MONASH UNIVERSITY
THESIS ACCEPTED IN SATISFACTION OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
ON..... 19 August 2003 .....
.....[redacted].....
Sec. Research Graduate School Committee

Following an exchange of correspondence with an examiner it was agreed that a future revision of the thesis would benefit from the corrections / additions listed below:

1. Transcription of Lao should be more consistent throughout. The following recommendations have been adopted.

Type of Word	Approach	Notes
Place names	Gazetted romanisation from Lao PDR Geographic Department.	Enfield transcription follows in italics and in parentheses on first occurrence.
Personal names	Subject's preferred method of romanisation where one exists, otherwise LoC romanisation.	No italics. Capital letters for each name. Enfield transcription in parentheses and italics following first occurrence of names.
Lao words within quotations from previous authors	Cited source's preferred method with Enfield romanisation in square brackets and italics if unclear.	Follow cited source's preference for italics, word breaks and capitalisation.
All other Lao words	Always Enfield romanisation. This includes *mòò lam* (rather than *mohlam*), *mòò khèèn* (rather than *mohkhaen*) and *khèèn* (rather than *khaen*).	Written in italics on all occurrences. Spaces to be used in compound words where all components have an individual meaning.
Bibliographic citations	Library of Congress (LoC) romanisation followed by Enfield romanisation in square brackets. Lao script to follow these. If authors are usually listed with the preferred romanisation then this is used with an LoC romanisation following.	In-text citations of authors to agree with LoC romanisation. Bibliographic entries of authors listed using LoC romanisation with their preferred romanisation following in brackets (where one exists).

2. The explanation of Lao vowel orthography in the prefatory section (pp. xii-xv) to be expanded to provide complete descriptions (i.e. long, short, with and without a final consonants). This includes orthographic symbols for long and short diphthongs and intermedial /-ia-/. The vowel tables showing the Enfield transcription phonemes to include short vowels as well as long, and the pronunciation guide should have a fourth column showing IPA symbols for each consonant and vowel phoneme.

3. An external theoretical definition of genre independent of the criterial features of any given genre is needed, and is given below:

   "A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains the choice of content and style." (Swales 1990:58).

   When this definition is applied to the Lao *khap-lam* traditions the *bun* event can be seen as an overarching communicative event and purpose which ties the various regional forms of *khap* and *lam* together as a super-genre. This can be equated to the broad Lao *khap-lam* tradition I propose in the thesis. However, this should not be seen as enough to link all *khap-lam* forms together as single genre because each discretely named *khap* and *lam* form (those named after a geographical place or an ethnic group) has its own unique communicative purposes and processes (with their own musical and textual structures, thematic content, and performance practices designed for a specific audience). Each regional locale forms its own discrete discourse community and there is little interaction between them. The forms which are categorised and named according to their thematic content and/or their poetic form occur across discrete genres and are not genres themselves.

   Using the above definition of genre, the Lao term *phaphêêt* (pp. 64-65) applied to *khap* or *lam* simply means 'kind, sort, variety', not 'genre'. The salient terms for classifying Lao vocal music are *khap* and *lam* together with other indigenous terms which discussed in general throughout the thesis and in particular detail in chapters 5 and 7. Performers identify themselves as performers of a specific genre (the one which forms the core of a regional tradition) even if they regularly perform others (e.g. Duang Phaeng refers to herself as a *mòò lam siiphandòòn*). Thus, while my concept of the regional tradition is an observer-imposed typology it relies on culture-emerging typologies to inform and shape it.

4. The definition of *khap-lam* on p. 55 appears in Miller (1985a:35, 142) and Mahoney (1995:254). At this point it should also be made clear that *khap* and *lam* song forms, and singing, are differentiated from songs with a fixed melody (and the singing of them) by the use of different terminology. A singer will *hòòng*, 'sing', a *phêêng* 'a song of fixed melody' while a *mòò lam* will *lam* a *lam* or *khap* a *khap* (see also p. 200). Songs with fixed melodies include Western and Westernised popular music and 'classical' compositions. Chapter three concludes with a much more restricted definition of *khap-lam* on p. 89. This is the preferred definition upon which the remainder of the thesis is based.

5. The treatment of parallelism on (pp. 235-7) is restricted to Koret's work on Lao literature and is not intended as a detailed examination of this phenomenon. Readers should be aware that many scholars of literature prefer a more restricted definition of parallelism which entails a syntactic frame that is modified by replacing one or two lexical items (e.g example 7-10) to produce two forms parallel in meaning and structure.
6. The following factual errors corrected:

   p. 9 & 220. The Lao term *muan* has other meanings which include 'pleasing, smooth, harmonious, gentle' and other things depending upon context.

   p. 41. Here I noted that "Three major language families are present in Laos: Tai, Tibeto-Burman/Hmong-Yao, and Mon-Khmer." This should read four not three and a comma instead of a forward slash should appear between 'Tibeto-Burman' and 'Hmong-Yao' to make clear that they are discrete language families.

   p. 45. In the 1995 census the Tai Dam and Tai Daeng were included in the Phu Tai category not Lao.

   p. 88. The phrase containing "largely arbitrary ethnolinguistic groupings" should be replaced by "the culture area concept allows us to explore diverse musics from a micro or macro perspective without being limited to ethno-linguistic boundaries".

   p. 200. The characterisation of the Lao language should read:

   "The tone languages of Southeast and East Asia are commonly categorised as mono-syllabic and isolating. Monosyllabic languages are those in which the core vocabulary is comprised of single syllable forms, although loan words from other languages may be polysyllabic. An isolating language is one without derivational morphology, meaning that the form of individual words does not alter to mark grammatical categories like plural, case, tense, mode and aspect. Instead other devices are employed to mark grammatical categories [.....] Most monosyllabic languages in Asia have phonemic tones which serve to distinguish otherwise identical items from one another."

Regional Traditions of Lao Vocal Music:

Lam Siphandon and *Khap Ngeum*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines musical, textual and performative aspects of Lao vocal music in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). This vocal music, known as *khap-lam*, is centred upon male and female singers, or *mohlam*, who perform alternate repartee to the accompaniment of the Lao free reed mouth organ, the *khaen*. Traditional all-night performances of this music take place within a religiously motivated event to which the Lao refer as *bun*. Performers, audiences and sponsors form a triumvirate of active participants who continually interact on different levels throughout the performance.

This thesis adopts a new approach to the study of Lao vocal music performance by eschewing the traditional focus upon the musical genre as the main unit of study and instead proposing and developing the concept of the regional tradition. Regional traditions are viewed as a fusion of four primary components: music, text, performance practices and performance contexts. Based upon extensive fieldwork in two regional traditions, *lam siphandon* and *khap ngeum*, this study identifies and explores the relationships and interactions between the four primary components and discusses the extent to which they are shared between the different regional traditions. A combination of observer- and performer-focussed perspectives and methodologies are employed to uncover the various ways in which both insiders and outsiders conceptualise and speak about these traditions. The analysis points to the existence of a broad ethnically-based tradition of Lao vocal music that is separated into discrete but closely linked regional traditions. It also illustrates that differences between cultural materials are often more fruitful avenues of research than are similarities.

The chapters include a critical overview of existing literature concerning Lao vocal music; a detailed examination of some performer's conceptualisations concerning textual composition and structures; and an investigation into the complex relationships between poetic structures, lexical tone and vocal melody. Comment is also made upon the existence and significance of parallel features between Lao vocal music and across diverse cultures in the Southeast Asian region. The appendices include musical and textual transcriptions of male and female performances in three musical genres and a compact disc of field recordings.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or other institution. I affirm that, to the best of my knowledge, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed [redacted]

Adam Chapman

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As with any large project there are numerous people to thank and it is my pleasure to be able to do so here. Firstly, I wish to thank my supervisor Professor Margaret Kartomi for her continued support, advice and thorough appraisal of my work at every stage of this project. Her comments and assistance during the writing-up process in particular, have considerably enhanced the style and integrity of the final product. I also wish to extend many thanks to the staff and my post-graduate colleagues at the School of Music-Conservatorium, Monash University for their support of my work through their attendance at my seminars and their comments upon various aspects of my work. The Monash Asia Institute (MIA) kindly provided essential funding for the year-long field research period of this project, helping to meet my various travel and equipment expenses. During my time at Monash Dr. Penny Graham of the MIA's Centre for Southeast Asian Studies found several slots for me in the Centre's weekly seminar series providing a valuable conduit for my work to reach a wider audience. Thanks also to all those who turned up to hear me speak and who contributed their comments and thoughts.

In Laos, the performers whose songs, words, and thoughts fill the following pages gave their time willingly and were always most gracious hosts, showing a generosity and richness of spirit that I always find uplifting. In Pakse, Som Sii, Duang Phaeng and Chindavan took me into their world of all-night performances and were always ready to answer my questions. Acaan Vanna, Lung Suun, and Sunii were also enthusiastic in their cooperation in interviews and other demands I made upon them. In Ban Pak Kanyung, Paeng Thong and Acaan Som were generous with their time and in sharing their considerable knowledge. My fieldwork in Vientiane was greatly assisted by the people of Ban Pak Kanyung who ensured that every visit I made to the village was eventful and enjoyable. In Salavan, Lung Buntaa showed a keen interest in what I was doing and made me a beautiful *kacappi*. Keo Lammon of Ban Kaeng Kok in Savannakhet also gave me a number of her texts and spent several afternoons answering my questions. I thank all of you for letting me into your world and I look forward to meeting and talking with you all again before too long.

I am also grateful for the assistance of numerous Lao government officials, without whom none of the field research would have been possible. Firstly, Acaan Somchith Saisouvanh and Acaan Douangchampy Vouthisouk, the Director and Deputy Director of

the National School of Music and Dance who agreed to have me as a student at the school. During my stay in Laos, Douangchampy provided friendship, good company and many useful insights into Lao perspectives on music and other issues. At the school my *khaen* teacher, Khamsuan Thongvongkham, helped me improve my knowledge and understanding of Lao music, as did Acaan Bounmanh through our many conversations. At the Ministry of Information and Culture, Mr. Bounleuan Boupha in the external relations office helped me arrange the numerous documents to satisfy ministerial visa requirements. Without him I would have spent most of my time in government ministries rather than talking with musicians.

A very big thank you to Kathryn Sweet & Theung Saykanya, Nick Enfield & Naa, Grant Evans, Keomany Somvandy, Rachel Dechaineux & Somphanh, Peter Koret, Gavin Brown, and Tony Diller all of whom also contributed to the project by way of accommodation, companionship, advice, suggestions, materials and other types of assistance too varied to name here. In the final production phase of the project, Gary Swinton of Monash University's School of Geography drew the three excellent maps based on maps I obtained from the Geographic Office in Vientiane; Georgie and Robb of By George Productions helped with scanning photographs and other material as well as mastering the compact disc.

I also extend my thanks and appreciation to my family, all of whom have found their own ways to support me and contribute to my research endeavours over the past decade. Your help and support has been greatly appreciated over the past decade. A deep and heartfelt thank you to my wife Jennie who has provided me with love and unconditional support right from the very beginnings of this project in 1997. She has embraced the project and the various trials and joys it brought to both of us at its different stages. I couldn't/wouldn't have done this without you. Finally, as this project was drawing to a close, a new one began with the birth of our beautiful daughter, Kalila Apsara, in January 2002. To her I say thank you for enriching our lives and joining us in the adventure.

Thanks to all of you.

ADAM CHAPMAN

CANBERRA, AUGUST 2002

ABBREVIATIONS

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
EIU	The Economist Intelligence Unit
ICR	Institute for Cultural Research
LPDR/Lao PDR	Lao People's Democratic Republic (1975-)
LPRP	Lao People's Revolutionary Party
MIC	Ministry of Information and Culture
NEM	New Economic Mechanism
NLHS	Neo Lao Hak Sat (Lao Patriotic Front)
PA	Public Address system
PL	Pathet Lao
RLA	Royal Lao Army
RLG	Royal Lao Government (1947-1975)
SPC	State Planning Committee

Note: The Lao language employs the term Lao, to refer to the Lao people, the Lao language and the country of Laos. Another term, Laotian, is often used in French and English to denote people and things as 'being Lao', but for this work I will use the term, Lao, to refer to people and things. The country of Laos will still be called by its conventional name, Laos, despite a current trend by ex-patriots to sometimes refer to Laos as 'Lao'. It is also referred to by its full name, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, or Lao PDR in some parts of the text.

TRANSCRIPTION OF LAO

Background

Unlike Chinese and Japanese there is no generally agreed method for the transcription of Lao into an easily readable, and pronounceable, form for English speakers (see Enfield and Evans 1998). A system for the romanisation of Lao was devised during the years of French rule, but because this was modelled upon French pronunciation it is often difficult for English speakers to appreciate the intended pronunciation. Although the French system is not ideal it remains in use today, largely through place names which have become conventionalised (eg. Vientiane, Xieng Khouang, Mekong etc.) and is also used by Lao people when romanising their names. More recently, the French romanisation system has become further complicated due to many Lao people choosing to incorporate Thai methods of romanisation (which likewise lack a standard) for names which contain words derived from Sanskrit or Pali (Enfield 1999:273). This is an interesting development given that the modern Lao orthography, unlike Thai, has not retained the spelling distinctions for these Indic loan-words. For the most part, these transcription methods reduce the chances that the average English speaker has of reading and pronouncing Lao words correctly. For example, a name with a final 'n' nasal sound may be transcribed as 'l' to reflect the original Sanskrit pronunciation but always remains an 'n' nasal sound when spoken.

Academics and other writers working with languages such as Lao, Thai and Burmese, which lack a standardised system of romanisation must deal with these problems of transcription if they are to convey to their readers a reasonable approximation of the spoken sound. This is especially difficult when the language has sounds not found in the reader's native tongue, and which are not easily rendered into another orthographic system. Apart from the differences in vowel and consonant sounds, a decision must be made whether to include other essential features such as tone and vowel length in the transcription system.

Recent works on Laos have produced considerable variations in the transcription of the language. Stuart-Fox (1997:4) provides a page outlining a somewhat inconsistent, as he admits, approach to transcription. In turn, Stuart-Fox's system was modelled upon a system employed by Koret (1994a). The numerous works of Evans (1990; 1995; 1998) contain brief transcriptions of Lao words but offer no explanation of the transcription

method used. None of the authors mentioned above has attempted to represent the phonemic tone distinctions which are integral to the language in their transcriptions.

Another shortcoming of many Lao transcriptions is the failure to adequately distinguish vowel sounds and length. Linguistic work, such as that of Enfield (1994; 1999), Chapman (1996) and Compton (1979) have either used the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), or a modified version of it, in order to account for all the phonemic nuances found in the language, including lexical tones. However, the need to provide journals and other publications with an easily typeset copy means that the use of IPA symbols can be problematic. Consequently, authors are often obliged to redraft and resubmit their work in typeset-friendly format. In order to avoid these problems, Enfield (2001) has developed a simplified transcription system for Lao that can be typed using a standard font. Because the sound system of Lao requires only a few IPA specific symbols, Enfield's system is not so much a case of re-inventing the wheel, but rather one of making it turn more smoothly.

In these pages I have chosen to employ a combination of the above approaches. The reader will find, however, that each approach is used for specific purposes. Conventionalised forms, place names like Vientiane, Xieng Khouang etc., that normally follow the French-designed system are retained because to use new forms, as Stuart-Fox has done (1997), only further confuses the issue. The majority of musical terminology and other Lao words that appear in the main text follow Enfield's system (outlined below) except that numerals denoting tone contour are omitted (although they are included in the extended transcriptions at the end of the thesis). However, tones are included in any transcriptions where it is relevant to do so, such as in chapters 6 and 7 in which aspects of song text structure and meaning are discussed.

A decision also had to made in the case of a number of words pertaining to music that have made frequent appearances in previous works. Two terms in particular brought this problem to the fore; 1. *mohlam* (Compton 1974; 1979) the word denoting the singers of song texts, which has also been transcribed as *mawlum* (Miller 1985a) and *molam* (Choron-Baix 1985; Miller 1998a); and 2. *khaen* (Picker et al. 1984), the free-reed mouth organ, which has appeared as *kaen* (Miller 1985a), *khene* (Kham-Ouane 1970), *khën* (Brengues 1904), *khène* (Choron-Baix 1985), and *khene* (Miller 1998a; Mahoney 1998; Guillemet 1923). The most recent publications by Miller and Mahoney have adopted the French romanisation system, a feature of which is the incorporation of final 'e' after 'n' to show that the nasal consonant is realised. The choice I faced for these commonly used

words was whether to continue with one of the forms already in use or to render these terms using Enfield's transcription, giving *mòòlam* and *khèèn*. I have chosen to use the spellings *mohlam* and *khaen* since I am writing in English and so these are more likely to result in an English speaker managing a reasonably accurate pronunciation of these two words. My linguistic sensibilities have also pursuaded me to go against the more recent trend to use *molam* because this form does not make the important phonemic distinction between the two back vowels (see 'vowels' below and appendix 1).

Consonants

ກ	k	no aspiration, similar to the k in 'skill'	ປ	p	no aspiration, like p in 'sport'
ຂ	kh	aspirated, like the k in 'kiss'	ຜ	ph	aspirated, like p in 'pill', never an f sound
ຄ	kh	as above	ຝ	f	
ງ	ng	like the end of 'sing' but occurs word initially in Lao	ພ	ph	same as ph above
ຈ	c	similar to j in 'ajar'	ຟ	f	
ສ	s	s as in 'soup'	ມ	m	
ຊ	s	as above	ຢ	j	like y in 'you'
ຍ	ñ	palatal nasal, like ñ in Spanish 'mañana'	ຣ	r	seldom heard in Lao, limited to orthography.
ດ	d		ລ	l	
ຕ	t	no aspiration, like t in 'stand'	ວ	v/w	v word initial, w word final.
ຖ	th	aspirated, like t in 'tick' never like th in 'think'	ຫ	h	
ທ	th	as above	ອ	q	glottal stop, like the t in English Cockney 'butter'
ນ	n		ຮ	h	
ບ	b				

The 27 written consonants of Lao are divided into three classes: mid, *kaang* (ກາງ); high, *suung* (ສູງ); and low, *tam* (ຕ່ຳ) (see appendix 1). The consonants are listed above according to the order in which they appear in the Lao alphabet. I have included brief notes for those consonants whose sound may not be immediately obvious to a speaker of English. Five consonant sounds /kh, s, th, ph, f, h/ are each represented by two different 'letters' (one is a high class consonant, the other low), the choice of which determines the

tone produced (in conjunction with vowel length, tone markers and final consonants). However, this distinction is not important for transcriptions in general text.

Vowels

×า	aa	like the a in 'bath'	◌ ×ี	ee	like the ur in 'fur'
×ີ	ii	like the e in 'eat'	◌×ย	ia	like eer in 'beer'
×ู	ùù	similar to oo in broad Australian English 'school'	◌×ีอ	ùa	no English equivalent.
×ุ	uu	like the o in 'fool'	×ือ	ua	like er in 'newer'
◌×	êê	like the e in 'bet'	ไ×	aj	sounds like 'eye'
แ×	èè	like the ea in 'bear'	ใ×	aj	as above
◌ ×ะ	oo	like oe in 'toe'	◌×ົา	aw	like ough in 'plough' but of shorter duration
×ໍ	òò/ oh	like aw 'saw'	×ໍา	am	like the um in 'drum'

Lao has contrastive vowel length. That is, there is a phonemic difference between long and short vowel sounds. The single vowel sounds shown above are all long, hence they are transcribed using a repeated vowel e.g /ii/. A short vowel is represented by a single occurrence of the vowel letter e.g. /i/. However, because the diphthongs /ia/ /ua/ and /ùa/ only rarely occur as short phonemes, no distinction between long and short diphthongs is made in this transcription. Short vowels in final position are followed by a glottal stop /q/ which is considered to be a discreet phoneme in Lao, however, to facilitate easier reading I have not included it in the transcriptions of this thesis.

Combination Forms

×າວ	aaw	×ວຍ	uaj
×າຍ	aaj	×ິວ	iw
×ุຍ	uj	◌ ×ັວ	èw
◌ ×ຍ	ooj	แ×ว	èèw
×ອຍ	òòj	×ຽວ	iaw
◌×ີຍ	eej	◌×ືອຍ	ùaj

The above table shows how combinations of vowel and glide consonants are transcribed.

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Lao People's Democratic Republic

ບັດປະຈຳຕົວ
I. D. CARD

ຜູ້ຊ່ຽວຊານຕ່າງປະເທດ
FOREIGN EXPERT

ເລກທີ
No. 0002 - 99.

Plate 1: Foreign expert card

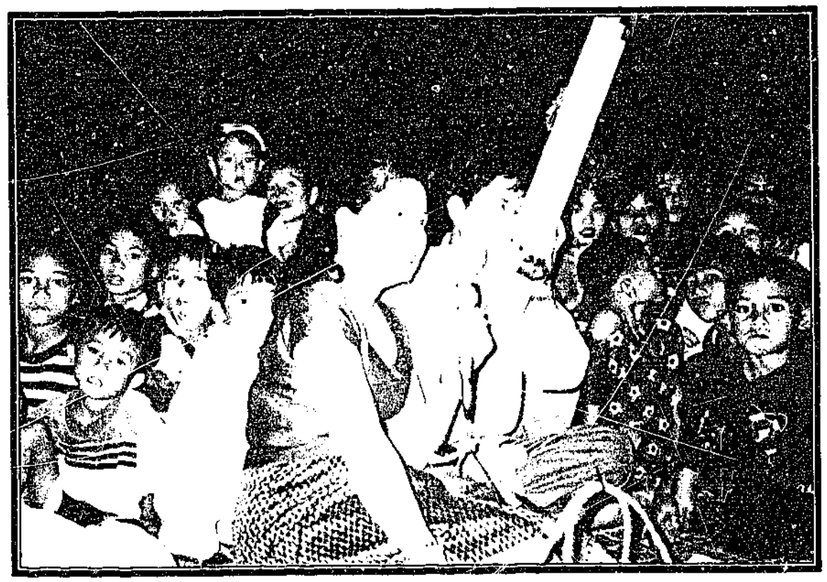

Plate 2: Duang Phaeng performing *lam siphandon* at a *bun*. Ban Niw, Muang Pakse, Champassak 13/11/1999 (photo: Adam Chapman)

Plate 3: Som Sii dances to Duang Phaeng during a *lam siphandon* performance at Ban Niw, Muang Pakse, Champassak 13/11/1999 (photo: Adam Chapman)

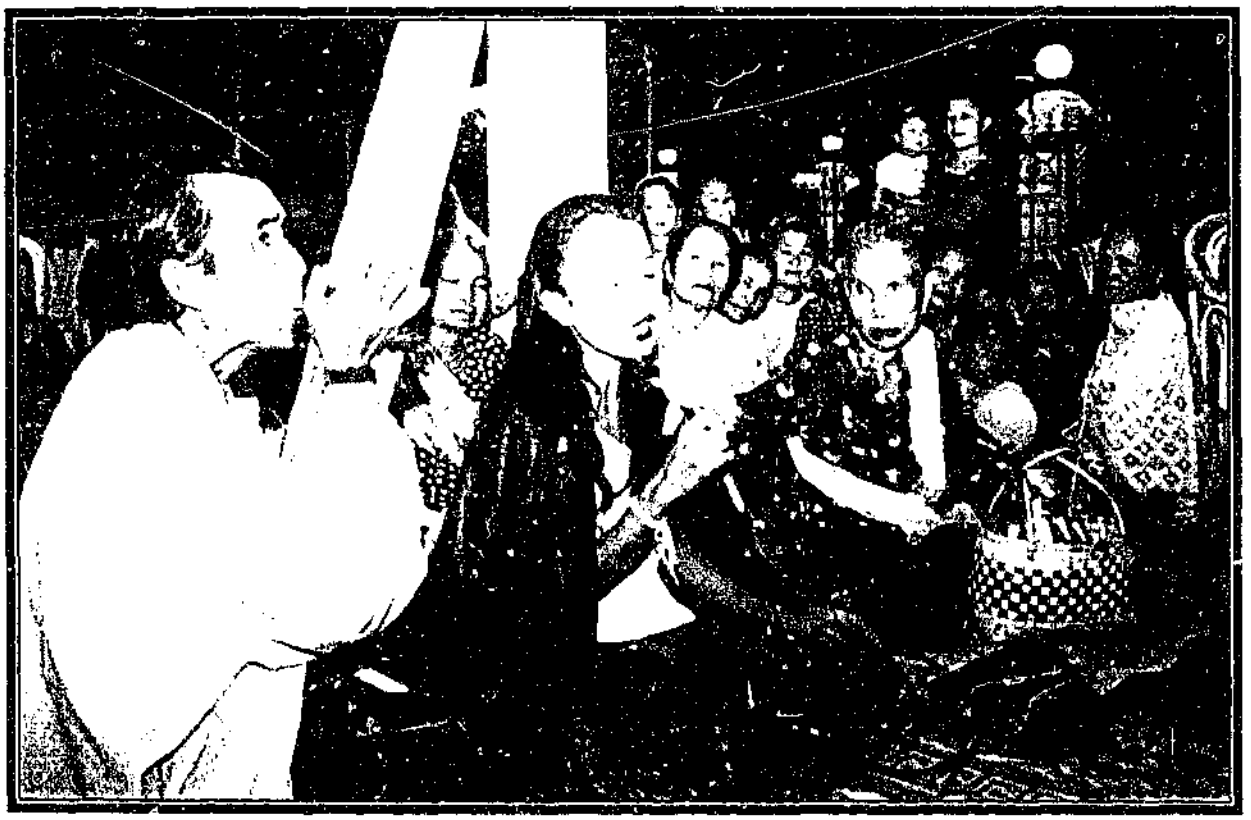

Plate 4: Chindavan sings *lam siphandon* during the opening rounds of a *bun* for a new house at Ban Dongkohlong, Muang Pakse, Champassak 21/11/1999 (photo: Adam Chapman)

Plate 5: Chiadavan stands to sing *lam khuu lam kòòn* while Som Sii and an audience member dance. Ban Dongkohlong, Muang Pakse, Champassak 21/11/1999, Muang Pakse, Champassak 12/12/99 (photo: Jennifer Smith)

Plate 6:Depiction of the "three ethnicities" of Laos (Lao Sung, Lao Lum, Lao Thoeng) on the 1000 kip note

