phráthɔɔŋ" was used in *sàgkrawaa* performances to sing the story. It was only at the end of the performance, when the poets were bidding farewell, that other tunes could be sung. "Phráthɔɔŋ" contained a lot of *ýyaa* and each line of each verse was repeated; this made it a long piece. The repetition gave the first poet enough time to complete the rest of the poem, and for his competitors to compose their replies. In the meaningful or "wordful" passages the melody had to be altered to reflect the speech tones; the semantically empty *ýyaa* passages left the melody unchanged. Arunwêed (1995:49) said that the poets and the audience must have grown tired of listening to the same song again and again throughout the performance, which was why, later on, other songs were used in *sàgkrawaa*, with the song "Phráthɔɔŋ" being preserved for the

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[45]The earliest document that mentions performances on water is an old law from the reign of King Boromatrailokanat (1448-63) prohibiting commoners from playing music in boats in the vicinity of the royal palace (Tramôod 1991:9).

initiation only, to pay homage to all human and spirit teachers. It was not until the reign of King Rama V (1868-1910) that *sǐgkra waa*performances began to take place on land, with boat performances gradually declining (see Arunwêed 1995:25-9).

In the present form, the singing commands more attention than in the past. This is mainly because the singers now sit in a separate unit from the poets, although each character in the story still has its own singer. The singers need to know the nationality of the characters they are representing, whether they are Laotian, Burmese, Cambodian, Javanese or Thai, as this influences their choice of music. For example, if a Javanese story is used, all the characters will be Javanese and Javanese-style music will be used throughout. Sometimes several different "foreign" styles of music appear within one story. On top of all this, questions of status are important: different pieces of music must be used for royalty, servants or beggars. For instance, fast lively hearty music represents peasants, whilst slow, stately music represents a king, queen or aristocrat. On occasion, however, it is the name of a piece of music which dictates its use, as in the piece "Khamĕen Lâj Khwaaj" or "chasing the buffaloes" - a job which no member of the upper classes would be caught doing! In any case, choice of tunes is the responsibility of each singer.

In February 1995, a group of poets known as "Samoosŏon Sajăam Wannasĭn" (The Poetry Society of Siam) was invited to perform a *kaan lên sǐgkra waa*at Chulalongkorn University, together with a famous musical group known as "Woŋ Dùrijápraniid" directed by Sùdcìd Dùrijápraniid. The ensuing performance was videotaped, and I managed to obtain a copy, later talking to some of the singers who had taken part. The poems written in the *sǐgkra waa*performance were in the *klɔɔn pèed*form, more specifically known as *klɔɔn sǐgkra waa*; *klɔɔn sǐgkra waa*differs from other kinds of *klɔɔn pèed*in that each poem begins with the word *sǐgkra waa*and ends with the word *əəj* The story they performed was an episode from the play *Inǎw*, a love story about a Javanese prince. Therefore, most of the melodies that the singers chose were in the Javanese style, as commonly indicated by the word *khèeg*, e.g. "Khèeg Ramphyŋ". The introduction was the exception as the story

hadn't begun and so non-Javanese songs could be chosen. The performance lasted only two hours, which was very short compared to the *sàgkra waa* performances of the old days which normally lasted for whole nights. Consequently, the poets didn't have much time to write their poems, and the singers had only approximately two minutes to choose and prepare for each song. In one instance, the singer Duuaŋêed Dùrijáphan had only half a minute to prepare because the poet had finished her line so late; this caused her to make mistakes in the word positioning in her chosen melody "Khèeg Hǔuan". It is interesting to note the resulting mis-positionings. The lyrics were as in Example 84.

Example 84: Lyrics written by MRL Oɔrachàd Sɔɔŋthɔɔŋ; sung to the melody "Khèeg Hǔuan" [in RV1] selected and performed by Duuaŋêed Dùrijáphan

sàgkra waa   bùdsabaa   ɔɔrachàd   séen khyyaŋ khàd sǔjàtraa   maa khɔɔd khɔɔn
wàa om phéd   saa-ù   rɣyaŋ dù rɔɔn   léew khíd jɔɔn   hǒoj hǎa   theewaalaj
ráb dɔɔg màj   càag inàw   cɔɔm càw chǔu   rùn khuŋpùu   sǐŋ dam   raw cam dàj
màj wàa pen dɔɔg màaj lèg dɔɔg màaj faj   lom hǎaj caj   jaŋ màj sǐn   màj sǒn əəj

Words in the first *wàg* of the poem should be positioned thus:

Example 85:

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
		sàgkrawaa	bùdsabaa			ɔɔ	ra-chàd

But, because the singer had very little time to prepare, she made a mistake and positioned these words so:

Example 86:

o	+	o	+	o	+	o	+
		sàg	krawaa			bùdsabaa	ɔɔrachàd

Once she had already sung the word *sàgkra waa* the singer realised her mistake and tried to amend it by struggling to squeeze the word *bùdsabaa* into a later bar. This mistake perhaps occurred because in the twelve songs sung previously, the word *sàgkra waa* was sung following Pattern 2 of the *sɔɔŋ chán* level, i.e. with *sàg* on a *chìŋ* beat and *kra waa* on the

following *cháb*beat, causing an expectation to be set up. However, Dùrijáphan's version of "Khèeg Húuan" always follows Pattern 1.

In general, in order to sing a new set of lyrics, the singer, first of all, must have a secure grasp of the melody. It seems obvious that singers should choose to sing melodies that they know very well. However, they sometimes pay too much attention to trying to achieve harmony between the title of a prospective melody and the theme of a poem and end up in disaster as in the above case.

Before starting to sing, singers have to divide each *wág* of a poem into g1, g2 and g3, as discussed earlier; this division doesn't have to follow the rhythm of the poem, but rather must keep the message intact. It is common for poets to write too many words for a *wág*, and this makes them hard to divide correctly.

While singing, the singers have to refer to the original melody throughout the performance, i.e. recalling word positioning, or whether the melody should be for words or *ýyua*. When it is an *ýyua*part, they can sing the original version of the melody exactly, but when it is a worded part, they usually have to change the melody in order to keep the tones intact. The "new" melody of the newly written word is normally based on the original melody of the original word, i.e. both use the same primary pitch. Examples of this can be seen in Examples 87 and 88 below where D is primary pitch 2 (C = 1). The singer used primary pitch 2 because it is the primary pitch that he learnt from his teacher, as shown here:

Example 87: *Sàgkrawaa*lyrics by Phòpphan Sìphàseenii; sung to the melody "Sǎam Sàw" [in RV1] selected and performed by Naron Sèephǎan


sàg   kra   waa   sù ri   jaa

Example 88: The melody of the song "Sǎam Sâw" that Narǫ Sěeŋhǎan used as his base version, with lyrics from *Khǔnchǎaŋ Khǔnphěen*

cǎw râ - aŋ   nɔ́ - ɔj ỳy nɔɔn nî-ŋ   ỳy yy

It seems, from my own performance experiences, that primary pitches can be deduced from the original melody and converted to a new melody (preserving speech-tones) "instinctively" by singers, as in Example 87 above. Here, Sěeŋhǎan deduced from his base version that d" was the primary pitch of this section of melody, and used it to create the *sǎgkrawaa* version. Singers, myself included, have no need to resort consciously to formulae, such as Tanese proposed, because throughout our long training as singers, the mechanism needed for this skill has become so deeply internalised that we no longer have to think about it in formal terms. In this sense, it is similar to the way in which native speakers are able to adapt their own language to each and every social situation or eventuality.

The melody that Sěeŋhǎan sang was accepted by everybody as a decent attempt, but he still felt that he had played safe in his performance (in conversation with Dùrijápraníid after the performance). I have never met a singer who is satisfied with their own singing performance in *kaan lên sǎgkrawaa*; they always say "I could have done better than that, if only I had had a little more time". Dùrijápraníid said that "the safest way to sing in *sǎgkrawaa* performances is to stick closely to the melody you have chosen", and that "being too adventurous can end in trouble" (personal interview 1997). However, she also added that if she were using the same version of the "Sǎam Sâw" melody, she would have sung it differently to Sěeŋhǎan, and she gave this example:

Example 89: Given by Dùrijápraniid to show an alternative melody to Example 87; using primary pitch 1 for the word *sàgkrawaa*
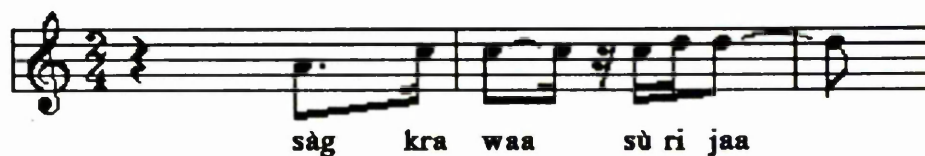
She offered no specific reason for changing the first primary pitch to c'', but it reflects the flexibility available to confident singers. The ability to change the primary pitch of an old melody for the purposes of word replacement is the hallmark of a master singer with great talent coupled to many years of experience. It reveals deep knowledge not only of the Thai repertoire of melodies, but also of the various poetic forms needed and a quickness of mind, all of which combine to bestow that elusive "instinct" which is the property of the master.

Let us look at one more example of a master singer altering a primary pitch. As mentioned, *sàgkrawaa* is not the only form in which singers have to adapt new lyrics to old tunes. This happens in more general competitions also. In Bangkok in 1950, Sùntharawaathin won a competition organised by the Department of Public Relations, when, daringly, she altered the primary pitch of the traditional melody "Phajaa Sòog" which had been given as the set melody. The traditional lyrics begin "ôo wan daj mí dâj phób..." and the new lyrics began with "lỳyab hèn phrá waj...". Example 90 shows the traditional version together with an example of what would be typically expected, and Sùntharawaathin's version.

Example 90: "Phajaa Sòog", *sǎam chán* 1st *caŋwà*

Traditional version

ô- o wa- n ǝǝ hóǝ ǝ ǝǝ

Typical adaptation

lỳy- ab ǝǝ hóǝ ǝ ǝǝ

Sǔntharawaathin's adaptation

lỳy- ab

Traditional version

da-j ǝǝ hý ŋyy hýy y ỳy y - y mí - yy dâ-j

Typical adaptation

hě -n ǝǝ hý ŋyy hýy y ỳy y - y phrá – yy hý yy

Sǔntharawaathin's adaptation

hě – n hý ŋyy hýy y ỳy y - y phrá – yy hý yy

Chapter 5

Some Significant Features of Thai Vocal Melody

5.1 The vocal melody and the *khɔ́ɔŋ* melody

When contemporary Thai composers are asked how they compose a vocal melody, their immediate answer is: "you need to understand the *thaaŋ khɔ́ɔŋ* [*khɔ́ɔŋ* melody] fully" or "it is always created from the *thaaŋ khɔ́ɔŋ*. (There are in fact many songs that are not based on a *khɔ́ɔŋ* melody, but they are not usually mentioned, perhaps because they are rarely of recent composition.) According to the history of Thai music, as already mentioned, pre-19th century songs made use of other musical repertoires than *piiphâad* music. As the *khɔ́ɔŋ* was exclusively used as part of the *piiphâad* ensemble, the vocal melody and the *khɔ́ɔŋ* melody could not possibly have had any relationship with each other at this time. Thus it should be remembered that creating a vocal melody from a *khɔ́ɔŋ* melody is a 19th and 20th century tradition.

The term *thaaŋ khɔ́ɔŋ* literally refers to the melody and its variations as actually played on the *khɔ́ɔŋ woŋ jàj* (the large gong circle). In reality, musicians often use this expression in a broader sense, not just referring to the actual melody played on the instrument, but also referring to a "deeper" meaning, an idea of an essential melody which is the essence of a piece even though it may not take physical form in a performance. That is why the term *thaaŋ khɔ́ɔŋ* in its broader sense is interchangeable with two other terms, *nʉ́a phleeŋ* meaning "song's essence" and *thamnɔɔŋ làk* meaning "principal melody".

Recently, Thai academics have invented the term *thamnɔɔŋ sǎandtha* literally meaning "the essence of a melody", but it is not yet as commonly used as the traditional terms.

Therefore, I would like to encapsulate the three terms, *thaaŋ khɔɔŋ* (referring to the basic structure of a song), *thamnɔɔŋ lǎg* and *nʔʔaʔ phleeŋ*, in a single English expression: "the basic structure". So when in future I refer to "the basic structure" of a song I am not going to be referring to the actual *khɔɔŋ* melody but to the idea that underpins both this melody and its variations, i.e., to the "deep", conceptual structure of the song.

5.2 The non-improvisational character of vocal melody

In performance, the instrumental musicians convert the *khɔɔŋ* melody into a simpler melody in their heads and then recreate a new melody from it, remaining responsive to the various other instrumental melodies. The whole process of this performance practice is complicated and is commonly known amongst instrumentalists as *kaan plɛɛ thamnɔɔŋ* or "the translation of the melody" with the instrumentalists seen as "translators". Silkstone (1993) explained this process by using the term "conceptualisation" for the simplification of the *khɔɔŋ* melody, and "realisation" for the conversion of this simplification into a new melody. He also said that the musicians conceptualise the same basic melody differently on different days and that they choose different melodies to fit into their current conceptualisation (ibid:12). This melodic conversion of the *khɔɔŋ* melody, when it is spontaneously practiced during a performance, can be seen as improvisation.

The process of arriving at the vocal melody, though sharing some traits with the instrumental, cannot be said to be improvisation. It is referred to by the term *tham thaaŋ rɔɔŋ* - literally "to create the way of singing". The vocal melody is pre-composed, either by the composer or sometimes by the singer. This means that the singer does not have to "translate" the *khɔɔŋ* melody in performance, because the melody is already translated. Once a vocal melody is composed, it is hardly ever formally changed. Aacaan Carəəncaj

said that each "phrase" of the singing is quite fixed, unlike the instrumental part where the melody can be varied in many ways (personal letter, 3 March 1995).

In reality, of course, noticeable differences appear in repeated public performances of the same song, or in *sagkrawa*performances. Differences arise from several factors, each of which will be discussed in more detail later (speech-tones have already been partly discussed of course):

1) Speech tones: notes from the basic melody can be considered not to have changed, but they are ornamented differently as the tones of the text change. Most singers wouldn't consider this an actual "change" in the melody, unless the tones are intentionally distorted in order to give musical accent or other artistic effect.

2) The effect of changes in the number of syllables contained in a text, which cause *jyauz*to be shortened or lengthened – this is not considered as a "real" change either.

3) Alterations in expressiveness and shifted emphases within a single melody and text, even though the speech tones have not changed; this is seen as change by some singers.

Singers do occasionally intentionally make an alteration during the performance to give the audience a surprise – but only to a few *jyau* parts, never to words, and there is much less change than to the instrumental parts. Even though alterations can be striking and normally draw a lot of attention, most singers will just concentrate on the perfection of vocal techniques and the conveyance of the emotional feelings of the words and *jyau* Therefore, a vocalist, unlike an instrumentalist, is not a "translator" but a "conveyor".

5.3 A general perspective on vocal melody

The vocal melody (*thaaŋ rɔɔŋ*) is sometimes very close to the *khɔɔŋ* and other instrumental melodies, as in the song "Khameen Sajjôog" shown in Example 91. The similarity of the vocal melody to the other melodic parts lies in the sequence of notes even though some note durations are different.

Example 91: "Khameen Sajjôog" [AM], *thɔɔn*1, *caŋwa*1, *wɛg*1[46]

At first I suspected that there might be some differences in the vocal melodies of the two different repertoires, *phleeŋ damnəən thamnɔɔŋ* and *phleeŋ baŋkhab thaaŋ,* as is true for most of the instrumental melodies. *Phleeŋ damnəən thamnɔɔŋ*[47], meaning "songs of ranging melody", is a type of song for which each melodic instrumentalist is expected to

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[46] The melodies of the *khɔɔŋ* and *ranaad eeg* which are usually played with both hands in octaves or other intervals, have been simplified and each has been presented here as a single melody.

[47] Also known as *phleeŋ thaaŋ phʉʉn* ("songs with foundation melodies").

provide a "translation" of the *khɔ́ɔŋ* melody into an individual instrumental melody for the ensemble performance. This means in effect that these melodies will be noticeably different from the *khɔ́ɔŋ* melody. The instrumental melodies of *phleeŋ baŋkháb thaaŋ* ("restricted path songs"), however, have the opposite character in that every instrumentalist has to play a melody very similar to the *khɔ́ɔŋ* melody. Silkstone (1993:17-8) says: "In a Fixed Melody phleeŋ [Silkstone's term for *phleeŋ baŋkháb thaaŋ*] ... the [instrumental] melodies diverge only in details of ornamentation and tessitura, allowing the performer little scope for variation". This led me to the hypothesis that the vocal melodies of *phleeŋ damnəən thamnɔɔŋ* might be different from their *khɔ́ɔŋ* melodies, and that the vocal melodies of *phleeŋ baŋkháb thaaŋ* (e.g. "Khamĕen Sajjôog" in Ex.91) might be similar to their *khɔ́ɔŋ* melodies. As a matter of fact, although the vocal melodies of *phleeŋ damnəən thamnɔɔŋ* are different from their own *khɔ́ɔŋ* melodies as expected, very few vocal melodies of *phleeŋ baŋkháb thaaŋ* are similar to their *khɔ́ɔŋ* melodies. That the vocal melodies of *phleeŋ baŋkháb thaaŋ* are not necessarily similar to their *khɔ́ɔŋ* melodies can be seen in the song "Khə̀əg Khǎaw", shown in Appendix III. Therefore, vocally, these two types can be treated as one, for the purposes of analysis.

As Example 91 illustrated, in Thai court music a few vocal melodies are almost the same as their *khɔ́ɔŋ* melodies; however, in the vast majority of cases, only a few notes are shared. The process of creating this second, divergent kind of vocal melody is similar to that followed when instrumentalists convert a *khɔ́ɔŋ* melody into an instrumental melody. Silkstone (1993) stated that when musicians do this, they do not think of the *khɔ́ɔŋ* melody in all its details: the *khɔ́ɔŋ* melody will be simplified before it is reconstructed into an instrumental melody. The simplified version can be understood to be the closest representation of the basic structure of a song, and for some musicians can even be said to be this basic structure. Example 92 shows a *khɔ́ɔŋ* melody and some simplified versions (any of which can be treated as representing the basic structure). It should also be noted that although the basic structure can be shown as a separate melodic line for ease of

analysis, the composer does not physically separate it out, but works from the *khɔɔŋ* melody, with an awareness of the basic structure always at the back of his mind, as an abstract concept.

Example 92: Typical *khɔɔŋ* melody and possible simplifications

(a) The actual *khɔɔŋ* melody

(b) Melodic line deduced from the *khɔɔŋ* idiom


(c) A simplified melody

(d) Another simplified melody

It should be realised that simplification into the basic structure can be a highly subjective process, varying from composer to composer, even though consensus appears to exist much of the time. (Example 93 gives further possible basic structures derived from the same *khɔɔŋ* melody.)
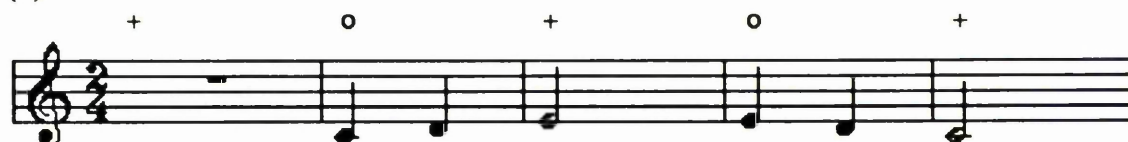
Example 93: Two more simplifications of the *khɔɔŋ* melody in Example 92a

(a)
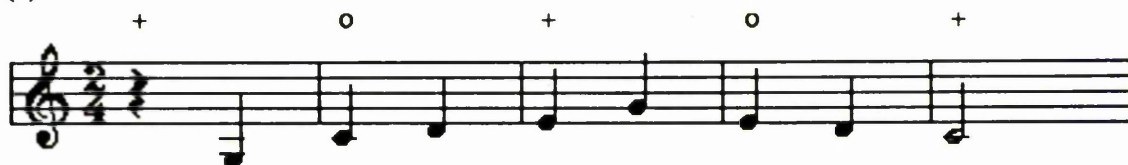
or

(b)

Creating a vocal melody shares the same process of mental simplification and conversion, but the vocal melody has its own *thaaŋ* ("way") or, in this context, melodic characteristics (*thaaŋ rɔɔŋ*). Tanese (1988:131) noted that "Instrumental and vocal versions of a melody share the same structurally important pitches … but vocal versions make use of their own melodic formulas…". While the instrumental melodies (*thaaŋ khrɯ̂yaŋ*) are the result of using *keb* technique, which is "filling-in" the melody to create a high density of equal notes, the vocal melody is closer to the basic structure, less dense and contains a variety of note values. It is generally accepted that the melody of Thai vocal music is similar to the *thaaŋ waan* solo version of fiddles and wind instruments. Sŏowàd further claimed that the instrumentalists borrowed this melodic style from the vocal (interview August 1997). Example 94 illustrates the differences between the *ranâad èeg* melody, where *keb* technique is employed, and the vocal melody, in comparison with the *khɔɔŋ* and basic structures; here the basic structure is the one shown in Example 93b above.

Example 94: (K = *khɔɔŋ*, B = basic structure; R = *ranâad ɛ̀ɛk*; V = vocal) [AM]

Since the basic structure can be conceptualized in different ways, the vocal melody of

the same *khɔɔŋ* melody can also be derived from Example 93(a) appearing as:

The basic structure is normally conceptualised as being in simple metre where the notes fall on the *chi̇ŋ* and *chȧb* beats, but sometimes on the beat halfway between *chi̇ŋ* and *chȧb*. However, only those notes of the vocal melody that fall on the *chi̇ŋ* and *chȧb* beats regularly correspond with those of the basic structure, and therefore to the *khɔ̌ɔŋ* melody also; the half-beat notes show less correspondence to either. The corresponding notes that fall on these "important places" are known in Thai as *lǔug tòg* or "structural notes", a concept described in the next section.

In 1929, Montrii Traamôod rearranged the song "Khamĕen Ew Baaŋ", a Cambodian-style song, into a *thȧw* form and taught it to the musicians in his band. He recalled:

> It was a coincidence that the King [Rama VII] had also already expanded the song "Khamĕen Ew Baaŋ" into a *thȧw* form and called it "Khamĕen La-ɔɔ Oŋ". [Discovering this,] I therefore asked my musicians to forget my version. Later, however, when I arranged another song, "Khɔ̌ɔm Soŋ Khrẏyaŋ", which was also in the Cambodian style, I used the melodies [both vocal and instrumental] of the abandoned version as an outline [*khrooŋ*] for this new arrangement. (Traamôod 1980:239)

This shows that it is not necessary for composers to create a new melody exclusively from the *khɔ̌ɔŋ* melody, but they can create a new arrangement either from scratch or even from somewhere else, as in the case of Traamôod's creation of the song "Khɔ̌ɔm Soŋ Khrẏyaŋ". However, it is necessary for every composer to keep the final *lǔug tòg* of each *caŋwàin* the new arrangement the same as in the *khɔ̌ɔŋ* melody.

5.4 *Lǔugtǒg*

The term *lǔugtǒg* refers to notes that, in theory, belong to the *chàb* beats.[48] However, the concept of *lǔugtǒg* can also be applied to the other "main" notes of the melody, notes that characterise the melody, so that notes falling on the *chǐɲ* beats, on the half-beats and, to some extent, on "any" beat can all be included. This totally depends on the creative perceptions of the composer and his purpose in composing the vocal melody: if he wants to create a "simple" vocal melody, many corresponding notes will be employed and can be seen as *lǔugtǒg*, but if he wants to create a "complex" vocal melody, very few notes will correspond with the *khǒɔɲ* melody.