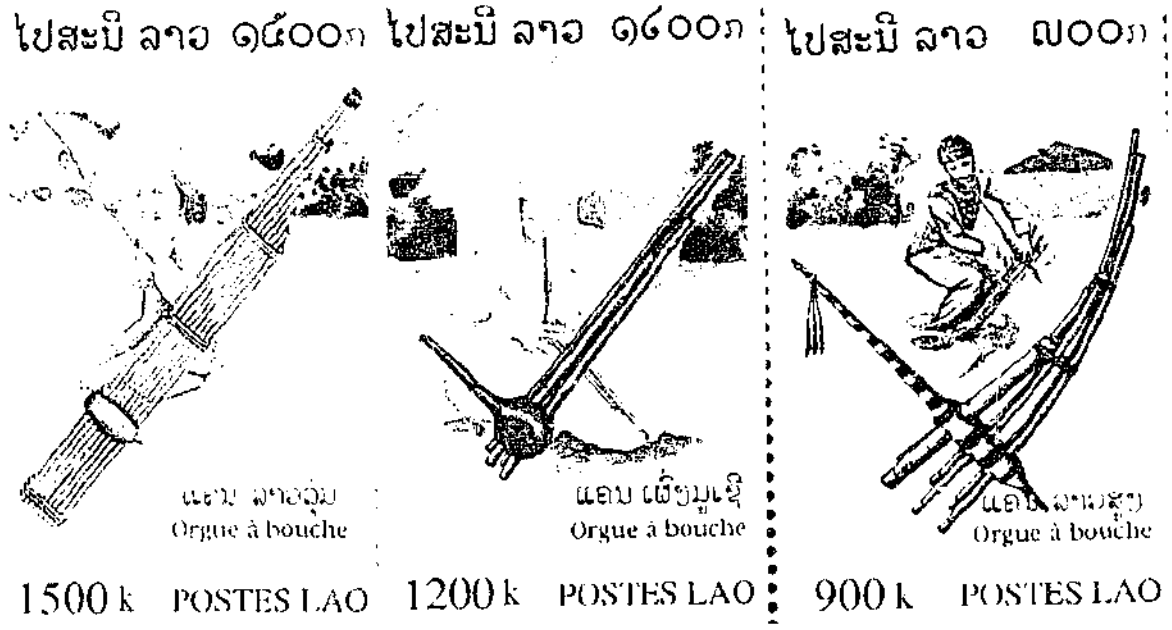

Plate 7: 1998 stamps depicting mouth-organs of Laos (Lao, Lahu [Musir], Hmong)

Plate 8: Suun Simanta repairs a *khaen* at his home in Ban Phon Ngaam, Muang Pakse (photo: Adam Chapman)

Plate 9: *Khaen* maker's sign near That Luang, Vientiane Municipality (photo: Adam Chapman)

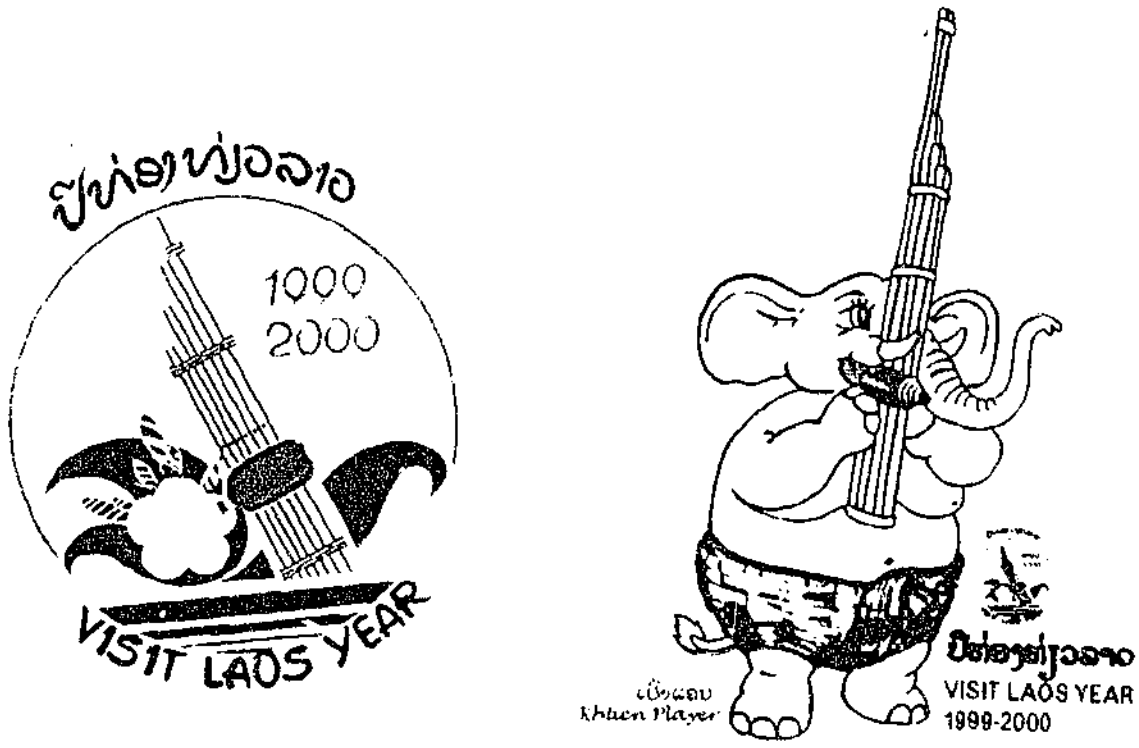

Plate 10: Logo for the 'Visit Laos Year 1999-2000' campaign and elephant 'mascot'

Plate 11: Commercial cassette covers for recordings of *lam som* and *khap sam neua*

Plate 12: Billboard advertising private *lam lùang* and *lam sing* troupes, Ban Phon Pa Pao, Vientiane Municipality (photo: Adam Chapman)

Plate 13: *Khap ngeum* performers Paeng Thong and Acaan Som

Plate 14: The midnight meal is served during a *khap ngeum* performance at Ban Noon Savang, Vientiane Municipality, 27/12/1998 (photo: Adam Chapman)

Plate 15: Acaan Thong (second from right) sings *khap ngeum* while reading a note passed by an audience member. Vat That Luang Taj, Vientiane Municipality 25/5/1999. (photo: Jennifer Smith)

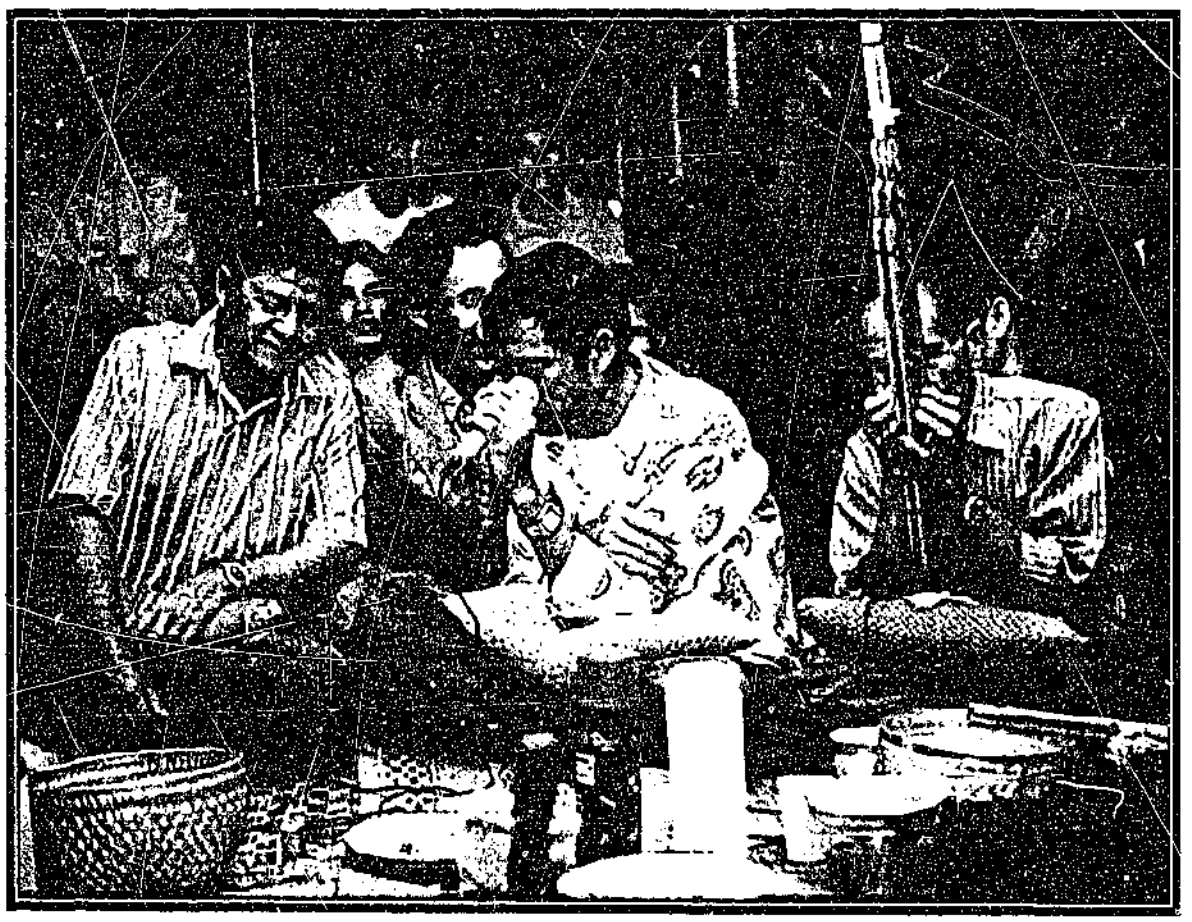

Plate 16:*Mohlam* Bunmii flanked by his *mohsòòj* and *mohkhaen*. Ban Noon Savang, Vientiane Municipality, 27/12/1998 (photo: Adam Chapman)

Plate 17: Kheua Kham begins a round of *khap ngeum*. The 'drink pourer' is seated on the right in the green jacket. Ban Noon Savang, Vientiane Municipality 27/12/1998 (photo: Adam Chapman)

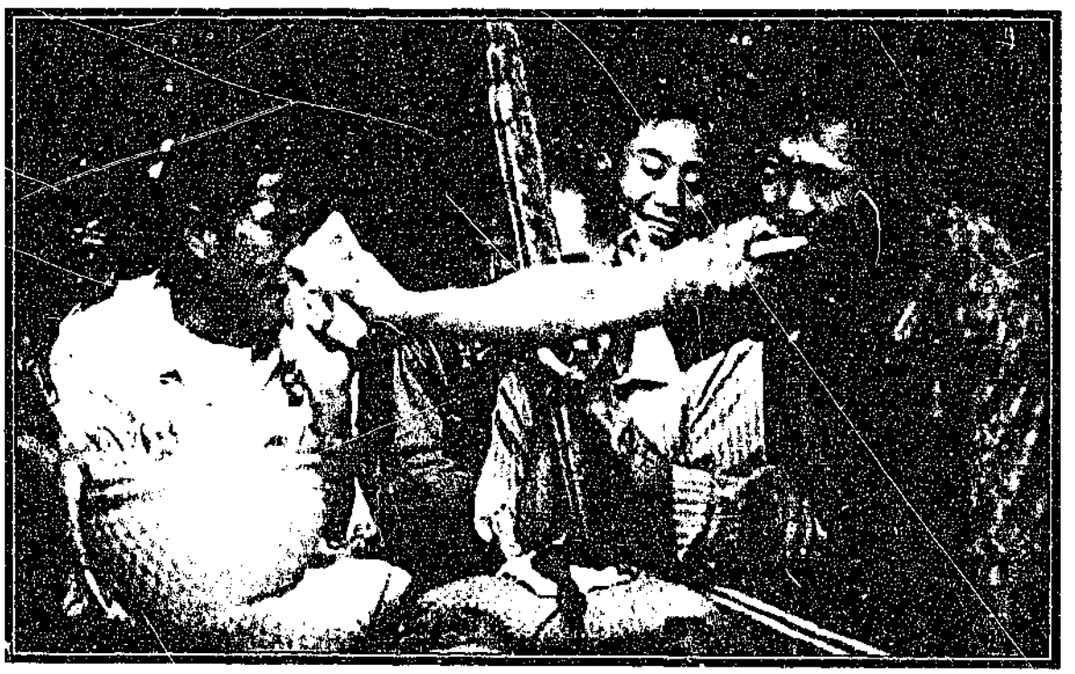

Plate 18: An audience member places a donation into *mohlam* Bunmii's bowl (*thèèm somphaan*). Ban Noon Savang, Vientiane Municipality, 27/12/1998 (photo: Adam Chapman)

Chapter 1

FIELDWORK IN THE LAO PDR

Opening with what I hope is a vivid description of a *lam siphandon* performance, this chapter introduces the reader to this study of Lao *khap-lam* vocal music. The purpose of the description is to give the reader a preliminary insight into the elements of a traditional Lao vocal music performance. Four primary components of the *khap-lam* tradition, each apparent in the description, emerge as central topics of interest. Following the description is a summary and discussion of the major theoretical concepts and methodologies around which the project design has been shaped. To complete the chapter there is a brief account of my field research activities followed by biographies of the performers who participated in the project.

A Lam Siphandon Performance

Background

This description is of a single *khap-lam* performance I attended at a village near Pakse, Champassak in Southern Laos on November 13th 1999. The main musical genre performed throughout the night was *lam siphandon*, a genre closely identified with the southernmost region of Laos. It was just one of many performances in which I was an observer/participant in locations around Laos during 1998-99. Leading up to this particular occasion, I spent several days working with Duang Phaeng, one of Laos' best known female *mohlam* (cf. Compton 1979). A *mohlam* (ໝໍລຳ) is a singer of a traditional form of song that is primarily based upon a poetic form called *kòòn aan* (ກອນອ່ານ). It is the performances of this sung poetry by *mohlam* that are the subject of examination in this thesis. During the course of our conversations I had asked Duang Phaeng if I could accompany her to observe the next performance in which she was engaged to perform. Having agreed to my request Duang Phaeng informed me that she was to perform that Saturday night in the village of Ban Niw (ບ້ານນີ້ວ) to the north of Pakse, and invited me to accompany her.[1]

The performance had been arranged by the village as part of their celebrations for the Buddhist festival of *bun kathin* (ບຸນກະຖິນ). Unlike many other Buddhist festivals in

Laos, such as *songkhaan* (ສົງຂານ), 'Lao New Year',[2] and *khaw phansaa* (ເຂົ້າພັນສາ), the start of the Buddhist rains retreat,[3] *bun kathin* does not fall on a specific day but may be observed at any time between the full moons of the eleventh and twelfth lunar months of the Lao calendar; a period which usually coincides with most of October and early November. The main activity of *bun kathin* is the presentation of new robes and assorted utility items such as soap, toothbrushes, buckets etc. to the monks, *khuu bca* (ຄູບາ), who reside in the local temples, called *vat* (ວັດ). These donations are made in recognition of the merit obtained by the monks during the three month rains retreat of *phansaa*, and also as a means for the alms-givers to gain merit for themselves.

Getting There

At four o'clock in the afternoon of November 13th 1999, I left my Pakse guest house and set off to meet *mohlam* Duang Phaeng. Just before leaving the guesthouse a deluge of rain descended on the town. Fortunately, the rain stopped in time to enable me to keep my appointment without getting soaked. I hailed a passing *jumbo* (a three-wheeled vehicle similar to a *tuk-tuk* but larger and quieter) and made the short journey across the narrow, single-lane bridge that crosses the Sedone (ເຊດອນ), a tributary river to the Mekong, to Duang Phaeng's house in Ban Tha Hin Kang (ບ້ານທ່າຫີນກາງ)[4] where Duang Phaeng greeted me and invited me inside. I waited for over half an hour, sipping tea and resting on a reed mat until Som Sii, Duang Phaeng's singing partner, finally arrived. Som Sii was dressed neatly in Western-style shirt, trousers and polished shoes; the outfit worn by most male *mohlam* to a performance. All three of us then waited for a while longer until a villager arrived in a *jumbo* to escort us to Ban Niw where the performance was to take place.

The four of us climbed aboard the vehicle, the villager sitting in the front with the driver. I carried my backpack of recording and photographic equipment, while Duang Phaeng shouldered a bag containing a change of clothes and her betel kit basket.[5] Som Sii brought only himself and a packet of cigarettes, needing neither a change of clothes nor betel to tide him through the performance ahead. Our destination was Ban Niw, a village located on the banks of the Mekong about twenty kilometres north of Pakse, near the weaving and tourist town of Ban Saphay (ບ້ານສະຜາຍ). We travelled north out of Pakse, past the airport where a Chinese construction company had half completed the new

terminal, just one of many highly visible infrastructure projects that are a constant reminder of the incessant, mostly foreign-funded, development under-way in Laos.[6]

On the outskirts of Pakse the vehicle stopped and three more people climbed aboard; a young female *mohlam* named Chindavan and two *mohkhaen* (ໝໍແຄນ), '*khaen* players', Bunsu and Leuang. The latter two were readily identifiable by the cloth bags containing their *khaen*[7] (ແຄນ) which they carried, slung across their backs. Our journey then continued northwards out of Pakse along the highway that leads to Savannakhet. After several kilometres the vehicle turned left onto a dirt road and headed west towards the Mekong river. Considering the amount of rain that had fallen just several hours beforehand, the dirt road was not very muddy and the vehicle made it to the river bank at Ban Saphay without misadventure. From there our only option was to complete the journey by taking a twenty minute boat trip up the Mekong because the final few kilometres of road from Ban Saphay to our final destination at Ban Niw was in disrepair, and would not allow our small vehicle to pass.

After we disembarked at the small market in the centre of Ban Saphay, our escort led the six of us to the riverbank where a small, long and narrow boat was waiting. Som Siii, Chindavan and the two *mohkhaen* stepped into the boat and set out up river. Meanwhile Duang Phaeng and I waited on the river bank, talking to each other and to the children gathered on the bank watching us. After half an hour or so, the boat returned and ferried us upriver, in the midst of a glorious sunset, to Ban Niw where we arrived just on nightfall. During the course of our journey I managed to glean various bits of information concerning the format of the evening's upcoming performance. Duang Phaeng, at fifty years of age, would only perform for the first part of the evening because, according to Duang Phaeng herself, she now lacked the endurance required to perform all-night. Consequently, Duang Phaeng would perform until midnight and then allow Chindavan, in her mid-thirties, to take over performing duties and continue until dawn. Som Sii the male *mohlam*, aged sixty, would perform for the entire night as would both *mohkhaen*.

Ban Niw: The Venue

Ban Niw is a typical medium-sized provincial village in the lower-lying river valley areas of Laos. In response to my questions, several villagers informed me that there were about forty households (around 280 people) in all. Despite its relatively close proximity to the provincial capital at Pakse, Ban Niw does not have access to grid electricity supply or

running water, even though these were available at Ban Saphay only five kilometres away. Electric power is supplied by diesel-powered generators for part of the evening, although most households appeared to rely on kerosene lamps home-made from recycled condensed milk tins. All village water is either drawn straight from the Mekong or from the large urns at the end of each house set in place to collect rainwater as it runs off the roof. The poor condition of the road leading to the village means that for the duration of the wet season Ban Niw can only be reached by four-wheel drive vehicle or river transport, thereby limiting the types and amounts of goods that can be brought into the village for several months of the year.

Upon arrival we walked through the village, crossing a cleared space between the houses. The cleared space was busy with several men setting up a public address (PA) system for the evening's festivities while women and young girls were preparing small fires upon which to grill bananas. Since this was a relatively small affair, the numerous food and drink stalls that one sees at the large temple fairs held in larger towns were nowhere to be seen.

Duang Phaeng and I went directly to a house where Som Sii, Chindavan and the two *mohkhaen*, Bunsuu and Leuang, were sitting down in conversation with the householders and some other guests from outside the village. They welcomed us by proffering shots of *law laaw* (ເຫຼົ້າລາວ), the fiery rice whisky that is ever-present at any celebration or festival in Laos. Alcohol is also an essential ingredient at every *khap-lam* performance because it helps free the audience of their inhibitions, ensuring that they become involved in the event. A full meal of sour fish soup, sticky rice, green vegetables, fried fish, and *cèèw* (ແຈ່ວ), a spicy jam, was served to us. As we ate dinner, our hosts plied me with questions and more *law laaw*, eager to discover what a *falang* (ຝະລັ່ງ), Westerner, was doing in the company of these *mohlam*. My interest was met with some bemusement, however, all present agreed that it was a good thing for other people to know about Lao *hiitkhòòng paphêênii* (ຮີດຄອງປະເພນີ), traditions and customs.[8] As we were discussing the merits of this cultural experience the first loud blasts of taped music began to resound throughout the village, indicating that the workers outside had managed to get the PA system up and running.

Once the meal was finished, Duang Phaeng and Chindavan proceeded to change into their formal performance costumes, which consisted of the traditional Lao skirt called

sin (ສິ້ນ), a blouse and the *phaa biang* (ຜ້າບ່ຽງ), a sash worn over one shoulder. The expectation that performers be smartly dressed in traditional attire only applies to female *mohlam*. Although male performers are expected to dress neatly, there is less obligation for them to do so. Furthermore, they never dress in the traditional Lao male costume which consists of a white jacket and baggy trousers called *phaa hang* (ຜ້າຫາງ), or the sampot which is "wrapped around the waist like a sarong, with the ends twisted and drawn up loosely between the legs and tucked into the rear waistband" (Halpern 1958:64). Today the traditional dress for Lao males is worn on fewer occasions than is the female dress for women. Due to its close associations with royal ceremonies and the state ritual of the Royal Lao Government (RLG), the male costume was banned after the 1975 revolution but has since made a comeback, although it is now largely restricted to large festival parades and serves as the outfit for Lao grooms (Evans 1998:86).

While Duang Phaeng and Chindavan were preparing for the performance, I left the house in order to explore the village and the designated performance space. Since this was a communal *bun* or festival, as opposed to a private family-centred activity, the performance was located in a cleared space vaguely akin to a village square. Had the *bun* been organised for the benefit of a family member it would have most likely been held in the space beneath a house or a specially erected *phaam* (ຜາມ), most often an old parachute or a marquee-like structure consisting of a canvas roof suspended by a metal frame. As it was, the cleared space had been divided into two areas by a length of blue and white striped plastic sheeting suspended from upright wooden poles. The space on the river side of the partition was lit up by a combination of condensed milk-tin kerosene torches and fluorescent lights tied by wire to trees or wooden poles, creating a floodlit arena for dancing. Even at this early stage the PA system was blaring out taped music although people had little enthusiasm for dancing, preferring either to eat their evening meal at home first or to mill about expectantly. On the other side of the plastic partition was a smaller space designated for the *lam* performance, although no stage had yet been set up (see the sketch map in Figure 1-1 below).

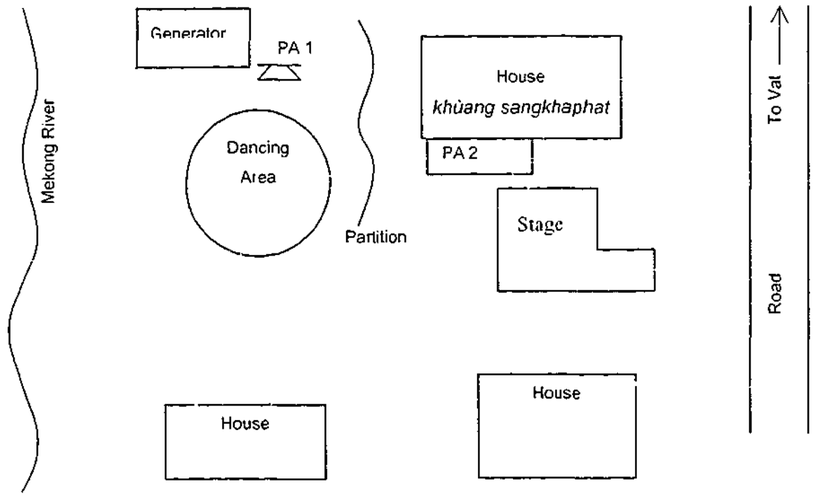

Figure 1-1: Performance area at Ban Niw, Muang Pakse, Champassak (map not to scale)

The Performance Space and Context

Filling the verandah of a house situated immediately in front of the performance space was a collection of goods that were to be offered to monks of the village *vat* the next morning. This array of items, known as *khùang sangkhaphat* (ເຄື່ອງສັງຄະຜັດ), 'offerings to bonzes', ranged from the practical to the decorative. Most prominent among them was a small four-poster bed surrounded by, and filled with, saffron coloured robes, buckets, food bowls, pinto sets,[9] soap, toothbrushes, decorations for the *sala* (ສາລາ), 'temple pavilion', and *sim* (ສີມ), 'consecrated building', [10] and other assorted items. The decorative items even included small models of *khaen* and *sòò* (ຊໍ), a two or three stringed bowed chordophone. These items, prepared and collected by the villagers throughout the week, had been arranged upon the verandah earlier in the day. Next to this collection of goods sat several older men of the village, some dressed in their best outfits, drinking coffee interspersed with the occasional shot of rice whisky. Perhaps the most significant item on the verandah was a model building made of wood, banana tree trunk and wax moulded into flower shapes that stood nearly a metre high and almost a metre square. The old men informed me it was a *phasaat pheeng* (ພະສາດເຜິ້ງ), 'beeswax palace' which would be carried by two men, litter-fashion, to the *vat* in the morning once the *lam siphandon* performance was

finished. All the other items displayed on the verandah would also be taken along by the villagers and presented to the monks at the *vat*. Initially, the significance of the beeswax structure was lost on me, but I eventually realised that it is most often associated with the rituals of *òòk phansaa* (ອອກພັນສາ), the end of the rains retreat which takes place just before *bun kathin* (cf. Preecha 1991:148).

As I was surveying the *khùang sangkhaphat* and talking with the older men, a number of younger village men began constructing the stage, using wooden platforms about two metres long by one metre wide, placing four of these together to produce a single large platform. After some debate, a fifth one was added to make the area larger. These simple wooden platforms are seen in villages all over Laos and are normally located beneath the house or in *thiang naa* (ຖຽງນາ), a small lean-to in the rice fields, for farmers to rest on during the day. Once the stage was in place, a second, smaller, PA system to be used for the performance was placed upon the verandah next to the *khùang sangkhaphat*. Virtually all *khap-lam* performances make use of amplification these days, even in areas like Ban Niw where there is no grid electricity available. Unfortunately, the majority of PA systems used are very poor quality which, in combination with a lack of technical knowledge, means that many performances are marred by system feedback, excessive sound levels and distortion. This also makes obtaining a good live recording difficult when using minimal recording equipment, as I was. Power for both PA systems was provided by a diesel-run generator housed in a small shack away from the performance area. It soon became clear that two forms of entertainment, *lamvong*[11] (ລຳວົງ) dancing and the *lam siphandon* performance would be competing with each other throughout the evening. I wondered how the performers would deal with this competition for attention and the sonic disruption it would cause. In addition, I was also concerned as to the degree it would affect my own audio-recording of the event. Competing forms of entertainment, usually situated right next to each other is very common, especially at larger community *bun*, a fact that has been confirmed at almost every other performance I have attended.

Part One of The Performance: Duang Phaeng and Som Sii

At 8:30pm the performers came down to the performance area, except for Chindavan, who remained up in the house where she would wait until midnight when it would be her turn to sing. Woven straw mats were laid on the stage so that the performers and audience had something more comfortable than bare wood to sit upon. The performers

removed their shoes and stepped up onto the platform, seating themselves in a rough circle with Som Sii and Duang Phaeng facing each other, their respective *khaen* players seated to their left. While the performers settled into their positions, the audience moved in, forming a circular mass around the performers. Some fifty to sixty people were seated on the stage close to the performers while others stood or squatted next to the stage. Men, most aged about thirty or more, sat cross-legged on the platform in close proximity to the performers, while the women of the village sat on the outer edges of the platform, a little further back from the action. The younger adults tended to remain standing around the edge of the platform or seated on its edges with their feet still on the ground, while the younger children came in close to the performers (see Plate 2). Duang Phaeng invited me to sit on her right affording me a very close look at the workings of the performers throughout the night. After an hour or so, the children gradually moved away as other activities caught their attention. From the outset it was clear which audience members were in for the long-haul and which ones had positioned themselves so they could easily move on. Pillows, jugs of water, a thermos of tea, glasses, some simple snacks, a spittoon and a plate with two packets of cigarettes were also provided for the performers' comfort.

The performance began when *mohkhaen* Leuang lifted his *khaen* to his lips and began to play the characteristic steady duple rhythmic pattern of *lam siphandon* to the cheers of the large audience, which had now grown to about sixty people. *Mohlam* Som Sii began first with a short round[12] of *lam* lasting about six minutes. Although relatively brief, this first round was composed of the standard sections that constitute a *lam* poem. All rounds of *lam siphandon* whether sung by a male or female, commence with *kòòn khùn ton* (ກອນຂຶ້ນຕົ້ນ), 'starting verse', in which the *mohlam* sings several lines of verse, then finishes by allowing the final syllable to descend to a cadence on the lowest pitch (the finalis) of the piece. The *mohkhaen* likewise holds the finalis, then follows the vocal melody momentarily as it descends before taking up the rhythmic accompaniment pattern once again. The *mohlam* resumes by singing a series of vowels, ascending melodically to a sixth above the tonic which is then followed by the main text, starting on a fourth above the finalis. The verses in the main body of the round have a partially predictable musical form. Immediately noticeable are ascending interval motifs which occur at the start of most musical phrases, and the descent of some phrases to a cadential point. These cadences often relate to tonal slots within the poetic structure, a feature explained further in chapter 6.

In the final verses of his first round, *mohlam* Som Sii stated that he was now finishing to allow *mohlam* Duang Phaeng to perform her first round. After a slight pause of both singing and accompaniment, *mohkhaen* Bunsuu began to play for Duang Phaeng. She began her first round, following the same musical structures that featured in Som Sii's round and lasting for a similar length of time. These two introductory rounds were shorter than the ones that followed in the rest of the performance which lasted for some ten to fifteen minutes each.

Both *mohlam* used these opening rounds to introduce themselves and to state that they had come to perform for the night to help the village celebrate *bun kathin*. In singing this first round, both *mohlam* made mention of the event's *caw sathaa* (ເຈົ້າສັດທາ), 'sponsor', numerous times, remarking on her generosity. The sponsor is the person who not only pays the performer's fees, but who also provides the food and drink (including alcohol) offered at the event and makes donations to the *vat*. On this particular evening, the sponsor was a former resident of the village, now living in the United States, who was visiting relatives. In addition to the performers, the sponsor had also paid for the taped music entertainment emanating from the adjacent space, so this too was mentioned by both *mohlam*. Greetings and blessings were likewise extended to the villagers as an acknowledgment of the audiences' importance to the success of the performance, and as a way of recognising how their observance of *bun kathin* brings them merit. Throughout a *khap-lam* performance *mohlam* continually refer to members of the audience as either *phuu fang* (ຜູ້ຟັງ), 'listeners', or *phuu som* (ຜູ້ຊົມ), 'viewers'. Sustained interaction between the *mohlam* and audience throughout the evening is a vital ingredient of making an event *muan* (ມ່ວນ), 'fun; pleasant'. An event that is described as being *bòò muan* (ບໍ່ມ່ວນ), 'not fun; unpleasant', is considered to be a failure by *mohlam* and audience alike.

By 9pm, the preliminaries were over and the audience was ready for the main body of the performance to begin. At this point in time, the taped music from the neighbouring space started up once again, drawing away many of the younger members of the audience. The extraneous noise did not appear to distract the performers, although it took me some time to get used to the dull steady thump of the pop music beat in the background. Som Sii took up his first main verse by inquiring after Duang Phaeng's personal details, such as where she was born, who her parents were, and whether or not she might be married or have a *suu* (ຊູ້), 'lover, fiancee'. Som Sii asked these and other questions over a period of

about fifteen minutes before completing his round. Once his round finished there was another brief pause before Duang Phaeng began her round by replying to his questions. In answering she likewise asked for his personal details and wondered why someone like him should be interested in her. The two *mohlam* continued in this vein for another round, with audience members cheering at particularly witty parts of the performance and occasionally offering a few interjections of their own whenever the *mohlam* paused between verses.

This part of the performance is known as *thaam khaaw* (ຖາມຂ່າວ), 'asking for news/information', in which the exchanges of wit between the two *mohlam* becomes competitive, building up as they make jokes at one another's expense and use plays on words to twist their meanings. This light-hearted joking helps prepare the audience and the *mohlam* for the songs of courtship and love that follow in the *lam kiaw* (ລຳຫັຽວ), 'courting *lam*', part of the performance. In the *lam siphandon* genre, the *lam kiaw* section can incorporate a more adversarial group of verses called *kòòn kathu* (ກອນກະຫູ), 'topic verses', in which the *mohlam* create poems containing questions and riddles as a challenge to the opposing *mohlam*. A variety of topics can be addressed in the *kòòn kathu* verses including Buddhist ethics and morality, local knowledge and literary tales. While the *kòòn kathu* are not necessarily part of the *lam kiaw* section, it is common for verses about courting and love to use riddles as a means of testing the worth of the hypothetical potential partner. Some of the different themes and modes of repartee that make up a *khap-lam* performance are explained in detail in chapter 7.

With the shift to *lam kiaw* themes, both Som Sii and Duang Phaeng began to perform longer rounds, some lasting half an hour or more. As each *mohlam* completed his/her round, a brief pause would ensue as the other *mohlam* and *mohkhaen* prepared to take over. Gaps between singing rounds are normal and allow the audience time to discuss what has been sung, and for one of them to occasionally add a short verse. This they do by taking the microphone and speaking a few lines of verse known as *sòòj* (ສອຍ), 'witticisms'. If the contribution is particularly good the audience will respond with a roar of approval and laughter. Breaks in the midst of a round by the singer and *khaen* player are also tolerated by the audience. They may pause to cough or for some other reason but a *khaen* player must quickly resume playing and not leave the *mohlam* without accompaniment. However, if a *mohlam* should pause too often because of memory lapses or an inability to

compose lines, the audience will view this as incompetence causing the performer to lose face. *naa tèèk* (ໜ້າແຕກ), as well as the audience's favour.

During singing rounds, the non-performing *mohlam* and *mohkhaen* engage in a variety of activities but remained seated, never leaving the stage or the semi-circle of performers. Som Sii, Bunsu and Leuang smoke cigarettes, taking them from packets placed on the plate in front of them, while Duang Phaeng would chew her betel and other assorted leaf and bark pieces which make up the chewing kits commonly used by older women throughout Laos.[13] Occasionally the non-active performers would talk with one of the audience or amongst themselves, but most of the time the non-singing *mohlam* preferred to pay attention to the performance so that they could formulate their reply. The male performers drank rice whisky served up by audience participants, although their intake was moderate in comparison to many in the audience since alcohol accelerates weariness and it is imperative that they remain alert for the entire night. Later in the evening when Chindavan was not singing she would smoke the occasional cigarette, or else chew betel like Duang Phaeng did.[14]

Just before 10pm, Duang Phaeng began to perform *kòòn fòòn*, (ກອນຟ້ອນ) 'dance verse', a feature of *lam siphandon* performance. She began her round in the standard *lam siphandon* style explained earlier, although this time the opening lines were full of bawdy humour, setting the tone for the rest of that round and Som Sii's reply. Once the opening lines and the bridging melisma had been performed, Duang Phaeng announced (in her sung verse) that she would now dance and then moved from her sitting position[15] up onto her knees and closer to Som Sii. Dancing in *lam siphandon* performance is performed with the hands while kneeling in front of the opposite *mohlam*. This means the *mohlam* who is dancing and singing must move from their sitting position up onto their knees and towards the listening *mohlam*, who does not dance but instead feigns disinterest at the praise or jibes directed at them by the opposing *mohlam*. Audience members, however, will often join in for brief periods, dancing where they sit or else clapping in time with the *khaen*'s rhythmic pulse. Since *mohlam* Duang Phaeng needed to use both hands to dance, she had *mohkhaen* Leuang hold the microphone to her mouth as she sang. Duang Phaeng focused her dance upon Som Sii, holding her hands up with the palms flattened and fingers extended moving them in roughly circular motions. At times Duang Phaeng would extend one or both of her hands towards Som Sii and go close as if to touch him but instead

allowing her hands to follow the outline of his face and body as she sang verses about him, some joking and some not. Once Duang Phaeng completed her round, Som Sii took up his round and moved into his dance verse. Som Sii's dancing technique was essentially the same although he moved closer to Duang Phaeng than she had to him, allowing his hands to follow her body contours as he sang to her (see Plate 3). As these dance rounds were performed the audience paid special attention to the performers, cheering them as they made suggestive remarks to one another and rebuked each other's advances at the same time.

The imagined courtship that takes place between the male and female performer has many dimensions; it is not merely an imaginary play between the two performers, but also between members of the audience and the performers. Audience members use the *mohlam* of their own sex to transmit messages of love to the performers of the opposite sex. Communication between the audience and performers can be achieved either through the passing of notes, by talking to, or yelling out at the performer when they are not singing. In performances of *lam siphandon* the latter was the most common method, whereas for *khap ngeum*, the genre of Vientiane province, passing notes was the preferred mode of communication. The regional differences in performance practice are discussed in detail in chapter 5.

In *lam kiaw* verses it is usually the male who suggests that the female should become his partner and in his appeal to her, he praises her beauty and intelligence. In reply the female *mohlam* may state that she is from a poor family, lacking in merit and therefore not suitable for him. The female does not only dwell on her supposed limitations, however, but also questions his motives, asking why someone as old/rich as him is interested in a young/poor girl such as herself. This provides a platform for the *mohlam* to employ humorous and bawdy elements in mocking the motives of the opposing *mohlam*. I observed Duang Phaeng doing this very skilfully by comparing Som Sii to a taxi, saying that from the outside he looked liked he would run well but that she was afraid on the inside he might not be in such good order since he may have never washed his *hua poo sii* (ຫົວໃປ້ຮີ), 'pit viper', a euphemism for his genitals (see chapter 7).

Upon completing the dance rounds, the *mohlam* returned to more rounds of seated *lam siphandon* verse until it was almost time for Duang Phaeng to finish for the night. Just prior to closing her final round of *lam siphandon*, Duang Phaeng announced that the

sponsor had requested she perform *lam som* (ລຳໂສ). It came as no surprise that a request for *lam som* was made since Duang Phaeng is perhaps the only remaining *mohlam* fully proficient in this genre. As the *khaen* patterns of *lam som* signalled its commencement, the sponsor handed a piece of paper to Duang Phaeng upon which was written a long list of people's names. All those listed had contributed in some way to the sponsoring of the event; many of whom were not present but living in the United States. In performing *lam som*, Duang Phaeng read through the very long list of names incorporating each of them into her verse using the extemporaneous composition technique called *som bòò khùt* (ສົມບໍ່ຄິດ), a process discussed in chapter 7. This marked a change of pace in the performance as *lam som* is performed to a slower tempo than *lam siphandon*. The theme was also one of sadness, which focussed upon the absent relatives and friends living in the United States.[16] Duang Phaeng took around fifteen minutes to complete her round of *lam som*. It was almost midnight when she finished and by this time the number of listeners had diminished to about twenty. No reply from Som Sii was requested nor given because the topic had been absent friends and relatives, not love. A *lam* performed by a single *mohlam* in this manner is called *lam diaw* (ລຳດຽວ), 'single *lam*', contrasting with the alternating *lam* using two performers called *lam khuu* (ລຳຄູ່), 'paired *lam*', which was the format of the preceding and following *lam siphandon* performance (see chapter 3 for methods of classifying *khap-lam* genres).

Part Two of The Performance: Chindavan and Som Sii

As Duang Phaeng was performing *lam som*, Chindavan came down from the house and waited until the *lam som* performance was over, when Duang Phaeng retired for the rest of the evening. With Chindavan's arrival the audience numbers swelled as the younger men and children of the village came to see and hear the young female *mohlam*. The change from the slower *lam som* back to *lam siphandon* had the effect of rousing the audience. As the crowd was already warmed up, there was no need for her to follow the protocol that had been observed at the start of the evening, save for introducing herself. Chindavan began using the conventionalised *lam siphandon* introduction after which she moved her verse into *kòòn fòòn* almost straight away. Chindavan's first round lasted for over half an hour and elements of her performance technique took me by surprise.

Chindavan's dance round began by following the same set of procedures that Duang Phaeng had used, raising herself upon her knees and moving close to Som Sii while singing. I immediately noticed that she was moving her hands closer to him than Duang Phaeng had done. Chindavan touched Som Sii, making very light contact between her hand and his face, actions that appeared very unusual to me because physical contact between opposite sexes in public is very unusual in Laos. Yet here it was happening, albeit in an implied manner, in a very public forum between two people who were make-believe lovers. Such actions are permissible in the performance event, in which an imagined scenario is created by the performers and audience who collectively allow some day-to-day social conventions to be ignored for a time. This bending of social convention is highlighted by the following scenario which unfolded during the next stage of the performance.

After Chindavan had sung several verses to Som Sii, she continued her round, turning her attention to male members of the audience seated nearby. This provoked an enthusiastic response among them because it provided the opportunity for face-to-face interaction with the performers. This action meant a long round indeed for Chindavan as she moved around the audience, singing several verses to about six male participants who stayed seated upon the platform. Each turn took three to four minutes in which Chindavan sang short verses about their physical appearance, their age and how eligible as a potential partner she considered them to be. Like the verses that Duang Phaeng had sung when dancing, Chindavan's verses contained bawdy and joking elements aimed at the men to whom she was singing. As she closed each set of verses directed at a participant, she would sing complements or a blessing to him. In return for her efforts, he would give her a small monetary tip of one or two thousand kip.[17] The method many audience members employed in handing the money over to Chindavan was even more risque than the actual dancing; they would roll the note up and place it either in their mouth or behind their ear from where Chindavan would remove it. Her methods of removal surprised me as she would use her mouth to retrieve the note from theirs, or else reach her hand around their head to take the note from behind their ear. I later discovered that this method of money retrieval was a relatively new development.[18] Chindavan concluded her round by singing to me in the same way she had done for the other members of the audience.

While Chindavan performed this long round of *kòòn fòòn* directed to the males of the audience, the majority of female listeners, both young and old, retired from the

performance area and ventured off to sleep for a few hours. A few stayed behind to stretch out on the performance platform and rest there, keeping a sleepy eye and ear on proceedings. This pattern of the women participating throughout the first half of the evening and then retiring around midnight is common to many social activities of the Lao, but it is particularly apparent at *khap-lam* performances in the *bun* context (see Plate 4). The primary reason for this is their burden of domestic tasks; it is the women who prepare and serve the food to the assembled performers and audience, so by the time midnight arrives they are tired. A rest is necessary because they will be called upon again to perform these duties, serving breakfast to everyone as the performance draws to a close, after which even more work awaits them as the festivities usually continue into the morning with the offering of food to the monks at the *vat*. It does not appear to be due to the performance becoming male-oriented since some women always remain. Their presence, together with that of the female *mohlam* ensures that the important feminine element of the performance is always maintained. Since the majority of the evening's entertainment is derived from the interplay of male and female elements in the performance and audience participants, a complete absence of female participants would result in an imbalance, making the occasion *bòò muan*, 'not entertaining; unpleasant'.

The performance continued for another hour or so, until just after 2 a.m., when bowls of noodles, *khaw pun* (ເຂົ້າປຸ້ນ), were served to the performers and audience who washed it down with coffee and/or *law laaw*. The performance then resumed with *lam siphandon*. However, by this late stage the audience of attentive listeners had dwindled to less than ten people with a few others sleeping at the outer edges of the platform. The young men who had been attracted to the performance with Chindavan's arrival had nearly all left, leaving only the older men and a few women to keep vigil. Likewise, activity from the adjacent area for dancing had all but ceased. The participants who remain are normally the sponsor, their family and close friends.

Part Three of the Performance: Additional Genres

By four in the morning, the performers and audience were beginning to show signs of tiredness. The late hour signalled a change in the performance as the *mohlam* moved into a mix of *lam* genres from northeast Thailand, including *lam khuu lam kòòn* (ລຳຄູ່ລຳກອນ, the Lao term for *lam klawn*), *lam (thaang) san* (ລຳ(ທາງ)ສັ້ນ) and *lam teej* (ລຳເຕີ້ຍ) (cf. Miller 1985a). The *mohlam* and audience referred to these genres collectively

as *lam jùùn* (ລຳຢືນ), 'standing *lam*', because they are performed standing. This label serves to differentiate them from the Lao genres of Champassak province which are performed seated, and often referred to collectively as *lam nang* (ລຳນັ່ງ), 'seated *lam*' or *lam taj* (ລຳໃຕ້), 'southern *lam*'. When the genres changed, the difference in performance format was signalled as the performers and audience participants stood up and danced with the music and singing. Everyone moved their hands in the circular motion that typifies Lao *lamvong* dancing, but instead of creating the *lamvong* circle, seen in nightclubs all over Laos, people preferred to dance standing in the one spot (see Plate 5). This change of genre is a strategy designed to stop all participants, both audience and performers, from going to sleep as the performance enters its last few hours. It also serves as a call to the womenfolk who are asleep to wake up and prepare breakfast for everyone as the performance draws to its conclusion. After about an hour, the standing performance came to an end and everyone sat down again. The *lam siphandon* performance resumed, continuing on to complete the evening's entertainment.

As the final two rounds of singing were performed, the women of the village who had been roused from sleep by the *lam jùùn* served up more bowls of *khaw pun* and coffee to all those people remaining in the performance circle. The first streaks of the dawn light began to show in the sky as the *mohlam* sang their final verses called *lam laa* (ລຳລາ), 'farewell *lam*', in which they thanked the sponsor and asked forgiveness for any offence, *khòò aphaj* (ຂໍອະໄພ), that their sung words and jesting may have caused to anyone. It was now 5:30am and with the performance now complete, the weary performers returned to the house where they had begun the evening to wake Duang Phaeng, and rest while they waited for their payment. After a short time the performers' payment was handed to Som Sii, who after counting it, placed the money in his pocket to be split between the five performers on the journey home. Without any further ceremony, all six of us were taken to the river bank, where two boats waited to ferry us back. As we went down river towards Ban Saphay we watched the rising sun cast shades of blue and purple colour onto the clouds surrounding the high triangular peak near Pakse. From Ban Saphay we hired a *jumbo* to drive us back to Pakse and bed.

Aims, Methodology and Theoretical Orientation

This study examines the four primary components of *khap-lam*: music, text, performance context, and performance practice and style. Two regional *khap-lam* traditions are the focus of this research: the *lam siphandon* tradition of Champassak province in the far south of Laos and the *khap ngeum* tradition of the Vientiane plain in northern Laos. Knowledge of Lao and Southeast Asian music culture is advanced through the exploration and analysis of the following features occurring in the two traditions:

a) Fundamental musical and textual structures and their interaction (including lexical tone-melody relationships).

b) The nature and importance of the socio-religious contexts of performance.

c) The relationships between textual themes and performance context.

d) Performers' concepts/knowledge regarding the learning, performative, compositional and contextual aspects of their tradition.

These areas of inquiry provide a set of criteria by which Lao *khap-lam* can be defined and distinguished from neighbouring vocal music traditions. Furthermore, they identify non-musical elements which are important additions to the existing set of musical criteria used to distinguish between regional *khap-lam* traditions. These research problems are addressed by adapting, unifying and extending a number of ethnomusicological theories and methodologies, as discussed below.

Insider/Outsider Perceptions and Transcription

The research is based upon a core of primary data consisting of interviews, conversations, field notes, photographs, and audio recordings all collected by myself in Laos during 1998-1999. Such data collection activities require the researcher to move between cultural boundaries as he/she attempts to gain an insider's understanding of the music. This dilemma of the insider/outsider or emic/etic dichotomy constitutes one of the fundamental theoretical problems of ethnological research. In recent decades, ethnological theory has shifted away from the ideal of the researcher as objective observer towards an acknowledgment that the researcher is ineluctably bound to his/her subjective viewpoint. Consequently, field research methodologies have sought to directly involve researchers in the cultural activities they study, a process typified in Stone's "observer-participant" method (Stone 1982:48-49).

More recently scholars such as Kisliuk (1997:42-48), Rice (1997:111-112) and Koskoff (1993) have taken the observer-participant role further by pointing out the importance of balancing experimental and experiential aspects of field research. Rice in particular, indicates that researchers are able to gain insights into the cultural dialogue between insiders by directly participating as performers within a music culture. This approach brings researchers to a unique position whereby we have access to both insider and outsider viewpoints, and are able to overcome Geertz's assertion that we are "condemned" to a dialogue between insider and outsider viewpoints (1973:13). Koskoff, however, provides some words of caution regarding this approach, noting that care must be taken to observe the power relationships between ourselves and our subjects to ensure that our representations do not become overly reflexive (1993:162-163).

One area in particular that has stimulated considerable debate over issues of insider/outsider conflict is the transcription of music sound, of which scholars have long discussed its merits, pitfalls and even validity.[19] However, it remains an indispensable analytical tool for most scholars. The on-going debate has been accompanied by a trend away from the inclusion of extensive transcriptions in ethnomusicological publications, as researchers view it as an analytical process rather than a research outcome (Brinner 1995:34; see also Miller 1985a and Kartomi 1973 for examples of extensive transcription). This is indicative of a shift over recent decades in emphasis away from declarative knowledge, towards procedural aspects of music which have seen the analysis of music in culture favour an anthropological perspective in which the social and cultural contexts of music are emphasised (e.g. Sarkissian 2000; Stone 1982). The stance taken by Wong in her study of ritual aspects of Thai music distils many of the arguments for this current trend:

> In discussing Thai music, I emulate Thai musicians' modes of talk, then; ultimately, I am interested not in "the music" but rather in how Thai musicians discuss the pieces that they play. This means following their lead. Indeed, I believe "the music" does not exist outside their conceptions of it, and this above all marks my approach as that of an anthropologist/ethnomusicologist rather than a musicologist, music theorist, or acoustician. As a result, little musical notation, whether Thai or Western, appears here. (Wong 2001:103)

One major concern with transcription is that it often favours the receiver's viewpoint over that of the producer, because "what is heard is notated without insight into that culture's universe" (Chenoweth 1972:50). Doris Stockmann has taken up this point, asking:

> ...has the transcriber been able to obtain the essential features of the music, and has he been able to express them clearly enough within the limitations of the chosen notation system, so that others will be able to reconstruct what he has heard. (Stockmann 1977:68)

In order for transcription to be effective, both producer and receiver must possess "a common set of standards, rules, etc., to which certain features of the acoustical signals can be related" (Stockmann 1977:68-69). This means that the transcriber must be familiar with the music system before he/she is able to produce an "appropriate decoding" (Stockmann 1977:69). However, musical semiotics shows that perceiver and producer of a musical sign will always have different relationships with, and interpretations of, the same musical sign (Stockmann 1977:69; Nattiez 1990:17). Thus, aural perception, like other fieldwork experiences, is a highly individualised process in which neutral observation is impossible to achieve.

This point was adroitly illustrated by England (1964), when he directed several well-known ethnomusicologists to transcribe the same piece of music. The resultant transcriptions exhibited a variety of different, individualised, interpretations. Each transcriber made different judgments as to which features were the most important. Although today's scholars have learned from the experience of their predecessors, the need for caution and self-awareness remains. For even when we are aware of our subjective viewpoint, other pitfalls await the unwary, as Cook reveals when he says that reducing music to notation:

> ...ruthlessly strips away the flow of the singer's voice into separate notes...it strips away vibrato and portamenti, and rationalizes rhythmic values. It is a much simplified model of what the singer actually sings: an interpretation or, if you like, an analysis of it, rather than a neutral record of the sound. (Cook 1987:225)

Cook's comments have particular relevance to two aspects of transcription. The first, is that any form of notation is not music, but simply a representation of musical sound. The second aspect relates to earlier comments concerning the transcriber's familiarity with the music sound and the culture that produces it. Each perceiver has a "recognition-threshold" (Stockmann 1977:73), a multi-dimensional area of perception which relates to their historical and cultural knowledge, drawn from their own personal experiences.

In order to pursue my research aims I combined the experiential/participatory aspects of field research with transcription-based (both music and text) analysis, accepting that my personal subjectivity would be present. Direct participation as a performer was not

viable since I did not possess the competencies necessary for performance (see below), nor did I have the time to acquire them. Instead I learned the basics of *khaen* playing at the National School of Music and Dance in Vientiane, a skill which greatly assisted in establishing a rapport with performers when I first began to work with them. Later on in my field research I acquired several texts from performers and began to learn them too. Although unable to participate as a performer, I quickly discovered that audiences play an important role in maintaining the vitality of a *khap-lam* performance through their interaction with performers and the way they manipulate aspects of a performance, such as the choice of textual themes and musical genres. This provided an avenue by which I could learn and participate in the cultural dialogue of *khap-lam* performance without having to spend many years as an apprentice *mohlam*. That said, it is still a difficult task to learn how to be an effective member of the audience. I found Ruth Stone's theoretical concept of the performance event, originally developed in response to Liberian Kpelle music, to be a useful starting point in describing the interactions between participants in traditional *khap-lam* performance.

Lao khap-lam as Performance Event

Stone's definition of a performance event is one in which "both the individuals producing the music and the people experiencing the music performance as listeners or audience, and the auditors' meanings and interpretation are just as significant as those of the performers", whereby participants "include anyone designated as sharing in the event's interactions" (Stone 1982:4-5). The various interactions, or processes and behaviours, are an integral part of Kpelle music sound which:

> ...is conceived as part of an integrally related cluster of dance, speech, and kinesic-proxemic behaviour referred to a pele and occurring in particular time-space dimensions. (Stone 1982:1)

All of these features are evident in the opening description in which participants may be divided into three categories: performers, audience members, and sponsors each of whom has their own interpretations of the activities within the performance event. Performances of *khap-lam* exhibit a similar integration of speech (in the form of rejoinders offered up by the audience) and text (of the sung verses which relate to the event context), and kinesic-proxemic behaviour (interaction between performers, audience, and sponsor). Dance behaviour (from both performers and audience), however, appears to be limited to the regional traditions of southern Laos. All of these behaviours occur in an environment

that is bounded spatially (the designated performance area), temporally (from around 8pm or 9pm until dawn; a period further broken down into alternating male-female singing rounds) and contextually (within the *bun*).

The one crucial difference between the performance event of Stone's model and the *khap-lam* event is that the latter is inexorably bound to the socio-religious event (i.e. *bun*) which motivates it. Event participants continually refer the performance to the *bun* context throughout an evening's performance. Furthermore, the sponsors and audience members engage in *bun*-related activities before the performers arrive and after they leave. The performance event is thus bounded by the space-time dimensions of the broader *bun* event. Consequently, I extend Stone's concept of performance event by viewing it as one (optional) element of a broader *bun* event. This research explores the different musical and textual structures within the performance event, the competencies required to produced them, and the ways in which performers and audiences continually emphasise and de-emphasise the relationship of the *bun* event to the performance event.