In the complex case, there will be a hierarchy of note importance that composers are normally aware of (also discussed in Morton 1976: Chapter 4). Silkstone investigated the hierarchy of note importance (he uses the term "pitch" to refer to notes in the Thai scale) and confirmed that the last note of the cycle is the most important. From his research into Thai fiddle music, he extrapolated a general rule which can also be applied to vocal music and its relationship to the *khǒɔɲ* melody. He says:

> There is a hierarchy of structural pitches within the micro-structure of a cycle of Thai Basic Melody. This will manifest itself in greater melodic variability on the beat at each smaller division of the Cycle: i.e. the pitch on chàb#4 varies least; the pitch on chàb#2 varies more; the pitches on chàb#1 or #3, chiɲ, half-beats, and etc. vary progressively more and more. (Silkstone 1993:175)

For general application, this in effect means that the last note of a *càɲwà* will be the most "important", i.e. the most likely to correspond to the *khǒɔɲ* melody. The notes which fall on the half-cycle will be the next most important, then the quarter, and so on. Thus in many vocal melodies it is only the last note of the cycle which corresponds with the *khǒɔɲ* melody, as in Example 95. The brackets show the significant *chàb* beat, although the *lǔug*

---

[48] Silkstone (1993) uses the term *sǔaɲtǒg* for *lǔugtǒg* but it is not as commonly used.

tòg in the vocal melody has been "translocated" (see next section for further discussion of this common practice).

Example 95: "Sŏom Sòŋ Sèεŋ" [R28], *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán, thɔ̌ɔn*1, *caŋwá*2.

khɔ̌ɔŋ

vocal

əə há əə hý ŋəə hə́ə ə əəŋ ŋə́-ə   ə ə́ə-   j   hý   sŏo- m hý sɔ̀ŋ yy hý yy

In addition to this, the correspondence of *lûug tòg* in the vocal melody with those in the *khɔ̌ɔŋ* melody varies more and more from *sǎam chán* to *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* to *chán dïiaw*. It should be realised that the length of time between the *chíŋ* and *chàb* beats doubles from *chán dïiaw* to *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*, and doubles again from *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* to *sǎam chán*. That is why the vocal melody of a *sǎam chán* piece has a better chance to develop and so to correspond with the *lûug tòg* of the *khɔ̌ɔŋ* melody, while the condensed vocal melody of a *chán dïiaw* piece has less time and less chance.

5.4.1 Translocation of *lûug tòg*

During the consideration of *lûug tòg*, a significant characteristic of Thai singing is revealed: this practice will be termed the "translocation" of notes. As already mentioned, this is seen in the vocal of Example 95 above where the notes on both of the *chàb* beats

have been "postponed". Analysts must be aware when they are looking for the *lûug tôg* in a vocal melody that many of these notes do not fall on the beats where they really belong and that they might have been translocated, sometimes to before the beat, more often to after the beat. Such practice occurs not only in the vocal melody, but also in the melodies of some instruments such as the *khlùj* and the *pìi* and in most instrumental lines when they play *thaag wäan* style solos. Since this practice is not exclusively used in singing, it is hard to say whether translocation originated in singing and subsequently influenced the instrumental melodies or vice versa. However, it should be noticed that it only occurs with the more "vocal" instruments, and not with percussion instruments.[49]

The practice of translocating *lûug tôg* seems to originate in the worded part of a song. Everywhere that worded parts are employed, but the speech tone of the last word will not allow the vocal melody to end exactly on the *chàb* beat, some extra *ỳyaa* will be added to adjust the melody, so that it can finish on *lûug tôg* (see Example 96). Such *ỳyaa* are termed by Tanese (1988) "tail melodies".

Example 96: "Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ" [R29], *säam chǎn thôɔn2, caŋwǎ1*

```
                          o              (+)
khôɔŋ      1 6 5 3   6 5 3 2   5 3 2 1   3 2 1 6

vocal      - - - -   - - - 2   - - 2 3   -21-12   - - 1 2   -16 -

                     khom                khôɔn   yy hýy  yy ỳy
```

(The underlined notes represent the notes the words are sung on.)

This translocation of notes has become so fashionable that even where the melody allows the word to end on the *lûug tôg*, the singer often deliberately adds a tail-melody as if a translocation was still necessary to reflect the speech tone. Example 97 shows two alternative ways of singing the last words "udom dèed" in the song "Cɔɔrakhêe Hǎaŋ Jaaw": one without translocation (vocal 1) and the other with (vocal 2).

---

[49] According to David W. Hughes (personal communication, Oct 99), such translocation is common in vocal melodies in many cultures, and often in vocally-oriented instruments.

Example 97: "Cɔɔrakhêe Hǎaŋ Jaaw" [AM], *thɔ́ɔn*1, *caŋwá*2, *prajɔ̀ɔg*2 (when repeated)[50]

```
                            o              (+)
khɔ́ɔŋ      + 5 + 6    + 5 + 3   3 3 + 2   2 2 + 1

vocal 1     - - - -    - - - -   - - 2 2   - - - 1
                                   u-dom     dèed

vocal 2     - - - -    - - - -   - - 2 2   - 1 - -   2 3-2 1
                                   u-dom   dèed     yy hý y ỳy
```

Furthermore, this trend also occurs in the *ɲ̀yan* part (see Example 98).

Example 98: "Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ" [AM], *thɔ́ɔn*1, *caanwá*2, *prajɔ̀ɔg*1

```
                       o             +
khɔ́ɔŋ      + 5 + 6    + 5 + 3   3 3 + 2   2 2 + 1
vocal      - - - -    - - - 3   - - 5 3   - 232 3   - - 2 1
```

It is important to note that translocation never happens to notes that fall on the *chìŋ* beats or half-beats: it exclusively happens to those on the *chàb* beats. Also, as already noted, translocation is not always the postponement of the *lûug tòg*: the *lûug tòg* can also fall "prematurely", before the last beat. This strategy is called *làg caŋwá* or "stealing the rhythm" (Ex. 99).

Example 99: "Kaarawêeg Lég" [AM], *chán dǐiaw*, *thɔ́ɔn*1, *caŋwá*1

```
               o   +     o   +     o   +      o  (+)
khɔ́ɔŋ       - 5 5 5   - 5 5 5   - 6 - 5   - 4 - 3

vocal       - - - 5  - 1 5 4  - 5 - 2  3 3 - -
                 sěen    hý wí-tòg  hyy  òg yy raw
```

It is also common that *lûug tòg* can be postponed dramatically, so that they end up quite far from the position where they belong. Example 100a shows a way to sing the song "Nôg Khamîn" where the the most important *lûug tòg* are positioned at the same place as in the

---

[50] *Prajɔ̀ɔg* is a term borrowed from Thai grammar; in music it means a unit the length of one *chìŋ-chàb* beat, which is also a quarter of a *caŋwá* of a *pràbkày* melody

khɔ̌ɔŋ melody. Example 100b shows the commonly sung version of this song with the

lûug tòg greatly postponed.

Example 100a: "Nóg Khamîn" [AM], *sǎam chán, thɔ̌ɔn*1, *caŋwàt*1

```
               o              +              o            (+)
khɔ̌ɔŋ    + 6 + 5  5 5 + 1  1 1 + 2  2 2 + 3  + 1 + 2  + 3 + 5  + 6 + 5  + 3 + 2

vocal              1  - - - 2  3 -2123  - - -'5 -65 52  - 3 5 3  21232 2
                                              lÿyaŋ --- ɔɔn yy
```

```
               o              +              o              +
khɔ̌ɔŋ    + + + 1  + 2 2 2  + + + 3  + 2 2 2  + + + 1  + 2 2 2  + 1 + 2  + 2 + 2

vocal      - - - -  - - - -'
```

Example 100b: "Nóg Khamîn" [R21.2], *sǎam chán, thɔ̌ɔn*1, *caŋwàt*1

```
               o              +              o            (+)
khɔ̌ɔŋ    + 6 + 5  5 5 + 1  1 1 + 2  2 2 + 3  + 1 + 2  + 3 + 5 · + 6 + 5  + 3 + 2

vocal              1  - - - 2  3 -2123  - - - -  - - -'5  - - - -  1 5 65 5
                                              lÿyaŋ        hý ---ɔ
```

```
               o              +              o              +
khɔ̌ɔŋ    + + + 1  + 2 2 2  + + + 3  + 2 2 2  + + + 1  + 2 2 2  + 1 + 2  + 2 + 2

vocal      - 2 - 3  - - - -  - 3 5 3  -21232 2  - - - -  - - - -'
           ɔn yy --->                 əəj
```

5.4.2 The abandonment of the most important *lûug tòg*

There are a very few cases where the last *lûug tòg* in the cycle is abandoned altogether, as in the *chán dïaw* levels of the songs "Khèeg Bɔɔrathêed" and "Khèegmɔɔn Baaŋkhǔnphrom" shown in Example 101. Most singers give the excuse that the tempo is too fast for bringing the melody back to pitch 3 in the former and pitch 2 in the latter. They

claim that if they were to use a tail melody, they wouldn't be able to begin the next melody on time.

Example 101: Two cases in *chán diiaw* where the most important *lûug tòg* is abandoned

"Khèeg Booratheêd" [AM], *chán diiaw, thôon1, caŋwá1*

```
          o  +       o  +       o  +       o (+)      o  +       o  +       o  +       o (+)
khɔ́ɔŋ  + 6̣ 6 6   + 6̣ 6 6   + 5̣ 5 5   + 7̣ 3 3   - 5̣ - 1   - 1 2 3   - 5 - 3   - 3 2 1

vocal  - - - 6   - 1̇ - 6   - - - 3   - 5 - 1   - 5 - 6   1̇ 6 5 3   - 5 1 2   - 2 - 1
           sɔ́ɔ-  ŋ  myy     kɔ̀ɔd phǔ-ua                              hâj tuua nê-ən
```

"Khèegmɔɔn Baaŋkhǔnphrom" [R14], *chán diiaw, thôon3, caŋwá2*

```
          o  +       o  +       o  +       o (+)      o  +       o  +       o  +       o (+)
khɔ́ɔŋ  - - - 5   - - 4 5   - - 6 5   4 2 4 2   - 1 1 1   - 2 - 4   - 5 - 4   - 2 - 1
vocal  - - - 6   - 1̇ - 5   -65- 4   5 4 - -   - - - 1   - 2 - 4   - 2 4 4   - 7 - 1
           ə̌ə -  j  mii   hə́ ə̌ə sǒm   jaa                          chǎn dâ- aj maa
```

In some cases, where speed does not prohibit translocation, the composer will still abandon the *lûug tòg*, as in the song "Khèeg Khǎaw" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*) sung by Caraəncaj Sǔntharawaathin (Example 102). For this melody, most singers would use a "tail melody" in order to finish on the *lûug tòg*. By doing this, however, more space will be taken up before the next melody begins. Sǔntharawaathin prefers to leave the *lûug tòg* on pitch 1, rather than resolving to 4, for the following aesthetic reason:

> The next melody in my *thaaŋ* [version] is intended to give a Javanese flavour, as the lyrics convey. By leaving the word "a-sǎn" to be completed on this note [pitch 1], the Javanese accent can be conveyed better. (Sǔntharawaathin, personal letter, 1997)

Example 102: "Khèeg Khǎaw" [AM], *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán, thôon1, caŋwá3*

```
          o          +          o          +          o          +          o          (+)
khɔ́ɔŋ  - - - -   - - - -   7 6 5 1̇   - 7 - 6   7 6 5 1̇   - 7 - 6   7 6 5 6   5 4 3 4

vocal  - - - -   - - - -   - 6 1̇ 6   - - - 5   - 6 - 1̇   -2̇1̇- 6   - 1̇ - 5   5 5 - 1
                          sǐia daaj          sàg                            woŋ a-sǎn
```

5.5 *Tháw* melody

Apart from *lúug tòg*, there is another practice which makes use of "significant notes"; this is called the *tháw* melody.[51] The term *tháw* literally means "equal", and refers to a section which joins two separate parts of a song and which always "stands on one note" (*jyyn bon síiaŋ diiaw*), i.e. makes main use of one significant note and keeps returning to that note, especially at the end when it must finish on that note (this last note is known as the *lúug tòg* of the *tháw*). (See Ex. 103.) Sumrongthong (1997:83) classified *tháw* melody as a "special melodic sentence" which musicians must learn to improvise. *Tháw* melody can be situated at the beginning or at any other point in the song, except the very end. Chajséerii said that *tháw* melodies are used as a "bridge" between sections: "... after a *tháw*, we know that something is going to happen, and this is why it can never be at the end" (personal communication, August 1996).

Example 103: The *khɔ̌ɔŋ tháw* melody for the three different levels (*chán*), based on D.

---

[51] This word *tháw* with a falling tone is different from the earlier mentioned term *tháw* with a rising tone.

The singer can choose to ignore a *thǎw* melody that is situated at the very beginning of a song, as in "Cɔɔrakhêe Hǎaŋ Jaaw" and "Khɛ̀ɛgmɔɔn Baaŋcháaŋ", but the instrumentalists have to play it when they repeat the section in sequence. For any other sections (*thɔ́ɔn*) of the song, the singer can only *not* sing the *thǎw* by prior arrangement with the musicians, who then tack it on to the previous instrumental section (this is only possible for a *thǎw* melody which comes at the beginning of a *thɔ́ɔn*; if the *thǎw* falls in the middle, it must be sung under all circumstances).

While the instrumental parts of the *thǎw* melody can be improvised into many different versions (according to the style of the instruments), the vocal *thǎw* melody seems to be fixed and conventional. The above *khɔ́ɔŋ thǎw* melody at the *sǎam chán* level is usually sung as:

Example 104: Vocal *thǎw* melody on a D note (*sǎam chán*)
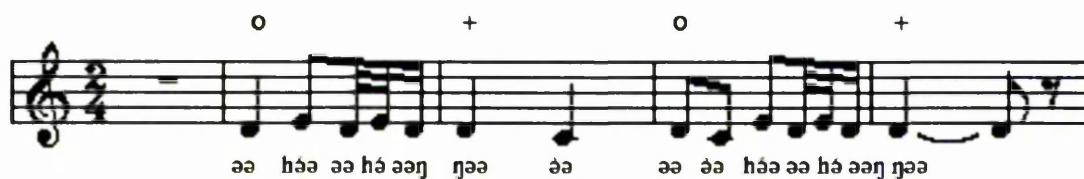
The same *thǎw* melody when played on the *ranâad èek* can vary substantially:

Example 105: Two different versions of the *ranâad èek thǎw* melody on D

or

It should be noted also that the main note of a vocal *thâw* melody will always be the first note (as in Example 106 where D is the first and main note), and always falls thereafter on either the *chìŋ* or *chàb* beats. Generally speaking, the first note of the *thâw* vocal melody falls on the *chìŋ* beat at the *sǎam chán* level, and on the *chàb* beat at the *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* level (Ex. 104, 106).

Example 106: Showing the *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* version of the above *thâw* melody.

5.6 *Lób sǔŋ*

Turning to a different kind of convention: when singers are accompanied by different kinds of ensembles, they find themselves having to sing the same songs in different "keys", i.e. pitch-levels (one meaning of the word *thaaŋ*, see next section). For example, songs that are performed by a *pìiphâad mái khě̌ɛŋ* ensemble will be a *thaaŋ* higher than when they are performed by a *khrɯ̂ŋsǎaj* or a *mahǒorii* ensemble. There will, therefore, always be some parts of the melody of any given song that will be too high or too low for a singer to reach. When this occurs, singers will drop down or rise up an octave to suit their own vocal range, before returning to the main scale or staying in the changed scale according to need. This rearrangement does not change the sequence of notes, but is the equivalent in Western terms of transposing down from a middle C to a low C, for example. The Thai term for this is *lób sǔŋ* or "avoiding a pitch". Example 107 is an ascending melody which is too high for some singers, and therefore has to be transposed:

Example 107:

hý ŋəə əə hə́ əə   əə   əə hə́ə ə əə ə-əə
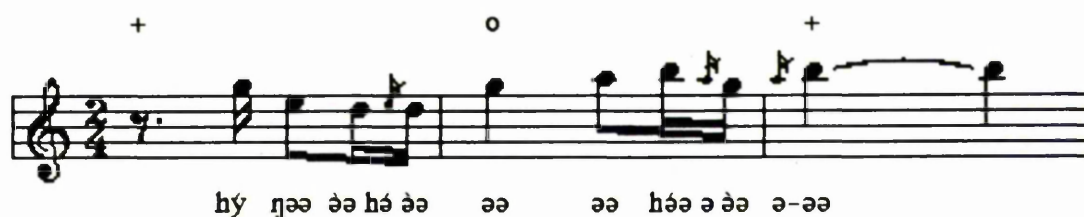
Most singers are capable of solving this kind of problem, but there are cases where singers are ill-prepared and end up making a "poor escape" as illustrated in the following example:

Example 108:

hý ŋəə əə hə́ əə əə   əə hə́ə ə əə ə-əə
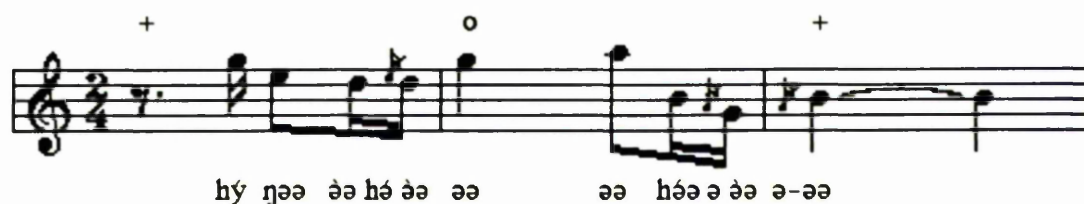
What is bad in the above example is that the escape is attempted on the wrong note. The notes making up the above phrase are divided into two: the first group ends on the *chiŋ*beat (note G), and the second begins on the following A note. These groups of notes should not be split internally. What the singer could have done is to breathe after the G and then begin with an A an octave lower (Ex. 109).

Example 109:

hý ŋəə əə hə́ əə əə   əə hə́ə ə əə ə-əə

Although the above strategy is acceptable, the singer has sacrificed the continuity of the phrase. Most singers would try to keep the phrase in one piece by rearranging the melody by adding link notes to smooth the descent (Ex. 110).

Example 110:

hý ŋəə   əə hə́ əəŋ ŋə́ə   əə   əə hə́ə ə ə́ə ə-əə
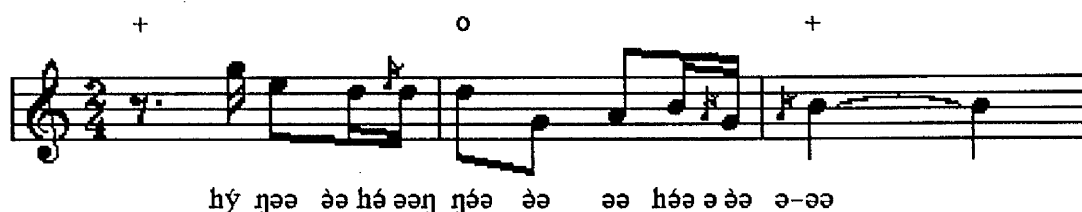
These transpositions and rearrangements can be applied to any vocal melodic phrase where an "escape" is required, and are used at the singer's discretion.

5.7 *Thaaŋ*

Thaaŋ literally translated as "way" or "path", is an umbrella term covering several different meanings. One meaning, "pitch-level", corresponds to the Western concept of "key". When it means this, it can be divided into seven "levels" which can be linked to the Western solfege system thus:

thaaŋ phiiaŋ-ɔɔ bon	(Do = 1)
thaaŋ krʉʉad or *nɔ́ɔg*	(Re = 1)
thaaŋ klaaŋ hɛ̀ɛb	(Mi = 1)
thaaŋ cha waa	(Fa = 1)
thaaŋ phiiaŋ-ɔɔ lǎaŋ	(Sol = 1)
thaaŋ naj	(La = 1)
thaaŋ klaaŋ or *mɔɔn*	(Ti = 1)

Musicians sometimes use the word *sǐiaŋ* instead of *thaaŋ* so that the terms would be *sǐiaŋ phiiaŋ-ɔɔ bon, sǐiaŋ cha waa* etc.[52]

Another meaning is to do with musical characteristics; to quote Myers-Moro:

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[52]See Silkstone (1993:89-90, 417) for a further explanation of pitch-level

It refers to both the variation or rendition (of a composition) stylistically and characteristically of a particular instrument, and the versions of standard songs associated with individual teachers or schools. (1993:107)

The term *thaaŋ róɔŋ* meaning "the way of singing", refers to the character of vocal music. The term *thaaŋ khrɰ̈yaŋ* refers to the character of instrumental music, and can be customised further to refer to individual instrumental parts; e.g. *thaaŋ ranâad èeg* refers to the melodic character of the *ranâad èeg* part. *Thaaŋ* can also refer to individual styles – Thúuam Prasìdthíkun's style, for example, could be referred to as *thaaŋ khrwu thúuam* ("The style of teacher Thúuam"). Stylistic schools use the term *thaaŋ* to identify themselves, together with the term *bâan* or house; for example, *thaaŋ bâan phâadthajákoosòn* is used to signify the Phâadthajákoosòn House style. Often, an individual's style and the stylistic school are interchangeable as the individual represents the whole school, as in the case of Phâadthajákoosòn House and Khunjìŋ Phajthuun who was the leader of that house. This section will be concerned only with the term *thaaŋ* as it refers to stylistic schools and individual styles.

As mentioned in Section 5.3, different composers conceptualise the *khɔ́ɔŋ* melody in different ways resulting in varying basic structures and thus varying vocal melodies. An example of the many *thaaŋ* of a song can be seen in "Khèegmɔɔn Baaŋkhùnphrom", composed by Prince Bɔɔriphád in 1910 (both instrumental and vocal parts). Soon afterwards, Phrájaa Sanòdurijaaŋ reinterpreted the same *khɔ́ɔŋ* melody in a new vocal *thaaŋ* which was so different from the original that it is hard to recognise that they are versions of the same song. My personal notes record an instance of this confusion:

> At a funeral ceremony for Khunjìŋ Phajthuun, when I had finished singing the Prince Bɔɔriphád *thaaŋ* of the song "Khèegmɔɔn Baaŋkhùnphrom", my fellow singer Méŋ remarked to me that she had never heard this *thaaŋ* before and that if she hadn't known the title of the song she would have mistaken it for a completely different song as the melody was so different from the version she knew … (noted in Bangkok 1997)

Below are excerpts from transcriptions of this very song "Khèegmɔɔn Baaŋkhǔnphrom"

illustrating the differences between the two versions by comparison to the *khɔ́ɔŋ*melody.

Example 111: "Khèegmɔɔn Baaŋkhǔnphrom", *caŋwà*2 (K = *khɔ́ɔŋ*melody; V1 = Prince Bɔɔriphád's version [R14]; V2 = Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durijaaŋ's version [R13])

Both *thaaŋ* differ noticeably not only from each other, but also from the *khɔ̌ɔŋ* melody. It seems that the more the vocal melody deviates from the *khɔ̌ɔŋ* melody, the better that *thaaŋ* is regarded to be. This deviation is, of course, limited by the positions of the *lûuŋ tɔ̀ɔg* which both versions share. The above example shows that both versions share *lûuŋ tɔ̀ɔg* C in bar 13 and b flat in bar 17 (translocated in V2). The rest of the melody is markedly different between the two *thaaŋ*.

Furthermore, it is often the case that composers from different schools use different sets of lyrics for a composition in order to distinguish themselves from each other. Composers become dissatisfied with the standard *thaaŋ* of a song and set out to replace the traditional lyrics being used with another set of lyrics from a different, but still traditional, source. This changing of the lyrics entails a changing of the vocal line. In theory, this practice could be infinite, but in actuality a few versions gain popularity and become standards in their own right. This is why schools of music can still be identified with specific versions or *thaaŋ* of a song, and the number of *thaaŋ* of a song in general currency tends only to vary from two to six at any one time. Ergo, it is still possible to identify the school from which a singer comes, when he or she sings in a *sǎŋkrawaa* performance, because they will have a well-known *thaaŋ* of a song in mind, which they will use when asked to utilise the newly written lyrics.

The lyrics used in the two versions in Example 111 above, have both been taken from the same story (*Khǔnchâaŋ Khǔnphɛ̌ɛn*), but from different episodes telling different tales of different warlords. Prince Bɔɔriphâd chose the poem that tells the story of Phlaaj Chumphon and his ritual confrontation with his enemy Phrá Waj on the battlefield, where they both recite their lineage before battle is joined. Phrájaa Sanɔ̌durijaaŋ subsequently chose the poem telling the story of Phlaaj Ngaam, another main character in the story, and his farewell to his wife, an episode that reveals the vulnerable sadness beneath the tough facade of the warlord, and which contrasts with the bluster of the lyrics chosen by Prince Bɔɔriphâd.

Each version makes use of different amounts of lyrics at the *sǎam chán* level: Prince Bɔɔriphád's version makes use of one and a half lines for *thɔ́ɔn*1 and 2, an unusual practice, while Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durijaaŋ's version follows the convention (Ex. 112).