Musical Competencies, Creative Processes and Taxonomic Thinking

An important aspect of this study's theoretical approach toward music-making processes is the concept of musical competency which Brinner defines as the:

> ...*individualised* mastery of the array of interrelated skills and knowledge that is required of musicians within a particular tradition or musical community and is acquired and developed in response to and in accordance with the demands of general and specific cultural, social, and musical conditions. (Brinner 1995:28) (my emphasis)

Brinner views musical competence as a dynamic and integrated process which can only be assessed via "an interpretive, ethnographic approach based on observed conduct and musician's concepts and concerns" (Brinner 1995:33).

In the quest to understand and model the complex and varied ways in which humans make music, Brinner writes that researchers must move beyond schematic approaches involving "lists and rules" towards a "consideration of process and product" (1995:30), reiterating similar appeals by Stone (1982:127) and Bohlman (1988:16). Variations in the type and degree of competence are likewise important because they are "the result of individual motivation and ability in response to community options and demands" (1995:31). Processes and the effects of social considerations upon musical competence are central to the performance event, in which ethnomusicologists must understand "the ebb

and flow that is part of building a music event, considering process in music events to entail analysis of the multiple dimensions of time as participants experience them" (Stone 1982:7). Both Stone and Brinner see the importance of the ways that audiences participate in musical performance through their physical behaviour and interaction with musicians and how this affects the musicians' behaviour. Audiences, they argue, also possess musical competency, albeit in a different form to that of musicians because they are less involved in compositional processes.

Brinner and Stone's pleas for a consideration of processes and products finds resonance in the semiological approach to analysis of music performance adopted by Canadian ethnomusicologist Jean-Jacques Nattiez. The semiological approach is based on the supposition that the producer and receiver of a given message/sign each assign their own meanings to it. These are called the poietic and esthesic dimensions: the poietic is the result of the process of creation, the esthesic the result of active perception. Between these two processes lies the physical trace (i.e. product), or neutral level, which exists in a form accessible to the five senses (Nattiez 1990:12). The physical trace is a result of poietic processes which is then actively interpreted according to the meanings the receiver assigns to it. This is represented in Figure 1-2 below:

Figure 1-2: Diagrammatic representation of the direction of semiotic processes (Nattiez 1990:17)

Semiotic approaches seek to integrate these three levels of communication into musical analysis. This may be done by asking the following questions: 'How does one produce a work?' (poietic level) and 'How is a work perceived?' (esthesic level). In order to answer these questions one must first describe the material work (neutral level) and then show how the poietic and esthesic elements are linked to it (Nattiez 1990:138). Nattiez notes that the memory of one performance serves as the model for the next one and that the surface style of a music is not a process in itself but rather the result of the poietic processes which produce it (1990:88-89). Therefore, in order to analyse processes, researchers must move between analysis of the neutral level (the music product) and analysis of the poietic level.

Stone's approach projects a similar but somewhat broader viewpoint, describing how both producer and receiver are affected by "relevances":

> Relevances for a music event participant come from sources beyond the event or the music system alone. Therefore, research can only begin at the event, moving beyond it to the other individuals and interactions that influence and relate to the music performance. (Stone 1982:26)

These poietic and esthesic elements or "relevances" which bear upon the material work are identified by both Stone and Nattiez. Both scholars begin examination at a level which precedes the actual production of musical sound; Stone at the performance event level, Nattiez with the compositional process (i.e. poietic level).

Extending this line of thinking, Brinner (1995:40-42) has effectively consolidated the concepts of relevances and poietic processes, calling them "domains of musical competency" which consist of perceptive, procedural and performative knowledge. The ten domains are: i) sound quality; ii) sound patterns; iii) symbolic representation; iv) transformation; v) interaction; vi) orientation; vii) ensembles; viii) repertoire; ix) performance context; and x) meaning/symbolism. There are also two "clusters of knowledge", often directly affecting the above ten domains: a) language arts, and b) dance, theatre, religious rituals and social occasions. These domains are not conceived as being neatly compartmentalised but as overlapping, bridging or encompassing one another (Brinner 1995:43-44).

Each of Binner's ten domains exhibit varying degrees of both poietic and esthesic processes and the neutral level, the point of departure for the productive and receptive processes, is present in all domains. The ten domains include both conscious and sub-conscious behaviour, meaning that musicians and other participants will not always be aware that a particular set of processes is taking place, as Stone has observed:

> ...music performance becomes habituated to a large degree. This habitualization functions as an economizing factor, allowing participants to repeat past action. Musical meaning is not absent but may, at this point, be taken-for-granted. As a music system develops, the participants experience it as an objective fact, although it never exists apart from the human interaction that created it. Thus, a dialectal tension constantly exists between the objectivity created by individual interpretations. Both are present in any music performance but one, at a given time, may be more prominent in the participant's awareness. (Stone 1982:25)

Since much of this study relies upon information provided by Lao performers and scholars as well as Western scholars, it is useful to consider how their observations and research affect this thesis. One way of doing this is to extend semiotic three-tiered analysis to include the act of research itself, in which Nattiez says "it could be suggested that this or that writer, in a poietic position in relation to his or her own work, is at the same time in an esthesic position in relation to the work of predecessors" (1990:180). The same three levels are likewise present when researchers conduct field research, gathering information in the form of music recordings, and especially interviews whose:

> ...words, as much as the musical corpus, constitute *data*; they have their own symbolic configurations whose specific articulations must be respected. The indigenous discourse bears on the corpus (1). Our job is to examine the nature of the relation between this ethnotheory and music (2). From the study of this relationship (2), of the words themselves (3), from analysis of the musical corpus (4) one can deduce something like a "thinking about music," but this is a *reconstruction* whose connection to the *data* that allow its elaboration must be established with great care. (Nattiez 1990:188-189) (original emphasis) (see Figure 1-3 below)

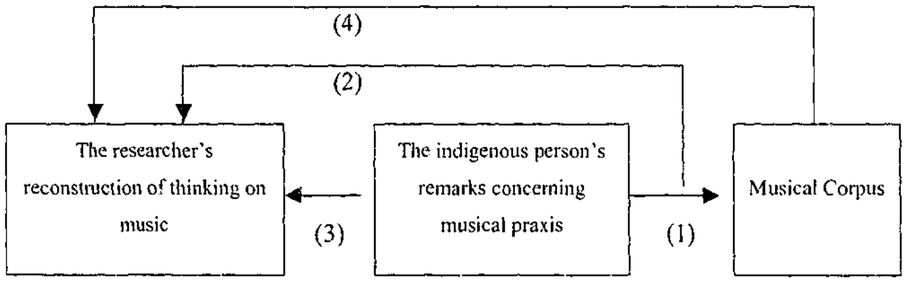

Figure 1-3: Semiotic relationships in music research (Nattiez 1990:189)

Nattiez's remarks have particular relevance to taxonomic processes in ethnomusicology which present researchers with the problem of finding a balance between "observer-imposed" taxonomies, meaning schemes imposed by observers from outside the music tradition in question, and "culture-emerging taxonomies", meaning schemes which emerge from within a culture (Kartomi 2001). This problem can be compounded when one is confronted with indigenous taxonomies that are observer-imposed as is the case with most analyses of Lao poetic structures (see chapter 6). It also echoes the issues concerning insider/outsider viewpoints raised at the beginning of this section.

Gender Issues

The prominent role of women in *khap-lam*, both as vocal performers and as audience participants calls for some consideration of gender issues in the Lao context. Ethnomusicologists look for the extent to which a society's gender style is reflected or codified in aspects of their music culture (cf. Koskoff 2000:192-193; Siapno 1997:10; Solie 1993:3). Koskoff (2000:191) writes that "[a] given society's gender style can be understood in terms of the value and subsequent power given to and maintained by one gender over another" and that, theoretically, these range from near-equal autonomy and value for both sexes to a lack of equality in autonomy and value. These two extremes are also known as complementarity and gender stratification (Koskoff 2000:191). A less extreme form of gender stratification may be referred to as gender hierarchy. Scholars analysing the dynamics of gender style of Southeast Asian societies have debated the extent to which they exhibit gender hierarchy and/or complementarity, with many suggesting complementarity as the prevalent gender style (Davis 1995:273). In Laos the gender style is predominantly hierarchical but has elements of complementarity, as the following summary reveals.

Gender roles in Laos are clearly divided between the public and private spheres of life (Evans 1995:132). Lao women wield little political or religious power and are considered to be subordinate to men, a view originating in Lao Buddhist theology. Women are also prohibited from entering the monkhood and from touching or being in close proximity to monks, yet they are the principal supporters of Lao Buddhism through their daily food donations to local temples, and the offering of their sons to ordain as monks; activities which bring merit to them and their families (cf. Wong 2001:224). Spirit cults, however, are almost exclusively the preserve of women who act as mediums to the spirit world.

Households tend to be female-centred since residence in Laos remains largely matrilocal, perpetuating women as land-owners. This, coupled with their ability to instigate divorce proceedings, means that Lao women have "comparatively more power and influence in the family" than their Vietnamese and Chinese counterparts (Evans 1995:131). In addition, Lao women also enjoy a degree of financial independence through their prominent role as small business proprietors; a role which further enhances their position within the household. Finally, in comparison to women in neighbouring Thailand, Lao women are expected to conform to fewer stereotypes of feminine behaviour (cf. Wong

2001:219-220).[20] This is largely attributable to Laos' historical lack of a large aristocratic and middle class, both of which have wielded considerable influence in Thailand over the past century or so.

Although this study is not aimed at exploring *khap-lam* as a gendered cultural system, a number of gender related questions can be raised. Does *khap-lam* performance reflect the public sphere of gender relations (hierarchy) or the private sphere (complementarity)? How are these reflected in performance practices and textual content? These broad questions can be applied to the roles of men and women as performers and audience members; the relative status of men and women as performers; gender-specific roles within the performance; whether or not particular themes are restricted on the basis of gender; and so on. In searching for answers to these questions we may gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which *khap-lam* performance responds to, and reflects, the culture that supports it.

Vocal Music Performance in the Southeast Asian Context

Readers familiar with the music cultures of mainland and island Southeast Asia and southern China will recognise that the prominent features of Lao *khap-lam* are common to the music cultures of the area. These similarities include: the all night duration of a performance; textual themes focussed upon courting, love, and traditional stories; the setting of poetic structures to music; accompaniment by a single instrument; the conspicuous consumption of alcohol in some traditions; and the male-female repartee format with risque flirting. Of these, all-night vocal music performances utilising themes of love, courting, and traditional literature are found in the Khmer *ayai* tradition (Sam-Ang Sam et al. 1998), Vietnam's *hát* and *hát quan ho* traditions (Nguyen 1998), the *sijobang* tradition of the Minangkabau people in Sumatra (Phillips 1981), as well as the vocal music of mainland Southeast Asian ethnic minority groups such as the Shan, Hmong and the Lahu (Uchida and Catlin 1998). It also extends into southern China with the *zhangkhap* traditions of the Dai people (Davis 1999), the *longgui / funiangfu* of the Li people and the Han Chinese *qingnianguan / yeyou* traditions in Hainan Island (Yang Mu 1998).

Studies of two traditions in particular, Malay *tarik selampit* by Sweeney (1987; 1994) and Minangkabau *sijobang* by Phillips (1981), have influenced the direction taken in this project's analysis of texts and textual compositional processes. Both scholars note that professional performers in oral traditions do not merely repeat texts they have learned by

rote, but that they manipulate memorised texts according to the demands of the performance context and audience. Sweeney and Phillips argue that although no two performances are exactly the same, performers are not original composers in the sense that they are taking "original leaps into the unknown" (Sweeney 1994:82). Instead performers compose within a conventionalised framework of poetic language, thematic motifs, and plot devices which they manipulate to create a unique performance. These theories provide a point of departure for the examination of *khap-lam* texts and the compositional processes employed by Lao *mohlam* which appears in chapters 6 and 7.

Linguists are interested in identifying aspects of language which they describe as 'areal' features; that is, they occur in languages from a wide geographical area. Areal features are not necessarily the result of different languages sharing a common ancestor but are often the result of prolonged cultural contact leading to the transfer of linguistic features from one language to another (see Dixon 1997; Enfield 2000). In chapter 3 I present arguments that music cultures are equally affected by these processes of exchange, noting that scholars must take care not to over-emphasise similarities. The in-depth description of the *lam siphandon* and *khap ngeum* vocal music traditions provided by this study will also permit some conclusions to be drawn regarding the place of Lao vocal music within the network of Southeast Asian music cultures.

The Field Research Process

The field research was undertaken between late 1998 until the end of 1999. During this time I was based in Vientiane, having gained approval for my project by nominating the National School of Music and Dance (NSMD), *hoong hian sinlapa dontii hèèng saat* (ໂຮງຮຽນສິນລະປະດົນຕີແຫ່ງຊາດ), as my sponsoring institution. I studied *khaen* at the NSMD for three days per week, leaving me with enough spare time to make regular trips to outlying areas of Vientiane province where I could research the *khap ngeum* (ຂັບງື່ມ) tradition. The majority of my field research for *khap ngeum* took place in the village of Ban Paak Kanyung (ບ້ານປາກກະຍຸງ) which is home to several well-known performers. The village is situated about five kilometres upriver from Ban Koen (ບ້ານເກິ່ນ),[21] the administrative centre for Tulakhom District (ເມືອງຫຸລະຄົ). Both villages are situated on the banks of the Nam Ngeum (ນ້ຳງື່ມ), a river, some eighty kilometres north of Vientiane city

and ten kilometres downstream from the hydro-electric dam built in the late 1960s. Along the river's edge below the dam are many of the villages which are home to performers of the *khap ngeum* genre.

During term time it was often difficult to leave Vientiane, especially for the longer trips to the south, because of my obligations to the School. Laos' embryonic modern communications infrastructure often made it difficult to arrange meetings with performers or to attend performances. This is particularly true in Vientiane province where all the best performers live between forty to eighty kilometres from the city; the only way to contact them is to travel out to their village and hope that they are at home. This obstacle was partly overcome with generous assistance from Lai Thong, the village headman of Ban Paak Kanyung, who allowed me to use the accommodation at the village's irrigation office, just outside the village. This enabled me to prolong my visits to Paak Kanyung extending the time I could spend there at a single stretch; allowing me to make good progress over several days at a time.

In the south, most of my field research was centred in and around the provincial centre of Pakse where the better known *mohlam* of the region live. Duang Phaeng, Sunii, Som Sii and Chindavan all live within several kilometres of each other and the town centre, making communications considerably easier than in Vientiane. I attended a number of performances both in town and the surrounding countryside, spending many days in the company of these performers, building solid relationships and giving them time to become familiar with my aims and ideas. I was also able to attend performances in Muang Khong in the far south of Laos, where the two southern genres, *lam siphandon* and *lam som*, are said to have originated.

In Salavan, extreme poverty means that the area cannot support professional performers like Pakse and Vientiane. There is simply less money in the town and virtually none in the surrounding province. Consequently, performers are difficult to locate since most live in remote villages some kilometres away from the provincial centre, and they do not travel into Salavan town to perform because there is no incentive to do so. Travel out to remote towns and villages is difficult, as there is little or no public transport and few places to stay once you are there. The most accessible performers are those employed by the Salavan division of the MIC. Fortunately, I found one elderly performer, Bunta Duangpanyathip, who was not only a *mohlam* but a multi-instrumentalist and instrument

maker as well.[22] Although I was unable to examine the Salavan genre in detail, he provided many useful insights into my work in general by sharing his knowledge and experience.

Finally, in Savannakhet I worked with one female performer, Keo Lammon, for several days and saw her perform on several different occasions. These included a particularly fascinating public performance jointly sponsored by the local division of the MIC and the Thai consulate in Savannakhet as well as several privately arranged *bun*.

The names of the performers with whom I worked are listed in Table 1.1 below.

Performers		Genre	Address
Acaan Duang Phaeng Hanmani (age 50)	ດວງແພງຫານມະນີ	*lam siphandon*	Ba[illegible]na Hin Kang, Muang Pakse, Champassak
Chindavan Sithavong (age 35)	ຈິນດາວັນ ສີທາວົງ	*lam siphandon*	Ban Kang, Muang Pakse, Champassak
Som Sii Kaseemlat (age 65)	ໂສມສີ ກະເສີມລັດ	*lam siphandon*	Ban Hae, Muang Pakse, Champassak
Sunii Kaseemlat (age 72)	ສຸນີ ກະເສີມລັດ	*lam siphandon*	Ban Khan Koeng, Muang Pakse, Champassak
Acaan Vanna Keophilom (age 54)	ວັນນາແກ້ວພິລົມ	*lam siphandon*	Ban Phon Ngaam, Muang Pakse, Champassak
Acaan Lin Kham (age c.62)	ລິ່ນຄຳ	*lam siphandon*	Ban Dong, Muang Khong, Champassak
Kii Kong (age 54) *mohkhaen*	ກີກອງ	*lam siphandon*	Ban Saphan Sai, Muang Pakse, Champassak
Suun Siimanta (age 70) *mohkhaen*	ສູນສີມັນຕະ	*lam siphandon*	Ban Phon Ngaam, Muang Pakse, Champassak
Kham Sing (age 42) *mohkhaen*	ຄຳສິງ	*lam siphandon*	Ban Phon Kheng, Vientiane
Acaan Som Patamphi (age 72)	ອາຈານຊົມ ປະຖຳພີ	*khap ngeum*	Ban Pak Kanyung, Muang Vieng Kham, Vientiane
Pa Nyaeng Sisutham (age 79)	ປ້າແຍງ ສີສຸທຳ	*khap ngeum*	" "
Paeng Thong Sisutham (age 45)	ແປງທອງ ສີສຸທຳ	*khap ngeum*	" "
Keomany Sisutham (age 22)	ແກ້ວມະນີ ສີສຸທຳ	*khap ngeum*	" "
Kae Sisutham (age 29) *mohkhaen*	ແກະສີສຸທຳ	*khap ngeum*	" "
Buakhay (age 26)	ບົວໄຂ	*khap ngeum*	" "
Kheuakham (age 43)	ເຄື່ອຄຳ	*khap ngeum*	Ban Na Di, Muang Phonhong, Vientiane
Keo Lammon Phomkaew (age 40)	ແກ້ວລຳມອນ	*lam khon savan*	Ban Kaeng Kok Neua, Muang Champon, Savannakhet
Saman Suvannasi (age 68)	ສະໝານສຸວັນນະສີ	*lam long, lam leuang*	Vat Si Muang, Vientiane
Bunta Duangpanyathip (age 68)	ບຸນຕາ ດວງປັນຍາທິບ	*lam salavan*	Ban That Huay, Muang Salavan, Salavan

Table 1.1: Participants in the study

Primary Participants

Of the primary informants listed above, there were eight with whom I established a fruitful and on-going dialogue. Furthermore, I was able to attend and record live performances given by five of them; performances which form the base data examined in this thesis. Since constant referral to these eight *mohlam* is made in the following pages, some brief biographical information on each of them is given below to allow the reader to become acquainted with them.

1. **Acaan Som**: Without doubt the most famous of all *mohlam* in the *khap ngeum* tradition, Acaan Som is from the village Ban Pak Kanyung. Although he retired from regular performance several years ago, Acaan Som's legacy is clearly evident in the number of his students, *luuk sit* (ລູກສິດ), who now make up the senior ranks of contemporary *khap ngeum* performers. Even in retirement Acaan Som remains active, teaching a new generation of *mohlam* and giving advice when it is sought by already established performers. Paeng Thong refers to Acaan Som as a *thatsadaa acaan* (ທັດສະດາອາຈານ) which literally means 'great teacher', a reference to his exceptional abilities of extemporaneous composition of poetry. In the mid-1990s, the Vientiane provincial government attempted to set up an association for *khap ngeum* performers in Muang Kaew Udom, Vientiane province with Acaan Som as the senior teacher. Unfortunately, this endeavour failed after several months due to a dearth of funding.

2. **Paeng Thong**: The senior female *mohlam* in Ban Pak Kanyung, Paeng Thong is continuing a family tradition begun by her mother Pa Nyaeng who was a *mohtòòp phañaa* (ໝໍຕອບພະຍາ), a female specialist who answered a male *mohlam* with spoken *phañaa* verses. Paeng Thong has been a *mohlam* since age 18, initially learning from her mother and then Acaan Som. The next generation of her family are also continuing the tradition; her eldest son Kae is a *mohkhaen* and his young wife Khammani, one of the new generation of *mohlam*, have established themselves as performers. In early 2000 on my last visit to Ban Pak Kanyung before I left Laos, I learned that Paeng Thong's youngest son, in his early 20s, had just commenced study with Acaan Som. Paeng Thong warmly welcomed this development seeing it as a career opportunity for her son as well as a continuation of the family tradition. Throughout 1999, Paeng Thong was regularly performing with Acaan Sing and Acaan Thong, both former pupils of Acaan Som. Performance is her main source of income throughout the year,

although she maintains a small shop at the front of her house selling assorted foodstuffs to passers-by.

3. **Acaan Duang Phaeng**: Without doubt the most famous female *mohlam* of the *lam siphandon* and *lam som* genres, Duang Phaeng is now semi-retired, citing a weak constitution as the reason. Duang Phaeng gained a reputation as a lively and entertaining *mohlam* in the early 1970s while performing regularly with Acaan Vanna and Sunii. Duang Phaeng and Sunii were the composers/performers of the *lam siphandon* texts analysed by Carol Compton in her 1979 study. Following the communists' rise to power in 1975 Duang Phaeng, together with Acaan Vanna, was a core member of the southern *mohlam* association in Pakse, a group that performed a vital role in the new Lao government's post-1975 political education campaign. Originally from Don Khong in the far south of Laos, Duang Phaeng has lived in Pakse for over thirty years. At the end of the 20th century she was the only performer considered fully competent in the *lam som* genre still performing.

4. **Som Sii**: Although Som Sii does not have the reputation as a performer equal to that of Acaan Vanna, he was the busiest male *mohlam* of 1999 in Pakse, performing several times a week during the peak season between October and February. Som Sii's popularity is largely due to the absence of other male *mohlam* in the Pakse region since a number relocated to Vientiane in the mid-1990s with Acaan Vanna. Now in his early sixties, Som Sii was taught by his father, Lam Khun and brother Sunii, but retired from performance after the 1975 revolution. In 1996 he returned to performance after Duang Phaeng urged him to fill the gap left when Vanna and a number of other male performers moved to Vientiane. Som Sii most often performs with Chindavan and Duang Phaeng.

5. **Acaan Vanna**: Among audiences and his peers, Acaan Vanna is widely considered to be the most skilful male *mohlam* of the *lam siphandon* genre. Together with Duang Phaeng, he is widely credited with creating and popularising the modern form of the genre known as *lam siphandon ñuk samai* (ລຳສິບສອງຍຸກສະໄໝ). The modern form contrasts with the genre's older form called *lam siphandon deem* (ລຳສິບສອງເດີ່ມ) by its faster tempo and modified techniques of textual composition. Vanna is originally from the Sukuma district of Champassak province but moved to Pakse in the 1950s to further his career as a professional *mohlam siphandon*. In recent years Vanna's

performances have been sporadic as a result of his relocation to Vientiane in the mid-1990s to establish his own business, the Lao *Khap-lam* and Art Promotion Centre, *suun songseem silapa lè khaplam laaw* (ສູນສົ່ງເສີມສິລປະ ແລະ ຂັບລຳລາວ). This business has the lofty aim of issuing recordings of all Lao *khap-lam* genres, however, funds are limited and it has been difficult for him to achieve his targets. At the end of 1999, upon returning from a four-month performance tour to Canada, Vanna relocated his business to Pakse although he was undecided as to whether or not he would recommence regular performances.

6. **Nang Chindavan**: A female *mohlam* who, having begun a career as a *mohlam* in the mid-1980s under the guidance of Duang Phaeng and Vanna at the *mohlam* association in Pakse, joined the military for ten years during which time she was stationed in Sainyabuli province. In the military, Chindavan was engaged as a performer in the 5th division's theatrical *lam lùang* troupe, and as a singer of contemporary Lao songs. Upon her return to Pakse in the mid 1990s, Chindavan resumed her earlier vocation as a *mohlam*, this time working for herself. In 1999, Chindavan was performing on a regular basis with Som Sii throughout the Pakse region, and although not yet as skilful in her composition methods, Chindavan's relative youth has assisted her popularity with audiences as the other female *mohlam* in Pakse are almost twenty years her senior. The age difference between Chindavan and Som Sii is about 28 years, thereby providing them both with plenty of ammunition for the teasing and cajoling that is an integral part of *khap-lam* performance.

7. **Mohlam Sunii**: Sunii, together with Acaan Lin Kham of Don Khong, is one of the last *mohlam* of the generation who are able to perform the older *lam siphandon deem*. Now retired, Sunii is most famous as the last male *mohlam* to have a complete understanding and mastery of the *lam som* genre.

Secondary Informants

1. **Acaan Lin Kham**: Possibly the sole remaining active male performer of the original style of *lam siphandon*, the predecessor of the contemporary style. Lin Kham lives a farmer's life in the village of Ban Dong on Don Khong in the Siphandon region of Champassak province. A highly knowledgable and respected performer he is not only in demand for performances in the Siphandon region but often travels to Pakse to perform with Duang Phaeng and Thong Bang. Lin Kham is currently teaching his

youngest son, in his early teens, to be a *mohlam* and will begin taking him to performances when he completes his schooling.

2. **Nang Keo Lammon**: The leading female *mohlam* in Savannakhet at present, Keo Lammon spent the late 1970s and 1980s working as a singer in Vientiane, firstly for Lao Aviation and then with the Police Department of the Ministry of the Interior. Consequently, Keo Lammon's singing skills are somewhat exceptional for a *mohlam*, the result of many years performing on stage. In the mid-1980s, Keo was sent to Pakse to study composition skills with Duang Phaeng and Vanna. During this time she learnt the genre of *lam som*, which she now performs in conjunction with *lam khon savan*. Unlike other performers considered to be *mohlam*, as opposed to singers, Keo Lammon has recorded a commercial cassette featuring an accompaniment with modern electronic instruments. Keo Lammon is also related to two *mohlam* now residing in the United States, Bunthong and Khamvong Insixiangmai (see Miller 1985b; 1985c).

3. **Buntaa**: The only informant for this project versed in the *lam salavan* genre, Buntaa is a *mohlam*, multi-instrumentalist, instrument-maker, and a doctor of traditional medicine. He is somewhat unusual for a native of Salavan province because he has no family links to the Mon-Khmer ethnic groups which make up much of the province's population. In the past, Buntaa worked for the Salavan division of the Ministry of Informantion and Culture but is now sometimes employed by the local office of the Lao Red Cross. Unlike performers in Pakse and Vientiane, Buntaa does not earn any significant income from performance because of the poverty of the Salavan area.

4. **Khammani**: One of the new generation of *khap ngeum* performers, Khammani is fortunate to have the guidance of three senior *khap ngeum* performers close at hand. A pupil of Acaan Som, Khammani also consults her husband's mother Paeng Thong and his grandmother, Paa Nyaeng for advice In 1999, Khammani was not performing on a regular basis because she was caring for her baby son, however, she aims to emulate her elder female relatives and continue performing throughout her life.