Example 112: Lyrics used for the song "Khə̀ɐgmɔɔn Baaŋkhǔnphrom", *sǎam chán* for both versions

1) Prince Bɔɔriphád's version

      (1) *khraa nán*   *phlaaj chumphon dâj faŋ kɔ́ɔ jàŋ jùd*

cyŋ tɔ̀ɔb wâa raw phǔu ryyaŋ rídthirùd (2) *naam sòmmúd chy̌y samíŋ mádtraa*

thin thǎan bâan myyaŋ raw nii   *jùu jaŋ thaanii hòŋsǎa*

(3) *mə̀ɐŋtajá lě mə̀əj maŋtrajaa*   *pen bidɔɔn maandaa khɔ́ɔŋ raw*

aacaan raw ry̌y chy̌y sùmə̀ed   *ryyaŋ phráwêed mâj mii khraj dii thâw*

2) Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durijaaŋ's version

(1) *phlaajŋaam khwaam aa-laj caj la-hǔa*   *faŋ mǔa mâj klân námtaa dâj*

(2) *phǔi nii ly̌ya thǔi cà hǔuaŋ -jaj*   *phǔi cà paj bɔ̀ɔg phɔ̌ɔ hâj khɔ́ɔ nɔ́ɔŋ*

(3) *chy̌ŋ kràraj dâj khɔ́ɔ phɔɔ dǔaj mân*   *pɔ̀ŋ kan mí hâj khraj maa kǔaw khɔ́ɔŋ*

thǎa hàaŋ wâa bidaa mâj prɔɔŋ-dɔɔŋ   *thy̌ŋ cà tɔ̀ɔŋ fan khɔɔ mâj khɔ́ɔ paj*

Consequently, the word positioning in *thɔɔn*1 and 2 of the two versions is different: Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durijaaŋ's version contains less words and therefore more *ỹyan* (Ex. 113).

Example 113: Word positioning in the two versions of the song "Khə̀ɐgmɔɔn Baaŋkhǔnphrom", *sǎam chán, thɔ́ɔn*2; B = Prince Bɔɔriphád's version, presented in bold, S = Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durijaaŋ's version

B		o		+		o		+
						naam	**sòmmúd**	
S								

B   o   +   o   (+)

					chỹy	samǐŋ	

S

					phîi	níi	

B   o   +   o   +

S

		lỹya	thîi				

B   o   +   o   (+)

					mád	traa	

S

					cà hùuaŋ	jaj	

B   o   +   o   +

		thìn	thǎan		bâan	myyaŋ	

S

						phîi	cà paj

B   o   +   o   (+)

					raw	níi	

S

					bɔɔg	phɔ̂ɔ	

B   o   +   o   +

		jùu	jaŋ		thaa	nii	

S

B   o   +   o   (+)

					hǒŋ	sǎa	

S

					hâj khɔ̌ɔ	nɔ́ɔŋ	

In a wider context, there are certain *ɲyaŋ*-section melodies that are sung by the Phâadthajákoosǒn School, of which Prince Bɔɔriphád was a member, that are not sung by the Sanǒdurijaaŋ School. An example of this can be seen in the ending melody of the *sǎam chán* level of the song "Khèɛgmɔɔn Baaŋkhǔnphrom" where the overall vocal melodies of both *thaaŋ* seem to agree with each other (see Example 114). But bar 30 of Example 114

shows the different approaches of the two schools, each intent on differentiating itself from the other, and refusing to share the same vocal melody for long.

Example 114: Vocal melody sung only by the Phâadthajákooson School (P), and that used by singers of other schools (O); differences indicated in bold

Many vocal melodies used by the Phâadthajákooson School differ noticeably from those used by others, and it is these differences that make this particular school distinctive in Thai musical society. Example 115 shows another vocal melody that is sung exclusively by Phâadthajákooson singers:

Example115: "Bùlǎn" [AM], *sǔum chán ýynn*as sung by Phâadthajákoosǒn School (P) and by other schools (O)

As well as schools, as mentioned earlier, the word *thǎǎŋ*can also be used to identify individual singers, distinguishing even singers of the same school. For example, Sùdcìd Dùrijápraniid and Caraancaj Sǔntharawaathin are from the same school, that of Phrájaa Sanɔ́durijaaŋ, and most of their singing makes use of the same main melodies, but they still have their own *thǎǎŋ* This is made clear when other singers identify the singing melodies of these two singers as *thǎǎŋ khrvu sùdcìd* (the style of teacher Sùdcìd) and *thǎǎŋ khrvu caraancaj*(the style of teacher Caraancaj). Individuality is subtle and may seem indiscernible to outsiders, but it is very clear to fellow singers. It is interesting to examine how a mid-tone word is sung differently by Dùrijápraniid and by Sǔntharawaathin. Both singers always sing it using two notes, but Sǔntharawaathin will treat the first note as an ornamentation by using a grace note for it, while Dùrijápraniid will always lengthen the note.

Example 116: "Khèèg Pàdtaanii", *sɔ́ɔŋ chán*, the word " *cǎd*'; lyrics by Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn

Sǔntharawaathin

Dùrijápranîid

c - a - n

The idea of individual *thaang* can also be illuminated by the use of the term *sàd sǔuaŋ* which refers to the "shape" of the melody, a reference to the duration of notes. The first person to start using this term was Caraancaj Sǔntharawaathin during her teaching. She always paid very close attention to the details of the melody – whether the note should be as short as a grace note or a little bit longer in particular melodies. She always said that the *sàd sǔuaŋ* of a melody not only differentiates advanced singers from beginners, but also reveals the style of the individual singer. Example 117 shows three variations on a melody that make use of different *sàd sǔuaŋ* as explained by Sǔntharawaathin, and a fourth variant from another *thaaŋ.*

Example 117: Contrast in *sàd sǔuaŋ*: three by Sǔntharawaathin, one by Prasìdthíkun

a) ordinary *sàd sǔuaŋ* used when "modest" singing is required; also used amongst beginners

əə   əə   hʔə əə əə   ə- əə

b) advanced *sàd sǔuaŋ* considered the standard version

əə   əə   hʔə   ə əə   ə- əə

c) another advanced *sàd sǔuaŋ*

əə   əə hʔə   ə əə   ə- əə

d) version characteristically used by Prasidthikun, but never by Suntharawaathin

əə   əə hə́ əə   ə̀ə   ə - əə

Unsurprisingly, when singers become successful and gain lots of pupils, they adapt their own style until it becomes distinctive. This can be seen in the case of Thúuam Prasidthikun, a talented pupil of Phrájaa Sanɔ́durijaaŋ, who became an authority on Thai singing after decades of great success in performing and teaching for the Fine Arts Department. Her singing style became different from that of other students from the same school, which may have been the result of her own adaptations plus influences gained from mixing with singers from different schools. This difference can be seen in her positioning of some words in the song "Ciin Sɛ̌ɛ" that vary from the practices of Carəəncaj Suntharawaathin, a fellow pupil of Phrájaa Sanɔ́durijaaŋ (Ex. 118).

Example 118: "Ciin Sɛ̌ɛ" [R2], thɔ́ɔʌ2; T = Thúuam Prasidthikun, C = Carəəncaj Suntharawaathin

5.8 Melodic flexibility and manipulation in *phleeŋthajɔɔj*

Phleeŋ thajɔɔj is a kind of song originally used only in plays. It is used to accompany a particular action characterised as a "sorrowful journey", i.e. when a character walks and cries at the same time. In the play "Ngɔ́ Pàa", the main female character, Lamhàb, goes out to look for her overdue husband in the forest:

> She searches before the cave by the stream
> No, he is not there
> She is getting worried and frightened
> Shouting loudly with a shaky voice
> No matter how loud she shouts, no answer comes
> Her pricked ears receive no reply
> She keeps walking and searching
> Her pitiful heart is almost broken

The above lyrics are set to the *phleeŋthajɔɔj* melody known as "Thajɔɔj". *Phleeŋ thajɔɔj* can usually be recognised by having this word "thajɔɔj" in the title; examples include "Thajɔɔj Naj", "Thajɔɔj Juuan", and "Thajɔɔj Khamĕen". But this is not always the case, and there are many other examples, such as "Oô Laaw", "Khamĕen Râadchaburii", and "Khèeg Lóbburii".

Most *phleeŋthajɔɔj* used in plays are at the *sɔ̆ɔŋ chán* level. Interestingly, when the songs are expanded to *săam chán* level, the sorrowful feelings are only preserved in the lyrics and vocal part; the instrumental part[53] is full of excitement created by being played at a very fast tempo and adding in joyful *lûuglɔ̌ɔ lûug khàd* melodies (complementary and contradictory melodies played by two groups of instruments).

Phleeŋthajɔɔj melodies are divided into two types: the *nɣ́ɣa phleeŋ*[54] and the *joon*. These are played alternately, the rule being that the melody must begin and end with a *nɣ́ɣa* section. *Nɣ́ɣa* means "meat", and is defined as a melody that is fixed in length, or number

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[53] Remember that the instrumental and the vocal parts are not performed at the same time, but rather in alternation.

[54] This is a different concept from *nɣ́ɣa phleeŋ*, the same word, that refers to the basic structure of a song.

of bars, but not in its sequence of notes (i.e. an instrumentalist or a vocalist can create a new melodic line). However, the truly significant feature of *phleeŋ thajɔɔ* is the *joon* melody, where the number of rhythmic cycles is variable. The term *joon* literally "to swing", refers to the character of this type of melody, which oscillates unequally around one note. This is a similar concept to that used in the *thâw* sections of *phleeŋ prôbkàj*, where the melody is also built around one note, but which results in different melodic characteristics. Moreover, the vocal melodies of the *joon* section of each song are different, whereas the *thâw* section will be broadly the same in each song.

As for the instrumental part, the composers (really, arrangers) can create several versions of the *joon* parts of the composition by extending them for as long as they want. They usually arrange the melodies into different foreign styles, or different versions of the same foreign style. An example of this is the song "Khèeg Lóbburii", from which several versions have been created. However, it is not common for composers to rearrange the vocal part, regardless of any changes to the lyrics.

A significant feature of the vocal melody of *phleeŋ thajɔɔ* is that the singers manipulate the *joon* melody by changing the note durations or adding ornaments. Sǔntharawaathin calls this technique *kaan lɔɔj caŋwǎ* or "the flying rhythm"[55]. When the note value is changed, the length of the melody is changed too. As a result, the vocal line does not correspond any more to the drum pattern, but "flies above it", and it will sound like a free-rhythm melody. However, it is important in all songs which are accompanied by drums for the melody (vocal or instrumental) to ultimately dovetail with the rhythmic pattern. Therefore, the singers have to "land" before the *joon* part ends. This practice of *kaan lɔɔj caŋwǎ* is exclusively used by students of Sǔntharawaathin; other singers stick to the rhythm more precisely. Sǔntharawaathin says that singing with the *kaan lɔɔj caŋwǎ* technique can better convey the sad feelings of the song.

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[55] This can be alternatively translated as "the floating rhythm"; both translations are equally valid, but "flying" gives the sense of forward motion.

A *joon* section always ends with a *tháw* melody. Most singers will sing the *tháw* melody two or three times per *joon*, but some singers like Súntharawaathin prefer to sing it only once. In teaching, Súntharawaathin will tell the students to ignore the drum in the beginning of the *joon* section and to concentrate just on the notes in the free-rhythm style talked about already. When the melody approaches its end, the students then start to listen to the drum, to find out which part of the cycle the drum pattern is in at that moment, and so adjust their singing to fit. Therefore, in order to sing using the *looj caŋwá* technique, singers have to know the drum pattern for this genre – the *náatháb thajooj* – and its variations well enough to respond and return to it seamlessly.

It is a Thai tradition that songs are categorised by the type of *náatháb* (rhythmic pattern) by which they are accompanied. *Náatháb thajooj* is also known as the *náatháb sóoŋmáa* or *sóoŋmáa* pattern. There are three different kinds of drums used for different kinds of ensembles: *kloŋkhèeg*, a pair of "Indian" drums, for the *woŋpiiphâad máj nuuam* or "soft stick percussion ensemble"; *kloŋ sóoŋ náa*, a single cylindrical drum, for the *woŋ piiphâad sèephaa* or "[hard stick] percussion ensemble for *sèephaa* music"; and *thoon rammanaa*, a set of two drums (one goblet-shaped, the other a circular frame-drum), for the *woŋ khrŷyaŋ sáaj* or "string ensemble" and for the *woŋ mahóorii* or "full orchestra".[56] Of course the drum strokes of different kinds of drums result in differing sounds: the sounds that can be created from a *thoon rammanaa* are *thâŋ, tiŋ, caŋ* and *cóŋ* while the sounds of a *kloŋ sóoŋ náa* are *phriŋ, pá, túb* etc. The fact that Thai musicians think of drum strokes in terms of words is exploited by teachers, so that they can impart new rhythms to their students vocally. The words representing the different strokes vary from school to school. It is important in performance that the same *náatháb* will vary according to which drums are used (and thus, of course, which ensemble), as shown in Example 119.

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[56] See Yupho (1987) for further information.

Example 119: The basic drum pattern for *nâathâb thajɔɔ*[57]

For *klɔɔŋ khɛɛg* drums [58] (two drummers, each playing one of the pair of drums)

sǎam chán

```
              o                    +                    o                   (+)
| -thâ - ti | - có - cá | - có - cá | - có - cá | - ti - ti  | -thâ ti thâ | - ti - ti | -thâ ti thâ |
```

sɔɔŋ chán

```
         o         +         o        (+)
| ti - có cá | ti ti - ti  | - - có cá | ti ti - thâ |
```

chán dìaw

```
      o   +   o  (+)
| ti - có cá | ti ti - thâ |
```

For *thoon rammanaa* drums [59] (one drummer, playing both drums)

sǎam chán

```
              o                    +                    o                   (+)
| - -thâ ti | thâ ti cá có | - cá - có | - cá - có | - ti - ti  | -thâ ti thâ | - ti - ti | -thâ ti thâ |
```

sɔɔŋ chán

```
         o         +         o        (+)
| ti - cá có | ti ti - ti  | - - cá có | ti ti - thâ |
```

chán dìaw

```
      o   +   o  (+)
| ti - cá có | ti ti - thâ |
```

For the *klɔɔŋ sɔɔŋ nâa* (also known as *sɔɔŋ nâa*) drum [60] (one drummer, one drum)

sǎam chán

```
              o                    +                    o                   (+)
| - - - ph | - - - ph | - - - pá | - - - túb | - - - -  | - - - pá | - - - túb | - - - ph |
```

sɔɔŋ chán

```
         o         +         o        (+)
| - - - túb | - - -priŋ | - - -priŋ | - - -priŋ |
  or
| - - - pá | -túb -tiŋ | - - - pá | - túb-ph |
```

chán dìaw

---

[57] These data are taken from Narkong's thesis (1992:55–6), but with different romanisation and presentation.
[58] thâ is used throughout this example to represent the sound thâm; ti represents tiŋ.
[59] có = cóŋ
[60] ph = phriŋ

```
    o   +    o  (+)
| - - - túb | -ph -ph |
```

The above are only the basic patterns for each drum: there are normally many variations during performance, partly dependent on individual style (see Narkong 1992).

Examples of *kaan lɔɔj caŋwǎ* ("the flying rhythm")

As mentioned previously, *kaan lɔɔj caŋwǎ* is a metaphoric explanation for the process whereby singers free themselves from a fixed rhythm and go into free rhythm, while the drummer still keeps the *thajɔɔj* pattern to a strict tempo. *Kaan lɔɔj caŋwǎ* allows singers to express the sad feelings of the genre through allowing them to go with their emotions, giving them full and free vent, as they seem to forget the rhythmic rules that underpin the *phleeŋ thajɔɔj* that they are singing. There is a manipulation of the time-scale within the *jɔɔn* section that a passage of melody inhabits. Singers achieve this by seeming to float indefinitely above the drumbeat, while the drum rhythm itself makes the audience more aware of the disregard of order that is occurring. This is of course partly an illusion, as the unwritten rules of singing *phleeŋ thajɔɔj* state that a piece should not be excessively long. The skill lies in the balancing of one passage with another - stretching notes here and compressing them there, always seemingly unaware, but always acutely aware of the rhythmic cycle which must be re-entered sooner or later.

The example of *kaan lɔɔj caŋwǎ* shown below is taken from a performance of one of Sǔntharawaathin's pupils, Aphinjaa Chiiwákaanon, singing the song "Thajɔɔj Naj" during a rehearsal for a general competition in 1991. The ensemble that accompanied her was a *pìiphâad sěephaa*, which uses the *klɔɔŋ sɔ̌ɔŋ nâa* drum. This is contrasted with the same song sung by Sǔntharawaathin in 1987 for my personal instruction, in order to illustrate the song sung without *kaan lɔɔj caŋwǎ*. Normally, performance with and without *kaan lɔɔj caŋwǎ* (of the same song) will result in different numbers of rhythmic cycles in the *jɔɔn* section; but in this example, coincidentally, both singers made use of the same number of

cycles, four. This allows us to do a parallel comparison of both melodies. The *joon* section starts on the *chi* beat of bar 13 and its ending is marked by the *cháb* beat of bar 28.

Example 120: "Thajɔɔj Naj", *sǔum chǔn*: the top staff is a teaching version without *kuun lɔɔj cug wa* presented by Caraancaj Sǔntharawaathin (28 crochets/minute) [R31]; the bottom staff is an actual performance by Aphinjaa Chiiwákaanon (24 crochets/minute) [R32]. The plus sign with brackets, (+), marks the end of the rhythmic cycle.

o   +   o

13

(1) əə   ə - əə   hə́ əəŋ   ŋəə -   i   hý yy

13

(1) ə̀ə   ə - əə   hə́ əəŋ   ŋəə -   j hý yy

(+)   o   +

16

(2) hý ŋəə   -   hý ŋəə əə hə́ əŋ ŋ-əə   ə e ə̀ə

16

(2) hý   -   ŋəə əə   hý   -   ŋəə əə ə ə̀ə   əə hə́ əə-ŋ   ŋə̀ə

o   (+)   o

19

-                    (3) əə   hə̀ə   hə́ə ə ə̀ə ə - əə

19

əə hə́ə   ə ə̀ə   -   (3) ə̀ə -   hə̀ə   hə́ə ə ə̀ə

22
(4) hý ŋə -ə əə hə́ə ŋ ŋəə - j (5) əə hə́ə əə hə́ əən

22
əə əə - (4) hý ŋəə - əə

25
ŋəə - j əə hə́ə əə hə́ əŋ ŋəə -

25
hə́ əə - ŋ ŋəə - j (5) əə hə́ə əə hə́ əŋ

28
i̩ sɛ̌ - ɛn hý yy wi tòg yy

28
ŋəə - j sɛ̌ - ɛn hý yy wi tòg yy

For ease of analysis, the above example has been divided into five passages numbered in brackets (also, passages 1, 3 and 5 are underlined for additional ease of viewing). The first passage shows the beginning of the *kaan lɔɔj caŋwá*, where the singer starts to ignore the time-controlling drum and *chiŋ*, there is not much difference at this stage. The *kaan lɔɔj caŋwá* is more apparent in passage 2, where Chiiwákaanon not only totally ignores the

percussionists, but also adds ornament notes, moving on to "float" over the drum beats in passage 3. When analysed, her notes are falling on off-beats and quarter-beats, but she is not attempting to achieve this consciously; instead she is concentrating on the *sàd sʊʋaŋ* or duration of notes without using the drum rhythm to time herself, thus freeing the notes to become shorter or longer as necessary according to her internal feel for the performance. This allows the sadness of the song to flow out through the singer to the audience. The free-rhythm can best be seen retranscribed without bar lines, as in Example 121 below:

Example 121:

Passage2

without *kaan lɔɔj caŋwà*

hý ŋə̀ə əə – hý ŋəə əə hə̀ əəŋ ŋə̀-ə – ə əə

with *kaan lɔɔj caŋwà*

hý ŋə̀ə əə hý ŋə̀ə əə ə əə əə hə̀ əəŋ ŋəə hə̀ə əə hə̀ə ə əə

Passage 3

without *kaan lɔɔj caŋwà*

əə həə hə̀ə ə əə ə əə

with *kaan lɔɔj caŋwà*

əə – həə – hə̀ə ə əə – əə əə

Passage 4 of Example 120 shows the moment when Chiiwákaanon starts to "begin her approach for landing", i.e. when she starts to listen to the drum once more in order to place herself within the rhythmic structure and takes note of the point in the rhythmic cycle that she occupies, adjusting and manipulating the vocal melody accordingly. She also has to calculate enough time to allow herself to finish passage 4, before the *thầw* melody begins, signalling the beginning of passage 5 and the end of the *joon* section. Consequently, passage 5 allows Chiiwákaanon to "touch down" from her "flight" by singing the *thầw* melody. She sings it only once, according to Sǔntharawaathin's advice that "once is enough, twice is already too much". In Example 120, Sǔntharawaathin herself sings the *thầw* melody twice, but only because she wants to illustrate an "undesirable" version (to her school, although not to some others). In an actual performance of the song "Oô Laaw" in 1990, Sǔntharawaathin used *kaaa lɔɔj caŋwǎa* and sang the *thầw* melody only once, according to her own prescription (Example 122).

Example 122: "Oô Laaw" [R23], *sǎam chǎn* sung by Caraancaj Sǔntharawaathin

yy   hý   ðo - y yy hý yy y hý yy wâ-a   wee-

Other singers who never use *kaan lɔɔj caŋwâ* like Sùdcìd Dùrijápraniid, repeat the *thâw* section at the end of the *joon* part two or three times. Their belief is that "the *thâw* here is used to imitate a crying voice, and that it is more appropriate to repeat it in order to illustrate the true sorrow of the soul" (personal interview Dùrijápraniid, August 1997). Most singers would choose a middle path, somewhere between the approaches of Sŭntharawaathin and Dùrijápraniid. Below is an example of a *joon* section from the song "Oô Laaw" in this compromise style; it is sung only partly using *kaan lɔɔj caŋwâ* (in bars 20 and 21), and the *thâw* melody is repeated twice.

Example 123: "Oô Laaw" [R22], *săam chán* sung by Prachíd Khâmprasàəd; the *thâw* melody is underlined

thô-ɔ- ɔd th-ɔ̌ɔ-   n   hý hyy y ỳy

ca - j hý yy   əəŋ hý ŋəə həə ə əə   jâ-j   yy hý yy

əə   hə́ əə   hə́ə   əə   əə hə́ə əə hə́ əŋ

As has been just stated, *kaan lɔɔj caŋwà* is not to everybody's taste. It is one approach amongst many, and some master singers, even though they could attempt to "borrow" the technique, choose not to, instead sticking to their own beliefs and means of interpretation. Realistically, however, the ability to use this technique depends upon the proximity of any singer to Sŭntharawaathin and her teaching. *Kaan lɔɔj caŋwà* is very personal to Sŭntharawaathin and her school; in fact, she can be said to be its inventor. Knowledge of this approach to *phleeŋthajɔɔj* has inevitably seeped out and influenced other singers and other schools informally. However, *kaan lɔɔj caŋwà* is a tricky technique to master and becomes very difficult indeed to figure out without direct tuition from a learned teacher. I was taught the technique directly by Sŭntharawaathin, which is why I am able to talk about it with some degree of understanding. Outside of Sŭntharawaathin's circle of pupils, it remains something of a mystery, subject to guesswork and imitation, while being jealously guarded by its prime exponent. This reminds us that Thai court singing is not a static, fiercely conservative genre. It is possible for respected artists to make significant innovations, subject to the constraints imposed by the rhythmic pattern, which have already been mentioned.

Chapter 6

The Teaching of Thai singing

เรียกผู้มาศึกษาว่าลูกศิษย์	We call all those who come to study "pupil children".
เออผู้ใดได้คิดบ้างหรือไม่	Who has ever noticed
ว่าเปนศัพท์พิเศษของเทศไท	That this is a custom close to Thai hearts
ยกศิษย์ให้เปนลูกถูกทำนอง	To name our pupils as our children?
อันมนุษย์น้อยใหญ่ในโลกนี้	All parents of this world, rich or poor,
ย่อมรักลูกไม่มีเสมอสอง	Love their children beyond compare,
เห็นว่าลูกมีค่ากว่าเงินทอง	Value them higher than silver and gold,
ลูกศิษย์ของครูก็เปนเช่นนั้นเอย	And so we teachers love our pupil children.