5. **Kheua Kham**: A contemporary of Paeng Thong, Kheua Kham has established a reputation as an excellent performer of *khap ngeum*. Kheua Kham began her career as a singer/*mohlam* with the Vientiane Municipality division of the MIC during the late 1970s and early 1980s before leaving to work independently. Like many *mohlam* of the *khap ngeum* genre, Kheua Kham is a pupil of Acaan Som.

6. **Acaan Samaan**: Originally from Khon Kaen in northeast Thailand, Samaan has lived in Laos since the 1950s and was the official artist at Lao National Radio (LNR) from the mid-1960s until 1992. Amazingly he not only survived the change of regimes but managed to retain his position at the radio station until he retired. Proficient in the Isan genres of *lam lòòng*, *lam teej*, and *lam kòòn*, Acaan Samaan is well known throughout Vientiane as a result of his long tenure at LNR. In his retirement Samaan spends most of his time at Vat Si Muang in Vientiane assisting the monks in their daily tasks as well as occasionally travelling to Thailand to perform.

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[1] Lao people often use the words *too cing* (ໂຕຈິງ) which loosely translates as 'the real thing'.

[2] *songkhaan* is the period of Lao New Year which is celebrated in mid-April. The water festival is the main component of the celebrations.

[3] The period of *phansaa*, sometimes referred to as Buddhist lent, begins with the first day of the waning moon of the eighth Lao month (usually mid-July) and ends with the full moon of the eleventh Lao month (usually early October). Lao calendar months begin with the first day of the waxing moon and end with the new moon.

[4] All villages in Laos are prefixed with Ban (ບ້ານ) 'village/home'. This is sometimes transcribed as Bane (to suit French pronunciation).

[5] Betel chewing is a habit common among older Lao women and, according to my own personal observations, the habit appears to be more predominant in the south.

[6] The new Pakse airport terminal opened at the beginning of 2002.

[7] *khaen* is sometimes spelt *khene* or *kaen*, the musical instrument which characterises Lao music. It is a free reed mouth organ usually consisting of seven or eight pairs of pipes arranged in a raft or panpipe-like manner. More details on the *khaen* and its construction are given in Picker (1984) and Miller (1985a), and in a separate section in chapter 3 of this text.

[8] Lao people often refer to a group of traditions called *hiitsipsòòng khòòngsipsii* (ຮີດສິບສອງຄອງສິບສີ່) '12 customs and 14 laws'. These include the monthly religious observations among which are *bun kathin*, *songkhaan*, and *khaw phansaa* (Khambang 2517/1974).

[9] Pinto is a set of food containers which are stacked one upon the other, and are then locked together by a long metal handle.

[10] A *sala* is a pavilion, usually open on three sides which serves as the main communal space in a *vat*. Buddha images are also kept there. However, the most important images are kept in the *sim*, which is an enclosed building normally reserved for more formal worship.

[11] *lamvong* is the name given to a dance labelled as traditional by the Lao, in which participants dancing in pairs form a large circle. Although the *lamvong* originated in Thailand during the 1940s under the regime of Field Marshall Phibun (Miller 1998b:91; Myers-Moro 1993:7-8), the Lao people and government have now appropriated it as their own tradition.

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[12] *Mohlam* refer to each turn at singing as a 'round' *ñok* (ຍົກ) a term which is also used to denote a round of boxing. It should not be confused with the Western notion of sung 'rounds' in which a song is sung by several voices following one another at equal time intervals.

[13] The betel kits carried around are quite elaborate containing not just betel but numerous other items: a white paste, bark, cutters for cutting the bark, tobacco, betel nut and an assortment of leaves.

[14] Smoking remains a very unusual practice for Lao women.

[15] Lao women sit in 'mermaid' fashion; that is with their legs together and folded to one side. Men usually sit cross-legged.

[16] Today *lam som* is often centred upon themes of estrangement, see chapter 7. As a result of the war in Indochina many Lao people left Laos as refugees to live in Western countries, see chapter 2.

[17] Kip is the Lao unit of currency. At the end of 1999 there were around 7,500 Kip to US$1.

[18] Interview with Chindvan Sithavong (Chindavan Sithavong 15/11/1999).

[19] The debate continues into the 21st century. The symposium before SEM 2001 in Detroit was entitled "Transcription and its Futures".

[20] This includes the relative pitch of speech, the choice of personal pronouns when referring to one's self, and the social taboo on drinking alcohol.

[21] This may also be transcribed as Bane Keun.

[22] A performance of *lam salavan* by Buntaa is included on the companion CD to the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, vol. 4 Southeast Asia*.

Chapter 2

THE LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

This chapter provides the reader with basic data on the nation of the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), beginning with a brief summary of the physical, political, economic, and social environment in which Lao *khap-lam* vocal music is performed. This is then followed by a discussion of the historical and political landscape surrounding ethnicity in Laos today, leading to a working definition of the various ethnic groups in Laos. This discussion then gives way to an historical overview of nationalism in Laos, a phenomenon also intimately linked with notions of ethnicity and one which has helped define the ethno-political situation in contemporary Laos. Once these social and historical matters have been discussed, the reader is ready to move into the more comprehensive exploration of Lao vocal music in chapter 3.

Geography

The Lao PDR, or Laos, is a landlocked and underdeveloped country located on the Indo-Chinese peninsula in mainland Southeast Asia. It is bordered by China to the north, Myanmar to the north-west, Thailand to the west and north-west, Cambodia to the south and Vietnam to the east. The country covers an area of 235,000 km^2 and is situated entirely within the tropics, so the Lao climate is influenced by the annual Asian monsoon cycles, producing three distinct seasons. Most rain falls in the wet-season between May and November which is then followed by a long dry period that begins cool becoming hotter towards the beginning of March. The hot weather then leads back into the wet season to complete the cycle. Around this cycle the Lao base their agricultural and religious calender which, in turn, has traditionally determined the periods of the year when most *khap-lam* performances take place.

Rivers and mountains are the dominant natural features of the country, the Mekong, by far the largest and most important waterway in Laos, runs the entire length of the country. For much of its journey through Laos the Mekong marks the border between Laos and Thailand, a border first established in an 1893 treaty between the colonising French and the Siamese kingdom. The Mekong has a central role in the life of many Lao people as a life-sustaining source, providing water for the irrigation of rice and other crops, and

protein in the form of fish, crabs and other aquatic life. For centuries it has served as an important means of transportation of both goods and people.

Communications and other aspects of infrastructure within Laos are still poorly developed with many areas quite isolated and accessible only by air or river. This is especially true for the less populous regions away from the Mekong River basin. The situation has improved dramatically since the beginning of the 1990s when, with the help of funding from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the aid programs of various Western governments, work began on the upgrading and sealing of a number of main roads. These include the sections of Highway 13 between Luang Phrabang and Vientiane, Vientiane south to Savannakhet and Pakse, as well as the section between Pakse and the southern border with Cambodia. In addition, smaller roads linking provincial centres are gradually being upgraded, most notably the road between Pakse and Salavan, and the roads from Luang Prabang to Sam Neua and Muang Xai. These improvements in the road network have greatly reduced travelling times and increased the efficiency of goods transport (cf. Jerndal and Rigg 1999). This has had a dramatic impact on the river transport sector whose traditional role in long distance transport has almost completely disappeared. The only profitable river route now remaining is between Pak Lai in Sainyabuli province and Vientiane.

Despite these improvements, a sizeable portion of the Lao population still lives in quite isolated communities. The 1995 census shows that twenty-two percent of the Lao population live in areas not accessible to vehicles (EIU 1998:58). Public utilities such as running water, electricity and medical services are poor and generally only available to the minority of the population, those living in the small urban centres. To illustrate the lack of general development of utilities, a selection of figures reproduced from the 1995 Lao census, shown in Table 2.1 below, gives a comparison of household characteristics from a number of provinces in the Lao PDR indicating the percentage of households with electricity, toilets and type of dwelling structure. Dwelling structure figures indicate the percentage of dwellings that were made of wood and/or concrete, i.e. permanent building materials. In considering this set of figures, the reader should remember that even where electricity is available it may be so for only several hours each day. Even in 1999 some provincial centres, such as Phonsavan in Xieng Khouang province, only had an electricity supply for five hours in the evenings. Note that Vientiane Municipality is significantly more developed than the other provinces listed.

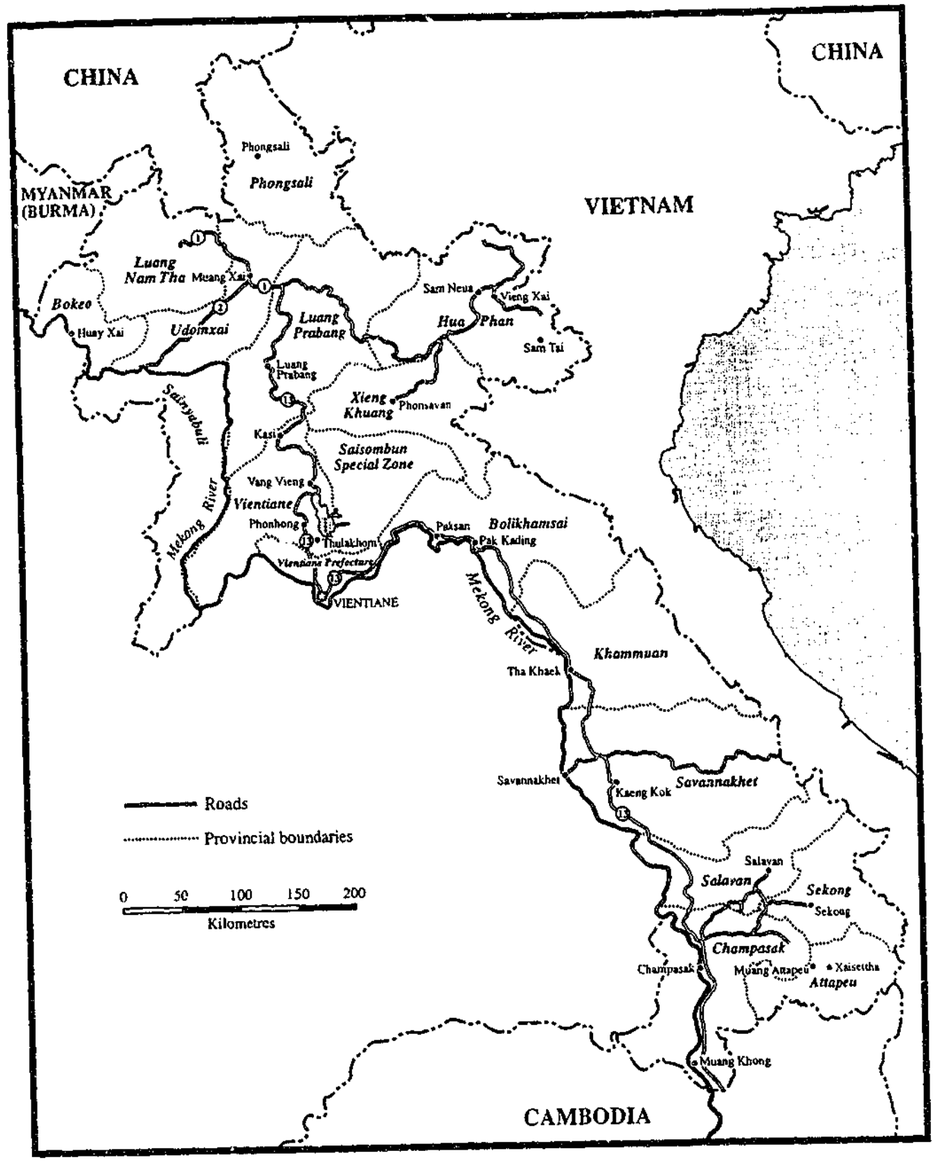
Province	Electricity	Toilet	Dwelling (Concrete, Wood/concrete)
Vientiane Municipality	84.0	69.7	33.6
Savannakhet	25.3	11.3	4.1
Champassak	16.8	13.6	3.8
Salavan	9.0	4.0	1.2
Huaphan	27.1	36.2	1.8
Xieng Khouang	15.9	44.0	3.2

Table 2.1: Housing characteristics (Source: Lao census 1995)

Politics, Administration and Economy

The Lao People's Democratic Republic is a one-party state, governed by the Lao People's Revolutionary Party (LPRP) who came to power on December 2nd 1975, after thirty years of warfare and internal political divisions which the Lao revolutionaries referred to, and mythologised, as the "thirty year struggle"[1] (Stuart-Fox 1997:62 & 174). Today the government no longer adheres to the socialist ideals and planning it originally espoused and implemented, having abandoned them in the late 1980s with the introduction of market reforms under the New Economic Mechanism (NEM). The Lao PDR is now fully committed to the market economy and development, but has no interest in, nor any intention of, permitting liberal-democratic reforms. Thus, the Lao government is described by Evans as "post-socialist", a description also applicable to Vietnam and China. The important feature of post-socialist governments is one of "political continuity between the revolutionary and post-socialist phases" (Evans 1998:1) whereby "it is the regimes as a political form which have survived, not socialism" (Evans 1995:xi).[2] This contrasts sharply with the experience of Eastern Europe and Russia, where the end of socialist ideology was accompanied by the downfall of the governments' who implemented it, even if many of their leading figures survived the change.

Politically, the country is separated into sixteen provinces, *khèèng* (ແຂວງ), one special administrative zone, and the prefecture of Vientiane, *kampèèng nakhòòn viangcan* (ກຳແພງນະຄອນວຽງຈັນ) (see Map 1). Each province is divided into around fifteen districts, one of which serves as the seat of the provincial government. Formerly, districts were



Map 1: Political map of the Lao People's Democratic Republic

further divided into several subdistricts, *tasèèng* (ຕະແສງ), that administered between five to ten villages each (Evans 1990:183), however, this level of government was discarded in the early 1990s. Provincial governments are able to exercise a considerable amount of regional independence because many national-level ministries (e.g. Finance, Interior, Forestry and Agriculture, Information and Culture) and the party organisation are

replicated at the provincial level (Evans 1990:184). The relatively poor state of communications between the provinces and the national administration in Vientiane has further assisted this decentralisation, which has been a characteristic of the current government since its outset (Stuart-Fox 1997:175) and was similarly a feature of the Royal Lao Government (Evans 1995:35).

Since the late 1980s, Laos has emerged from its self-imposed isolation from the Western world which began after the change of power in 1975 when the new communist government took Laos into the Soviet bloc. The admission of Laos, along with Myanmar and Cambodia, as full members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) in July 1997 has been a significant and progressive step in the process of integrating Laos into the region. The importance of Laos' geographical location as the hub of Southeast Asia is now coming to the fore as the region becomes more closely integrated, its trade liberalised, and the economic power of China becomes increasingly prominent. Laos is now in a position to assume an important role as a major land trading route between China and the rest of Southeast Asia (see Walker 1997). In the meantime hydro-electric power sales to Thailand and timber products are the main sources of export income for the Lao government, although the projected income from electricity sales has been revised downward in the wake of the Asian economic crisis of the late 1990s (cf. Bourdet 2000).

In spite of the potential benefits regional changes are likely to bring Laos is still finding progress very tough due to its small size and struggling economy. The Lao economy remains highly dependent upon foreign aid projects and development loans; a situation that is unlikely to change in the near future (Evans 1995:xx; Lintner 30/9/2001). Household income in the Vientiane region is quite dependent upon remittances from overseas which, as we shall see in later chapters, has a bearing upon the staging of *khap-lam* performances. Furthermore, the Asian economic crisis has had a severe impact upon the Lao economy, causing massive inflation and rapid devaluation of the local currency, the kip. In 1998 the kip nosedived from around 900 kip to the US dollar to more than 3000, a trend which worsened throughout the first half of 1999 when it almost reached 10,000 kip to the dollar. Another worrying sign for the Lao government is the withdrawal of foreign business investment, a sector that was booming in the early 1990s, because of perceived government interference and corruption.

Population

The population of the Lao PDR is estimated at four to five million people (EIU 1998:55; SPC 1997:7) and is overwhelmingly rural, with the sources giving either 76% (EIU figures) or 83% (SPC figures)[3] of the population residing in the countryside. Even Vientiane, the nation's capital and largest urban centre with nearly half a million people has a strong rural flavour, with livestock and rice fields occupying many open areas within the city limits. Other urban centres are much smaller and less economically important, although this is slowly changing, especially in the southern areas where the roads which traverse Laos to join Thailand with Vietnam are being upgraded. The recently completed bridge across the Mekong at Pakse, and the commencement of another at Savannakhet will provide further impetus for these two urban centres to expand.

By Asian standards Laos' population density is extraordinarily low, with around 19 people per km^2, a figure attributable to the rugged forested and mountainous terrain that covers most of the country. In comparison, neighbouring Vietnam has a population density of 230 people, and Thailand 120 per km^2. Of Laos' total population 37 percent live in the provinces of Vientiane, Savannakhet and Champassak, the main commercial areas of the country and the three provinces with the largest proportions of ethnic Lao people.[4] Questions concerning Laos' population inevitably raise issues of ethnicity, issues that are complex and politically sensitive. This area requires some consideration before we can turn to matters concerning musical topics, since a full appreciation of Laos' ethnic landscape is essential to coherent description and definition of vocal music in Laos.

Ethnicity in Laos

The population of Laos is not homogenous but a collection of numerous ethnic groups who can be categorised at a general level according to the languages they speak. Three major language families are present in Laos: Tai, Tibeto-Burman/Hmong-Yao, and Mon-Khmer. From 1975 until 1991 the Lao government used membership of these language families as the underlying criteria by which to officially categorise minorities, dividing them into the following 'three large ethnicities/nationalities', *saam son phaw ñaj* (ສາມຊົນເຜົ່າໃຫຍ່):

(i) the *Lao Lum* (ລາວລຸ່ມ), literally 'lower Lao'. The Lao of the river valleys, or more generally the speakers of Tai languages;

(ii) the *Lao Sung* (ลาวสูง), literally 'high Lao'. The Lao of the mountain tops, the Tibeto-Burman and Hmong-Yao language groups;

(iii) the *Lao Thoeng* (ลาวเทิง), literally 'upper Lao'. The Lao of the mountain slopes, the Mon-Khmer speakers. This group is believed by many ethnographers to be indigenous to the area (cf. Evans 1999b:25).

Although linguistic criteria underlie these groupings, the actual labels reflect the relative elevation at which each group dwells. Elevation is a general guide since the majority of Hmong and other Tibeto-Burman groups do tend to live and farm along the high ridges of the mountainous north while the Mon-Khmer groups live and farm on the mountain slopes rather than the ridges. Similarly, the lowland Lao tend to congregate in towns and villages along the banks of Laos' many rivers. Trankell (1998), however, notes that these groups do not necessarily have a deep cultural attachment to living at these elevations as many people believe. It is more likely the result of the politically dominant Lao ethnic group having taken the best land, leaving the other groups little choice but to occupy land at higher elevations.

In 1991, the tripartite system was officially replaced by a system in which the groups were categorised by four ethno-linguistic categories: Lao-Tai,[5] Mon-Khmer, Sino-Tibetan, and Hmong-Yao (Vientiane Times 8/2000), but in spite of this official change, the tripartite terms remain firmly fixed in the Lao conceptualisation of ethnicity.[6]

The status of the diverse ethnic groups in Laos is further confused by continual official revisions of the names and number of ethnic groups living in Laos. Figures appearing in previous estimations of the number of ethnic groups have ranged from the Lao government's 1984 claim of 68 groups, then to 50 (Ratnam 1982:32), and down to 46 in Halpern's 1967 list (1967:255). The 1995 Lao census cited the number of different ethnic groups living inside Laos at more than 48, a figure[7] which Evans (1999a:178) notes was arrived at after the Institute of Ethnography rationalised a list compiled from the 1983-1985 census that recorded an astounding total of 820 groups! It appears that this number was inflated due to many names being recorded several times with various spellings. The most recent example of the on-going count appeared in a *Vientiane Times* report in August 2000, entitled *Anthropology Symposium on Tribes in Laos*. According to this report the symposium had agreed that there are "49 tribes in Laos". The same article also mentions

that in 1984 the Party politburo "gave approval of 68 ethnic groups", acknowledging the downwards revision now occurring.

Beneath all the number juggling one significant process has been carried out, the breaking down of the three large ethnic groups into their constituent ethnic groups. Evans claims this is a means to ensure each ethnic group "appeared less significant in relation to the dominant ethnic Lao group, and therefore placed the latter at the cultural centre and apex of the nation" (1999b:26). This claim is supported by a table entitled "Population, Distribution by Sex and Ethnic Group" that appears in the 1995 Lao census in which the Lao stand out at the top with nearly two and a half million people or 52.5% of the population (SPC 1997:19). The next most numerous group are the Khmu, numbering under half a million, just 11% of the total population. The figures would have looked quite different had only the three ethnic groups been listed. Furthermore, a number of minority Tai groups, including the Thai Dam (Black Thai) and Thai Daeng (Red Thai), appear to have been included in the figures for the 'Lao' group, which probably increased the total for the ethnic Lao group to over fifty percent.

A common misconception is that the tripartite terms were created by the Lao communists and put into general use after the LPRP came to power (see Miller 1998a:336). In fact, all three were in general use at least fifteen years before the current government took over and were loosely employed by the Royal Lao Government (RLG) as well (see Halpern 1960; Halpern and Kunstadter 1967). While there is little doubt that the minority policy of the Lao communists was the vehicle that put these terms into general use, it was not a new innovation instituted by them. Evans notes that the 'three ethnicities' approach to Lao ethnology "has an old pedigree", tracing it as far back as an 1899 article in the *Revue Indo-Chinoise*. That the situation has barely changed over the following one hundred years is what he calls "a clear sign of deep conceptual inertia" (Evans 1999b:24), an inertia of which one is constantly reminded by the depictions of the three ethnic groups all over Laos on billboards, advertisements and the one thousand kip note (see Plate 6).

Who are the Lao People?[8]

'Lao' can have a variety of meanings depending upon the contexts in which it is used. 'Lao', and the now somewhat outmoded term 'Laotian', may be used to refer to the citizens of the Lao PDR or it may be used in a more specific sense to refer to the ethnic group known as the lowland Lao who dominate the social, political and economic

landscape in Laos. Lowland Lao political dominance is exemplified in the nation's name, 'Lao PDR' or 'Laos', even though Laos' population is one of the most ethnically diverse in mainland Southeast Asia. The Lao ethnic group, most of whom live along the valleys of the Mekong and its tributaries, are sometimes referred to as the Lao-Tai as a means of distinguishing them along linguistic lines (Moréchand 1970:31).[9] The affix 'Tai' indicates that the Lao ethnic group belongs to the broad family of peoples in and around mainland Southeast Asia who speak Tai-Kadai languages (Halpern and Kunstadter 1967:255; Edmonson and Solnit 1997:2), a grouping which also includes the Thai people in Thailand, the Shan groups in Thailand and Myanmar, the Ahom and Ai-Ton of Assam in India, the Lue of Laos and Yunnan, and the Zhuang of south-west China, among many others (see Li 1959; 1960). The Tai-Kadai family is divided into three sub-groups, northern, central, and south-western, with Lao and many minority Tai languages found in Laos belonging to the latter sub-group. Membership of this broad language family, however, does not mean that all members share a common cultural identity or a common language even among members within the same sub-group (cf. Enfield and Evans 1998).

Apart from language, the lowland Lao are often distinguished as the ethnic group that adheres to Buddhism, contrasting them with other ethnic groups of Laos speaking Mon-Khmer, Tibeto-Burman and Hmong-Yao languages, the majority of whom remain animistic in their beliefs. These animistic beliefs include the worship of nature spirits (thought to reside in trees, rivers, the earth and sky) and ancestors. In common with Buddhism in Thailand, Burma and Cambodia, Lao Buddhism is a fusion of Buddhist teachings and the animistic beliefs that preceded the arrival of Buddhism. Those earlier beliefs are still seen in numerous daily practices of Lao Buddhists, including the *basi*[10] and the erection of small spirit houses, *saan pha phuum* (ສານພະພູມ), at the front of important buildings like the family home (cf. Tambiah 1970).[11]

Yet even the official definition of the lowland Lao group is far from homogenous since it includes upland Tai-speaking minority groups whom Lao and Western ethnographers have labelled as 'tribal Tai', not because they are in any sense tribal but "presumably because they have not formed separate states" (Evans 1999c:126) as the Thai, Lao, Shan and Lue have managed to do at various points in history. For official purposes these minority Tai groups are included in the official ethnic category 'Lao' (synonymous with Lao Lum, 'lowland Lao'), despite the fact that they are not all Buddhist, observe different cultural practices from the valley-dwelling lowland Lao, have little day-to-day

contact with them, and speak their own languages which are not mutually intelligible with Lao dialects (cf. Trankell 1998). Hence, the most likely explanation for their inclusion in the Lao category is as a boost to the numbers of ethnic Lao for the census figures. Somewhat incongruously, the 1995 Lao census provides separate figures for two of the larger minority Tai groups, the Phutai (or Phu Thai) and the Lue, possibly because they are better known than the smaller Tai groups. Also noteworthy is the fact that these two groups are more similar to the lowland Lao both linguistically and culturally than are minority Tai groups like the Thai Dam who appear to have been included in the lowland Lao category.[12]

For this thesis, the answer to the question 'who are the Lao?' will be ethnically-based, stating that the people whose vocal music is the focus of this study are the ethnic group who:

1. speak mutually intelligible dialects of the Lao language.
2. observe Buddhist religious practices.
3. tend to live in the lower lying river valley areas of Laos.

Accordingly, the definition of 'Lao' deliberately omits the numerous minority Tai groups whose languages are not mutually intelligible to speakers of Lao, and/or who are not Buddhist. This definition is necessarily a narrow one, which, by drawing definite boundaries around the 'Lao' group seeks to emphasise difference rather than similarity. This stance is further clarified at the end of chapter 3 in which a paradigm for the Lao *khap-lam* tradition is presented. For the time being, however, we need to appreciate the extent to which issues of ethnicity have been important to the development of Lao nationalism.

Lao Nationalism and the Political Imagining of 'Lao-ness'

Evans (1999b:16) points out that questions concerning racial identity in Southeast Asia are modern ones, born of the nationalist movements in the late 19th century. Answering questions like "Who are the Lao people?" requires us to examine the basis of two conceptions of the nation state in Southeast Asia. The first, conceived along ethnic and racial lines, seeks to unite the peoples of a single ethnic group under the banner of the nation. The second is the political, or republican model, according to which the population within the borders of the nation are its citizens, regardless of ethnic or racial identity. The Lao nationalist dialogue, begun by the French and continued by the Lao, has been unable

to escape an ethnically based view of the nation, despite attempts to cultivate a republican model (see Evans 1999b:16-21). The Lao ethnic model that holds sway in Laos today places the lowland Lao at the apex of the nation through which all other cultures are interpreted.

Whether modelled upon ethnic or republican ideas, nationalist dialogue always has the "imagined community" of the nation as its central focus (Anderson 1983:6) in which all people within the borders of the nation, or proposed nation, are envisaged as sharing common goals and aspirations:

> ...it is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. (Anderson 1983:7) (*his emphasis*)

In this section we shall see how the nationalist dialogue in Laos began with an ethnically-based concept of the Lao state, flirted briefly with a republican model before returning again to an ethnic model. The major obstacle to the republican model has been the inability to instil a sense of "deep, horizontal comradeship" among the ethnically diverse population; it has been easier to create a nationalist dialogue based upon the lowland Lao ethnicity.