(M.L.Pin Maalaakun 1903-95)

Every year Suntharawaathin's pupils, including myself when I lived in Thailand, gather together to celebrate her birthday. After lunch, they will play music and sing songs, then the teacher will join in and sing the above poem to the melody known as "Khɔ̌ɔm Klɔ̀m Lûug", meaning "a Khmer singing a lullaby to their child". The melody is simple, but the text is full of emotion for pupils, particularly when it is sung for them by their own teacher.

6. 1 The relationship between students and teacher

The term "pupil children" or *lûug sìd* gives an insight into the relationship between teachers and students. The term *lûug* meaning "offspring" is used for both male and female babies, while *sìd* is "a person who receives the knowledge" or a student. Another term used for students is *nág rian* literally meaning "professional learners", but it is used chiefly in modern educational institutions and doesn't have the intimate implications of the

traditional term. If a teacher uses the term *nágriian* to identify a pupil, the teacher is hinting that that pupil is merely someone who has come to learn and that they are not accepting him or her as a "real" pupil. Unsurprisingly, every pupil identifies themselves as being a *lûug sid* of the teacher. I have never heard any pupils identify themselves as *nágriian* in Thai musical society.

The Thais name their teachers *khruu* which is derived from the Sanskrit word *guru*. The Sanskrit word itself originally meant "heavy", which is appropriate for Thailand, since Thais always consider teachers as those who bear a heavy load. Another term used for teachers is *aacaan*, but it is more commonly used for university professors (including professors of music) who have formal qualifications. Myers-Moro (1993:110) noticed that *aacaan* have a "higher prestige than *khruu*". Some music teachers who haven't got any qualifications but teach at universities are unhappy to be called *khruu* and prefer their pupils to call them *aacaan*. But for many Thais the term *khruu* has a deeper meaning than the knowledge-giver which the *aacaan* represents. *Khruu* refers to those who also love and care for their pupils, are supportive when pupils are in trouble and happy when they are successful. Perhaps it could be said that *aacaan* are respected while *khruu* are loved.

A teacher is said to be a second father or mother to the student. Prasìdthíkun's pupils call her "khun mêe", which means "mother". Students come from many walks of life: Sùntharawaathin's students are people from various professions. They include a school teacher teaching Thai language (Jomdooj Pheŋphoŋsăa), a university lecturer in Pali and Sanskrit (Praphód Asawáwírunhakaan), a banker (Canthraa Sùgkhàwírijá), a doctor (Yŷaphoŋ Càtùráthamroŋ), a school teacher teaching Thai traditional singing (Aphinjaa Chiiwákaanon) etc. These people are bound together like brothers and sisters with Sùntharawaathin as their mother, although they do not call her such.

The students of Khunjiŋ Phajthuun Kìdtìwan – many of them from the Army Academy – treated her as if she was their real mother: they took her out for day trips, and when she

was ill, they brought her food and flowers and kept her company; and when she died, they mourned.

Myers-Moro divided students into two kinds: formal and informal.

> Formal students were those who lived in the teacher's household, performing
> chores in return for daily lessons and opportunity to practice long hours.... .
> Informal students came only occasionally to study or to "ask for" songs. (Myers-
> Moro 1993: 111)

There are no terms to distinguish between formal and informal students, but it is clear to the teacher and the students themselves. The relationship between the teacher and his or her formal pupils and amongst the pupils themselves was that of people in the same family. Thais define these people as those who "live under the same roof" (*jùu tàj chaajkhaa diaaw kan*) and "eat rice from the same pan" (*kin khâaw móo diiaw kan*).

Even though some of these "musical houses" still exist and still accommodate musicians and singers, e.g. Phâadthajákoosŏn House and Kamnan Sămraan House[61], in other places this tradition struggles to keep going.[62] Most musicians and singers come to a teacher's house to learn and practice during the day but no longer stay the night. On top of this, musical houses are no longer the only places from which to gather knowledge: formal educational institutions, such as The Dramatic Arts College, have also taken over these traditional tasks. Thus, formal students are no longer only those who live with the teacher. However, even those who are taught in other contexts still have to be loyal disciples who conscientiously learn, perform and preserve their teacher's style.

The new definition of an informal student is one who, although learning new songs from a teacher, still sings in his or her old style simultaneously. (So, in effect, a student can have a formal relationship with one teacher, whilst having informal relationships with several others at the same time.) One of Myers-Moro's informants said that "...the first

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[61]These two examples are also known by the other names Wádkanlajaa House and Ajûdthajaa New House respectively.

[62] Chritopher Blasdel gave a fuller list of Thai musical houses in his 1999 paper to the 39th ICTM (International Council of Traditional Music) conference, which would be of interest if published.

teacher always goes the deepest, touches the student the most" (ibid:114-5). Informal
students can make the transition to formal if they spend a long enough time with the teacher
and the other pupils, not only learning and performing music but sharing their life with
them.

Thais use the term *khrôp*, literally "to cover", but which can also be translated as "to
influence" or "to mould", in order to explain the process of passing on Thai singing. An
example of influential teaching can be seen in the case of the already mentioned Aphinjaa
Chiiwákaanon, a singer who spent many years after graduating from university living with
her teacher Súntharawaathin, absorbing the very spirit of the teacher, not only imitating her
singing style, but also emulating her in all aspects of her life, even down to the way she
dressed and which ornaments she collected. Despite concern in some quarters that her
singing is "too much like" that of her teacher, Chiiwákaanon enjoys a reputation as one of
the top singers currently performing, proving that an old-style relationship with a teacher,
although it has some dangers, is still effective in creating a new generation of potential
master singers.

6.2 Traditional teaching methods

In the old days, most successful singers started singing when they were very young,
learning from their parents or relatives. Those with no close connection with a musical
family found it difficult to get a teacher and often struggled to excel. Súntharawaathin learnt
singing from her father, Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durijaaŋ[63] (one of the most famous court musicians
ever), simultaneously with learning to talk. She wrote thus about learning to sing:

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[63] This is a title given to Chêm Súntharawaathin by King Rama VI. Phrájaa refers to "the fourth rank of
conferred title for government Civil Service officials" (McFarland 1989:567). Sanɔ̀durijaaŋ means "melodious
music".

> My mother told me that when I was only a few days old [i.e. in 1915], my father fed me with a drop of pure gold every day for three days. Years later, when my speaking was clear enough, he started teaching me to sing "Tôn Phleeŋ Chiŋ", as it had to be the first song every beginner learnt. The first line was '*kaakii̇́ pŏŋpàd saḀ̀d kɔɔn*', but on the first day I learnt how to sing just the word '*kaakii̇́*': '*kaa*' followed by *ŷyaa* and then '*ki̇́*'. The sound of the *ŷyaa* must be the same as the trilling sound of the fiddle. In order to exercise the throat until it was under control, I had to practice every morning and evening. Once I could sing that word, he taught me the next one and so on until the song was complete. (Sŭntharawaathin 1995:88-9)

This was common practice amongst the children of famous musicians. The song "Tôn Phleeŋ Chiŋ" was used as an initiation piece for every beginner at that period, including Prasìdthìkun and Dùrijápraniid. However, Kìdtìwan informed me in conversation in 1997 that she was in fact started off with the song "Thajɛ̀ɛ", her father perhaps being important enough as a musician to have his own ideas about apprenticeship. Feeding a baby with a drop of gold was widely believed to ensure that the baby would grow up to be golden-voiced. Thus, according to a Thai saying, singers with good voices were *nągrɔ́ɔŋ sĭiaŋ thɔɔŋ* - "golden-voiced singers". Whether or not the pure gold had any effect on their voices, some of these children did in fact grow up to gain great distinction as famous singers with fine voices! The fiddle reference is interesting in light of Prasìdthìkun's recollection in her book that she was taught by Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durijaaŋ to memorise sounds by listening to him playing them on the *pìi̇́ naj* (Thai oboe) ([Prasìdthìkun] 1992a:103). One thing is certain, that learning bit by bit with regular practice - or to borrow Myers-Moro's words, the "slow cooking" of the old leisurely world - led to evident success. There were no fixed periods for lessons; singing teaching took place anywhere and at anytime in a holistic, life-embracing way. Meal times, gardening periods, even massage sessions were all opportunities for debate, correction and practice. The downside of this was of course harsh discipline and physical punishment for the slow or lazy child.

In these past days, singers exercised their voices by singing under water. Prasìdthìkun recalled her own childhood experience:

My house was by the river. I exercised my voice in the river. My father made me
go under the water and sing. You could sing anything, not necessarily a song,
yelling or just singing the sound æ, but it had to be at the top of your voice. My
father would keep me under the water by pushing my head down until I was out
of breath. When I recovered from exhaustion, my father would make me repeat it
again, and I had to do this everyday .... Singing under water not only gives you
strength but allows you to hear your own voice more clearly. As a result, you'll
be able to hit and maintain a pitch, and never be out of tune .... (ibid:74)

When an opportunity came, the child would be sent to stay with a famous teacher to
gain more knowledge. Prasìdthìkun's father was a common (non-court) musician and also
a fine singer. He started teaching her when she was only 7 years old. One day, when
Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durijaaŋ visited the house, her father asked her to sing for the visitor. She
wrote in her diary:

My father said to him [Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durijaaŋ] that I was a foolish girl, never
wanted to study, but enjoyed singing very much. Then he called me to sing for
his highly regarded friend. He [Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durijaaŋ] said I had a good voice and
was brave, and then offered to train me, saying that this knowledge [singing]
would be good for my future. I followed him to his house in the Baaŋ Sâj Kàj
district. He taught me only in the mornings and evenings. During the daytime, he
had to go to the Sǔuan Buua Palace to teach the ladies-in-waiting.... One day
[after a year] my mother visited me, and I wanted to follow her home. I hadn't
learnt much at that time. Also I had an easy and comfortable life with my teacher.
What a foolish girl I was! (ibid:102)

Because Prasìdthìkun already had some knowledge of singing, Phrájaa Sanɔ̀dirjaaŋ
chose to re-teach her songs that she already knew before teaching her new songs. She
recalled:

When I finished learning some significant techniques on the songs I knew already,
he then taught me new songs. The first song he taught me was "Sǎaráthǐi" and then
"Khaměen Plikhě̂əw", "Khèəgmɔɔn", "Thajɔɔj Naj", "Thajɔɔj Nɔ̂ɔg" and so on.
(ibid:104)

The correcting of already-learnt songs was a process of getting to know each other for both
teacher and student. The student had a framework of knowledge against which to measure
her new learning, and a ready-made comparison which allowed her to see the significance

of her new teacher's *thaag* (style) and techniques. The teacher was able to measure his new student's ability and knowledge, while having a structure on which to build for the future. It is interesting that I had much the same experience myself when I transferred from my first teacher, Suntharawaathin, to become an informal pupil of Kidtiwan. She made me sing a song that I knew in order to assess me; immediately she spotted the evidence of my previous teacher, identified her correctly, and set out to gently provide me with alternative techniques and interpretations of the piece. She then proceeded, over the succeeding weeks, to teach me songs that were unknown to me.

6.3 The concepts of *huuag wichaa* or "guarding knowledge" and *khruuphag lig cam* or "stealing knowledge"

Huuag wichaa is a fascinating concept. The term *huuag* itself, according to Haas' *Thai-English Student's Dictionary*, means "to refuse to share or give away; to guard, keep back, care for zealously; or to keep from falling into others' hands". The term *wichaa* means "knowledge". Myers-Moro interprets *huuag wichaa* as "guarding knowledge" and says:

> Sometimes guarding is not overtly the choice of the teacher himself, but of the deities.... This strict guarding has saved the most sacred repertoire from falling into the hands of students who are likely to abuse tradition by passing the repertoire on to others indiscriminately or who might be harmed by the supernatural power associated with some songs. (Myers-Moro 1993:118)

Such a statement presents *huuag wichaa* as a concept where the restriction of knowledge is under the control of musical deities. It is true that Thai musicians guard very much against the improper passing on of certain repertoires, particularly *phleeg naaphaad*. This term comes from *naa* meaning "face" or "front" and *phaad* meaning "orchestra". It is impossible to explain the significance of the actual words, but this term became associated with theatrical melodies some time in the 18th century (there are no records of dates, only

oral conjecture). *Phleeŋ nâaphâad* were wordless interludes which accompanied the action

on stage. Sometimes demons and supernatural beings were involved, and these pieces

gradually came to be associated with these deities. Later still, they came to be used in *wâj*

khruu("homage to teachers") ceremonies, which enhanced their supernatural reputation.

Phleeŋ nâaphâad must be taught step by step, in strict order, with certain pieces only

allowed to be taught after others have already been mastered. One of the pieces that inspires

most awe and respect is "Oŋ Phrá Phirâab" – described by Myers-Moro as "the most

supernaturally powerful and dangerous song in the entire musical repertoire". It requires

not only very advanced musical skills, but also spiritual maturity and high social standing

on the part of the "knowledge receiver" (*phûu ráb thâaj thɔ́ɔd*). Traditionally the *phûu ráb*

thâaj thɔ́ɔd apart from having a good knowledge of the prerequisite preceding pieces, must

also have been a monk. [64] This latter was supposed to spiritually protect the receiver against

any supernatural side-effects which may occur from learning such a sacred piece. Thai

musicians are very superstitious people, and the initiation as a monk, even if it is only for a

few weeks, represents the superiority and triumph of Buddhism over the old religion of

Hinduism with its demons and gods, the old religion having inspired the sacred deities to

which these *phleeŋ nâaphâad* are dedicated.

Another explanation for this close tie with religion is that in the old days, when the

temple was the centre of all kinds of education, only people who had been ordained as

monks were allowed to be educated. Therefore, for Thai society in general, only he who

had been ordained as a monk was considered a *khon sùg* or "ripe person", ready to work in

any profession. Thus for musicians also, only a person such as this was equipped to bear

the responsibility of performing and preserving the piece "Oŋ Phrá Phirâab" and other

pieces from the *phleeŋ nâaphâad* repertoire with respect and due care. As a consequence of

this, women were prohibited from learning the most sacred *phleeŋ nâaphâad* pieces since it

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[64] In Thai society, traditionally, most men were ordained as monks, usually around the age of 20, before they returned to secular life. This need only to have been for a short period. It gave a unique insight and spiritual grounding to the populace, engendering respect and admiration for those who chose to spend their whole lives as monks. The practice still continues today, though much reduced.

was impossible for them to be ordained as monks. Some time in the unrecorded recent past, the rules became loosened, with an age limit now standing alongside mandatory ordination as the qualifications for eligibility. Those who have never been monks have to be over thirty-five years of age, which allows women to now learn even the most guarded and respected of pieces, although such women still remain few in number.

This restricted repertoire had nothing to do with singers, as all of the pieces were instrumental. It is only recently that lyrics and vocal melodies have been created for some of the *phleeŋ nâaphâad* associated merely with action scenes. The "high" pieces, related to deities, such as the aforementioned "Oŋ Phrá Phíràab" and others such as "Phraam Khâw" and "Samôə Phraam", still do not have vocalised versions. Even the less sacred pieces that have been given vocal parts are still treated with the utmost respect and are only taught according to the traditional protocols and cautions.

Hŭuaŋ wíchaa is not confined to the sacred sphere. There is a long tradition, related to the practice of pupils living in the houses of their teachers, of master singers jealously guarding the musical knowledge acquired in a lifetime, and refusing to pass it on to any but the most trusted of their apprentices - sometimes not even to them until literally the last days of the master's life. Occasionally the master would wait too long, as evidenced by "ghost" songs, such as "Niiarapaatii", "Chomphuunúd" and "Jookhii Joon Kêəw", which are no more than names written in Ajúdthajaa-period inventories. This secular *hŭuaŋ wíchaa* continues to the present day. It has been said that Lŭuaŋ Pradìdphajrô (1881-1954) did not reveal his best version of the *ranâad èeg* solo of the song "Kraaw Naj", learnt in a dream, to any pupil. The only student that he was prepared to teach this tune to was Bunjoŋ Kèedkhoŋ, but Kèedkhoŋ did not have enough *ŋən kamnon* (thank-you money) to pay for the lesson. In the end, the unheard tune went back to its musical deity forever![65] Montrii Traamôod wrote about Thŭuam Prasìdthíkun:

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[65] *Ŋən kamnon* was only requested by a teacher for the most prestigious pieces. The teacher traditionally passed the money on to a temple in order to make merit and to thank the forefathers of his school.

> I asked Khruu Thúuam to sing for me the song "Thajɔɔj Dìiaw" but she
> refused. I think she was afraid that I would memorise the song! Worse than
> that, she refused to remind me of the lyrics of the song "Phrácan Khrỹŋ Sîig"
> which I myself had written and taught to her. ([Prasìdthíkun] 1992a:39)

This kind of *húuaŋ wíchaa* is a totally human jealousy, with nothing to do with the

supernatural or respect for deities. The refusal to pass on knowledge comes from a high

degree of competition amongst musicians and singers, even those who work for the same

institutions. Where musical knowledge equals prestige, no singer wants to give his or her

rivals any advantage. At this level, *húuaŋ wíchaa* can simply be viewed as the result of

petty rivalry.

Probably as a consequence of *húuaŋ wíchaa*, there grew up the corresponding practice

of *khruu phàg làg cam* which can be translated as "memory and theft are the best teachers"

but which can be simplified as "stealing knowledge". If musicians and singers could not

extend their repertoire by fair means they had to use foul. *Khruu phàg làg cam* refers to the

practice whereby musicians and singers would attend performances by their rivals or

superiors and try to memorise any songs or techniques which were new to them. They

would then incorporate the stolen musical goods into their own repertoire, trying to pass

them off as their own. Wíchiian Kunlatan provides examples of the extreme lengths that

musicians go to, even now, to avoid becoming victims of predatory "thieves", otherwise

known as other musicians:

> Some musicians practice their music in fruit gardens where no one can hear
> them; some fiddle players put a piece of cloth into the sound box in order to
> mute the sound for the same reason; some play the tunes very fast so that
> nobody can possibly remember and so steal the melody; some masters of *pìi naj*
> practice their instruments sitting in trees and put the end of the *pìi naj* into a jar
> so that the sound cannot be heard clearly ... . ([Kunlatan] 1983b:36)

Húuaŋ wíchaa and *khruu phàg làg cam* still exist despite the advent of universities with

their Thai music departments, and are indeed rife within their walls. *Khruu phàg làg cam*

can be seen as a way of disseminating and widening knowledge of traditional music so that

it is not lost. Musicians and singers can also enrich their own practice by studying and copying the techniques of others, and in fact they all do so, whether they are willing to admit it or not. In this way whole schools can acquire characteristics from others, and stealing knowledge can be regarded as just one more way of learning.[66]

6.4 Songs for beginners

As mentioned previously, "Tôn Phleeŋ Chiŋ" was expected to be the first song learnt by most singers born at the beginning of the 20th century, and in their cases it really was the first. When the Dramatic Arts College, the premier music college of Thailand, was established in Bangkok in 1942, this song was put into the curriculum and has been used as an initiation piece ever since. However, the college students were and are unlikely to be complete beginners; by the time they sit the entrance test to the college they will have had some years experience of singing. So "Tôn Phleeŋ Chiŋ" can be said to be their initiation into higher learning, although confusingly, some might have already learnt it as their first childhood piece. Thúuam Prasìdthikun, one of the pioneering teachers of the school, wrote in an article published on her cremation that her friends and ex-pupils often teased her for her never-ending use of the song "Tôn Phleeŋ Chiŋ" for beginners: "Khruu Thúuam's pupils year after year sing only the song ' *kaakii* ', nothing else" ([Prasìdthikun] 1992b:118; *kaakii* is the first word of the lyrics, and so became used as a nickname for this piece by the pupils).

"Tôn Phleeŋ Chiŋ" is the first song of the "Tàb Tôn Phleeŋ Chiŋ" suite, which consists of "Tôn Phleeŋ Chiŋ", "Cɔɔrakhêe Hǎaŋ Jaaw", "Tuuaŋ Phrá Thâad" and "Nóg Khamîn".[67] In a situation where time prohibits pupils from learning the whole suite, they

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[66] David W. Hughes has noted that Japanese folk musicians also often "steal art" (*gei o nusumu*) from others, but there, in Japan, it is a proudly admitted and accepted technique (Hughes 1985:Sect 2.5.2)
[67] It is common to use the title of the first piece as the title of the suite

have to at least finish "Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ" (Sŏowád, personal interview 1997). The song is at the *sǎam chán* level, with its characteristic large use of *ýyɐɐ* making it hard to learn. Why use such a difficult song to teach beginners? Prasìdthíkun opined:

> Children that have never learned a song are completely ignorant, and any song can be hard for them anyway. Therefore we might as well teach them a difficult song with a lot of *ýyɐɐ* and once they have learned the difficulties of *ýyɐɐ*, they can learn anything. This is what we mean by *tôn lambàɐg cà sabaaj mýyɐ plaɐj mɹy* ["hard at the beginning, easy at the end"]. (ibid:122)

Disregarding the high degree of *ýyɐɐ* Prasìdthíkun said "the song is not too difficult because the melody is simple and not too long when compared to the *sǎam chán* melody of other songs" (ibid:122). Here is the melody of "Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ" that I learnt from Sǔntharawaathin in the music department at Chulalongkorn University, where it was also policy to teach it to beginners as their first song:

Example 124: "Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ", *sǎam chán*

7

əə hý ŋəə əə hə́ əəŋ ŋə́-ə ə əəj

9

kaa əə həə kii

11

pô-ŋ ỳy əə hə́ə ə əə ə əə pà- d yy

13

əə ə əə ə əə həə əə hý ŋəə əə hə́ əŋ

15

ŋə́-ə ə əə hý ŋəə əə hə́ əŋ ŋə́-ə ə əə əə hý

17

ŋəə hə́ əə hý ŋəə hə́ə ə əəŋ ŋə́- ə ə ə əə-

o   (+)

j   sa- là-   d   yy hý yy   kɔɔ-   n

chɔ́ɔn2

o   +

əə   hə́ əə   hý   ŋəə hə́ə   ə əəŋ   ŋə́-ə   ə əə   hý   ŋəə   ə əə

o   +

ə-əəj   chaa-   j   nê-   e-d   yy

o   +

əə   ə əə   ə-əə   hý   ŋəə-   j

o   (+)

kho-m   yy   hə́ə   ə əə   khɔ́ɔ-   n   əə   hə́ə   ə əə

o   +

əə   ə əə   ə-əə   əə   əə   hý   ŋəə   əə- ŋ

11

ŋə́-ə ə əə hý ŋəə əə-ŋ ŋə́-ə ə əə əə hý

13

ŋəə hə́ əə hý ŋəə hə́ə ə əəŋ ŋə́- ə ə əə-

15

j hə̂- j pə̀- g sə̆-a hý yy

The vocal melody shown here contains metabole shifting between *sǔaŋ chawaa*(F = 1) and *sǔaŋ phǐiaŋ-ɔɔ bon*(C=1): *thɔ̌ɔn*1 = *sǔaŋ chawaa* -> *sǔaŋ phǐiaŋ-ɔɔ bon* -> *sǔaŋ chawaa, thɔ̌ɔn*2 = *sǔaŋ phǐiaŋ-ɔɔ bon* -> *sǔaŋ chawaa*. The melody from bars 9-16 of *thɔ̌ɔn*2 is the same as that in bars 13-20 of *thɔ̌ɔn*1, and this, according to Prasidthikun, makes the song easy to remember. *Thɔ̌ɔn*1 contains three cycles[68] of *nǎatháb pròbkàj,* while *thɔ̌ɔn*2 contains only two cycles, a moderate amount by Thai standards.

While "Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ" is seen as the ideal song for beginners, it is not by any means the only song used for this purpose in the past. Kìdtìwan told me in conversation that she had been taught the song "Thajɛɛ" as a beginner by her step-mother, Mɔ̀m Carəən (1876-1955). This song is considerably more advanced than "Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ", and appears as a solo piece for many different instruments. The melody is hard to remember, and this has made it very rare as an ensemble performance piece. I asked Kìdtìwan if she could teach me

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[68] The above notation shows the vocal melody of *thɔ̌ɔn*1 as being two and a half cycles, with the first cycle containing only half a cycle. This is because the first half cycle of this section is a *thǎw* melody, which, as mentioned earlier, is normally omitted in the vocal melody.

this song and at first, she said "Why would you want to learn a song that no *khon khrýyaŋ* [instrumentalist] can accompany!". In the event, she did teach me the vocal melody and said: "Good luck, I hope you find some people who know the instrumental part well enough to accompany you". Below is the vocal melody of "Thajɛɛ" which I learnt from her:

Example 125: Transcription of the song "Thajɛɛ" [R30], *săam chán,* from tapes recorded during my lessons with Khunjíŋ Phajthuun Kìdtɪwan

o   +
11
əə   hə əə hý ŋəə   əə hə əəŋ   ŋə - ə   ə əə

o   +
13
əə   hý ŋə - ə   əə hə əəŋ   ŋəə -   j   mon -

o   (+)
15
thaa   ỳ yy hý yy   thɔɔ -   ŋ

o   +
17
hý yy   ỳy   hýy   yy hý əŋ   ŋəə -   j   cha -

o   +
19
nǎ - j   hý   ŋyy   yy hý yy   nɔɔ-ŋ   yy   hýy   y ỳy

o   +
21
əə   hý ŋəə   əə hə əə   ə-əə -   j

o   (+)
23
cy -ŋ   maa ráa -   ŋ   yy

25   o   +

əə   həə   həə ə əə   ə-əə   əə   hə əəŋ

27   o   +

ŋəə   hý ŋəə   əə hə əəŋ ŋə-ə ə əə   əə

29   o   +

əə hə ə hý ŋəə   həə   əəj   hý ŋyy yy yy hý yy

31   o   (+)

sa-nèe   hăa   yy

chɔ́ɔn2

1   o   +

$\frac{2}{4}$

əə   ə əə   ə əə   əə   əə hə əə   hý ŋəə həə ə əŋ

3   o   +

ŋəəj hý phĭ-i tằ-ŋ   ỳy cĭ-đ yy   hý yy

ə ə   ə ə ə   ə ə   həə ə ə-əə -   j

hý   paj   wii - aŋ   cha- j   hýy   y ỳy

ə ə   həə ə ə   ə-əə -   j

hý   ca rá - b   yy kə̂ɛ - w   yy

ə ə   hý ŋəə   ə ə ə-əə -   j

hý   wɛɛ - w taa   ə ə

ə ə   ə ə   ə ə   ə ə

o   +

43

əə   hýy ŋəə   əə hə əŋ ŋə́-ə   ə əə   əə

o   +

45

əə   hə́ əə hý ŋəə   həə   əə   hý ŋəə əə əə hə́ əə -

o   (+)

47

j   paj   wii – aŋ   cha –   j

Although the beginnings (first 14 bars) of each *thɔɔn* are the same, it is a lengthy song with *thɔɔn*1 containing four cycles of *nâatháb prɔ̀bkàj* and *thɔɔn*2 containing six cycles; this is part of the difficulty in memorising the melody, particularly for beginners. Also, the *lûug tòg* of the first *caŋwà* of each *thɔɔn* do not correspond with those in the *khɔ̆ɔŋ* melody. On top of this, the vocal melody of *thɔɔn*2 is significantly shorter than its *khɔ̆ɔŋ* melody, an unusual occurrence in a *phleeŋ nâatháb prɔ̀bkàj*. (See Appendix VII for a transcription of the *khɔ̆ɔŋ* melody of this song.) These non-correspondences cause extra difficulties for a beginner, when they try, as they are taught to do, to compare the vocal melody and the *khɔ̆ɔŋ* melody, in order to understand the relationship between the two. All of these factors have probably contributed to making "Thajɛɛ" obsolete as a tool for teaching those in the early stages of learning Thai court singing.

6.5 Modern teaching

In the past, in the pre-formal education era, "Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ" was the popular choice for use with absolute beginners and "Thajɛɛ" was the unpopular choice; now, in primary schools where today's true beginners are found, the first of these has sunk to a low level of popularity for use with the schoolchildren while the second has disappeared altogether from early learning schemes and has become an esoteric piece even for professional singers. School teachers now choose songs which contain much less *ɲʉ́an*, such as "Khɛ̀ɛg Bɔɔrathêed" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*only), and wordy and popular songs such as "Laaw Duuaŋ Dyyan" instead. Amongst these teachers, the song "Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ" is put at the "intermediate" level, if it is taught at all; however, in the small number of schools where Thai music is still seen as a serious subject, this "ideal" song is still employed from the beginning.

So, in mainstream schools, a more modern approach has evolved. As well as teaching the less demanding songs already mentioned, teachers now have a more graded method which they may employ. This is thanks to Sùdɕ̀d Dùrijáprañîid, a well-known and respected singer born in 1927. In 1996, she developed a set of six cassette tapes graded from levels one to six, for use with either primary or secondary school beginners – "Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ" was nowhere to be seen. Here is her choice of teaching material:

Tape 1: "Khɛ̀ɛg Bɔɔrathêed", "Tuuaŋ Phrá Thâad", "Piin Talìŋ Nɔ̌ɔg", "Ciin Khwǎn Oòn", "Nâagkharâad", "Khɛ̀ɛg Nǎŋ", "Thêeb Thɔɔŋ", "Krabɔ̀ɔg", "Khaměen Lâj Khwaaj", "Talùm Pooŋ" and "Fáràŋ Khîiad"

Tape 2: "Naaŋ Nâag", "Wilandaa Oòd", "Thɔɔŋ Jôn", "Laaw Lampaaŋ", "Nîi Sy̌ya", "Sɔ̂j Sǒn Tàd", "Sɔ̌j Phleeŋ", "Mɔɔn Ram Dàab" and "Saràburòŋ Nɔ̌ɔg"

Tape 3: "Mɔɔn Joon Dàad", "Khaměen Pàag Thɔ̂ɔ", "Joosalam", "Laaw Sǒmdèd", "Ciin Phajaa Khrúd", "Khɛ̀ɛg Saj", "Nóg Jàag", "Krabɔ̀ɔg Thɔɔŋ" and "Khaměen ɛɛw Baaŋ"

Tape 4: "Ciin Sɛ̌ɛ", "Wêedsukam", "Campaa Thɔɔŋ Thêed", "Sǎam Sâw", "Khɛ̀ɛg Lóbburii", "Kariian Thɔɔŋ", "Laaw Duuaŋ Dyyan", "Mɔ̀əj Cəəŋ", "Lam Sùuad" and "Ciin Ram Phád"

Tape 5: "Laaw Damnəən Saaj", "Khèeg Săaràaj", "Sĭŋtoo Lên Hăaŋ", "Khŷn Phláb phlaa Nŏɔg", "Cháaŋ Prasăan ŋaa", "Hòg Bòd", "Săalikaa Khaměen", "Phamâa Hèe", "Rùm" and "Lŏŋ Ryya Phránákhɔɔn"

Tape 6: "Liilaa Krathûm", "Dɔɔgmáaj Saj", "Aahiia", "Khɔ̆ɔm Klɔm Lûug", "Máa Jŏŋ", "Ciin Lânthăn", "Phád Chaa", "Khaměen Saj Jôog", "Lóo" and "Khaměen Phoothisàd"

The first tape contains fast-tempo songs. They are sung with a small degree of *ɲɲaa* and so are known as *phleeŋ ɲɲaa temo* or full-text songs. As a rough guide, it can be said that the degree of *ɲɲaa* and the number of rhythmic cycles which the songs include both increase as the set progresses. In fact, tapes 4, 5 and 6 reach a level which could be said to be that of a professional singer. The majority of the songs over the six tapes are at the *sɔɔŋ chán* level. There is a small amount of progression through the levels, as two of the songs on the first tape are at the *chán diiaw* level, and a few of the songs on tape six are at the *săam chán* level.

Hot on the heels of the appearance of Dùrijápranîid's tapes, the Ministry of Higher Education announced that they intended to bring out their own rival set. Although it has not yet appeared, a preview list of songs to be used is available, and looks like this:

Level 1: "Phleeŋ Châad" (National Anthem), "Phleeŋ Sănsə̆ən Phrábaaramii" (The King's Theme), "Phamâa Khwĕe" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Laaw Tɔɔ Nóg" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Buusensóg" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Tɔ̂j Taliŋ" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Sŏom Sɔ̆ŋ Sə̆eŋ" (*chán diiaw*), "Tə̂j Khŏɔŋ"

Level 2: "Phamâa Klɔɔŋ Jaaw" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Khaměen Phaaj Ryya" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Khăměen Klɔm Lûug" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Khaměen Kampɔɔ" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Mɔɔn Thâa Id" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Khèeg Klɔm Câaw" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Mɔɔn Duu Daaw" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Nâagkharâad" (*chán diiaw*)

Level 3: "Phamâa Khwĕe" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Phamâa Klɔɔŋ Jaaw" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Khaměen Phaaj Ryya" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Khɔ̆ɔm Klɔm Lûug" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Mɔɔn Thâa Id" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Khèeg Klɔm Câaw" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Laaw Phuŋ Dam" (*sɔɔŋ chán*)

Level 4: "Tàb Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ" (*săam chán*), "Pə̆" (*săam chán*), "Laaw Damnəən Saaj" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Lom Phád Chaaj Khăw" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Naaŋ Nâag" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Khèeg Bɔɔrathêed" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Săam Sâaw" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Ciin Khĭm Lég" (*sɔɔŋ chán*)

Level 5: "Khaměen Saj Jôog" (*săam chán*), "Laaw Duuaŋ Dyyan" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Khaměen Phoothisàd" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Tàw Kin Phàgbûŋ" (*sɔɔŋ chán*), "Klɔm Naarii" (*chán*),

"Aanǔu" (*tháiň*), "Kaarawêeg Lég" (*tháiň*), "Khèɛg Boorathêed" (*tháiň*), "Tàb Wíwaa Phrásamùd" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*)

Level 6: "Sèɛn Sùd Sawàad" (*sǎam chán*), "Tôn Boorathêed" (*tháiň*), "Ciin Khǐm Lég" (*tháiň*), "Naaŋ Khruuan" (*tháiň*), "Sùd Sa-ŋǔuan" (*tháiň*), "Khèɛgmɔɔn Baaŋ Khǔnphrom" (*tháiň*), "Tàb Mahǒorii Rŷyaŋ Naaŋ Nâag" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*), "Phrá Aathíd Chiŋ Duuaŋ" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*)

Though the songs chosen are almost completely different from Dùrijápraniíd's, they broadly follow the same system of increasing *ɲyaa* and rhythmic cycles, and also show a gradual increase in metric expansion level from *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* and some *chán diìaw*, towards *sǎam chán* and full *tháiň* suites. But this time, it is a more graded approach, with guidelines as to the age when a pupil should be exposed to each tape. The "Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ" suite is included at level 4. There are also a further three levels aimed at professional singers, who will be expected to have memorised levels 1-6.

Long before the arrival of pre-recorded cassette tapes in primary and secondary schools, there was and still is widespread use of tape recorders to record singing lessons by both private and university singing teachers, so that students could take these recordings home for extra practice. The use of tape recorders is almost universally accepted now, reducing the huge amount of effort which constant repetition caused teachers in a completely oral discipline.

The way Sǔntharawaathin taught me was to record what she called the *khrooŋ* or "the bare bones" of the vocal melody the first time a new song was being learnt, then send me away, saying "I will dress the song in jewels next week when the *khrooŋ* is secure in your mind". These colourful metaphors cannot be taken as a true representation of the process, however. Sometimes, she *would* add extra ornaments, hand-picked by her to suit my individual voice and to show off its strengths within the vocal melody. She would also tailor the breathing to my needs. But, it is just as likely that the second week's version would not be that different from the first. Most of the "jewels" or ornamental notes would have already been present in the so-called *khrooŋ* version, and occasionally she would

even remove some of the ornaments which were deemed to have been too difficult for me. In this way, it became as much a process of "undressing" the song. On yet other occasions, nothing would be changed either way, as Sŭntharawaathin felt that the song already fitted me perfectly. I suppose what I am saying is that it was a completely flexible process, despite her description of what she was doing. Here is an example of ornaments being added to a *khrooŋ* version:

Example 126: An *ŷŷaa* section from "Tôn Phleeŋ Chiŋ" sung by Sŭntharawaathin in a private lesson

khrooŋ version

dressed version

The above example shows the way in which Sǔntharawaathin ornamented the *ŷyaa* sound *əəŋ-ŋəə* I have underlined four passages of the above vocal melody and numbered them (1) and (2) in each version. In passage (1) of the *khrooŋ* version, the sound *əəŋ-ŋəə* is unornamented; in passage (1) of the dressed version, Sǔntharawaathin has added extra notes, which change the sound *əəŋ* into *əə hə́ əŋ* and the sound *ŋəə* into *ŋə́ə-ə-əa* In passage (2) of the *khrooŋ* version, the sound *əəŋ-ŋəə* is already "half" ornamented and has become *əəŋ ŋə́ə-ə əə*; it is "fully" ornamented in passage (2) of the dressed version and has become *əə hə́ əŋ ŋə́ə-ə-əa* These changes represent a combination of Sǔntharawaathin's personal aesthetic together with her assessment of what would be the "best" version for my voice and technique.

My experience of learning with Khunjǐŋ Phajthuun Kìdtìwan was different as she adhered to the old traditional teaching methods without the use of a tape recorder. This meant longer lessons with constant repetition on both our parts. As a result, a rapport developed which meant that I became more aware of subtle changes, variations and nuances in the song being learnt. She went through the songs phrase by phrase, singing them as they should be sung in her *thaaŋ* and correcting me as we went along. This method meant instant assessment on her part, as she was aiming to arrive at the "perfect" version for me by the end of a single lesson. In fact, with her permission, I did record these sessions for my own ease of learning, as I knew I only had a limited time with her, and to make sure that any details of what was an alien style to me did not go unnoticed, but this did not change her teaching approach in any way, in my opinion.

6.6 Music competitions

I have included this section as I regard the preparations for music competitions to be an opportunity for teachers to expand and reinforce their message. Teaching new material,

rehearsing pupils or students, and evaluating final performances all increase the imparting of fresh knowledge, as Chajséerii said of the good effects of competitions: "they stimulated the composition of new songs and variations and encouraged hard work and diligent practice" (quoted by Myers-Moro 1993:120).

There are two main types of music competitions at the present time. The first is known as *kaan prachan* and is a traditonal competition which can take place in either a formal or informal setting, though there is no difference in name. The formal *kaan prachan* is an arranged competition where some rules come into play, e.g. the songs to be played are agreed in advance, as is which group will play first. They are very numerous and can take place anywhere - they have become something of a rite of passage for aspiring musicians and singers, and no-one is taken seriously if they haven't taken part in one. The informal version normally takes place in a temple, on the occasion of a funeral or major festival, when several different ensembles have all been employed at the same time. These ensembles engage in vying with each other during the ordered service, each trying to outdo the others in ingenuity and skill. The competition is unspoken, but everybody knows exactly what is going on without being told. Myers-Moro notes that:

> One group might perform the very same song which another group has just
> played to show that it can play it better, or it might choose to perform an
> obviously much more difficult, complex piece. (ibid:121)

The second major type of competition is called *kaan prakuuad*. It is similar to the formal form of *kaan prachan*, but it differs in that it contains opportunities for single instruments and voices to compete, as well as being almost entirely made up of schoolchildren and university students. *Kaan prakuuad* are arranged by government agencies and have no religious dimension, being purely about the excellence of the musicians and singers. The first competition was only for singers and took place in 1950, arranged by the government Department of Public Relations (*krom khôodsanaakaan*).

Kaan prakvud competitions allow students of a new generation to experience traditional ways of learning through music camps which are set up expressly to prepare for them. Not all of the competitors attend these camps, but the winners generally have done so. Camps include those of Chulalongkorn University (Bangkok), Kannasòodsỳgsǎalaj School (Supanburii) and Râadwinid Baaŋkêew (Samùdpraakaan). The regime employed by these builds personal discipline, as I know from experience in 1987-9, when I attended the Chulalongkorn camp and had to get up at 5 a.m. every morning to practice until 7 a.m. and then attend a morning of normal classes, before spending the afternoon and early evening learning and revising songs for the competition. It is no exaggeration to say that the legacy of this formed the foundation of my professional life as a singer and musician.

There is a downside to *kaan prakvud* competitions. They tend to lead Thai music into standardisation: melodies or rhythms that are variable and open to many interpretations according to *thaaŋ* become standardised so that they can be subjected to a marking system by the judges. For example, there is a melody in the song "Ciin Aanǔu" that some singers will sing using C as the *lûug tòg*, while others use an E. Before the competition, it was announced that the C *lûug tòg* was the correct version and had to be used. Consequently, prospective competitors were only taught one version, thus limiting their educational outlook. It is debatable whether this is a healthy thing for the future of Thai music.

6.7 Recent movements in teaching theory

In 1986, the 5th National Plan was launched, its subject being the preservation and promotion of Thai culture. This led to the first ever national conference on Thai music on 20-22 October 1987 at Mahidol University. The conference discussed several issues, including the role of higher education institutions in preserving Thai music and giving support to musicians and singers. It also discussed the initiation of the development of a

teaching method for universities and the role of higher education in popularising Thai music amongst the general populace. Finally, it debated the lack of truly excellent musicians and singers, and set out a plan to increase their number.

As a consequence of this, in 1988 the Ministry of Higher Education set up a committee under Wáraawúd Sùmaawoŋ and Phuunphíd Amàadtajakun. This decided that it should proceed along the following lines: it would encourage research into Thai music, so that high quality treatises would result; it would set a musical curriculum from primary schools right up to postgraduate study; it would encourage excellent musicians and singers, including academics, and also encourage regular performances from them, certifying them so that they might enter public sector employment; it would set out to create standards for the knowledge of Thai music and to create a marketplace to cater for the number of students of Thai music graduating each year; finally, it would promote the performance of Thai music as a tool for moral development. Three concrete proposals emerged from all this and were immediately put into action. They were:

1 the grading of musical compositions in terms of their complexity;

2 the grading of music theory in terms of its complexity;

3 the standardisation of the examination system for Thai music performance.

In addition, in 1995, a comprehensive book called *Keen màadtrathàan sàakhàa wíchaa lé wíchaachíib dontrii thaj* ("Standard grades of Thai music for students and professionals") was published together with the first of a set of accompanying cassette tapes giving examples of the songs used (as already discussed earlier).[69]

Again, the downside of what at first appears to be a very positive endeavour on the part of the government is that there is no room for variety of approach. Thai music has developed piecemeal from numerous strands and traditions, resulting in a complex, multi-faceted brew. A single regulated approach cannot encompass this, no matter how well-

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[69] See Appendix VIII for more details of this enterprise.

meaning. Creeping standardisation has resulted from the work of the 1988 committee, as embodied by this new common university entrance singing examination:

Tasks for the university entrance singing examination

1 The ability to play the drums
2 The ability to use *chìŋ* for self-accompaniment
3 The ability to sing in the Thai style
4 The ability to sing the following songs
    4.1 Compulsory songs
        4.1.1 For the examination of physical ability and concentration
            1) "Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ" suite (*săam chán*)
            2) "Pè" (*săam chán*)
        4.1.2 For the examination of mental ability: memory, understanding, voice control, and the correctness of the song
            1) "Klòm Naarii" (*thǎw*)
            2) "Kaarawêeg Lég" (*thǎw*)
        4.1.3 For the examination of emotion and interpretation
            1) "Tàw Kin Phâgbûŋ" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*)
            2) "Naaŋ Khruuan" (*thǎw*)
            3) "Sùd Sa-ŋǔuan" (*thǎw*)
            4) "Khèegmɔɔn Baaŋ Khǔnphrom" (*thǎw*)
        4.1.4 For the examination of singing songs for social functions
            1) "Wíwaa Phrá Samùd" suite (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*)
            2) "Naaŋ Nâag" suite (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*)
            3) "Laaw Duuaŋ Dyyan" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*)
            4) "Laaw Damnəən Saaj" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*)
            5) "Khaměen Sajjôog" (*săam chán*)
            6) A regional folk song of the area where the university is
    4.2 Optional song
        The entrant chooses their own favourite song

On the plus side, Thai singing is more widespread and appreciated now than it has been for many decades, and continues to increase in popularity. Perhaps standardisation is the price

we have to pay for this. Hopefully, it is only a temporary price, reflecting our current place in the cycle of these things. Standardisation will reach a critical mass which will in turn generate curiosity and longing for the diverse world of the past.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

What I feel I have achieved in this thesis is to provide the groundwork to link past and present practices in Thai court singing, a groundwork which can be built upon by future researchers. I have been aided and privileged in this research by having experienced three "incarnations" on which I was able to draw: Thai student of Thai court singing, practicing Thai singer, and Western-based analyst. Hopefully, the result is a mixture of emic and etic insights, expounded in such a way as to create cross-cultural accessibility.

Amongst my main findings and conclusions is the fact that, in agreement with Morton (1976), Thai court singing does not use the equidistant scale in practice, thus disagreeing with the theory and practice of Thai melodic percussion instruments. The beginnings of a basic grammar of *jyaa* is established and set down. Tanese's formulae of the relationship between speech-tones and the vocal melody, a major contribution to Thai singing studies, is evaluated and proven to be useful in detecting metabole, with some notable exceptions.

The patterns which govern the positioning of words in the vocal melody are revealed as having their origins in the *kloon* poetic form, and shown to be codifiable. Also, the process by which one set of lyrics is replaced by another, with particular reference to *sagkrawaa* performances, is explained. Thai court singing is seen to be essentially non-improvisational in nature, regardless of the appearance of some alterations between the composed form and the performed form. Vocal melodies are shown to grow, in common with instrumental melodies, out of the *khɔ̌ɔŋ* melody, but within their own idiom, and the influence of *thaaŋ* on any given composition is shown to be a significant factor. The melodic flexibility of *phleeŋthajɔɔ* as embodied in the practice of *kaan lɔɔj caŋwà* is analysed and discussed.

A change is diagnosed in the approach to teaching, from the traditional method of beginning with a difficult song containing a large amount of *ɲ́yaŋ* in order to discourage unworthy students, to the contemporary method of starting off with the simplest songs, in order to achieve an inclusive approach, and to therefore win back interest from young people in the context of a modern multicultural musical environment, in which court singing is only one choice of many, and an unfashionable one at that.

Following on from this thesis, there is plenty of scope for both deeper and wider research into Thai court singing. Amongst the most important topics for further research, would be studies into *phleeŋlakhɔɔn* with special reference to songs not included in either the *phleeŋprɔ̀bkàj* or *phleeŋsɔ̌ɔŋmáaj* repertoires, and into *sěephaa* melody. Also, a study into *sǎmnii̯aŋ* or "accents", and the differences between the closely related court singing traditions of Thailand, Laos (with its tonal language, Lao) and Cambodia (whose language, Khmer, is non-tonal though related to Thai). Of great usefulness as well would be an investigation into the sources and origins of court singing, both within Thailand itself and in the Southeast Asian sphere as a whole.

Appendices

Appendix I: The abstract of Bunchûuaj Sŏowåd's research paper: "The Sound Frequency of the Notes used in the Thai Musical Scale"

This research paper, "The Sound Frequency of the Notes used in the Thai Musical Scale", is undertaken under the personal patronage of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand, at the behest of His Majesty the King. His Majesty aims to answer the many questions still current amongst academics about the pitch-frequencies in Thai music by calling for an examination of the traditional tuning system; this system was measured and documented a long time ago, but it has become adulterated by an ever-changing world.

The current research continues the research into Thai music initiated by His Majesty the King and undertaken by the Faculty of Engineering of Chulalongkorn University during 1967-1970. The findings of that project provided good outlines which pointed the way for this current research; re-examination and recategorisation of the earlier data brought it into line with real traditions and theories of Thai music. New data was also gathered and analysed from contemporary users of the traditional tuning system, a system which was widely used before 1932. The *ranat thum lek* was used as the standard instrument, and a Phase Meter Type 2977 was used to read the data, which was later analysed in terms of the constant ratio of Thai musical theory in order to test the exact measurement of the second interval against its theoretical equivalent. Field data was used from both before and after 1932, and Thai tuning forks were tested and their frequencies analysed; the differences and norms of frequency used by court musicians and commoners were also considered. The accuracy of the scientific tools used in past and present research, and in Thailand and abroad, was and is both reliable and trustworthy.

The current analysis proves that the system of pitches used in Thai music is made up of seven notes divided by equal intervals within an octave, and that this system has been preserved, used and has given a unique musical identity to Thai academics and musical professionals right up to the present day.