The French made some of the first attempts at defining who the Lao people are as they sought to justify their territorial claims during border demarcation negotiations with the Siamese in the late 19th century. A primary consideration in these negotiations was to differentiate the Lao from the Siamese in order to discredit Siamese claims to the territory claimed by France. These French efforts were a precursor to a Lao nationalist discourse that began to emerge in the mid 20th century, the origins of which may be traced to the national renovation movement which was spearheaded by the first national newspaper *Lao Nhay* (ลาวใหย่) 'Great Lao' (Ivarsson 1999). Launched in January 1941, this newspaper printed inter-provincial news, old and new poetry, a range of practical information, and articles concerning the standardisation of the Lao language and the historical narrative relating the territory of modern Laos to the former Lao kingdom of Lane Xang.

The national renovation movement differs from other nationalist movements in Southeast Asia because it was instigated by the French colonial administration in order to counter the growing pan-Thai rhetoric emanating from Thailand. Under the right-wing rule of Field Marshall Phibun,[13] the Thai government was making irredentist claims to Lao

territory and its ethnic Lao inhabitants, calling them lost provinces and Thai brothers that should rightly be reunited with Thailand to create a greater Thai nation. Thailand had already annexed parts of Laos and Cambodia in 1940-41, and was seeking to add to its gains. Phibun's aims may be seen as an extreme example of the ethnic model of nationalism to which the Lao responded with an ethnically-based model of their own, building on earlier French efforts, seeking ways by which they could define themselves as a separate entity from the Thai. Consequently, the national renovation aimed not to find similarity with Thailand and other Tai groups but to "integrate Laos further into the Indochinese Federation and make it a more viable member of this entity" and remain loyal to France and the French empire (Ivarsson 1999:64). The program adopted by the national renovation movement is described below:

> ...the campaign stressed the oneness of the population from north to south with regard to history, race, language, and religion. At the same time a cultural renovation was carried out through which a specific Laotian cultural heritage was to be unearthed, reformed, and resurrected in order to communicate the common identity of the Laotian people as defined through a specific Lao cultural identity. That is, an identity defined in pure ethnic-Lao terms to which the other ethnic groups were to be assimilated. (Ivarsson 1999:65)

Much of the dialogue begun by the national renovation movement has continued to the present day, with successive Lao governments putting their own slant on the vision of a Lao state for the Lao people. Each of these visions is spun together by the same historical narrative reaching back into the glorious past of Lane Xang when Lao influence and power was at its pinnacle. The Lao kingdom of Lane Xang lasted from 1353 until 1707, at which time it split into three separate weak kingdoms: Luang Phrabang, Vientiane and Champassak. Lao influence in the region declined further over the next one hundred and fifty years, with the stronger states of Siam and Vietnam vying against each other for control over the disunited Lao territories. In 1887 when the French established their presence in Laos they brought most of the former Lane Xang territory on the Western banks of the Mekong under the one administration, incorporating it into French Indochina. Since independence in 1953, successive Lao governments have fostered the image of a historical continuity from the kingdom of Lane Xang to the present day as an integral part of their imagined Lao community. The preoccupation with the Lao kingdom of Lane Xang has also meant that the narrative and the cultural materials upon which the national

renovation and subsequent nationalist movements have focussed, are those belonging exclusively to the Lao ethnic group.

The national renovation movement and its accompanying historical narrative were largely a dialogue for the urban and educated Lao. In a country where literacy and access to education was severely limited, Lao people in the countryside, minorities, and others who were not members of the small elite were excluded from the debate which was primarily aired through print media. As the national renovation gave way to the anti-French Lao Issara (Free Lao) movement in 1945, the nationalist dialogue began to move beyond the elites. By the late 1950s, after independence, rural peasants and minority groups, previously overlooked in nationalist discourse had become the target of Pathet Lao (PL, the Lao communists) and RLG political campaigns, taking the nationalist discourse into the general population. At this point in time, a republican model for the nation began to emerge as the dialogue moved away from the urban Lao elites. In 1948 Katay Don Sasorith, a leading figure in the Lao Issara, suggested that it was not necessary for all groups within a nation to speak the same language or worship the same religion (Evans 1999b:19), a position that was partly reflected in the development of the tripartite ethnicities labels. These developments indicated that a more inclusive dialogue was emerging, although the use of 'Lao' to prefix each of the tripartite ethnic labels was a sign that ethnic concepts were not far away.

By popularising the three ethnic designations prefixed with 'Lao' during the war years, the Lao communists adopted the republican model, emphasising themes of solidarity between all tribes and peoples of Laos. Application of this policy has been described as a "shrewd tactic" because the provinces under communist control, the liberated zone *khêêt pot pòòj* (ເຂດປົດປ່ອຍ), were mainly populated by minority groups (Halpern 1964a:13).[14] The Lao communists' call throughout the 1960s was for the peoples of Laos to unite and repel the foreign invader, the United States. The potency of such symbolism was obviously not lost on the RLG who also adopted the same rhetoric, casting Vietnam in the role of foreign invader. Unfortunately, the RLG did not enjoy the same access to the minority populations as the Lao communists because it had no control over the areas along the Lao-Vietnamese border where most minorities lived. This situation, coupled with a lack of genuine interest in, and understanding of, minorities by the Lao elite, were significant problems that the RLG never managed to overcome in its minorities policy (Halpern 1960:80-83; 1964a:91).[15]

Once the LPRP took power at the end of 1975 their republican nationalist rhetoric continued, but the socialist ideals which had been largely down-played throughout the war came to the fore. A few years before taking power, as their influence in the RLG zone spread, the LPRP adopted a pro-ethnic Lao line similar to that of the RLG in which they set themselves up as the guardian of traditional lowland Lao culture, promising to rid Laos of the corrupt RLG officials and the bad influences of the West, in particular the USA. A return to a more ethnically-based view of the nation was signalled here, although at first it would prove to be one that was subservient to international socialist culture. The rapid move towards socialism was begun with the implementation of the three revolutions, which were: 1) the relations of production; 2) science and technology; and 3) culture and ideology.

> Of the three, the first was the 'guide', in that it would form the economic base upon which Lao socialism would be constructed; the second was the 'key' to this transformation, since it would provide the transfer of technology necessary to by-pass capitalism and create a modern industrial economy; while the third was always to be a 'step ahead' of the other two, in forming Lao socialist men and women ideologically committed to socialism and thus bringing about the desired socialist transformation of Lao society and the Lao economy. (Stuart-Fox 1997:169)

It was the latter revolution that disrupted daily life in Laos for a number of years, as the Lao culture that the party had promised to protect came under attack. The monarchy was abolished, Buddhist monks were no longer permitted to go on their alms rounds, *bun* festivities were banned, the Lao language was reformed, and rituals connected to spirits, *phii* (ຜີ), and other superstitions outlawed. All of these changes were part of the ideological and cultural revolution which aimed to transform the population into the ideal of 'new socialist man' by controlling all aspects of everyday life.

Yet by all accounts, the socialist experiment in the Lao PDR largely failed. Most of the economic and social reforms implemented in the mid-1970s had been abandoned by the mid 1980s. Many of the changes made to Buddhist practices did not last. Similarly, the restrictions on *bun*, banning of private enterprise, and collectivisation of agriculture also proved to be short-lived. However, the government managed to retain political control over the *sangha*, or priesthood. The introduction of the New Economic Mechanism in 1986 marked the beginning of free-market reforms and the government's retreat from its control over people's daily lives. In the intervening years the underlying ethnic based view of the

Lao nation has gained strength particularly since the collapse of socialism in the early 1990s, after which the Lao government has sought to maintain its legitimacy to govern by once again casting itself in the role of protector of traditional Lao culture (cf. Evans 1998). Few observers have failed to spot the irony of a government that once attempted to create an international socialist culture with Lao characteristics is now promoting the virtues of traditional Lao culture without the socialist interpretations.

So what has this meant for the minorities? They have not fared terribly well in the new Lao PDR in spite of policy statements and announcements emanating from the LPRP and its numerous bodies. These inevitably refer to the equality and solidarity of all tribes and ethnic groups of Laos, something that Evans describes as a "leitmotif" of Vietnamese ethnography (1999a:163). Such statements exemplify the imagining of a "deep, horizontal comradeship" between members of a nation, however, the Lao government has found it difficult to instil a sense of an imagined community into its ethnically diverse population, especially with the added burdens of war, poverty, isolation, low education standards and poor communications infrastructure. Furthermore, there appears to be little will on the part of the government to put its rhetoric into practice.

A good example of this lack of integration is evident in the fact that the minorities' important role in the revolution has not been reflected in the party hierarchy. Faydang Lobliayao and Sithon Kommadam, two ethnic minority leaders in the PL who, after the creation of the Lao PDR, were declared 'heroes of the revolution', yet never gained places in the party central committee which has always been the preserve of the ethnic Lao (Stuart-Fox 1997:177). A decline in the number of minority group representatives in the higher levels of the Party hierarchy over the past decade has lead to a state apparatus that is dominated by ethnic Lao (Evans 1998:177). Other examples of the declining role of minorities in government planning and policy making can be seen in school texts which, in the early days of the new government, made frequent reference to how the minorities had aided, or were aided by the revolution but which now increasingly project a lowland Lao view of national culture (Evans 1998:164). Over the past decade the Lao government's minority policy has taken a more assimilationist approach, a shift exemplified in the policy to stop swidden agriculture, widely practiced by the minority groups, and relocate their villages away from the highland areas to the river valleys where the lowland Lao live.[16]

The exclusion of the minorities from the political dialogue is also reflected in other aspects of Lao life, especially cultural activities and the economy. Recent reports indicate

that the benefits of development and economic reforms have been heavily in favour of the Lao ethnic population, who are concentrated in the urban areas and fertile river valleys (Jerndal and Rigg 1999:45). The cultural dialogue in Laos has been almost exclusively conducted in terms of a lowland Lao culture and, until very recently, little genuine interest has been shown in the cultural materials of minority groups, despite their being show-cased at official functions and in tourist venues. However, rather than being genuine cultural materials of minority groups these are mostly show pieces, usually written, choreographed and performed by lowland Lao people (see Mahoney 1994; 1995; 1998). Although lowland Lao domination of 'national culture' is unlikely to be challenged in the near future, the commercial potential of ethnic diversity has recently been recognised by the Lao government and has begun to be actively promoted by the National Tourism Authority. This has resulted in some restored pride to the more marketable, "colourful" minorities (Evans 1999b:26), but the commercial exploitation of some minority cultures threatens to turn them into a commodity that is increasingly homogenised, reflecting the contrived representations of the past.

Traditional Lao Literature[17]

Traditional Lao literature exists as both a written and an oral tradition. Much of the Lao literary canon was composed from the 16th century onwards, following the decline of the kingdom of Lane Xang. Unlike many other Southeast Asian traditions, traditional Lao literature is the product of village culture, not of a royal court. Texts were originally written upon palm-leaves, *baj laan* (ໃບລານ), and bound together into a bundle, hence the name *nangsùù phuuk* (ໜັງສືພຸກ) 'bound book'. In traditional Lao society, monks, novices, and former monks were usually the only literate people in the village, therefore, public readings of literature were the primary means by which the literary canon was transmitted to the general population. These public readings formed the *aan nangsùù* tradition (lit. 'reading a book'); the tradition that is widely thought to be the origin of all Lao *khap-lam* genres.

The vast majority of traditional Lao literature is composed using a poetic form called *kòòn aan* (ກອນອ່ານ), (lit. 'poetry to be read', see Chapter 6 for more details); a name indicating that the poetry was intended to be read aloud to a listening audience and not read silently by individual readers. The *kòòn aan* form was adapted from the oral tradition of

phañaa (ພະຍາ), a rhyming, often riddle-like, verse formerly used by villagers in courting rituals. Although texts were written upon palm leaf manuscripts, the texts of the stories were by no means fixed. Instead, they were often modified by the monks and novices whose task it was to transcribe literature to new manuscripts as older copies wore out and decayed. Alteration of manuscripts during the transcription process was often unintentional, simple errors introduced by young, unskilled novices, but intentional changes were also made. Transcribers with extensive literary knowledge would alter sections that they felt could be improved, or repair errors introduced in previous transcriptions. In this way, different versions of the same story developed in different parts of Laos and northeast Thailand.

It is widely believed that the Lao literary canon is largely of Indic origin, however, the Indic stories are largely restricted to some fifty *pañña-jatakas*, which arrived in Laos via Cambodia around the time of Fa Ngeum, the 14th century founder of the Lao kingdom of Lane Xang. A continuity of plot exists between the Indian, Cambodian, and Lao versions of these particular tales, although in Laos they have been considerably reworked to suit the Lao worldview. However, the Lao version of the Ramayana, Pha Lak Pha Lam (ພະລັກພະລາມ), differs from the Indian tale in a number of crucial ways, most notably the omission of the motif in which the father banishes the hero at the instigation of the step-mother (Sahai 1996:49). In total the traditional Lao literary canon has five hundred jataka tales (stories of the previous incarnations of the Lord Buddha), fifty of which are the *pañña-jatakas* mentioned above, also known as the *haasip saat* (ຫ້າສິບຊາດ) 'fifty lives'. There are also a large number of apocryphal jatakas that are exclusive to the Lao literary canon. These blend folktales with religious elements and include the stories, *thaaw kam kaa dam* (ທ້າວກຳກາດຳ), *pha dèèng naang aaj* (ພະແດງນາງອາຍ), *sang sin saj* (ສັງສິນໄຊ), and *kalakêêt* (ກະລະເກດ), among others. Scenes from many of these Lao jatakas are incorporated into verses performed in *khap-lam* genres, and they are also the tales which formed the basis of the early *lam phùùn* tradition in which *mohlam* recited the tale over a series of evenings (Miller 1985a:40-42).

[1] The "thirty year struggle" refers to the period beginning with the Lao Issara (Free Lao), the forebear of the LPRP, movement's declaration of Laos' independence from Japan in 1945 and ending with the declaration of the Lao PDR in December 1975.

[2] A number of socialist structures and symbols remain. The organisation and power structures of the LPRP and Lao government have changed little since 1975. For example, the hammer and sickle emblem has been retained on the party's flag which is widely displayed throughout the country in the period leading up to national day on December 2nd each year.

[3] The Lao census of 1995 used the following five criteria to determine whether or not a village was classified as rural or urban. At least three of the five criteria must apply to a village for it to be classed as 'urban'. 1. There is a market in the village, 2. There is a road for motor vehicle access to the village, 3. The village must lie in the municipal vicinity where the district or provincial authority is located, 4. The majority of households in the village are electrified, 5. There is a tap water supply in service to the majority of households. (SPC 1997:16).

[4] It was in these three provinces that I conducted the bulk of my field research.

[5] This is a term coined by the Lao government as a reaction to perceived bias towards a Thai interpretation of the Tai language family. Lao belongs to the south-western branch of the Tai-Kadai family.

[6] Evans points out that the tripartite terms have not been used in official documents since the beginning of the 1990s. They have been replaced by statements which refer Laos' multi-ethnic status with the Lao-Tai ethnicity as its implicit or explicit core (Evans 1999a:180).

[7] The 1995 Lao census gave a list of forty-seven groups plus a category for 'others'. Ten thousand people or 0.2 of the total population were listed in this last group.

[8] Evans recently used a similar sub-title (Who are the Lao?) in the introduction to his 1999 book *Laos: Culture and Society* (Evans 1999b). That introduction is cited extensively in this section, because it provides the most thoroughly researched and contemporary views on issues of ethnicity and nationalism in Laos currently available.

[9] While the Lao-Tai is a label ostensibly assigned according to linguistic criteria, it is also a political designation designed to counter perceptions of Thai (not Tai) dominance. In Thailand the terms Thai-Lao or Tai-Lao are often used.

[10] The *basi* (ບາສີ) or *suu khuan* (ສູ່ຂວັນ) is a common Lao ceremony in which the essential energies of the body, *khuan*, are called back to the person. The ceremony finishes with the tying of threads of white cotton around the wrists.

[11] The incorporation of local beliefs into the large religions of Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity is a world-wide phenomenon and by no means unique to Laos or Southeast Asia.

[12] For example, the Phu Thai language is primarily distinguished from Lao by its tonal patterns and its lack of diphthongs whereas many other minority Tai languages of the south-western branch (including Lue) are further distinguished by their lack of aspirated stop consonants (Edmonson and Solnit 1997:12).

[13] Field Marshall Phibun Songkhram is without doubt the most notorious prime minister of Thailand. His two premiership terms were remarkable for a number of social engineering programs.

[14] The liberated zone covered most of the eastern regions of Laos from north to south that were adjacent to the Vietnamese border. The royalist zone was mostly restricted to the Mekong river valley.

[15] Evans (1998:148) provides a counterview noting that the RLG were more sympathetic to minority issues than has been assumed.

[16] These policies/practices have been criticised, as relocated groups are often given poor quality land in undesirable locations. Other concerns centre upon the inability of some minority groups to participate in the lowland economy (International Rivers Network 1999).

[17] This brief overview of traditional Lao literature is largely a summary of several works by Peter Koret (1996; 1994b; 1999).

Chapter 3
LAO KHAP-LAM VOCAL MUSIC

With the complex issue of ethnicity in Laos now explained in some detail and the question 'whose music?' having been posed and answered, this chapter provides an overview of the genres which make up the *khap-lam* vocal music tradition. Firstly, in order to clarify possible misconceptions that may have arisen from conflicting data in other studies, two fundamental terms, *khap-lam* and *mohlam*, are considered and their meaning defined for the rest of this study. A basic paradigm showing the relationships between primary components of the *khap-lam* tradition and its various genres is then proposed before moving on to a discussion of classification issues, which includes a summary of the northern and southern genres within the *khap-lam* tradition. A section on the Lao free-reed mouth organ, the *khaen*, covers the basic musical structures found in *khap-lam*, explaining the instrument's fundamental features and analysing its role in contemporary conceptualisations of Lao culture. The chapter concludes by expanding the paradigm presented earlier in the chapter to include a new concept: the Lao cultural platform, which is a collection of cultural possessions upon which the four primary components of the Lao *khap-lam* tradition are based.

What is *khap-lam*? Terminology, Definitions and Concepts

The term *khap-lam* is currently used in Laos to denote genres of traditional vocal music characterised by extemporaneous singing, usually in repartee form, between a male and female performer, although solo performance sometimes occurs. The compound *khap-lam*[1] is created by combining two separate words whose meanings are parallel; thus both words, *khap* and *lam*, mean "a song (sung in a particular verse form where the word tones generate the melody)".[2] The song type denoted by *khap* and *lam* has also been described as "antiphonal chanting" (Hartmann 1992:33), and "a synthesis of extemporaneous poetry, folk music, and dance" (Compton 1974; 1979:94). Miller claims that the extemporaneous nature of *khap-lam* genres is an aspect which is over-emphasised by many casual observers of genres in northeast Thailand (Miller 1985a:101). However, he does acknowledge that texts are improvised by accomplished *mohlam* in Laos (Miller 1998a:342).[3]

A number of homonyms exist for both *khap* and *lam*. However, these will not be discussed here, as Miller (1985a:22-24) has already examined them in some detail.

Origins of the term khap-lam

The words *khap* and *lam* occur in numerous languages and dialects of the south-western branch of the Tai language family. Appearing in all the languages of the south-western branch, *khap* is quite widespread. In contrast, *lam* is more restricted in its distribution, perhaps originally limited to Lao dialects in southern Laos and northeast Thailand (Li 1977:195). Both words are often combined to give *khap-lam*, a compound word in which the two elements have essentially the same meaning. Noun-noun and verb-verb compounding strategies are ubiquitous throughout the Lao language. Lao also has other types of word-compounds, some of which join a number of verbs or nouns together, usually with a rhyming second and third syllable in a series, creating an "elaborate expression" (Chapman 1996:21-22; Roffe 1975).[4] For example, a frequently heard expression is *tham maa haa kin* (ທຳມາຫາກິນ) 'to go out and earn a living', is made up of the verbs 'to do, to come, to seek, to eat'. Parallel compounds with rhyming syllables are a distinctive feature of Lao literature, spoken Lao, and the sung texts of *khap-lam*. These features have been the subject of previous descriptions and analysis by several scholars (Koret 1994a; Compton 1979)(see Appendix 1 for more examples).

In Lao, as in English, many words are able to function as both verbs and nominals, although an individual item will usually appear in one role more frequently than the other.[5] Both *khap* and *lam* have this dual function; as verbs they mean "to sing (a song of a particular verse form in which word tones generate the melody)", while as nominals they denote the song type itself. Since the two meanings are clearly related, it is likely that one usage developed before the other, although it is unclear which one came first. As nominals, *khap* and *lam* most often appear before the name of a genre, with *khap* generally denoting genres from the northern regions of Laos, and *lam* most often referring to the genres of southern Laos. The compound *khap-lam*, as used by the MIC and other government offices, tends to have a collective meaning: the traditional vocal music genres of all the regions, and by extension all ethnic groups, of Laos. This notion of a collective folk music tradition goes hand-in-hand with the Lao government's image of Laos as a harmonious multi-ethnic nation sharing diverse yet somehow unifying traditions, as discussed in the previous chapter. In this sense the term *khap-lam* is probably a by-product of recent government policy (see the section on classification issues below).

The Thai scholar Jarernchai Chonpairot has suggested that an old Thai compound term, *khap-lam-nam* 'to sing'[6] may have been shortened to produce both terms, *khap* and

lam, one used in the north of Laos, and the other in northeast Thailand and southern Laos (Miller 1998a:340). This view is arguably Thai-centric, as it presumes the words originate in the Thai language rather than being common to Tai languages in general; moreover it provides no explanation as to why *khap* is used in the Tai speaking Lue groups of Yunnan province in China, an area in which there has been virtually no Thai influence and where the word *lam* is unknown (Davis 1999 & personal communication 10/10/99). The fact that both *khap* and *lam* are common to Tai languages of the south-western branch, albeit with uneven regional distribution, explains why they are found in the vocabulary of the minority Tai groups in northern Laos and into China and Vietnam, but not in the vocabulary of non-Tai groups such as the Khmu and the Hmong,[7] who inhabit the same areas. This lack of a common term for vocal music across disparate ethnic groups is further evidence that the use of *khap-lam* as a blanket term for all traditional vocal music in Laos appears to be an imposition by a government interpreting cultures from an ethnic Lao perspective.

During my field research in Laos I noticed that although the term *khap-lam* was frequently employed in all official documents and publications originating from various departments within the Lao Ministry of Information and Culture (MIC): Fine Arts, Literature and Mass Culture, and the Institute for Cultural Research (cf. Houmphanh 1992a), the term was not always immediately understood by members of the general public. However, the performers who participated in the study had no difficulty understanding the collective term *khap-lam*, presumably because most of them have had some involvement with the MIC at some stage of their careers. As a result I began to wonder about this label, what its origins might be, and whether it might be a recent invention or reinterpretation of an existing term. The first sources I looked at were Lao language publications both old and new.

Two recent publications on *khap-lam* genres written and published by the scholars from the MIC's Department of Literature and Mass Culture have addressed the issue of how *khap* and *lam* differ. They provide a number of clues as to how to answer this question. Both works concluded that the two words really mean the same thing, with one form, *khap*, found in northern dialects and the other, *lam*, found in southern dialects (Thongkham 1998:43; Kavin 1997:2-3). That the authors of these publications felt the need to explain these terms to their Lao readers suggests that the term *khap-lam* and its application to a broader context has been a source of confusion for some people, perhaps even scholars within the MIC itself. In examining two pre-1975 Lao grammars by Sila

Viravong and Phoumi Vongvichit which have sections dealing with *khap* and *lam*, I was unable to find the compound *khap-lam* (Sila 1961; Phoumi 1991). Subsequently I turned to a number of dictionaries published between 1912 and 1992. As a compound form, *khap-lam* does not appear in a well-regarded Lao-English dictionary (Kerr 1992), Preecha's Isan-Thai-English dictionary (1989), nor in a Lao language dictionary (Thongkham 1992). It is listed in an older Lao-French dictionary where *khap-lam* is defined as the verb *chanter* 'to sing' (Reinhorn 1970:227), although this dictionary appears to be largely an update of an earlier publication from the early 20th century in which *khap-lam* is also listed (Guignard 1912:291, 395). Finally, a recent Thai dictionary lists the Thai compound *khap-lam-nam*, categorising it as a verb (Ramkhamhaeng 1991:81). The similarity between this definition of *khap-lam* and Reinhorn's is strong; however, the Thai dictionary breaks the compound down into *khap* and *lam-nam* and gives separate listings for both with the latter listed as a nominal only (Ramkhamhaeng 1991:470). It should be noted that the term *lam*, meaning 'to sing' in Central Thai, is no longer in general use. This is reflected in the mistake often made by Thais when they equate Lao *lam* as Thai *ram*, meaning 'to dance'. This can easily occur as the word initial phonemes /l/ and /r/ are in free variation in colloquial Thai.

The writings of Western scholars have, to date, made no reference to the compound *khap-lam*. Compton's work on *lam siphandon* (1979) mentions *khap* in reference to northern genres but not the compound *khap-lam*, while more recently Miller appears to have mistaken *khap-lam* as a separate genre from southern and central Laos (Miller 1998a:351). Hartmann (1992) has briefly discussed the term *khap*, noting its occurrence across many Tai languages, particularly those spoken in the northern areas of Laos and Vietnam and Yunnan province of China, but he fails to mention the compound of the two words. The absence of *khap-lam* in this broad sense from all but the most recent Lao publications on vocal music adds further weight to the suggestion that its present usage could well be a recent reinterpretation of an older form.

Mohlam: Genre? Doctor of dance? Expert in lam?

Throughout this thesis the label *mohlam*[8] is used to denote performers skilled in the art of *khap-lam* repartee singing. *Mohlam* is a non-parallel compound word combining *moh* (ໝໍ), 'person skilled in X' and *lam* (ລຳ), 'sung poetry (in which the melody is determined by the word tones)'. These two words are combined to give the compound

mohlam, which means 'a person skilled in the art of *lam* (singing)'. *Mohlam* may also be used as a title by which to refer to individual performers, for example we may refer to *mohlam* Som Sii, *mohlam* Duang Phaeng, and so on. In the northern traditions singers can be referred to as *mohkhap*, however, performers of the *khap ngeum* tradition usually describe themselves as *mohlam*. Further north, the situation may be different.

Apart from the above meaning, the term *mohlam* has also been used as a kind of catch-all term meaning *khap-lam* vocal music genres, as the following definition indicates:

> The term *mohlam* is usually used separately on its own to describe the sung poetry found in Lao villages in central and southern Laos. (Bond and Kingsavanh 1992:132)

This manner of using *mohlam* to refer to the singing itself is described by Miller (1985a:35) as "a grammatical impropriety" perpetuated by Westerners, although the title of the work in which this comment appeared, *Kaen playing and mawlum singing in Northeast Thailand*, and its text, exemplify this usage. We find that a Lao writer, Kingsavanh also employs the generic meaning (in the above quotation), indicating that it is not necessarily restricted to Westerners. My own personal experiences in both Laos and northeast Thailand, however, have found that this secondary meaning is now commonly used by the ethnic Lao population in northeastern Thailand but not in Laos, where *mohlam* refers only to individual singers. It is possible that Kingsavanh's co-author Katherine Bond is responsible for the use of this term, or that his usage is a remnant of terminology used before 1975 when performers from northeastern Thailand were present in Laos.