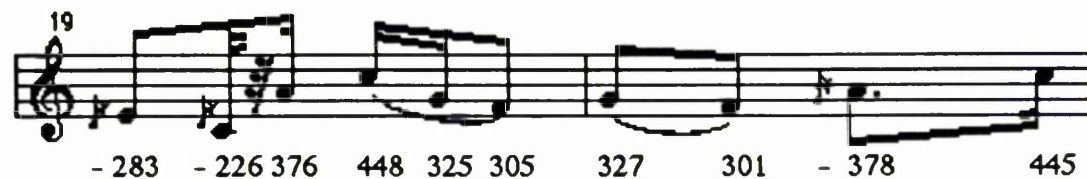# Appendix II: The pitch ranges of some instruments and of the singing voice

Data gathered from Sǒowád 1998:82

Note	Freq.	khɔɔŋ woŋ jàj	male	female	pìi nɔ̂ɔg	pìi naj	sɔɔ sǎam sǎaj	khlùj phíiaŋ ɔɔ	kràb sěe-phaa
ti	3657				*				
la	3312				*				
sol	3000	.			*				
fa	2717				*	*			
mi	2461				*	*			
re	2229				*	*			*
do	2019				*	*	*		*
ti	1828				*	*	*		*
la	1656				*	*	*		*
sol	1500				*	*	*		*
fa	1358				*	*	*	*	*
mi	1230	*			*	*	*	*	*
re	1114	*			*	*	*	*	*
do	1009	*			*	*	*	*	
ti	914	*			*	*	*	*	
la	828	*			*	*	*	*	
sol	750	*			*	*	*	*	
fa	679	*			*	*	*	*	
mi	615	*		*	*	*	*	*	
re	557	*		*	*	*	*	*	
do	505	*		*	*	*	*	*	
ti	457	*		*	*	*	*	*	
la	414	*		*	*	*	*		
sol	375	*		*	*	*	*		
fa	340	*	*	*		*			
mi	308	*	*	*		*			
re	279	*	*	*		*			
do	252		*	*					
ti	229		*	*					
la	207		*	*					
sol	187		*	*					
fa	170		*	*					
mi	154		*	*					
re	139		*						
do	126		*						
ti	114		*						
la	104		*						
sol	94		*						
fa	85		*						
mi	77		*						
re	70		*						
do	63		*						

Appendix III: An example of raw data from an analysis of intervals

Note frequencies of the song "Khèɛg Khǎaw" sung by Aphinjaa Chiiwákaanon

Hz   253   296   251- 253 252   - 252 339 228   253 222

- 297 - 334   325   248 224 254   178

209   - 159 - 212   220   249   249 286   - 216

- 295   334   - 296 329   304   - -   331

303   336   296 279   251   - - -   332

222   - 298   - 335   334

332 374 - 297 - -   -   333   -   373 - -   333

15
\- 376 \- 299   376 376 376   418   496 376

17
224   252 284 \- 220   \- 290->285 336 283   246 \- 255

19
\- 283 \- 226 376   448 325 305   327   301   \- 378   445

21
302   329 378 \- 303 \- 377

23
446   330   333   \-   378 \- 299

25
300   332   298 284 241 \- 249 250 \- 251 332 \- 226

27
251   \- 247 334 250   286   299

29
\- 374   446 372 325 \- 334 \- 376 \- \- \-   \-   \- \-

Notes marked with hyphen are those that cannot be measured for three reasons:
1 note duration is too short
2 note is sung with a strong nasal voice
3 notes at the end of each transcription cannot be measured because that is the point where the whole ensemble joins in

The ten songs used in the analysis are:

1 "Khèeg Khǎaw" (*sǎam chán*, *thɔ́ɔn*1), sung by Aphinjaa Chiiwákaanon

2 "Khèegmɔɔn" (*sǎam chán*, *thɔ́ɔn*1), sung by Caraancaj Sǔntharawaathin

3 "Phajaa Sòog" (*sǎam chán*), sung by Caraancaj Sǔntharawaathin

4 "Sìi Bòd" (*sǎam chán*, *thɔ́ɔn*1), sung by Wimon Phàajphàwjen

5 "Tôn Phleeŋ Chíŋ" (*sǎam chán*, *thɔ́ɔn*1), sung by Amphɔɔn Sǒowád

6 "Khèegmɔɔn Baaŋkhǔnphrom" (Prince Bɔɔriphád's version) (*sǎam chán*, *thɔ́ɔn*1), sung by Usǎa Sěeŋphajrôod

7 "Khèegmɔɔn Baaŋkhǔnphrom" (Phrájaa Sanɔ̀durijaaŋ's version) (*sǎam chán*, *thɔ́ɔn*1), sung by Cěeŋ Khláajsǔithɔɔŋ

8 "Khamǐen Ráadchaburii" (*sǎam chán*, *thɔ́ɔn*1), sung by Prawêed Kumúd

9 "Oô Laaw" (*sǎam chán*, *thɔ́ɔn*1), sung by Prachíd Khǎmprasèad

10 "Thajɔɔj Nɔ̂ɔg" (*sǎam chán*, *thɔ́ɔn*1), sung by Sǒmbàd Sǎŋwiiankɔɔŋ

Appendix IV: Categorisation of song texts

G	=	General Songs
L	=	Love Songs
S	=	Songs of Sorrow
HB	=	Hymns to Beauty
P	=	Songs of Parting
PT	=	Patriotic Songs
R	=	Songs of Rage
GW	=	Songs of Goodwill
PR	=	Songs of Praise
M	=	Martial Songs
MI	=	Songs of Moral Instruction

Title	Context
Kòb Tên	MI
Kratàaj Chom Dyyan	L (recalling the beauty of a beloved)
Krabìi Liilaa	G
Kraaw Khèeg Ngó	PT
Kraaw Ram Mɔɔn	1 P and GW
	2 P and GW
Klɔ̀m Naarii	L (romance)
Klɔ̀m Phajaa	1 L (romance)
	2 L (romance)
Kwaaŋ Thɔɔŋ	G
Kansěeŋ Sawàad	PT
Kamphúd	G
Kanlajaa Jiiam Hôŋ	S
Kaarawêeg Lég	L (waiting for love)
Kaarawêeg Jàj	L (hopeless love)
Kaariian Thɔɔŋ	1 HB (a deer)
	2 HB (a girl)
Kamsùuan Sùraaŋ	1 P (sad)
	2 P (sad departure)
	3 S (lonely lady)
Kég Měŋ	M
Keesɔ̌ɔn Sǎm-aaŋ	HB (nature)
Kâaw Tháb	PT
Kwâaŋ Dàab	R
Khɔ̌ɔm Klɔ̀m Lûug	1 G
	2 GW
	3 GW
	4 PT
Khɔ̌ɔm Ngən	G
Khɔ̌ɔm Soŋ Khrŷyaŋ	G
Khɔ̌ɔm Thɔɔŋ	G
Khɔ̌ɔm Booraan	G and R
Khɔ̌ɔm Rathom	G

Khǒɔm Jàj	1 G
	2 G
	3 HB (nature) and L
	4 G
Khaněeŋ	1 L (broken heart)
	2 L (romance)
Khaměen Khǔaw	G
Khaměen Chonnabòd	S
Khaměen Chom Doŋ	G
Khaměen Sajjôog	1 HB (nature)
	2 HB (nature)
Khaměen Nǒoj	G
Khaměen Pàagthòɔ	1 P and L
	2 G
Khaměen Phuuaŋ	1 HB (an object) and R
	2 L (romance)
	3 HB (an object)
	4 S
Khaměen Phaaj Ryya	1 G
	2 G
Khaměen Phoothìsàd	L (romance) and S
Khaměen Phuumprasàad	G
Khaměen Ràadchaburii	G and S
Khaměen La-ɔɔ-oŋ	G and R
Khaměen Lìiab Phránákhɔɔn	G with R
Khaměen Sùd Caj	S
Khaměen Lǔyyaŋ	1 R
	2 G
Khaměen Jàj	L and S
Khaměen Eew Baaŋ	G
Khèɔg Kùlíd	HB (landscape and wildlife)
Khèɔg Khǎaw	1 G and S
	2 G and S
Khèɔg Ngó	L and S
Khèɔg Chəən Câaw	G
Khèɔg Dəəŋ	HB (army troop)
Khèɔg Tòj Môɔ	HB (furniture)
Khèɔg Saj	1 S and L
	2 L (romance)
Khèɔg Bɔɔrathêed	G
Khèɔgmɔɔn	G (bad dream)
Khèɔgmɔɔn Baaŋkhǔnphrom	1 G
	2 L (romance)
	3 L and S
Khèɔgmɔɔn Baaŋcháaŋ	1 R
	2 L
Khèɔg Mádsarǐi	1 L (chiding)
	2 L, S and R
Khèɔg Lóbburii	P and S

Khèɛg Sǎaj	HB (nature)
Khèɛg Sǎaràaj	1 HB (garden and flowers)
	2 HB (garden and flowers)
Khèɛg Sìi Klə̀ə	S and L
Khèɛg Hèe	P and S
Khèɛg Aawǎŋ	HB (house and garden)
Khèɛg Oòd	P and S
Khruuan Hǎa	1 L and S
	2 S
Khrɔ̂ɔb Càgkrawaan	L (seductive)
Khrûn Kíd	1 L (thinking of the beloved)
	2 L (thinking of the beloved)
Kiirii Phajrɔ́	L (thinking of the beloved)
Kunluŋ Khunpâa	MI
Kûu Mɔɔn Ram Dàad	G
Kiiaŋ Mɔɔn Ram Dàab	L (romance)
Ngíiaw Ramrýg	GW (to the king)
Cɔɔrakhêe Khwǎaŋ Khlɔɔŋ	G
Cɔɔrakhêe Hǎaŋ Jaaw	HB (a woman and furniture)
Cɔɔrakhêe Hǎaŋ Jaaw (S)	1 G
	2 G
	3 G
	4 G
Campaa Thɔɔŋ	G
Campaa Naarii	L (romance)
Cîŋcòg Thɔɔŋ	S
Cintaraawaatii	S (chiding)
Ciin Khwǎn Oòn	1 L
	2 G
Ciin Khǐm Lég	1 HB (room)
	2 HB (garden)
Ciin Khǐm Jàj	L (romance)
Ciin Khâw Bòod	G
Ciin Nam Sadèd	S
Ciin Ramphyŋ	G and MI
Ciin Lân Thǎn	R
Ciin Waŋ Lǔuaŋ	1 G
	2 M
Ciin Sěɛ	S
Chalə̌əm Phon	G
Chom Doŋ Nýya	L (comparing flowers with love)
Chom Sǔuan Sawǎn	HB (garden)
Chom Sěɛŋ Can	P and S
Chaweedaakɔɔŋ	HB (stupa)
Cháaŋ Prasǎan Ngaa	1 M
	2 M
	3 L (romance)
Juuan Ramphyŋ	S
Jîipùn Cha-ɔ̂ɔn	L (thinking of the beloved)

Jĭipùn Rancuuan	L (lonely heart)
Dɔ̀ɔgmáaj Saj	1 L (thinking of the beloved)
	2 L (romance)
Dɔ̀ɔgmáaj Phraj	HB (nature)
Daaw Cɔɔrakhêe	G
Dyyan Ngǎaj Klaaŋ Pàa	G
Tôn Bɔɔrathêed	P and S
Tuuaŋ Phráthâad	L
Tɔ̀j Rûub	1 L (romance)
	2 L (romance)
Tanaaw Plɐɐŋ	S
Talûm Pooŋ	1 HB (building and garden)
	2 HB (garden)
	3 P and S
Taam Kwaaŋ	HB (golden deer)
Tàw Hèe	G
Thɔ̌ɔn Samɔ̌ɔ	1 HB (sea)
	2 HB (sea)
Thɔ̌ɔj Lǎŋ Khâw Klɔɔŋ	G
Thajɔɔj Khamĕen	S (travel)
Thajɔɔj Juuan	S (travel)
Thajɔɔj Nɔ̂ɔg	P and S
Thajɔɔj Naj	1 S
	2 S (travel)
Thajɔɔj Laaw	S (travel)
Thawɔɔj	P and S
Thɔɔŋ Jɔ̂ɔn	1 L (romance)
	2 G (argument)
Thajɐɐ	L (chiding)
Thalee Bâa	1 L (chiding)
	2 L (romance)
Thágsĭnràadchaníwêed	HB (palace)
Thêeb Chaatrii	HB (god)
Thêeb Banthom	1 G
	2 G
Thêeb Rancuuan	1 P and S
	2 S (thinking of the beloved)
Thêeb Sŏmphób	HB (princess)
Thêeb Hǎaw Hə̌ən	1 G
	2 G (getting dressed)
Theewaa Prasìd	GW
Thaj Ramrýg	PT
Thɔɔranii Rɔ́ɔŋhâj	1 P and S
	2 S and R
	3 L (chiding)
Nóg Kracɔ̀ɔg Thɔɔŋ	HB (wildlife)
Nóg Khamîn	1 L
	2 P
Nóg Khǎw Khamɐɐ	1 HB (wildlife)

	2 L (romance)
Nóg Càag	1 L (romance)
	2 L and S (thinking of the beloved)
Nâag Kîiaw	L and S
Nâag Bɔɔriphan	G and R
Naaŋ Khruuan	1 L (disappointment)
	2 L (thinking of the beloved)
Naaŋ Jýyaŋ	HB (heaven)
Naaraaj Plɛɛŋ Rûub	HB (dance)
Náam Lôɔd Tâaj Saaj	G
Nareesǔuan Chon Cháaŋ	1 M and PT
	2 M and PT
Baŋ Baj	1 HB (water plants)
	2 P and S
	3 L (thinking of the beloved)
Bulǎn	1 HB (night)
	2 HB (woman)
Bulǎn Lɔɔj Lýyan	G
Bâj Khlâŋ	L and S
Praphâad Pheetraa	S (travel by sea)
Plaa Thɔɔŋ	1 L (romance)
	2 G
Pèɛd Bòd	G (bad potent)
Pɛ́	1 L and S
	2 L and S
Phakaa Kaan	HB (flowers)
Fáràŋ Klaaj	HB (woman)
Fáràŋ Khuuaŋ	HB (woman)
Fáràŋ Cɔɔrakaa	G
Phajaa Sìi Sǎw	1 G
	2 S
Phamâa Klɔ̀m	L (romance)
Phamâa Kamcháb	G
Phamâa Plɛɛŋ	1 S
	2 S
Phamâa Hâa Thôn	1 G and R (thinking of the beloved)
	2 HB (garden)
	3 HB (garden)
Phamâa Hèe	1 R
	2 P and S
	3 G
Phrácan Khrŷŋ Sîig	1 S
	2 S
Phrá Aathíd Chiŋ Duuaŋ	L, P and S (metaphorical love-making)
Phraam Khâw Bòod	MI
Phraam Dìid Námtâw	1 G and L
	2 P and L
Phuuaŋ Rɔ́ɔj	1 G
	2 G

	3 MI
Phád Chaa	L (romance)
Phan Fáràŋ	1 G
	2 G
Phírun Sàŋ Fáa	G (interpret a dream)
Phéd Nòoj	L
Phírom Suraaŋ	1 S
	2 HB (heaven)
Phuu Laaw	HB (wildlife)
Mɔɔn Khruuan	R
Mɔɔn Chom Can	HB (the moon)
Mɔɔn Joon Dàab	Pr (the Buddha)
Mɔɔn Ram Dàab	1 G
	2 R and P
Mɔɔn Lôŋ Ryya	1 G and HB (the sea)
	2 G
Mɔɔn Oôj Iŋ	S
Maŋkɔɔn Lên Khlŷyn	HB (the sea and sea fish)
Máa Jôŋ	1 G
	2 G and L (thinking of the beloved)
Máa Ram	1 G
	2 HB (horse)
Maalii Hŭuan	1 L and S (thinking of the beloved)
	2 L (romance)
Múlôŋ	G and HB (plants and nature)
Maleeŋ Phŭu Thɔɔŋ	L and R
Juuan Khláw	1 G
	2 S
	3 P and S
Jásŏothɔɔn	M
Jɔɔree	G (argument)
Joon Dàab	1 L and R
	2 Pr (god)
Joo Salam	S and R
Rasàm Rasăaj	G
Rahòg Rahə̆ən	1 L and S
	2 S
Ratrii Pradàb Daaw	L (romance)
Loŋ Sòŋ Laaw	G (getting dressed)
Lom Phád Chaaj Khăw	1 L (thinking of the beloved)
	2 HB (wild flowers)
Lôŋ Lom	1 L (loneliness)
	2 L (loneliness)
Lɔɔj Prathŭib	PR (the river)
Laaw Krasee	S
Laaw Khruuan	G
Laaw Caraənsŭi	L (thinking of the beloved)
Laaw Damnaən Saaj	P
Laaw Lam Paaŋ	L (wooing)

Laaw Lam Paaŋ Jàj	G
Laaw Liiab Khâaj	G and L (thinking of the beloved)
Laaw Sŏmdèd	HB (woman)
Laaw Sŭuaj Ruuaj	1 G
	2 G
Laaw Sɔ̌ɔŋ Khɔɔn	S
Laaw Săaw Sŭuaj	1 G
	2 G
Laaw Sìiaŋ Thiian	HB (princesses)
Liila Krathûm	G
Loom Anoŋ	L
Wádthanaa Wîiadnaam	PT
Waajúbùd Jâadtraa	G
Wilandaa Oòd	R
Wíwêeg Weehăa	L
Wíhòg Hə̆ən	G
Wêɛn Thɔɔŋ	L (romance)
Sŭithammarâad	S
Sĭisùg Maŋkhalaanúsɔ̌ɔn	G
Sĭisùg Ramlýg	HB (music)
Sadaajoŋ	1 G
	2 G
Sadaajoŋ Plɛɛŋ	L and S
Sŏn Thɔɔŋ	L (thinking of the beloved)
Sŏmphôod Phránákhɔɔn	PR (royal)
Samĭŋ Thɔɔŋ	HB (plants)
Samĭŋ Thɔɔŋ Thêed	G
Sajămmaanúdsatì	PT
Sôj Thajɛɛ	G
Sôj Májúraa	HB (curtain)
Sôj Lampaaŋ	HB (curtain)
Sɔ̌ɔŋ Fàŋ Khŏoŋ	G
Sɔ̌ɔd Sĭi	HB (plants) and L
Săam Máaj Naj	HB (plants) and L
Săaráthĭi	L (romance)
Salikaa Kêɛw	L
Sălikaa Khamĕen	1 HB (birds)
	2 HB (birds)
Săalikaa Chom Dyyan	L (thinking of the beloved)
Săaw Nɔ́ɔj Lên Náam	G
Săaw Wiiaŋ Nў̆ya	L (thinking of the beloved)
Săaw Sɔ̀ɔd Wɛɛn	1 L (romance) and S
	2 L (romance)
	3 L and P
Săaw Sùd Sŭuaj	L (romance)
Sĭŋtoo Lên Hăaŋ	L (asking for apology)
Sĭinuuan	L
Sĭi Bòd	1 S (thinking of the beloved)
	2 HB (plants and landscape)

Sùd Caj	G
Sùd Thawǐn	S
Sùd Sa-ŋǔuan	L (romance)
Sùd Sǎaj Caj	MI
Sùd Aalaj	PR (Thai music)
Sùdaa Phírom	MI
Sùdaa Sawǎn	L
Sùraaŋ Camriiaŋ	G
Sùrintharaahǔu	1 L (thinking of the beloved)
	2 L (thinking of the beloved) and S
	3 L (thinking of the beloved) and S
Sùrijoothaj	PR (a queen)
Sěɛn Khamnyŋ	S
Sěɛn Sùd Sawàad	S
Sǒom Sòŋ Sěɛŋ	L (romance)
Sâj Phrácan	1 L (thinking of the beloved)
	2 HB (a woman)
Hòg Bòd	1 S and R
	2 L (chiding)
Hǒŋ Thɔɔŋ	1 G
	2 MI
	3 G
Nǐi Sǐyya	G
Rùm	1 S
	2 S
Hùuaj Aalaj	1 S
	2 G
Hǔuan Khamnyŋ	L and S (chiding)
Hěɛraa Lên Náam	1 HB (curtain)
	2 HB (curtain)
	3 S (travel by aea)
Wěɛn Pradàd Kɔ̂j	S (travel by sea)
Oǧ Thalee	1 P
	2 P
Oŋ Chiiaŋ Sǐyy	G
Anoŋ Sùchaadaa	1 G
	2 G
	3 PR (gods)
Asɛɛwùnkîi	G
Absɔ̌ɔn Sǎm-aaŋ	HB (woman)
Aathǎn	G
Aanǔu	G
Aahiia	1 S (thinking of the beloved)
	2 R
Inǎw Plɛɛŋ	S (thinking of the beloved)
Eègkabòd	1 G
	2 G
Oô Laaw	S (travel)
Aj-jarêed	HB (wildlife)

Appendix V: Translation of "The Phrájaa Sanòdurijaaŋ singing method and its theory", an article by Caraancaj Sŭntharawaathin (1987)

I have been practicing this method of singing and its principles from the time I began to sing right up until the present day, exactly as it was defined and expounded to me by my father Phrájaa Sanòdurijaaŋ (Chêm Sŭntharawaathin) in person. His teaching method included a rigorous attention to the details of singing; songs would be taught by rote in short "phrases" or "sentences", until the learner could sing them perfectly, then moving on to the next phrase or sentence. This principle of teaching, with its standard method and strict quality control, allowed me to develop into a skilful singer after much serious practice, my own experience vouching for its efficacy in creating an intricate style of singing, full of feeling and emotion. I want to analyse and explain this method of singing here, so that it may become a useful source of learning and help future singing students.

Because this area of study is previously undocumented and is, in fact, difficult to explain in written form, ideally, recorded examples should accompany this essay. This is not, however, the case and I apologise for this and hope the essay will still prove useful for an understanding of Thai singing.

Every subject has to have principles and methods of learning, and singing is no exception. Some would say especially singing, a delicate art, which if performed without precepts cannot become truly great, no matter how good the voice. The learner needs to be taught the significant principles in order to be able to practice correctly and surely, thus allowing the beauty and delicacy of the song to be delivered to the listeners. These main precepts are set out below.

1 Voice

    1.1 voice quality

Every human being is born with a different quality of voice; for example, some with a soft voice (*sǐiaŋ lég* or "little voice"), some with a high range (*sǐiaŋ sǔuŋ* or "high voice") and others with a deep voice (*sǐiaŋ jày* or "big voice") and so on. However, quality of voice is only one factor in creating perfect singing. Some singers have a beautiful voice, but no technique and so, as I will explain later, cannot sing effectively. It is a handicap if a singer does not know how to use the qualities of their own voice to best advantage; for example, someone with a high range using only the top of their range and losing the sweeter qualities of their voice, or a medium-range singer using high pitches in the wrong places and so losing clear pronounciation. Singers need to understand the term *mɔ́ khuuan* ("appropriateness") in the use of voice. Having a high range is a natural advantage, but only if it is used properly, otherwise someone with a medium range but an effective technique will, in the end, be the better singer.

1.2 vocal strength

Singing Thai songs requires the full power of the singer; even singing a soft passage one needs a lot of strength to control the utterance. The singer must be able to exhale for long periods, and the muscles which relate to breathing and sound-production must be strong; the singer needs to be well-trained to reach this full physical potential.

1.3 voice production

Singing Thai songs, as well as power, requires control to produce the required sound: *sǐiaŋ nàg* ("a heavy sound"), *sǐiaŋ baw* ("a light sound") and *sǐiaŋ klom* ("a round sound"); or to correctly modify a sound - for example, to *phɔ̀n sǐiaŋ* or 'soften' a sound. The singer also needs to consider when to use *sǐiaŋ tɛ̀ɛ* ("real sound") and when to use *sǐiaŋ aasǎj* ("supported sound" or "nasal sound"). On this point, two significant techniques need to be explained:

1.3.1 air control

The singer has to create the correct passage of air in singing and use the correct body parts to control it. To sing the *a* sound, the air must procede directly from the throat and

through the mouth; to sing the *yy*sound, the air must come directly from the throat and pass through both the mouth and the nose; and to sing the *ay*sound, the air must finish in the nose only.

1.3.2 vocal cord usage

The vocal cords need to be trained in order to be able to use the following essential vocal embellishments:

a) *khrân sĭaŋ*(to vibrate the sound), which is similar to the technique of *phrom*or "trilling" on a *sɔɔ*(fiddle). If the muscle is not vibrating, the singing will sound *kradâaŋ*and *khĕeŋ* (terms which both mean "rigid").

b) the three-note *yyaŋ* as in the example below:

(i)
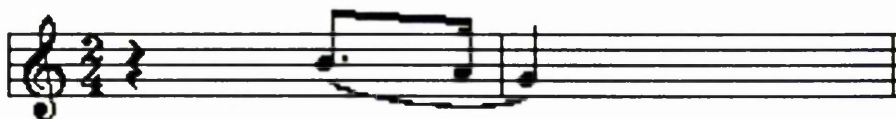
or

(ii)

Both (i) and (ii) require good control of the vocal cords in order to *phlĭg*(literally to "turn over") and so utter the three notes with strict clarity. In some cases, when the middle note is not pronounced independently, the result is a *sĭaŋ hàg*("broken sound"), which is the result of loss of control. Singers have to be taught this three-note *yyaŋ*because it is the main vocalisation of Thai singing.

1.4 muscle control

On those occasions when a singer has to reach very high notes, they are required to use muscle tension, for example, pulling in the diaphragm in order to move the air upwards. This kind of muscle control creates *sĭaŋ klom*("round sound"), a type of "non-shouting" sound, and also increases the length of exhalation – necessary for singing long notes.

2 Song text

There are three significant aspects in this area:

2.1 Conveying the meaning of a word clearly

A song which illustrates the need for this is "Chə̂əd ciin", in which the line *jàaprɛɛ-rɔɔm paj laaj nà cǎo* contains the word *jàa* (low tone) meaning "don't" - this should not be too embellished, otherwise the result could be *jâa* (falling tone), meaning "grass" or "grandmother". In this case, if the word is sung from a higher note down to a lower note the sound will be *jâa* (falling tone), whereas if it is sung from a lower note up to a higher note, it will have the required sound and be heard as *jàa* (low tone). Again, in the song "Laaw khamhɔ̌ɔm", in the line *hɔ̌ɔm dòkmáaj khamhɔ̌ɔm jàak dɔɔm* ("The scent of the *khamhɔ̌ɔm* flower makes me want to inhale it"), if the word *jàak* (low tone) meaning "to want" is sung from a higher note down to a lower, it will sound like *jâak* (falling tone), a word which means "difficult", whereas if it is sung from a lower note up to a higher the correct low tone will be preserved and so will the meaning.[70]

Singing in such a way as to preserve the meaning of a word is not always the order of the day; not in *phleeŋphaasǎa* (foreign style songs), for example. When these are sung, some words actually need to be *phìian* ("incorrect" or "with accent") in order to recreate the feel of a foreign language. If one tries too hard to sing with a "Thai" accent, one cannot convey the foreign air; for as the Thai say: *sǎmniiaŋ nn bɔ̀ɔk phaasǎa* - "the accent reveals its origin".

2.2 Giving lyrics the correct phrasing

This is important. For example to sing *ôo* (gap) *phɔ̂ɔphlaaj* gives the meaning "Oh, young boy", but to sing *ôophɔ̂ɔ* (gap) *phlaaj* means "Oh father, Phlaaj". Again singing *dâj maa* (gap) *lɛ́ɛw* means "has already come", but to sing *dâj* (gap) *maalɛ́ɛw* means "has already got it". Another example appears in a song called "Khɔ̀ɔŋ sǎa-ràaj" where a phrase is sung *ôo* (gap) *phǔu sǐiya* meaning "O butterfly" and not *ôophǔu* (gap) *sǐiya* meaning "O

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[70] This may not seem important, but the whole meaning of the phrase could be changed from "... makes me want to inhale it" to "it is difficult to inhale" - D. Swangviboonpong

shirt spirit". Moreover, if individual syllables are wrongly emphasised, an unpleasant rather than a pleasant meaning can be conveyed.[71] To read the lyrics carefully is very important, so that the singer understands their meaning, and so, through the correct phrasing and emphasis, conveys their true feeling.

2.3 Singing with the exactness needed for full expression and emotion

In addition to the above aspects for increasing the pleasure and understanding of the audience, each syllable has to be treated correctly. For example single syllables such as *phií* (brother), *phɔ̌ɔ*(father), *rɨg*(love), *ŋôo*(foolish), *jɨ̀ɨg*(want) and *rɨ̀aŋ*(emptiness), need to be divided into two or three notes, with each note of appropriate duration and emphasis so that the correct meaning is delivered with expression and emotion. If the division or duration is inappropriate, the result will be displeasing and may even result in the wrong meaning. In the song "Bâj khlâŋ", there is a line: *ðo ðg jỳ̀yɨ̀g jɛɛ*("Oh, my heart is chill and cold"); the word *jỳ̀yɨ̀g*("chill") should be divided into three notes, namely, 'doh', 'sol' and 'me'. The first two notes, should be of the same duration, but with more emphasis on the 'sol'; the last note 'mi' should be the longest and have the most emphasis of all. The following word, *jɛɛ*("cold") then needs to be softened so that the full feeling of "chilly coldness" is communicated to the audience.

3 *Ỳ̀yan*

*Ỳ̀yan*is the most important vocal technique in Thai singing and singers need to be taught it thoroughly. The *ỳ̀yan*technique can be divided into two significant aspects:

3.1 Sound

There are many types of *ỳ̀yan*sound: for instance, *ɔɔ, hɔɔ, yy̆, hy̆y̆, ŋɔɔ, ŋɔɔ-j, ɔ*(very short), *ɔŋ*and, included here, *khrân sĭaŋ*("shaking sound") and *kratôb sĭaŋ*("bouncing sound"). The singer has to choose which sounds they will sing carefully and make sure that the duration and emphasis of the sound is correct within each phrase. When this is

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[71] As in the above example where if *phĭi*is over-emphasised, the pleasant butterfly becomes a non-existent, but unpleasant-sounding spirit! - D.S.

done the overall singing will be smooth and pleasing. For example, the sound *haa* should always be soft in order to create this smoothness and also be used as a "resting place of the breath". If the singer does not have this "rest", they may become over-extended, causing the breaking up of the musical "sentence" and thus spoiling the continuity of phraseology of the song. In addition, when a sentence is coming to an end, if the last consonant of the *ɲyan* is an "ɔ" (อ), it has to be sung as " *ɔɔ́* , and again if it is a "ŋ" (ง), it has to be sung as *ŋəɔ́* in order to signal a feeling of ending.

3.2 The use of *ɲyan* to emphasise feeling

The treatment of *ɲyan* is similar to the way syllables within a word are treated: in terms of duration, emphasis and pronunciation. Choosing the appropriate *ɲyan* means that different feelings can be created, for example, sadness, and in some cases *ɲyan* can help to enlarge the feeling of words. In the song "Sùd sa-ŋŭan" there is a line: *mɛ̂ɛ ŋɲya hɔ̌ɔm* ("oh, fragrant-skinned girl"); as well as the emphasis on the word *hɔ̌ɔm* itself ("fragrant"), if one uses a group of *ɲyan* after it appropriately, the word will stand out even more, so the scent of the girl will be carried out to the audience.

4 Rhythm

A good Thai singer needs to have a good sense of rhythm and be able to sing in time perfectly. There is no doubt about this. However, the two techniques *làg caŋwà* ("to steal the rhythm") and *jɔ̀ɔj caŋwà* ("to loosen the rhythm") should be included in a singer's repertoire, otherwise their singing will be *cɨ̀ɨd chɨ̀ɨd* ("tasteless"). Using the appropriate rhythm creates good pronunciation and makes the words *khom* ("sharp"). However, the singers are sometimes allowed to sing freely, avoiding the normal rhythm, and returning to it afterwards as in the group of songs known as *thajɔɔj* There are some places in *thajɔɔj* songs, for instance, that allow the singer to *lɔɔj caŋwà* ("to float the rhythm") in order to *khrâm khruuan* ("bemoan fate"); this contrasts with the singing in time which characterizes

the rest of the song. This technique also reveals the understanding of rhythm by the singer through their ability to use it skilfully.

5 Breathing

Breathing should be fixed and used to hide the gap between phrases from listeners, and so the singer will not become over-tired. The right breathing technique helps to make a smooth sound; the breathing place, therefore, should be set in advance.

6 Revealing emotion

Thai music can be classified as "classic" when it requires a high level of knowledge and understanding from the audience in order for them to appreciate and judge. The highest aspiration of Thai song, and indeed, of all other kinds of classic music, is to tap into the core emotion of the piece and not just to simply finish the song or tell the story or sing correctly in terms of notes and timing. The question is, how can this emotion be achieved?

To free the emotion in a song in order to show sadness, sweetness, tragic love, gladness or grief or even to create sarcasm and complaint cannot and should not be done by the use of the face, physical action or the voice[72]. It requires various techniques, as stated previously, such as the emphasis of word and *ɲyan* punctuation, *lɛ̀g caŋwà* the use of different kinds of sound and its control, and these all have to be done in an appropriate way. Not only knowledge on the part of the singer is required, but also consideration, interpretation and a lot of practice in order to uncover the emotion within the song.

7 *Khwaam praniid*

One of the most important elements of Thai singing is singing with *khwaam praniid* and *bancoŋ* meaning "precision" and "carefulness". This can be compared with the art of handwriting which can either be executed *wàd* ("with carelessness") or *bancoŋ* ("with

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[72] Thai singing does not make use of these physical aids, but instead relies on the internal dynamics of the song to convey its message.

carefulness"). Every word, phrase and sentence has to be sung precisely so that the meaning and feeling of the lines (normally taken from famous poems) can be illustrated. If a singer does not use *baancoη* these words cannot come alive but merely tell a story without vision or emotion.

8 Teaching

If learners are beginners, they should be taught to simply memorise a basic version of a song first, then to "manipulate" the words and *ŋŋaan* later. This procedure does not take a long time, but the singing will please the ear from the beginning and the learners themselves will understand the pattern beneath the singing of a song. In the ensuing songs, more advanced techniques can be added with regard to the ability of the learner. After three or four songs following this method, the learner's singing will certainly improve.

Following the original teaching method of Phrájaa Sanòdurijaaη (Chêm Sǔnthɔɔnwaathin), which taught the learner phrase by phrase as stated in the introduction, helped the learner to improve gradually from one stage to another. However, nowadays, it is impossible to teach in such a way. I have, therefore, developed the new method as set out above and found it also to be successful. It should be noted, though, that most of my students already had basic experience in singing to a certain level and were willing to learn and to love song; when taught by my method of demonstration and comparison, they learned to sing superbly within a short time.

Only singing of high quality should be taught, singing which constitutes a national heritage and which should be placed in the forefront of Thai culture. Quality of performance should also be concentrated on, so that the audience appreciates a pleasing and attractive sound. While it is true that being able to learn to play music and sing songs within a short time is to be applauded, the most important thing is the brilliance of the performance of that same music and those same songs.

April 1987

Appendix VI: Transcriptions of some Thai court songs

"Khèegmɔɔn"

*sǎam chán thɔ́ɔn*1
sung by Carəəncaj Sǔntharawaathin

(phrá əə)̀ phrásoŋlág
ŋaam phág phɔ̀ŋ phǔaŋ dùuaŋ bulǎn(cǎw əə)̀

1
əə   həə   əəŋ ŋəə   hə́ əə hý ŋəə   həə əə

3
ə-ə   hý ŋəə əə əə hə́ əəŋ   ŋəə

5
əə   hý ŋəə ə əə əə hə́ əəŋ ŋə́-ə ə əə hý ŋə- ə   ə əə

7
ə -ə - j   phrá   y ýy y-y əə   -   j

9
hý ŋəə hə́ə ə əə əə hə́ əə ə - ə

hý   phrá   soŋ   lá - g   yy   hý ŋǝǝ   ǝǝ hǝ ǝǝŋ

ŋǝǝ ǝǝ   hý   ŋǝǝ ǝǝ ǝǝ hǝ ǝǝŋ   ŋǝǝ -   j   hý

ŋaa- m   phág   yy   ǝǝ   hǝǝ

ǝǝ   hǝǝ ǝǝ   ǝ - ǝ - j   hý

phɔŋ   yy phii-aŋ   yy hýy   y ỳy   ǝǝ   hǝ ǝǝŋ

ŋǝǝ   ǝǝ hǝ ǝǝŋ ŋǝǝ   hý ŋǝǝ   hǝǝ

ə - ə -   j   câw   yy y - y   əə-   j

"Khèɛgmɔɔn Baaŋkhǔnphrom"

*sǎum chǐn thɔ̌ɔn*1

*khɔ̌ɔŋ*melody converted from Phíchíd Chajsěerii's notation

1st version sung by Usǎa Sčeŋphajrôoj

> *khrua nǎn*
> *phlaajchumphon dâj faŋ kôɔ jǎŋ jùd*
> *cyŋ tɔ̀ɔb wǎa raw phǔu ryyuŋ rídthírúd*

2nd version sung by Cěeŋ Khláajsǔithɔɔŋ

> *phlaajŋaam khwaam aalaj caj lahǔa*
> *faŋ mǔa mâj khlǎn namtaa dâj*

əə   hý   ŋəə   əə hə́ əəŋ

27

K

U

əə-ə   əə   hə́ əə   əə   hý ŋəə   əə- ŋ

C

ə-ə   əə   əə hə́ə ə əəŋ   ŋəə   hý ŋəə   əə hə́ əəŋ

29

K

U

ŋə́-ə ə əə   əə   əə hə́ əə hý ŋə̀ə   əə

C

ŋə-ə ə əə   əə   əə hə́ əə hý ŋə̀ə həə

31

K

U

əə- j hý ŋəə ə əə hə́ əə   rid   thi

C

əə- j y yy hý yy   náam yy taa

"Oô Laaw"

săam chán thɔ̌ɔn 1
sung by Caraəncaj Sǔntharawaathin

dəən thaaŋ   maa naj klaaŋ mɔɔrakhaa
phráɪ raachaa   thɔ̌ɔd thɔɔn caj jàj
ôo wâa   ween kam   dâj tham wáj
ca rɔ̂ŋ paj pen khâa câw phraam chii
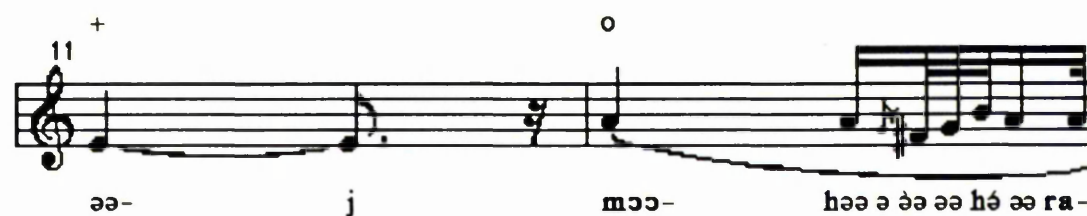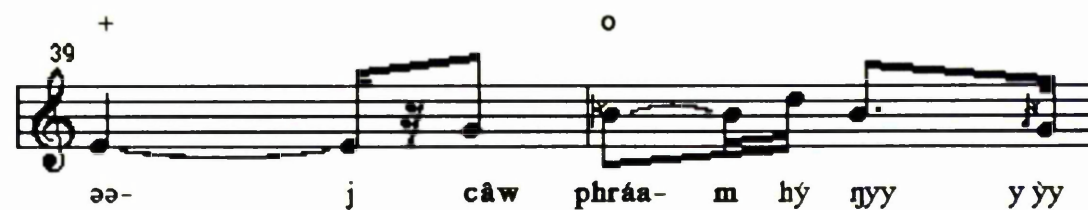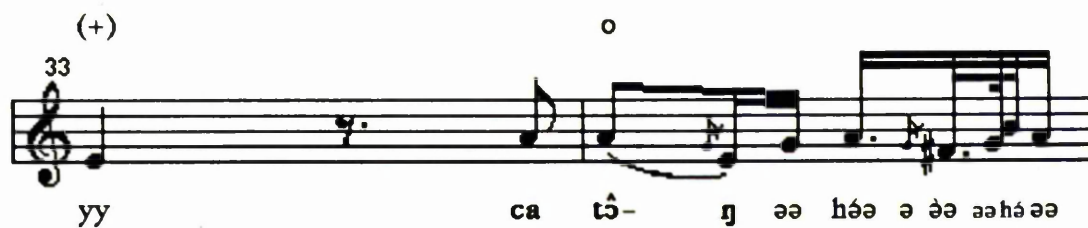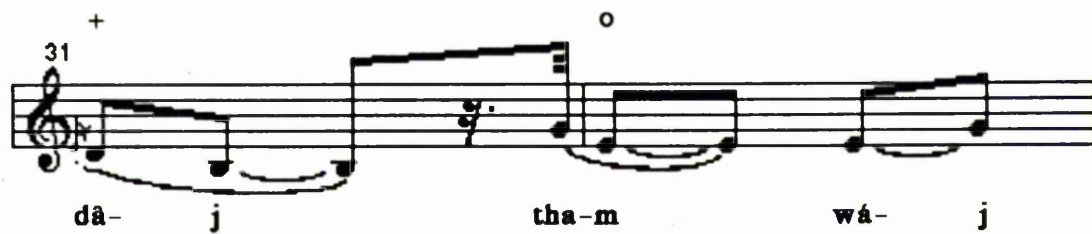
Appendix VII: *Khɔɔŋ* melodies of the songs "Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ" and "Thajɛɛ"

"Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ" (*sǎam chán*)
Thɔ̌ɔn 1

	o			+			o		+
5 6	1 6	5 6	7 1	+ 2 2	+ 1 +	7 7 +	6 6 + 5		
+ 4	5 5	5 4	5 6	2	1 + 7	6	5		

	o			+			o		(+)
+ 1	6 5	2 3	4 5	+ 1 + 2	+ 1 + 6	+ 5 5	+ 6 + 1		
+ 6 5	4 3	2 1	2 3	+ 1 + 2	+ 1 + 3	+ 2	+ 3 + 1		

	o			+			o		+
+ 6	5 3	1 1 +	2 2 + 3	+ 3 + 3	+ 3	3 3 +	2 2 + 1		
+ 5 3	2 1	2	3	+ 5 + 6	+ 5 + 3	2	1		

	o			+			o		(+)
+ 1	6 5	2 3	4 5	+ 1 + 2	+ 1 + 6	+ 5 5	+ 6 + 1		
+ 6 5	4 3	2 1	2 3	+ 1 + 2	+ 1 + 3	+ 2	+ 3 + 1		

	o			+			o		+
+ 6 +	5 5 +	6 6 +	1 1 + 2	+ 2 2 2	+ 1	6 6 +	5 5 + 4		
+ 6 + 5	6	1	2	+ 5 4 2	+ 1 + 6	5	4		

	o			+			o		(+)
+ 6 + 1	+ 6 +	5 5 +	4 4 + 2	+ 2 +	1 1 +	2 2 +	4 4 + 5		
+ 6 + 1	+ 6 + 5	4	6	+ 6 + 5	6	4	5		

repeat

Thɔ̌ɔn 2

	o			+			o		+
+ 5 6	+ 1 + 2	+ 3 + 2	+ 1 + 6	+ 6 +	5 5 +	6 6 +	1 1 + 2		
+ 4	1 + 2	+ 3 + 2	+ 1 + 3	+ 3 + 2	3	1	2		

	o			+			o		(+)
+ 2 3	4 5	6	5 4	1 6	6 5	5 3	3 2		
+ 1	2 3	4 5 4	3 2	5 3	3 2	2 1	1 6		

	o			+			o		+
+ 6 +	5 5 +	6 6 +	1 1 + 2	+ 2 2 2	+ 1	6 6 +	5 5 + 4		
+ 6 + 5	6	1	2	+ 5 4 2	+ 1 + 6	5	4		

	o			+			o		(+)
+ 6 + 1	+ 6 +	5 5 +	4 4 + 2	+ 2 +	1 1 +	2 2 +	4 4 + 5		
+ 6 + 1	+ 6 + 5	4	6	+ 6 + 5	6	4	5		

repeat

End

"Thajɔɔ" (săam chán)

thɔ̂ɔn1

o	+	o	+				
+ 6 +	6 5 + 6	+ 2 +	1 1 + 2	+ + 3	3 2	1 2	2 1
5 + 3	2 + 3	+ 2 + 1	2	2	1 6	6 1	6 5

o	+	o	(+)				
1	6 5	2 3	4 5	+ 4	3 + 5	+	5 6 + 1
+ 6 5	4 3	2 1	2 3	3 2	+ 2	+ 3 + 4	1

o	+	o	+				
+ 5	+ 6 7	6 7	1 2	+ 5 + 1	+ + 2 3	+ 3 + 3	+ 2 + 1
+ 2 +	5	6 5	6 7	2 + 1	+ + 3	+ 5 + 3	+ 2 + 1

o	+	o	(+)				
+ 3	2 7	5	+ 6 7	+ 1 + 2	3 2	6 7	1 2
+ 2 7	6 5	+ 2 +	5	5 +	1 7	6 5	6 7

o	+	o	+				
+ 6	5 3	1 1 +	2 2 + 3	+ 3 + 3	+ 3 +	3 3 +	2 2 + 1
5 3	2 1	2	3	+ 5 + 6	+ 5 + 3	2	1

o	+	o	(+)				
+ 6 +	5 5 +	6 6 +	7 7 + 1	+ 6 +	5 5 +	1 1 +	2 2 + 3
+ 6 + 5	6	7	1	+ 6 + 5	1	2	3

o	+	o	+				
+ 2 3	+ 5 + 6	+ 1 + 6	+ 5 + 3	+ 5 + 1	+ + 2 3	+ 3 + 3	+ 2 + 1
+ 1	5 + 6	+ 1 + 6	+ 5 + 7	+ 2 + 1	+ + 3	+ 5 + 3	+ 2 + 1

o	+	o	(+)				
+ 6 +	5 5 +	6 6 +	7 7 + 1	+ 3 3	+ 2 +	1 1 +	7 7 + 6
+ 6 + 5	6	7	1	+ 3	2 + 1	7	6

repeat

thɔ̂ɔn2

o	+	o	+				
+ 6 +	6 5 + 6	+ 2 +	1 1 + 2	+ + 3	3 2	1 2	2 1
5 + 3	2 + 3	+ 2 + 1	2	2	1 6	6 1	6 5

o	+	o	(+)				
1	6 5	2 3	4 5	+ 4	3 + 5	+	5 6 + 1
+ 6 5	4 3	2 1	2 3	3 2	+ 2	+ 3 + 4	1

o	+	o	+				
+ 5	+ 6 7	6 7	1 2	+ 5 + 1	+ + 2 3	+ 3 + 3	+ 2 + 1
+ 2 +	5	6 5	6 7	2 + 1	+ + 3	+ 5 + 3	+ 2 + 1

o	+	o	(+)				
+ 5 + 1	+ + 2 3	+ 3 + 3	+ 2 + 1	+ + 3	3 2	1 2	2 1
+ 2 + 1	+ + 3	+ 5 + 3	+ 2 + 1	+ + 2	1 6	6 1	6 5

***

o	+	o	+				
1	6 5	2 3	4 5	+ 4	3 + 5	+	5 6 + 1
+ 6 5	4 3	2 1	2 3	3 2	+ 2	+ 3 + 4	1

	o		+		o		(+)
+ 5 + 1	+ + 2 3	+ 3 + 3	+ 2 + 1	+ + 3	3 2	1 2	2 1
+ 2 + 1	+ + 3	+ 5 + 3	+ 2 + 1	+ + 2	1 6	6 1	6 5

	o		+		o		+
+ 5 6	1 6	5 6		5 + 6		1	+ 2 3
+ 4	5 5	5 4	5 4 3 2	+ 4 +	5 4 3 2	+ 5 +	1

	o		+		o		(+)
+ 4 + 5	6 5	2 3	4 5 6 6	6 6 5	5	4 5 + 4	
+ 1 +	4 3	2 1	2 3	6 3	3	2 2 3	1

	o		+		o		(+)
+ 6	5 3	1 1 +	2 2 + 3	+ 3 + 3	+ 3 +	3 3 +	2 2 + 1
5 3	2 1	2	3	+ 5 + 6	+ 5 + 3	2	1

	o		+		o		(+)
+ 6 +	5 5 +	6 6 +	7 7 + 1	+ 6 +	5 5 +	1 1 +	2 2 + 3
+ 6 + 5	6	7	1	+ 6 + 5	1	2	3

	o		+		o		+
+ 4 + 5	6 5	2 3	4 5 6 6	6 6 5	5	4 5 + 4	
+ 1 +	4 3	2 1	2 3	6 3	3	2 2 3	1

	o		+		o		(+)
+ 2 +	1 1 +	2 2 +	3 3 + 4	+ 6 6	+ 5 +	4 4 +	3 3 + 2
+ 6 + 5	6	7	1	+ 6	5 + 4	7	6

repeat from line 5 and continue

	o		+		o		+
+ 6	5 3	1	+ 2 3	+ 4 + 5	6 5	2 3	4 5
5 3	2 1	+ 5 +	1	1	4 3	2 1	2 3

	o		+		o		(+)
+ 2	1 6	4	+ 5 6	+ 2	1 6	5 6	5 4
1 6	5 4	+ 1 +	4	1 6	5 4	5 4	3 2

	o		+		o		+
+ 6	5 3	1	+ 2 3	+ 4 + 5	6 5	2 3	4 5
5 3	2 1	+ 5 +	1	1	4 3	2 1	2 3

	o		+		o		+
+ 6	5 3	1 1 +	2 2 + 3	+ 3 + 3	+ 3 +	3 3 +	2 2 + 1
5 3	2 1	2	3	+ 5 + 6	+ 5 + 3	2	1

End

Appendix VIII: Translation of the standard levels used in Thai singing exams

(from *Keen màadtrathàan siakhǎa wichaa lé wichaachíib dontrii thaj*[Standard grades of Thai music for students and professionals] by Anú-kammakaan khrooŋ-kaan sòŋsǝǝm kaan dontrii thaj [The Committee for the Support of Thai music] (1995) page 214-221)

In 1992, the Thai Ministry of Higher Education invited teachers of traditional singing to join them in setting up a standardised Thai singing examination. The committee was composed of singers, musicians and representatives of the ministry and it took twelve meetings over two years to reach the following conclusions.