Mohlam in the generic sense was certainly used in Laos, by Westerners at least, during the 1960s and 1970s. This was possibly due to the presence of the United States Information Service's (USIS) *mohlam* program, which employed *mohlam* from northeast Thailand (Miller 1985a:56-57). This resulted in the musical terminology from northeast Thailand becoming familiar at the time among the Western ex-patriot community, who then applied it to what they saw and heard in Laos (Compton 1979:103; Recchi 1968). A range of pre-1975 articles employed *mohlam* in its generic form, including Carol Compton's, *Mohlam: The Folksingers of Laos* (Compton 1974:11), and a USIS paper entitled *Mohlam* (Recchi 1968). Compton's terminology in the 1974 article may have been the result of previous experience in northeast Thailand, because her subsequent publications do not use *mohlam* in the generic sense at all; they only use it in reference to the singers themselves (Compton 1975; 1979; 1992a). More recently, Hartman (1992) in a

paper on *khap lue*, a minority Tai group, uses *mohlam* to refer to southern Lao genres, although he appears either to have taken the label from Compton's work, or from his own experiences in northeast Thailand.

The origins of *mohlam* as a generic term are unclear; it may be the result of Westerners' misinterpretations of the term, or it may have evolved in northeast Thailand. It does, however, provide an example of the seemingly minor, but often important, differences in terminology between Laos and the provinces of northeast Thailand. These differences are beautifully illustrated by a common, often joking, mistranslation (into English) of *mohlam* as 'doctor of dance' that is sometimes heard in northeast Thailand. This translation arises from the Central Thai word *ram* meaning 'to dance', which is colloquially pronounced *lam* by the Thai.[9] The joke is possible because in northeast Thailand, unlike Laos, Central Thai is widely spoken; and its lexicon is becoming increasingly incorporated into the Lao dialects of northeastern Thailand as a result of the mass media and the centralised education system (Smalley 1994:90). Consequently, north-easterners are as familiar with Central Thai *ram* as they are with their own Lao form *fòòn* (ฟ้อน) 'to dance'. This pun, however, fails to find its mark in Laos because Central Thai, although widely understood, does not have the same importance in everyday life for the Lao.[10]

A similar state of affairs is found in the Lao and Thai term used to mean 'Westerner', *falang* (ฝะลั่ง). In Lao this term has only one meaning, 'Westerner', but in Central Thai it has two, 'Westerner' and 'guava'. In Lao the word for 'guava' is *maak siidaa* (ໝາກສີດາ), which has a variant in northeast Thailand, *bak siidaa*. North-easterners often employ the Lao word for 'guava' as a joking reference to Westerners, but once again the joke is largely lost upon the Lao, who do not share the same associations in spite of their exposure to Central Thai. These examples indicate that the radically different social, political and economic environments of Laos and northeast Thailand, since 1975 in particular, have had a significant impact upon the way that the Lao people in the two nations conceptualise their language and their culture.

Origins of the khap-lam genres

Historical documentation concerning any aspect of Lao music is either rare or non-existent. Chinese-like court decrees on tuning do not exist, nor are there extensive written

or oral theoretical treatises similar to those found in some Indian traditions. Were such documents to be found, they would most likely refer to the classical music tradition[11] that existed in Luang Phrabang and Vientiane rather than the rural folk music of *khap-lam*. Origin theories for musical instruments in oral traditions "are not only unprovable but can be intellectually arid and sometimes even misleading" (Kartomi 2001:298). This comment is equally pertinent to this issue. Rather than attempting to piece together an uncertain history, the following section examines accounts of Lao performers and scholars concerning the origins and development of *khap-lam* genres.

Although the Lao living in both Laos and northeast Thailand region have a consistent and widespread story telling the origins of the *khaen* (see Miller 1985a:217-218), I am yet to hear of any similar legend telling the origins of *khap-lam* singing. Of course, this does not necessarily mean one does not exist. It is, however, widely accepted that the art of *khap-lam* developed from a form of entertainment called *aan nangsùù* (ອ่านหนังสือ), 'reading a book', in which tales from traditional Lao literature were read aloud to an audience (Miller 1985a:27; Koret 1999:230; Thongkham 1998:21; Phosikaew and Bunteu 1991:9).[12] The readers were educated males, usually monks or former monks since they were the only literate people in the village able to interpret texts as well as read them. Performances of *aan nangsùù* took place during *bun* which were held to celebrate important dates on the Buddhist calendar, weddings, funerals, and other milestones in people's daily lives, many of the same socio-religious contexts in which *khap-lam* performances are held today.

Possibly the oldest *lam* genre, *lam phùùn* (ลำผื้น), which was popular in northeast Thailand during the first half of the 20th century but is now extinct, had a "close and significant" relationship with *aan nangsùù*, because performers utilised the same tales from traditional Lao literature (Miller 1985a:40-41). This literary link remains today, as *mohlam* from all genres refer to episodes from traditional literature at certain times during performance and compose many of their texts using the same poetic structures (see chapters 6 and 7). Directly related to traditional Lao literature is the oral tradition of *phañaa* (ผะหยา). These short poems formed the basis of courting rituals in the past and are the most likely origin of the male-female repartee format that typifies *khap-lam* performance today. Lao *phañaa* were short riddles posed by one party, who required the other to invent, or know, an appropriate rejoinder. Much *phañaa* was formulaic and

probably learned by rote by the majority of the population; however, it is closely related both in content and structure to the poetry which characterises traditional Lao literature (Koret 2000:218-219).

Although Lao authors, Kavin (1997:13), Thongkham (1998), and Phosikaew (1991), agree with Koret (1999:230) that *khap-lam* in its current *khaen*-accompanied, male-female repartee form is largely a development of the 20th century, several historical documents indicate that some form of *khaen*-accompanied Lao vocal music was known at least as far back as the second half of the 19th century. Two documents come from central Thailand, written during the fourth reign of the current Chakri dynasty (Miller 1985a:38-39; Thongkham 1998:29). The first document, from the *Chronicles of the Fourth Reign*, describes the activities of King Mongkut's (Rama IV) brother, Prince Chutamani, who was accomplished at playing the *khaen* and who "could skilfully perform the Laotian comedy-singing known as *aew*" (Miller 1985a:38). The second document is a royal decree by King Mongkut upon his brother's death in 1865, banning performances of Lao music which had grown very popular at the time, no doubt partly due to his brother's efforts.

Lao music arrived in Central Thailand together with large numbers of ethnically Lao people who had been forced to migrate from Lao areas following successive Siamese sackings of Vientiane in the late 18th and early 19th centuries (see Stuart-Fox 1997:14-15). The migrants carried their language and culture with them. Lao communities whose origins can be traced to these migrations may be found today in Nakon Pathom province, close to Bangkok. Two decades after Mongkut's decree of 1865, French explorer Francis Garnier recorded his encounter with *khaen*-accompanied singing in southern Laos; his description, reproduced in chapter 4, identifies some performance practices similar to those occurring in Laos today (Garnier 1996a:208). Other evidence beyond these few documents remains to be discovered, but the few that do exist indicate that *khap-lam* in one form or another has a history that is at least 150 years old.

Lao *khap-lam* Genres: Classification Issues

Classification Criteria

The first attempt by a Western scholar to understand Lao classifications of *khap-lam* genres was by Carol Compton, who examined four criteria: geographical area, thematic content, number of performers, and poetic form (Compton 1974; 1979). The

problem with these criteria, as Compton found, is that the resulting categories have too much overlap. A performance of *lam siphandon* for example, can also be categorised as *lam kiaw* (ลำเกี้ยว) 'courting *lam*', if the participants are singing verses about love; *lam khuu* (ลำคู่) 'paired *lam*' (i.e. two singers) if a male and a female *mohlam* perform it; and/or *lam tat*[13] (ลำตัด) (i.e. *lam* using *tat* form poetry), if the *mohlam* are utilising that particular poetic form. Compton, however, overlooked the key to unlocking this apparent classificatory conundrum, namely the musical genre. The melodic and the rhythmic patterns of both musical accompaniment and sung melody are the primary distinguishing elements of *khap-lam* genres (see chapter 6). Although individual stylistic variations within genres exist, each genre remains readily identifiable through the presence of musical motifs and structures adhered to by all performers (Miller 1998a:340; 2000:259). The geographic names for each of the Lao *khap-lam* genres are conterminous with their discreet musical characteristics. Individual verses, performances or part-performances *within* each of these genres may then be sub-categorised according to poetic form, thematic content, or the number of performers.[14]

An excellent illustration of the fact that musical features are the primary mode of classification may be found in a review essay (Miller and Jarernchai 1980:132) which discusses a French-produced compilation entitled *Laos: Traditional Music of the South* (Brunet 1973). The reviewers note that a recording cited as *lam siphandon* in this record's liner notes is not *lam siphandon* at all, but rather a combination of two Lao genres from northeast Thailand, *lam thang ñaaw* (ลำทางยาว) and the theatrically derived *lam teej* (ลำเต้ย).[15] A listener familiar with Lao *khap-lam* genres can immediately recognise that the piece is not *lam siphandon*. However, the same piece could also be classified as a *lam kiaw* (ลำเกี้ยว courting *lam*) performance in *lam khuu* format, regardless of whether it is *lam siphandon* or not. The four criteria identified by Compton, then, are clearly not of equal importance, only one of them serves to classify musical genres within the broader *khap-lam* tradition, while the other three detail variations in domains common to all *khap-lam* genres; the thematic, structural and performative. The four criteria are, in fact, directly related to the four common components of *khap-lam* identified in chapter 1: music (geographical area), text (poetic form), performance context (thematic content), and performance practice (number of performers).

Before moving on to discuss the regional *khap-lam* genres, I propose a basic paradigm (see Figure 3-1 below) to explain the relationships between regional genres of the broader *khap-lam* tradition. The paradigm is based upon the above criteria and the four primary components of the broad *khap-lam* traditions, identified in chapter 1 (music, text

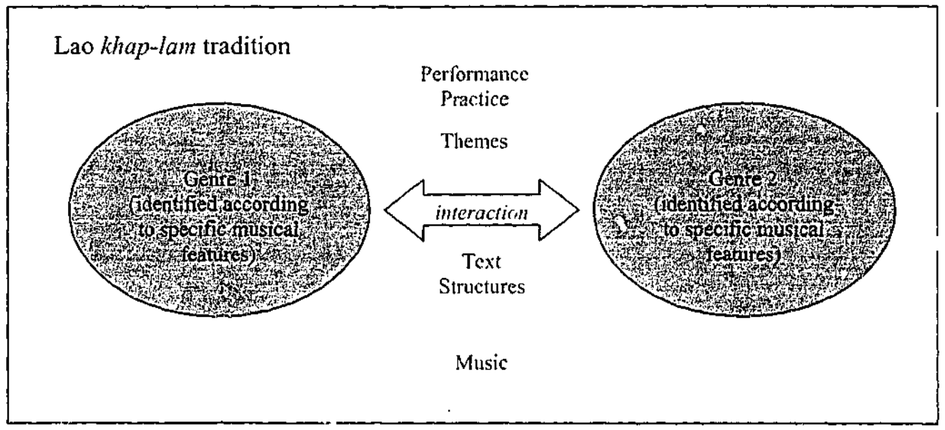


Figure 3-1: Genres and the four primary components of *khap-lam*

structures, themes, and performance practice). The rectangle represents what I call the broader Lao *khap-lam* tradition within which a number of discreet musical genres exist. Each of the genres is based upon the four primary components, listed in the middle of the rectangle. Here I follow Alan Dundes' definition of tradition as things which "exist in multiple versions and in more than one time or place" (Sweeney 1987:10). Genres, represented by the ovals (only two are shown but there are many more), are primarily distinguished from one another by discrete musical features. Other differences also occur across the other three primary components; performance practice, themes, and text structures. In spite of these differences the four primary components are the elements by which *khap-lam* genres can be distinguished from other traditional musics in Laos. Genres within the *khap-lam* tradition may also interact with one another, a process facilitated by factors such as geographic proximity, political agendas, mass media, travel by performers and so on.

Lao performers and scholars use slightly different terminology to describe the broad concepts used in the above paradigm. Instead of 'genre', regional varieties of *khap-lam* are generally referred to as *paphêêt* (ປະເພດ) 'kind, sort, variety' and what I term the broad *khap-lam* tradition has approximate equivalents in the terms *khap-lam laaw* (ຂັບລຳລາວ) or

vannakhadi khap-lam (ວັນນະຄະດີຂັບລຳ) '*khap-lam* literature'. This latter term, incorporating *vannakhadi* 'literature', makes explicit the close connection *khap-lam* genres have to Lao literature and the importance that Lao scholars and performers attach to this connection. However, the official Lao concept of *khap-lam* also includes minority music which is explicitly excluded from the above paradigm for reasons made clear in the following discussion.

Genres: Type and Number

The exact number of *khap-lam* genres in Laos today has not been properly assessed, largely due to the confusion as to where the ethnic demarcation point for *khap-lam* should lie. Recent Western publications have estimated the number of ethnic Lao *khap-lam* genres at eleven (Miller 1980a) or "at least twelve" (Miller 1998a), although in the latter count Miller actually names thirteen. Lao scholars, Thongkham and Kavin also list many of the same genres, but include genres belonging to non-Tai and minority Tai ethnic groups which they name using the Lao prefix *khap* (*khap mong*, *khap teem*, *khap lue* and so on) largely because these non-Lao genres occur in northern Laos. The Lao proclivity to include minority musics has led Houmphanh Rattanavong, the head of the Institute for Cultural Research, to give a rather high estimation of the number of *khap-lam* genres when he speculates that if all forty plus ethnic groups have "five to six types of *khap-lam* sung poetry, we would calculate between 200-250 types" (Houmphanh 1992a:196).

Of the thirteen regional genres listed in Miller (1998a:341), nine take their name after a geographical location in Laos: *khap ngeum* (after the Nam Ngeum ນ້ຳງື່ມ, a river); *lam tang vaay*, *lam ban xok* (after villages in Savannakhet province); *lam khon savan*, *lam salavan*, *lam mahaxay*, *khap thum luang phrabang*, *khap sam neua* (after towns or provinces); and *lam siphandon* (after a large wetland area, formerly a province). Three genres take their name from the ethnic minority group of their purported origin: *lam phu thai*, *khap phuan*, and *khap thai dam*, while only one, *lam som*, is named after the inventor of the genre.[16] Genres named after ethnic groups are equivalent to those with geographic names because they indicate a discrete musical genre, rather than variations in theme, number of performers, or textual structure. The genre of *khap phuan* may also be referred to as *khap xieng khouang* since Xieng Khouang province is home to a large number of the Phuan ethnic group, a minority Tai group.[17]

The three genres named after ethnic minority groups are not equivalent to one another since two, *lam phu thai* and *khap phuan*, are not really genres belonging to the ethnic groups whose name they bear, but are instead sung in Lao dialects by lowland Lao performers. These two genres have also entered the repertoire of popular Lao performers and have been given modern arrangements which are available on commercial cassette recordings sold in the markets and shops around Laos. The third genre, included by Miller in his most recent surveys (1998a; 2000), *khap thai dam*, is a genuine minority Tai genre not performed by lowland Lao *mohlam*. Its inclusion in Miller's list, however, is somewhat incongruous since other significant tribal Tai genres such as *khap lue*, belonging to the Tai Lue group who are more culturally similar to the lowland Lao than the Thai Dam, were omitted.

Although an examination of the music genres belonging to ethnic minorities in Laos is beyond the scope of this thesis, the reader should bear in mind that in spite of various Lao governments' inability to improve the general understanding of ethnic minorities, there has, nevertheless, been extensive and prolonged contact between the Lao and some ethnic minority groups. Musical evidence of such contact may exist, especially in the regional genres of Savannakhet where several genres that are now part of the repertoire of the lowland Lao are thought to have their origins in the music of Mon-Khmer speaking groups (*lam tang vaay* ລຳຕັ້ງຫວາຍ) or minority Tai groups (*lam phu thai* ລຳຜູ້ໄທ) (Miller 1998a:345). These genres are best thought of as Lao creations sung "in the style of" the *phu thai* and so on, rather than genuine minority music (Miller 1998a:346).

As noted above, Lao scholars tend to take a broad view of the Lao *khap-lam* tradition and include numerous non-Tai and minority Tai genres in their count (Thongkham 1998; Kavin 1997). This approach seems inappropriate when viewed from a social and cultural standpoint but makes sense from a Lao political perspective which attempts to define a national Lao culture from a multi-ethnic cultural landscape. Culturally, non-Tai vocal music genres have little in common with Lao *khap-lam*, as they are sung using language-specific poetic constructions and performed in very different social and religious contexts (see Uchida and Catlin 1998:556-559). The vocal music of minority Tai groups, however, is more difficult to assess because these groups do share cultural and linguistic similarities with the lowland Lao. Hartmann's work on *khap lue*, for example, provides evidence that Lue poetry uses a structure known as *haaj*; a structure common to both Thai and Lao as well as the broader Tai language community (Hartmann 1992:38); an

observation supported by the work of Koret (2000: 211). Koret, however, also notes that the literature of the Lue and other related neighbouring traditions are separated from Lao literature by "certain characteristics, tendencies, and preferences" including performance context/conventions, scripts used, *kòòn aan* structures, specific stories or versions of stories, and thematic content (Koret 2000:251). These differences of textual structures and themes are accompanied by musical differences, such as those noted by Miller in his assessment of *khap tai dam*, which he says is musically "most different in style from any Lao style" (Miller 1998a:349). Researchers should therefore conclude that minority Tai genres should not be categorised as Lao *khap-lam* until they have been fully assessed on their own merits. One way of achieving this is to utilise the paradigm that is set out at the end of this chapter.

The fundamental principle of this approach is that it is wise to avoid implicit assumptions of underlying norms of language and culture simply because a number of similarities in vocabulary or literary conventions are visible (cf. Enfield and Evans 1998:8). Trankell (1998:51) has illustrated that in many instances minority Tai groups observe religious and cultural practices quite different from those of the lowland Lao. Lao authors, while glossing over many cultural differences are at least aware that discrepancies exist between Lao and the languages of the non-Tai and minority Tai groups as the following passage shows:

> As for *khap lao sung*, *khap tai meey*, *khap tai lai*, *khap tai lue*, and *khap thai dam*, these groups all prefer to use the poetry in each of their own languages; and the poems of the various minorities have their own principles of composition according to the features and characteristics of their languages. (Thongkham 1998:48)(my translation)[18]

In addition to political motivations it seems most likely that Lao scholars also classify non-Tai and tribal Tai vocal genres as *khap-lam* due to their perceived similarities with Lao genres, since many performance formats and content combinations are similar to those of Lao music. For example, male-female repartee utilising topics of love, courtship and legendary stories are evident in the music of the Hmong, Shan, and Akha to name a few (Catlin 1986; Uchida and Catlin 1998). *Khap-lam* may be used simply because there is no other label that does the job as adequately, however, I believe that the motivation is equally political. Many of the perceived similarities between the vocal music traditions of ethnic groups within Laos are not restricted to Laos, but exemplify parallel features common to oral traditions throughout the mainland and insular Southeast Asia. The political motivation

for classifying all indigenous vocal music in Laos as *khap-lam* locates these diverse minorities within the cultural and political imagining of the lowland Lao whereby similarities are emphasised and differences reduced.

Southern and Northern Genres

Lao and Western scholars distinguish between northern and southern genres on the basis of whether they are prefixed with *khap* (northern genres) or *lam* (southern genres). Miller has remarked that Lao scholars believe the distinction between *khap* and *lam* was in the type of poetry used; *lam* with seven syllables per line, *khap* with only four or five, however, he does not name any of these scholars nor does he provide a reference (Miller 1998a:340). In contrast, at least one Lao scholar, Kavin Kiangkhamsony, has written that there is little difference between *khap* and *lam* as far as poetic structure is concerned and that all forms of *khap* and *lam* are based upon old courting poems known as *kòòn phañaa* (ກອນພະຍາ) 'philosophy verses', that have been adapted and modified by numerous *mohlam* over the years. Audible differences arise between regional genres because of the variable prosaic features of the various Lao dialects, which has a major effect upon the tones produced and the choice of some lexical items, however, there appears to be little overall variation in the structure of the texts themselves:

> ...both *mohkhap* and *mohlam* are able to take a *phañaa* poem and sing it. A *mohkhap* from the northern region is thus able to take a southern *mohlam's* verses and sing them comfortably; a *mohlam* from the south is able to take a northern *mohkhap's* verses and likewise sing them comfortably, it is only different in its regional accent. (Kavin 1997:3)[19]

This point of view was likewise confirmed in discussions with *mohlam* from the Vientiane and Pakse regions in which leading performers Acaan Som, Duang Phaeng, and Acaan Vanna stated that *phañaa* was the primary foundation for all *khap-lam* poetry. They further noted that the poetry is transferable from one genre to another with only minimal structural modification required. The analysis of syllabic structures in *khap-lam* texts presented later in chapter 7 concurs with these viewpoints. Their comments, however, do not mention that there are slightly different textual composition strategies between *lam siphandon* and *khap ngeum*.

Southern genres begin at the southern border of Laos in the area known as Siphandon where the Mekong river splits into delta-like wetlands, creating a vast number of islands of different sizes before converging again at the Lao-Cambodian border after a

series of impressive rapids. The genres of *lam siphandon* and *lam som* are said to have originated here, and although the islands are still home to a number of *mohlam*, others hail from districts all over Champassak province, many of whom have moved to the provincial centre at Pakse. The *lam siphandon* and *lam som* genres, are often referred to by southerners as simply *lam taj*, (ລຳໃຕ້) 'southern *lam*', a local classification which excludes vocal music genres from Salavan and Savannakhet which are usually classed as southern genres by most Lao and Western observers. These two genres are accompanied by the *khaen* only and are described in detail in chapters 5 and 6.

Northeast of Pakse lies the provincial centre of Salavan, although the province itself straddles the width of Laos from the Thai border along the Mekong to the Annamite mountain chain that marks a physical as well as political border with Vietnam. Salavan is home to the genre *lam salavan* which may have originated in the music of the Mon-Khmer groups that inhabit the province (Miller 1998a:344), and its performers today are a mixture of Mon-Khmer minority people and lowland Lao. *Lam salavan* differs from other southern genres in that it is normally accompanied by the smaller of the two commonly-used *khaen*, which has seven pairs of pipes rather than the eight pairs typical of *lam siphandon* (see the section on the *khaen* below). In addition to the *khaen*, southern ensembles in Salavan and Savannakhet may incorporate a drum, a small three-stringed lute called a *kacappii* (ກະຈັບປີ),[20] and a two stringed fiddle known as *sòò* (ຊໍ).[21]

Although Salavan is only a three hour trip away from Pakse along a good road, the difference in economic development of the two areas is dramatic, with Salavan noticeably poorer and relatively neglected in terms of infrastructure and economic development. Consequently there are fewer people in Salavan with the resources to stage an all-night function at which *mohlam* might perform. This means that professionalism among performers of the genre has not been able to develop like it has in Pakse, Savannakhet and Vientiane. To my, admittedly limited, knowledge the only local musicians who have regular employment as performers are those working in the local division of the Ministry of Information and Culture.

Further north along the banks of the Mekong is the province and urban centre of Savannakhet which, according to Phosikaew (1991), is home to four genres of *khap-lam*: *lam khon savan*, *lam ban xok*, *lam tang vaay* and *lam phu thai*. Of these genres *lam khon savan* is the most widely-known and is most frequently performed with *lam ban xok*; a

genre that is a possible predecessor of *lam khon savan* or perhaps a genre that has been derived from it (Miller 1998a:345). As noted earlier, the latter two genres are purported to have entered the lowland Lao repertoire from the music of minority groups in the province, and are now performed in the Lao language using Lao poetic forms, although a few words from minority languages are often included in the text. The extent to which these four genres might be alternated with one another throughout a single all-night performance has not yet been explored and would make an excellent topic for a future study.

A little further north of Savannakhet is the province of Khammouan, home to *lam mahaxay*, a genre named after the town and district of Mahaxay that lies to the east of Tha Khaek, the provincial centre. This genre has similar accompaniment patterns to *lam khon savan* and is distinguished by the vocal line in which each phrase ends with a scalar descent to the finalis (Miller 1998a:346). No information is available concerning the number and ranges of ability of contemporary performers or the degree of professionalism amongst them. I am aware that several performers live close to the provincial centre of Tha Khaek.

All of the southern genres named above, with the exception of *lam siphandon* and *lam som*, are often accompanied by a small ensemble consisting of *khaen*, *kacappi*, *sòò* and *kòòng* 'drum', although in the *bun* context I have only ever seen solo *khaen* accompaniment to which an audience member might add with a drum or cymbals at intervals. Miller (1998a:351) also notes that *lam siphandon* and *lam som* are further distinguished by their melodic contours as the only southern genres not exhibiting a descending contour. These musical differences and the Champassak dialect are most likely the features that *lam siphandon* performers have in mind when they state that *lam taj* only includes these two genres. One feature that is consistent across all the above genres is their use of metrical accompaniment patterns although the singing is less uniform with some genres exhibiting metrical vocal lines and others non-metrical.

Khammouan and its neighbouring province to the north, Bolikhamxay, are often said to be the cross-over area between genres that are prefixed by *khap* and those prefixed with *lam* (Miller 1998a:351; Kavin 1997:2). This imaginary boundary has been placed at the Khammouan/Bolikhamxay border because other lexical changes are noticeable at this point; for example from Bolikhamxay north the word for river is *naam* (ນ້ຳ) but to the south *sêê* (ເຊ) is used. However, this north-south distinction is often broken as I have heard

and seen both *lam salavan* and *lam som* referred to as *khap salavan* and *khap som* in a variety of contexts.[22] Finally, Bolikhamxay is sometimes cited as an area with no music to call its own although I am aware of at least two minority Tai genres, *khap mèèn* (ຂັບແໝ) and *khap meej* (ຂັບແມ), [23] which occur in this province although very little data on either of these genres is available.[24]

Complete information regarding the northern genres of *khap-lam* is not available, a consequence of isolation and the extended period of warfare that has greatly affected the northern provinces. Although a huge variety of music exists in this region only three northern genres, on the basis of linguistic and musical criteria, should be considered as belonging to the lowland Lao *khap-lam* tradition: *khap ngeum* (from the Vientiane region), *khap xieng khouang* (also called *khap phuan*), and *khap sam neua*. A fourth Lao genre, *khap thum luang prabang*, is very different from other *khap-lam* genres listed here since it has a relatively fixed melody and is accompanied by classical instruments from the *piphaat* and *maholi* ensembles (Miller 1998a:350). Although *khap thum* is essentially a village tradition, its format, musical structures, and ensembles indicate that *khap thum* does not draw from all four of the primary components of the *khap-lam* tradition according to the paradigm in Figure 3-1 above. Therefore, I do not consider this genre to be part of the Lao *khap-lam* tradition.