The Scope of the Singing Examination

The committee has agreed that the examination of Thai singing should include the following points:

1 The correct sitting position

2 Singing techniques

3 Voice quality

4 The accurate memorisation of the basic melody

5 The accurate memorisation of a set vocal melody including rhythm

6 The rearrangement of the vocal melody and the creation of a *thaaŋpliian* version of it

7 General excellence and aesthetic quality

The examination will include the following tests:

1 A singing examination

2 An examination of the use of *chiŋ* for self-accompaniment (level 4 upwards)

3 An examination of the singing of drum-pattern mnemonics (levels 5 and 6)

4 An examination of *thoon rammanaa* playing (above level 6)

Clarification of the above headings

1 The correct sitting position

   1.1 Sit in the *pháb phíiab* position appropriate to your sex with feet pointing backwards

   1.2 Using your arms to support yourself is forbidden; hands should be folded in your lap

   1.3 Backs should be perfectly straight and heads held high

   1.4 Singers should be focussed and still, with no unnecessary movement of the head, face or eyes

   1.5 Wear a natural expression

   1.6 Do not use hands or feet to keep the beat

   1.7 Singers should exhibit a knowledge of their seating position in relation to different ensembles

2 Singing techniques

The fundamental ability of Thai singing is to combine wordless vocalisation (*ýyuu*) with sung lyrics. Singing technique consists of:

   2.1 Enunciation

   2.2 Projection

   2.3 Breath control

   2.4 Rhythm

2.1 Enunciation

The singer should be able to sing accurately and clearly, following the song text, dividing words into syllables appropriately according to set rules - this includes the reading of poetry - and the proper pronunciation of every sound. There are five levels of competence:

2.1.1 Singers should be able to read poems from the written page or deliver them from memory following the traditional set rules

2.1.2 Singers should be able to read poems from the written page or deliver them from memory following the traditional set rules, and divide words according to the metre of the poem (at this level perfect pronunciation is not expected)

2.1.3 As above but with perfect pronunciation

2.1.4 The singer should be able to perform a melodic recitation (*kaan dan thamnɔɔŋ sa-nɔ́*) according to the rules of the type of recitation performed

2.1.5 The singer should be able to sing lyrics with the correct emphasis, careful control and precision

2.2 Projection

The singer should be able to use their neck, chest, diaphragm and nasal cavity to project notes at high volume with evenness and correct pitch. There are 18 levels of competence:

2.2.1 To be able to go up and down the Thai scale keeping the correct pitches

2.2.2 To create a continuous stream of sound for the duration of a *chiŋ* and a *chàp* at the *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* level, breathe and continue

2.2.3 To be able to go up and down the Thai scale with one breath

2.2.4 To create a continuous stream of sound for the duration of a *chiŋ* and a *chàp* at the *sǎam chán* level, breathe and continue

2.2.5 To sing a note with even volume for the duration of one breath

2.2.6 To go up and down an octave with one breath

2.2.7 To reproduce precisely the pitch of an instrument or a human voice

2.2.8 To sing the *ǝǝ* sound in the following manner

    (1) from the chest (low range)

    (2) from the neck (middle range)

    (3) with nasality (high range)

2.2.9 To sing set songs clearly with continuity

2.2.10 To sing *sǐiaŋ khrǎn*

2.2.11 To sing the interval of a second using the *krathóɓ*technique

2.2.12 To sing the interval of a third using the *krathóɓ*technique

2.2.13 To jump up or down the vocal scale appropriately

2.2.14 To sing using the techniques of *nén sǐiaŋ, prakhóɓ sǐiaŋ,* and *klɔ̌m sǐiaŋ* in the same manner as the committee's examples

2.2.15 To sing using the techniques of *nén sǐiaŋ, prakhóɓ sǐiaŋ,* and *klɔ̌m sǐiaŋ* in the same manner as the committee's examples, and to identify these techniques from a tape recording

2.2.16 To sing using the following techinques (perfection is not expected)

- *klíŋ sǐiaŋ*

- *klyŋ sǐiaŋ*

- *klyyaŋ sǐiaŋ*

- *klyyn sǐiaŋ*

- changing from a nasal to a "real" sound appropriately

- *sǐiaŋ khrʋʋan*

- *khrɔ̌m*

- *khwʋʋaŋ sǐiaŋ*

- *chɔɔn sǐiaŋ*

- *pàn sǐiaŋ*

- *sǐiaŋ príɓ*

- *sǐiaŋ prooj*

- *phǎan sǐiaŋ*

- *phǎn sǐiaŋ*

- *phɔ̌n sǐiaŋ*

- *mʋʋan sǐiaŋ*and *mʋʋan kham*

- *jòog sǐiaŋ*

- *joon sïïaŋ*

- *rüuab sïïaŋ*

- *sïïaŋ rɔ̀n phïʾw lom*

- *lǎg caŋwǎ* and *jɔɔj caŋwǎ*

- *lýyaŋ lǎj* (up and down)

- *sïïaŋ sɐdʋ̀d* (the gentle version of this technique is the same as *sïïaŋ prìb*)

- *sïïaŋ nǎg* and *sïïaŋ baw*

- *hǎaŋ sïïaŋ*

- *hə̌ən sïïaŋ*

- *hoon sïïaŋ*

- *sïïaŋ lɔɔj*

- *sïïaŋ aa-sǐj* (also known as *sïïaŋ phǔ̀*)

2.2.17 To sing using the above techniques perfectly

2.2.18 To sing *khǎb seephaa* and other kinds of *khǎb, phǎaŋ* and *ceeancaa*

Note: To include the techniques of 2.2.16 in singing results in a high quality

performance called "singing with *méd phraaj*"; without *méd phraaj*, singing cannot be

pleasing to the ear and is known as *rɔ́ɔŋ dàad dàad paj* or "just singing".

2.3 Breath control

This covers the knowledge of when to take a breath, in synchronization with melodic

phrases and lyrics

2.3.1 Principles and methods

2.3.1.1 Singers must breathe-in deeply and naturally without making any excess

noise

2.3.1.2 Exhalation has to be through the mouth, gently and slowly with complete

control for as long as possible

2.3.1.3 Good singers should breathe in the right places, normally after the *chǎb*

beats

2.3.1.4 Singers should be able to *lág háaj caj* or "steal the breath"; this is a brief inhalation without the knowledge of the listener

2.3.2 The examination of breathing control

2.3.2.1 To breathe and to control the breath correctly

2.3.2.2 To take a deep breath and control the exhalation as long as a double length of *chiŋ* and *chàb* beats (perfection is not expected yet)

2.3.2.3 To take a deep breath and control the exhalation as long as a double length of *chiŋ* and *chàb* beats (perfection is expected at this level)

2.3.2.4 To breathe and to exhale appropriately in the right places in the melody (perfection is not expected yet)

2.3.2.5 To breathe and to exhale appropriately in the right places in the melody (perfection is expected at this level)

2.3.2.6 To *lág háaj caj* efficiently and appropriately

The methods of singing different *ÿyaa*

Singers must include these *ÿyaa* in their singing: *aa, aaj, ÿ, yÿ, áaj, á, haa, hyy, hÿ, hÿy, aaŋ-aa* and *aaŋ-aaj.* Singing is learnt by imitating the sounds a teacher makes, therefore the following explanations might help singing teachers during their teaching practice.

The production of the sound *ae*:

Use the very back of the tongue; tense neck; open mouth a little, project the sound directly from the throat without moving the chin

The production of the sound *aaj*:

Follow the same procedure as when producing the sound *aa*, but at the end lift the the tongue until both sides touch the palate, then widen the mouth a little (this *ÿyaa* is normally situated at the end of the *ÿyaa* section just preceding the lyrics)

The production of the sound *yy* :

    Open the mouth a little, project the sound directly from the throat, keep the chin still, lift the tongue a little bit in order to let the air touch the palate, let the air come through both the mouth and the nasal passage

The production of the sound *y* :

    Use the same technique as when producing the sound *yy*, but make it briefer. (This sound is normally used in combination with the other sounds, not on its own.)

The production of the sound *ə́əy*:

    Use the same technique as when producing the sound *əəy*, but let the sound swoop up at the end in a nasal fashion

The production of the sound *ə*:

    Use the same technique as when producing the sound *əə* but make it briefer

The production of the sound *həə*:

    The sound is produced in the throat and channelled mainly through the palate but also through the nasal passage

The production of the sound *hyy*:

    Use the same technique as when producing the sound *həə* but with more nasality and allowing the tongue to rise upwards. If this sound is followed by *əə* then ŋ has to be added to it

The production of the sound *hy*:

    Use the same technique as when producing the sound *hyy* but make it briefer

The production of the sound *hýy*:

    Half open the mouth, then produce the sound *hyy* slowly and let the sound swoop up through the nasal cavity; the sound should fade out gradually

The production of the sound *əəŋ-əə*

    Produce the sound *əə*, then raise the tongue upwards until it touch the palate, let the air come through the nasal cavity resulting in the sound *əəŋ* then immediately produce the sound *əə* once more

The production of the sound *əəŋ-əəj*:

Use the same technique as for *əəŋ-əə* then produce the sound *əəj*

3 Voice quality

[Good] voice quality can be defined as follows:

1. The loudness and clarity of the voice is excellent, without shouting

2. The volume of the voice is evenly produced and tuneful

3. The voice is not cracked or husky

4 The accurate memorisation of the basic melody

This refers to the ability to sing the melody of the *khɔ̌ɔŋ woŋ jàj* with the exception of songs that are not created from a *khɔ̌ɔŋ woŋ jàj* melody, or where the vocal melody has no relationship with the *khɔ̌ɔŋ woŋ jàj*, for example in songs used in plays (such as "Cháa Pii", "Oô Pii" and "Hèe Chə̂əd Chìŋ").

5 The accurate memorisation of a set vocal melody including its rhythm

5.1 The accurate memorisation of a set vocal melody will be examined by the following test:

5.1.1 The accuracy of the melody and lyrics

5.1.2 The ability to sing in tune throughout the performance

5.2 The ability to sing with the right tempo

5.3 The ability to sing with the right rhythm

6 The rearrangement of the vocal melody and the creation of a *thaaŋpliian* version of it

6.1 The ability to change some parts of the songs correctly according to the theory of Thai music

6.2 The ability to convert an instrumental melody into a vocal melody

6.2.1 For some phrases

6.2.2 For the whole song

6.3 The ability to create a *thaaŋphiian*(version) of a song without changing the *lŭŭg tòg* (corresponding notes)

7 General excellence and aesthetic quality

This means an excellence of hearing, seeing, understanding and interpreting in order to be able to use the voice in singing with clear pronunciation, correct tones and the conveyance of the emotions of the songs to the audience. To achieve this, the singers have to use all of the techniques appropriately.

Note: In the past the strategy of teaching and learning singing was not standardised, but based on imitation and mimicking of teacher by pupils. It is the committee's duty to set up a standard teaching method using universal terms and instructions.

Glossary of Thai Terms

bòd	A stanza of poetry. In the *klɔɔn* form, it consists of four *wák*
bòd rɔ́ɔŋ	Lyrics
caŋwà	Rhythmic cycle; also known as *caŋwà nâatháb*. A unit for measuring the length of a *thɔ̂ɔn* of a song; the shortest *thɔ̂ɔn* consists of two *caŋwà*
chán	Level; sometimes called "metrical expansion level". Term used for indicating melodic and rhythmic form of a melody of which there are three: *sǎam chán* (level 3), *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* (level 2) and *chán diiaw* (level 1). *Sǎam chán* is the longest with a high degree of *ýýan*; *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán* is half the length of *sǎam chán*, with a medium degree of *ýýan*; *chán diiaw* is half the length of *sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*, with a low degree of *ýýan*.
chán diiaw	Level 1 (see the term *chán*)
chǎn	A kind of poetic form, believed to have originated in China
joon	A type of melody based around a single note, used mainly in *phleeŋ thajɔɔj*
kaan lɔɔj caŋwà	Flying rhythm: a singing technique used exclusively in *phleeŋ thajɔɔj*
khlooŋ	A kind of poetic form, believed to have originated in India
klɔɔn	A kind of poetic form, believed to be indigenous to Thai-Lao speaking peoples
klɔɔn pèed	A type of *klɔɔn* poetry, with eight syllables to the *wák* (half-line)
klɔɔn hòg	A type of *klɔɔn* poetry, with six syllables to the *wák* (half-line)
klɔɔn sàgkrawaa	*Klɔɔn pèed* poetry used in *sàgkrawaa* competitions; differentiated by the use of the word "sàgkrawaa" at the beginning of each stanza
lòb sǐaŋ	Avoiding the pitch: a practice where the singer comes down or goes up an octave when a melody is either too high or too low for their voice

lùug tòg	Structural notes: normally refers to notes of the *khɔ̌ɔŋ* melody that fall on the last *chàb* beat of each rhythmic cycle; it can also be used for other "important" notes of a melody
nâatháb	Rhythmic pattern: can be divided into three main types, *nâatháb próbkày*, *nâatháb sɔ̌ɔŋmáaj* and *nâatháb phíséed*
nâatháb próbkày	The *próbkày* rhythmic pattern: drum pattern that lasts for the length of four *chìŋ- chàb* cycles
nâatháb sɔ̌ɔŋmáaj	The *sɔ̌ɔŋmáaj* rhythmic pattern: drum pattern that lasts for the length of two *chìŋ- chàb* cycles
nâatháb thajɔɔj	The term used for *nâatháb sɔ̌ɔŋmáaj* when it is used to accompany *phleeŋ thajɔɔj*
nɯ́ɯa	A set-length melody used in *phleeŋ thajɔɔj*
nɯ́ɯa phleeŋ	Term used amongst Thai musicians to refer to both the *khɔ̌ɔŋ* melody and the basic structure of a song
phleeŋ	Music; songs; musical compositions; musical repertoires
phleeŋ lakhɔɔn	Songs used in plays
phleeŋ nɯ́ɯa tem	Songs containing a small degree of *ɯ́ɯan*, literally "full-text songs"
phleeŋ próbkày	Musical repertoire containing songs made up of musical phrases each of which are the length of one cycle of *nâatháb próbkày*, also known as *phleeŋ nâatháb próbkày*
phleeŋ sɔ̌ɔŋmáaj	Musical repertoire containing songs made up of musical phrases each of which are the length of one cycle of *nâatháb sɔ̌ɔŋmáaj*, also known as *phleeŋ nâatháb sɔ̌ɔŋmáaj*
phleeŋ thajɔɔj	Songs made up of *nɯ́ɯa* melodies in alternation with *jooŋ* melodies and accompanied by *nâatháb thajɔɔj*, also known as *phleeŋ nâatháb thajɔɔj*
sǎam chán	Level 3 (see the term *chán*)
sàgkrawaa or *kaan lên sàgkrawaa*	
	Poetic game in which several poets try to outdo each other with the brilliance of their poetry, which is set to music and sung
sěephaa	A repertoire of musical recitations, where the vocalist accompanies him or herself with a set of *kràb sěephaa* (hand-held woodblocks)
sɔ̌ɔŋ chán	Level 2 (see the term *chán*)

thaaŋ	Style, including vocal styles, the style of each instrument, an individual's style, or the style typical of a school of music. Another unrelated meaning of *thaaŋ* is "pitch-level" or "key".
thǎw	A type of melody based on a single note, commonly used in *phleeŋ prôbkaj*
thǎw	A form of musical repertoire consisting of melodies at three *chán* (levels): level 3, level 2 and level 1
thɔ́ɔn	Self-contained melody made up of a set number of *caŋwà*, from a minimum of two to a variable maximum number
wák	Term used for a half-line unit of *klɔɔn* poetry, which can be divided up into three distinct groups of syllables
ɲyan	Wordless vocalisation

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Audiography

Dates in brackets are the date of issue for a recording; dates in square brackets are the date the piece was recorded, if different from the former.

R1 "Bùlǎn" (*sǎam cháà*): Ruuambanleeŋ, Narong (1980s) (F), radio, Bangkok

R2 "Ciin Sèè" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ cháà*): Prasìdthíkun, Thúuam [1970s] (1992) (C), on cassette tape distributed on her cremation day, 22/1/92

R3 "Cɔɔrakhêe Hǎaŋ Jaaw" (*sǎam cháà*): Sǒowád, Amphɔɔn (1997) (C), on Ministry of Higher Education, Vol 5

R4 "Fáràŋ Ram Tháaw" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ cháà*): Sǔntharawaathin, Carəəncaj (1989) (F), private lesson, Bangkok

R5 "Hěeraa Lên Náam" (*sǎam cháà*): Thábphɔɔn, Sǒmchaaj (1980s) (CUSA)

R6 "Kaarawêeg" (*thǎw*): Sǒowád, Amphɔɔn (1997) (C), on Ministry of Higher Education, Vol 5

R7 "Khaměen Ráadchaburii" (*sǎam cháà*): Prawêed Kumúd [1970s] (1995) (C), on cassette tape distributed for his 72nd birthday

R8 "Khèèg Bɔɔrathêed" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ cháà*): Chuuchɔ̂ɔkêəw, Nanthaa (1996) (C) on Dùrijápraniid *phleeŋ thaj dəəm*[Thai classsical music], Vol 1, np

R9 "Khèèg Khǎaw" (*thǎw*): Chiiwákaanon, Aphinjaa [1991] (1992) (C) on Fong Naam, *Siamese Classical Music*(CD) Vol 3. Marco Polo

R10 "Khèègmɔɔn" (*thǎw*): Dùrijáphan, Nìiaw (1950s) (F), radio, Bangkok

R11 "Khèègmɔɔn" (*sǎam cháà*): Sǔntharawaathin, Carəəncaj [1966] (1995) (C) on *Sǎaj Saaŋ* Vol 1 [reissued for her 80th birthday, 16/9/95]

R12 "Khə̀əgmɔɔn Baaŋcháaŋ" (*tha'm*): Sǐiwoŋsǎa, Maniirád (1992) (F), concert, Paris

R12.2 "Khə̀əgmɔɔn Baaŋcháaŋ" (*tha'm*): Thábphɔɔn, Sǒmchaaj (1980s) (CUSA)

R13 "Khə̀əgmɔɔn Baaŋkhǔnphrom" (*tha'm*): Khláajsǔithɔɔŋ, Cə̂əŋ (1980s) (CUSA)

R14 "Khə̀əgmɔɔn Baaŋkhǔnphrom" (*tha'm*): Usǎa Sə̀əŋphajrôod (1980s) (CUSA)

R15 "Khə̀əg Pàdtaanii" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chám*): Prasìdthìkun, Thúuam [1970s] (1992) (C) on cassette tape distributed for her cremation day, 22/1/92

R16 "Khə̀əg Pàdtaanii" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chám*): Dùrijápraniid, Sùdcìd (1993) (C) on *Phleeŋ thaj prɨ̀ràadchaníphon* ["songs by royals"] 2 volumes, Bangkok

R16.2 "Khə̀əg Pàdtaanii" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chám*): Sǔntharawaathin, Caraəncaj (1980s) (F), radio, Bangkok

R17 "Khə̀əg Saj" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chám*): Sǔntharawaathin, Caraəncaj [1960s] (1990) (C), an excerpt from "Songs of *Raammakiian*[Ramayana]" on *Sǔnthariijá phleeŋ thaj*[The beauty of Thai songs]

R18 "Mahǎa Rə̂əg" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chám*): Sǔntharawaathin, Caraəncaj (1982), an excerpt from "Songs for the Emerald Buddha" on *Chǔn dùdsadii sǎŋwəəj phrɨ́phǔdthámahǎamanii rɨ́dtanáพáttimaakɔɔn*["An offering to the Emerald Buddha"]

R19 "Naaŋ Nâag" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chám*): Chiiwákaanon, Aphinjaa (1992) (C) on Fong Naam, *Siamese Classical Music*(CD) Vol 5. Marco Polo

R20 "Ngiiaw Ramlýg" (*tha'm*): Dùrijápraniid, Sùdcìd (1980s) (F), concert, Bangkok

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R21.2 "Nóg Khamin" (*sǎam chám*): Sǔntharawaathin, Caraəncaj [1980s] (1995) (C) on *Sǎaj Sǎníd*, Vol 2 [reissued for her 80th birthday, 16/9/95]

R22 "Oô Laaw" (*sǎam chán*): Khǎmprasèəd, Prachíd (1985) (CUSA)

R23 "Oô Laaw" (*sǎam chán*): Sǔntharawaathín, Carəəncaj (1989) (C) on Fong Naam, *From the Courts of Old Siam* Pacific Music Co., Ltd.

R24 "Pè" (*sǎam chán*): Sǒowád, Amphɔɔn (1997) (C), on Ministry of Higher Education, Vol 5

R25 "Phajaa Sòog" (*sǎam chán*): Sǔntharawaathín, Carəəncaj (1995) [1966] (C) on *Sǎaj Sǎŋ* Vol 1 [reissued for her 80th birthday, 16/9/95]

R25.2 ""Phajaa Sòog" (*sǎam chán*): Thábphɔɔn Sǒmchaaj (1980s) (CUSA)

R26 "Sǎaráthíi" (*sǎam chán*): Sǎŋwiiankɔɔŋ, Sǒmbàd (1980s) (C)

R27 "Sìi Bòd" (*sǎam chán*): Phèəjphàwjen, Wímon (1985) (CUSA)

R28 "Sǒom Sòŋ Sèəŋ" (*thǎw*): Roohítaacon, Kanjaa (1995) (C), on cassette tape distributed for Montrii Traamôod's 95th birthday

R29 "Tôn Phleeŋ Chìŋ" (*sǎam chán*): Sǒowád, Amphɔɔn (1997) (C), on Ministry of Higher Education, Vol 5

R30 "Thajèə" (*sǎam chán*): Swangviboonpong, Dusadee (1995) (F), private lesson with Khunjíŋ Phajthuun Kìdtìwan, Bangkok

R31 "Thajɔɔj Naj" (*thǎw*): Sǔntharawaathín, Carəəncaj (1987) (F), private lesson, Bangkok

R32 "Thajɔɔj Naj" (*thǎw*): Chiiwákaanon, Aphinjaa (1991) (F), rehearsal for performance, Bangkok

R33 "Thajɔɔj Nòog" (*sǎam chán*): Sǎŋwiiankɔɔŋ, Sǒmbàd (1992) on Fong Naam, *Siamese Classical Music* (CD) Vol 4. Marco Polo

R34 "Wêedsùkam" (*sɔ̌ɔŋ chán*): Chuuchɔ̀ɔkêɛw, Nanthaa (1996) (C) on Dùrijápraniid, *Phleeŋ thaj dəəm*[Thai classsical music], Vol 4, Bangkok

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