The three northern genres all have accompaniment patterns based upon the *ñaaw* scale (see below), with *khap ngeum* and *khap sam neua* typified by a non-metrical accompaniment that follows the vocal melody. The accompaniment and singing for *khap xieng khouang* is metrical but the female's chanted reply is unaccompanied and non-metrical with two distinct durations (Miller 1998a:348). Miller's assertion (1998a:348) that *khap sam neua* is performed by a minority Tai group the Tai Neua, appears incorrect (the Tai Neua are found in Huaphan and other northern provinces) because the several recordings of this genre I have listened to are sung in a mutually intelligible dialect of Lao, and not a minority Tai language. Likewise, the *khap phuan/khap xieng khouang* genre does not appear to be sung in the Phuan language judging by the recordings I have heard,[25] this may reflect a situation similar to *lam phu thai* described above, however, more research needs to be undertaken to determine the current status of these two genres. The genre of *khap ngeum* is easily distinguished from these other northern genres by its melismatic refrain, called *sòòj* (ສ້ອຍ), which is added at certain points by a third performer, and/or the

audience. Also significant is its use of the *khaen* type found in southern Laos and northeast Thailand, whereas the two genres to its north are accompanied by the northern *khaen* (see the section below).

With the discussion of general terminology and classification issues for *khap-lam* genres now complete, our attention turns to the *khaen* which is the primary musical instrument used to accompany the singing of *khap-lam*. An understanding of how the *khaen* is conceptualised is integral to a detailed understanding of the *khap-lam* tradition as a whole.

The Khaen

This section provides an overview of the Lao *khaen*, its instrumental typology, construction, tuning, and basic playing techniques. A detailed description of the technical aspects of *khaen* manufacture is not given here because excellent descriptions of the *khaen* and its method of manufacture are available elsewhere (Miller 1985a:Ch V; Picker et al. 1984). Likewise, no attempt is made to discuss playing techniques in detail as this thesis concentrates its description and analysis on vocal melody and the sung texts of *khap-lam* genres. Readers seeking to find out more on the technical aspects of *khaen* playing should consult Miller (1985a:ChVI), Kham-Ouane (1970) and Samret (1995) for a variety of perspectives on *khaen* playing techniques.

Organological Issues

The *khaen* is one of several types of free-reed mouth-organ found in Laos and northeast Thailand. This particular free-reed mouth-organ is the one used by the lowland Lao ethnic group, and is distinguished from other free-reed mouth organs found in the region by a number of quantitative and qualitative features. Three free-reed mouth-organs from Laos featured on a set of postage stamps issued around 1998 (see Plate 7) exemplify some contrastive physical features. The left-most instrument is the Lao *khaen* which is used to accompany a large number of *khap-lam* vocal music genres, including those discussed throughout this thesis. The centre stamp depicts the *naw*, the mouth organ belonging to the Lahu or Musir ethnic group (Uchida and Catlin 1998:539), while at the right is the *qeej* mouth-organ of the Hmong ethnic group. Both these latter groups live in Laos' northern provinces and would be classed as Lao Sung using the Lao tripartite classification system for ethnicity. Given the Lao government's proclivity to illustrating

the three ethnicities one wonders whether or not these stamps were meant to portray the mouth organs of the three ethnicities and a mistake was made in equating the Lahu as a Mon-Khmer group.

All three instruments may be classed as free-reed aerophones if using the Hornbostel-Sachs taxonomy, however, this classification does not adequately cover many other aspects important to these instruments. By utilising more comprehensive upward taxonomies, organologists seek detailed knowledge of individual instruments, gradually working their way upwards to the point from which downward taxonomies begin (Kartomi 1990:200); in this case the category of free-reed aerophone. While downward systems begin at the abstract level and work their way towards specifics step-by-step, an upward system is "based on the detailed knowledge of a body of specimens and the building of increasingly more abstract classes" (Kartomi 1990:25). An upwards classification system would begin by accounting for features such the length of the mouthpiece and the material used to make it (wood or gourd). Both upward and downward taxonomies have their advantages and disadvantages as observer-imposed classification systems, however, a third approach which Kartomi (2001:298) terms as "culture-emerging" describes and details indigenous approaches to classification. A culture-emerging taxonomy might include classifications according to the contexts in which an instrument is used or whether the player sits or stands whilst playing.

In Laos, the most prevalent culture-emerging taxonomy is a downward system, that appears to be connected to Laos' classical music tradition, in which musical instruments are classified primarily by the action required to produce sound from the instrument. Four main classes exist: *khùang tii* (ເຄື່ອງຕີ) 'struck instruments; membranophones', *khùang paw* (ເຄື່ອງເປົ່າ) 'blown instruments', *khùang diit* (ເຄື່ອງດີດ) 'plucked instruments', and *khùang sii* (ເຄື່ອງສີ) 'bowed instruments'. I have also noticed the occasional use of a fifth class, *khùang khò* (ເຄື່ອງເຄາະ) 'knocked instruments, ideophones' which is not included in most lists I have seen, suggesting that this may be an emerging class. The above taxonomy is certainly applied by Lao music researchers to the instruments used in the various *khap-lam* traditions (cf. Houmphanh 1992a), but musicians use it only sparingly. I have been unable to discover an alternative culture-emerging taxonomy, however, *khap-lam* musicians certainly have other ways of conceptualising and talking about their relatively small number of instruments.

In central and southern Laos as well as northeast Thailand, two types of *khaen* are commonly found which are classified according to the number of paired-pipes they have: the *khèèn cêt* (ແຄນຈັດ) '*khaen* seven' with seven pairs of pipes and the *khèèn pèèt* (ແຄນແປດ) '*khaen* eight'[26] with eight pairs of pipes. The latter type has an additional two higher pitches which are used as drones (see the section on tuning below). Before and during the 1970s, the *khaen pèèt* was supposedly more common in northeast Thailand than in Laos, where the *khaen cêt* was favoured (Miller 1998a:338). This assertion is supported by numerous photographs of Lao *khaen* players and their instruments taken during the first half of the 20th century in which only *khaen cêt* appear (cf. Miller 1985a:190-191).[27] A further point of historical change emerges from studying these photographs; all *khaen* pictured are well over a metre in length, whereas today a *khaen* is considered to be long if it reaches one metre. Length does not appear to have any bearing upon the way an instrument is classified, although length and the circumference of the pipes will usually affect the relative pitches produced by the *khaen*.[28] Relative pitch of an individual *khaen* is an important consideration for players and *mohlam* because this is how *khaen* are matched with a performer's voice. Lower pitched *khaen* are said to possess *siang thum* (ສຽງຫຸ້ມ) 'deep voice' while higher pitched ones possess *siang suung* (ສຽງສູງ) 'high voice'.

A third type of *khaen* exists which is used in the northern Lao provinces of Xieng Khouang and Huaphan. At first glance it appears to be identical to the *khaen cêt*. However, closer inspection reveals that one pipe is silent, having neither free-reed nor finger hole, and that the tuning of individual pipes varies in a number of crucial ways from *khaen cêt* and *khaen pèèt* (see below). Since this northern variety of *khaen* is not found in the southern regions of Laos, nor even in Vientiane province, few performers from these regions have any intimate knowledge of the instrument, nor of the playing techniques required. Certainly none of the performers I worked with made any reference to the fact that a different type of *khaen* was used to accompany northern *khap-lam* genres.

Khaen Manufacture in Laos

The manufacture of *khaen* inside Laos today is restricted to a small number of skilled makers dispersed throughout the country. This seems always to have been the case for Laos whereas in northeast Thailand a number of villages have earned reputations as producers of high quality *khaen*, and these villages are sought out by players wishing to

purchase the best instruments. Miller reports that in the 1970s "most instruments used in Laos were either imported from northeastern Thailand or made by makers from that region" (Miller 1998a:338). This was not the case in 1999. The falling value of the kip and the very low income of the average Lao musician have ensured that quality *khaen* from Northeast Thailand, costing from 500 to more than 1000 baht each, are well beyond their means. Furthermore, the networks that previously existed among musicians on both sides of the Mekong were interrupted and broken by the travel restrictions imposed after 1975. These networks remain broken in spite of travel restrictions for Lao citizens being relaxed throughout the 1990s.

A *khaen* made in Laos by a reputable maker usually costs no more than A$20. During 1999 I bought several *khaen* in Pakse for 60,000 kip each, the value of which was around A$11 at the time. Most *khaen* makers I met in Laos were also accomplished players who, although mainly making *khaen* for themselves, would produce *khaen* for others on request and for a fee. In Pakse, an elderly man, Suun Siimanta of Ban Phon Ngaam is regarded as the best maker in the area. Suun is also an accomplished *mohkhaen* but has retired from performance and now relies on *khaen* making as his main source of income (see Plate 8). Formerly, Suun was the *mohkhaen* for a number of *mohlam* including Duang Phaeng, Vanna and Sunii. Suun has also taught *khaen* making techniques to two other *khaen* players, Ki Kong and Kham Sing who regularly accompany Pakse's best-known *mohlam*, including Duang Phaeng, Thong Baang and Acaan Vanna.

In Vientiane, *khaen* of variable quality can be obtained from the State Handicraft Shop on the western side of town, as well as from one or two lesser-known makers around town, one of whom is located immediately behind That Luang (see Plate 9). In the villages north of Vientiane where most *khap ngeum* performers reside, there are several individuals who manufacture *khaen*, however, I was unable to meet them during my field research. Finally, I am unable to provide any information regarding the manufacture of *khaen* in the northern provinces of Xieng Khouang and Huaphan.

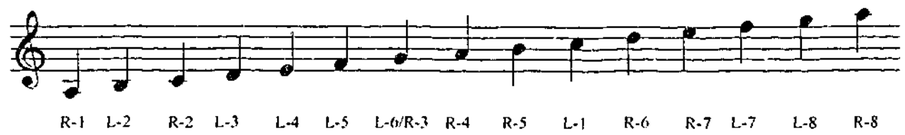
During field research in 1999, I observed that professional *khaen* players in central and southern Laos have a strong preference for *khaen pèèt*. Players of the southern Lao genres now play using the technique of plugging the finger hole of one of the two additional pipes with *khii suut* (ຂີ້ສຸດ) (a black insect wax, see below) to create a drone. Somewhat surprisingly, *khaen* players of the *khap ngeum* genre have also taken to using

khaen pèèt even though they make no use of the two drone pipes. This development means that those *khaen* players with an extended repertoire are able to play the genres from southern Laos and northeast Thailand. The only exception to the current preference for *khaen pèèt* are *mohkhaen* from Salavan who still play and manufacture *khaen cêt* almost exclusively. In the northern provinces of Sam Neua and Xieng Khouang I only ever encountered the northern *khaen* type explained below.

Construction and Tuning

Bamboo is the material used to make the pipes of the *khaen*, a hardwood is used for the wind chest, silver and copper coins are melted down to make the reed, *liin* (ລີ້ນ) 'tongue', and *khii suut*, the black wax produced by a flying ant-like insect, is used to seal the gaps between the pipes and the windchest. Pipes are arranged in ordered pairs of different lengths, slotted through the windchest then bound together to form a raft-like or pan-pipe shape with the pipes even across the bottom of the instrument but staggered at the top; it is for this reason that the *khaen* is sometimes incorrectly identified as a "pan-pipe" (Condominas 1975:265; Evans 1998:38; Khampha 1999). The longest pipes are positioned closest to the players mouth, the smallest at the far end of the instrument. The gaps between the pipes and windchest are plugged with *khii suut* and finally a finger-hole is burnt into each pipe. Occasionally a *khaen* may be made with two reeds per pipe, *liin khuu* (ລີ້ນຄູ) 'paired tongues', inserted side-by-side to give a louder, fuller sound, however, this is expensive and these *khaen* require more maintenance than single-reed *khaen*.

Lao music, in common with many Southeast Asian music traditions, does not have a regular system of tuning, thus the actual pitches produced by individual *khaen* varies widely (cf. Sutton 2000:97). The internal relationships between the pitches of the pipes, however, remains the same for every instrument. In order to easily compare the different absolute tunings of individual *khaen*, Miller transcribed the *khaen* tuning system on the Western staff as an a minor scale, thus avoiding accidentals (Miller 1985a:107; 229). If the lowest pitch of the *khaen* is equated with pitch a, every *khaen pèèt* will have the following series of pitches A, B, c, d, e, f, g, a, b, c', d', e', f', g', a' ,[29] as shown in Example 3-1 below.



Example 3-1: *Khaen* pitches in ascending order showing pipe numbers (Miller 1985a:192)

Note that each pitch has an octave counterpart with the exception of g which has a unison. A *khaen cêt* with seven pairs of pipes, lacks the two highest pitches a' and g', which are used as drones on a *khaen pèèt*. The northern variant of the *khaen* has a silent pipe at L-2, no b pitches, only the lower e pitch and two consecutive pipes of pitches a and d' (see Figure 3-3 below).

A chart showing the physical layout of the tones on the *khaen pèèt* and the fingers which are used to sound them appears in Figure 3-2 below. The chart is presented as if we are looking down on the *khaen* from above, the pipes R-8 and L-8 are furthest away from the player while the L-1 and R-1 pipes, controlled by the thumbs are closest to the opening in the windchest through which the player exhales and inhales air.

Left Hand	Note	Pipe Name		Note	Right Hand
khii suut or little finger. Used for drone.	g'	L-8	R-8	a'	*khii suut* or little finger. Used for drone.
ring finger	f'	L-7	R-7	e'	ring finger
ring finger	g	L-6	R-6	d'	ring finger
middle finger	f	L-5	R-5	b	middle finger
middle finger	e	L-4	R-4	a	middle finger
index finger	d	L-3	R-3	g	index finger
index finger	B	L-2	R-2	c	index finger
thumb	c'	L-1	R-1	A	thumb

Figure 3-2: Order of tones on the Lao *khaen* and standard fingerings (Miller 1998a:338; Kham-Ouane 1970; Rangsy 1972)

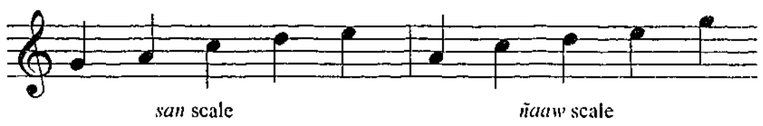
The pitch-pipe correspondences for the northern *khaen* are shown in Figure 3-3 below, but no fingerings are given since I am unaware of the particular techniques that have been developed for playing this instrument.

Note	Pipe Name		Note
f'	L-7	R-7	d'
g	L-6	R-6	d'
f	L-5	R-5	a
e	L-4	R-4	a
d	L-3	R-3	g
-	L-2	R-2	c
c'	L-1	R-1	A

Figure 3-3: Order of tones on the northern *khaen* (Miller 1998a:338)

The figures above show that the pitches on both variants of the *khaen* are not arranged in a sequential pattern but in an arrangement that Miller finds "seemingly erratic" (1985a:192). However, as Miller points out, this arrangement fits the musical structures played on the *khaen* because it ensures that the notes in each mode are evenly distributed on both sides of the instrument, permitting easy fingering of the pipes while allowing the player to balance the weight of the *khaen* evenly between his two hands.

The seven-tone scale of the Lao *khaen* is quite different from the seven-tone equidistant scale used in the related Lao, Thai and Cambodian classical music traditions. Morton noted that the theoretical distance between each step of the Thai scales is 171.4 cents[30] (Morton 1968:26) while Miller's analysis of Lao *khaen* tunings revealed a system closely corresponding to the pitches of the Western equal-tempered diatonic scales with semitones approximately 100 cents apart and whole steps 200 cents apart (Miller 1985a:214). Although the *khaen* is tuned to a seven-tone scale, all seven tones are never used as a musical system in a typical *khap-lam* accompaniment pattern. Instead, there are two basic pentatonic scales: *san* (สั้น) 'short' g, a, c, d, e and *ñaaw* (ยาว)[31] 'long' a, c, d, e, g which form the basis of the *khap-lam* genres found in Laos and northeast Thailand. The *khaen* plays mode-like patterns based upon these two scales, shown in Example 3-2 below.

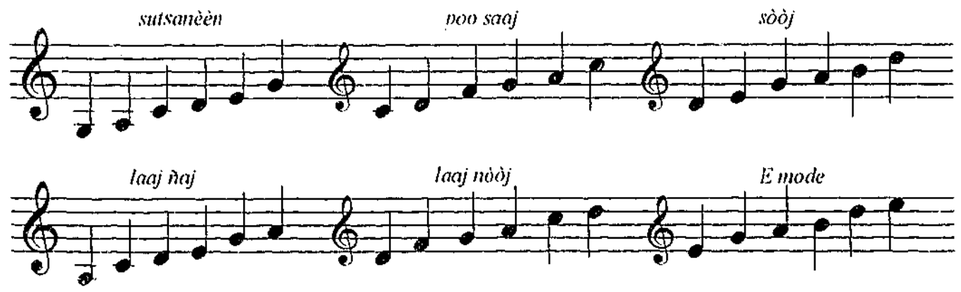


Example 3-2: The two scales of Lao vocal music (Miller 1985a:24)

By adhering to the intervals contained in these two scales *khaen* players can theoretically play in six different modes,[32] which they choose to suit the voice of the *mohlam* they are accompanying. The *san* scale structure underlies the following three modes: *sutsanèèn* (สุดสะแนน) (G), A, c, d, e, g; *pòò saaj* (โป้ซาย) c, d, f, g, a, c'; and *sòòj* (สอย) d, e, g, a, c, d. Note that *sutsanèèn* has a finalis whose pitch, G, does not appear on the *khaen*. Below is Miller's explanation of how *sutsanèèn* is played:

> In its most basic form sootsanaen [sic.] consists of the two drones on g (L-6 and L-8) plus a, c, d, and e played in octaves. The ear tends to follow the lowest sounding notes meaning that when octaves are played the melody is relatively low sounding; if only the upper notes are used, the melody follows the upper octave. This gives the player an apparent melodic range of one and a half octaves, from A to e'. With the higher g' used as a drone, the ear willingly accepts the two lower (unison) g's together as either G, g, or g' depending upon its melodic context, giving the player in a sense two full octaves. The simulation of the lowest G is enhanced when the lower d (L-3) is added. (Miller 1985a:236)

The modes based on the *ñaaw* scale are: *laaj ñaj* (ลายใหย่) A, c, d, e, g, a, *laaj nòòj* (ลายน้อย) d, f, g, a, c, d and a sixth, rarely used, mode e, g, a, b', d', e' which Miller calls the "e mode" (1985a:229). This last mode also presents a problem for the *khaen* player because it contains five consecutive pitches on one side of the instrument, the very problem that the physical arrangement of pitches on the *khaen* seeks to eliminate. To my knowledge the "e mode" is not used by Lao players to accompany *mohlam*; I did not hear it played in any situation during the year I spent in Laos. The northern variant of the *khaen*, missing pitch b, cannot play either the *sòòj* or e modes. Its ability to play sonorities would also be restricted due to the omission of the e' pitch, however, a full investigation of the playing techniques associated with this instrument remains to be done. The notation of all six modes is set out in Example 3-3 below.



Example 3-3: The six *khaen* modes (Miller 1985a:229)

A Note on Lao Musical Terminology

At this point it is worth taking a brief moment to explain that Lao musical terminology is often imprecise and characterised by a degree of slippage. Readers should be aware that the above discussion of scales and *khaen* modes uses the terminology employed by *khaen* players of northeast Thailand, previously described by Miller (1985a). Musicians in Laos, however, often use different musical terminology to that used by musicians in northeast Thailand. Rather than using the five or six modal names above, many Lao *khaen* players use less explicit terms, preferring instead to call the lower pitched mode of each scale *ñaj* (ใหญ่) 'large/great' and the higher pitched one *nòòj* (น้อย) 'small' (cf. Miller 1998a:340). Lao players also use the term *thaang* (ทาง) 'path; way' to denote a mode instead of *laaj* (ลาย). Thus, the modes *sutsanèèn* and *laaj ñaj* are usually referred to as *thaang ñaj* and modes *laaj sòòj* and *laaj nòòj* as *thaang nòòj*. Accompaniment patterns for a specific genre may also be referred to in the same way, for example *thaang siphandon*.

Although this approach makes no explicit distinction between the underlying *san* and *ñaaw* scales as the northeastern Thai names do, both *mohlam* and *mohkhaen* automatically know the underlying scale for each genre they perform. This is not to say, however, that the northeastern Thai terminology used above is completely alien to Lao musicians as most *khaen* players in the southern region of Laos are familiar with, and use the modal and scale names above (cf. Thongkham 1998:59-64). In the Vientiane region I found that these names were less well-known by *khaen* players skilled in the *khap ngeum* genre and I would anticipate a similar state of affairs for musicians in the northern genres.

Two other fundamental terms, *thamnòòng* (ຫ ຳ ນອງ) 'melody' and *cangva* (ຈ ັ ງຫວະ) 'rhythm', must also be mentioned here since their meaning varies depending upon the context to which they are applied. Definitions from Kerr's Lao-English dictionary provide a starting point for this discussion:

1. *thamnòòng* 'melody, tune; way, style, mode, custom, pattern' (Kerr 1992:651).
2. *cangva* 'rhythm, tempo; measure (in music); rhyme; timing, time; interval; opportune or favourable time' (Kerr 1992:302).

When these two terms are employed by *mohkhaen* in relation to *khaen* playing they are roughly equivalent to the terms melody and rhythm as Western-trained musicians

understand them. *Thamnòòng* is usually understood as melody, but is not often used by *mohkhaen*. Instead, *mohkhaen* prefer to use *cangva* as term encompassing meter, rhythm, and tempo, as well as referring to an overall rhythmic and melodic density (Miller 1998c:264). An example of this latter use occurs when *cangva* is used to describe a particular accompaniment pattern (e.g. *cangva siphandon*), without reference to the specific mode being used (i.e. *poo saaj*, *sòòj* etc.). In these cases, the meaning of *cangva* comes close to the Western term 'improvisation'.

Similarly, *mohlam* tend to use several possible meanings for *thamnòòng* and *cangva*, depending upon the context. *Thamnòòng* 'melody' is usually understood in relation to high and low pitches, *siang suung siang tam* (ສ ຽ ງ ສ ູ ງ ສ ຽ ງ ຕ ่ ຳ), that are determined by the tones of the language (see chapter 6, part two). However, I discovered that *mohlam* often use *thamnòòng* to mean 'style' or 'pattern'. During the course of conversation it is often difficult, for an outsider such as myself, to determine the exact meaning of *thamnòòng* that the speaker intends. Many *mohlam* tend to view rhythm from a textual perspective, relating it to the internal rhythms generated by the rhyming patterns that they use in their sung poetry. Since it is not uncommon for singing to be non-metrical while accompanied by a metrical *khaen* pattern, the term *cangva* may have two parallel meanings: one which refers to the rhythm or pattern of the *khaen's* accompaniment pattern, and another which refers to the internal rhythmical patterns the *mohlam* utilise in their singing (see chapter 7 for further discussion of indigenous concepts concerning texts).

The Khaen: A Lao Symbol for a Multi-ethnic Nation

The *khaen* has long been seen as a symbol of the Lao people and representative of their culture. A proverb naming the essential characteristics of the lowland Lao is repeatedly quoted by Lao and Westerners alike whenever a discussion turns to questions of Lao identity. The proverb usually goes like this: "He who inhabits a house built on stilts, eats sticky rice, and plays the *khaen*, is a true Lao" (Miller 1985a:295; Kham-Ouane 1970). Yet as markers of ethnic and cultural identity these three characteristics are overly simple and extremely fuzzy. None are unique to the lowland Lao nor to groups within the nation state of the Lao PDR. Many ethnic Lao in northeast Thailand likewise use this proverb as a means of self identification. Furthermore, non-Lao groups like the Hmong, Lahu and Khmu play their own free-reed mouth-organs too, and many minority Tai groups including the Lue of Sipsongbanna and the Thai Dam eat sticky rice.

Anthropologist Grant Evans has explored the issues surrounding the problems faced by researchers when having to delimit culture and society and de-link it from the nation-state (Evans 1999b:9-10). He proposes that the concept of "culture area" be used as a means by which our sights can move beyond the conflation of national boundaries and language with culture, a viewpoint often obsessed with finding 'pure' or 'proto' culture and language in order to validate the oneness of nation and people. In particular, Evans takes issue with the assumptions of the general field of Tai-studies which tends to presume that ethno-linguistic similarities (i.e. the Tai language family) are concomitant with similarities of culture (see also Enfield and Evans 1998).[33] Refuting this approach, Evans argues that language and culture exist in history and that it is the accidents and incidents of history which combine to bring about the "exchanges in aspects of culture" or the "convergences and collisions" of cultures, as Kartomi (1994) describes them. The result is the dispersion of cultural materials and ideas across linguistic, ethnic and political boundaries. Ethnomusicologists have argued along similar lines, refuting any notion of 'pure culture'. Indeed Kartomi, in saying that "a culture is better seen as a series of processes that construct, reconstruct and dismantle cultural materials" (1994:xvii) and Nettl, through his offering of a similar culture area concept (Nettl 1983:216), have already put forward much of Evans' argument.

The size of a culture area will, of course, depend upon the parameters ethnographers set for it. In the Lao context, Evans argues that the Lao and Thai cultures are part of a larger culture area which "is defined first and foremost by a common history as Hinduized states and Theravada Buddhism" (Evans 1999b:15). Evans' culture area encompasses Thailand, Laos, the Shan, the Lue, as well as Cambodia and Burma. A second feature of this area is that it is also part of an "*oikoumenê* which includes Vietnam and other parts of the peninsular and insular Southeast Asia, and other Sinicized Tai groups" (Evans 1999b:16). Such a broad culture area helps to explain the cultural similarities that exist across national boundaries and different ethnic groups in the region. By the same token this does not mean that the many diverse cultures located within the culture area are homogenised, but simply indicates they have all been affected to varying degrees by a similar set of historical incidents and accidents.

The culture area concept accepts that culture transgresses national borders, but this position is not favoured by modern nation states who are doing their utmost to link concepts of society and culture to the state; a state of affairs that is exemplified in the case

of the Lao government's coopting of the *khaen* as the primary symbol for the newly developing tourist industry in Laos. Tourism, a relatively new industry in the Lao PDR, has rapidly expanded since the mid-1990s to become a major income generator for the country. With the strong growth of tourism anticipated to continue, it is fast becoming the major impetus for the standardisation of Lao and minority cultures inside Laos as the Lao government seeks ways to package Lao and minority culture as a tourist product (see Trankell 1999). An example of this standardisation at work is the appearance of the lowland Lao *khaen* in the two official symbols of the 'Visit Lao Year 1999-2000' campaign, shown in Plate 10.

The 'Visit Laos' logo shows a *khaen* together with a white frangipanni flower, *dòòk campaa* (ดอกจำปา) the national flower of Laos, above several stripes of blue symbolising the many rivers of Laos. The second symbol, a cartoon figure of an elephant playing the *khaen*, is the 'mascot' of the Visit Laos campaign. The elephant is probably a symbol of Laos' supposed historical continuity from the kingdom of Lane Xang (one million elephants) while the *khaen* represents Lao national culture, interpreted from a lowland-Lao perspective. In choosing the *khaen* as the symbol of tourism the Lao government has effectively created a second icon of lowland Lao culture through which the nation is represented.

The first of these icons is the official national symbol, That Luang seen on the national crest that features on all official documents and banknotes (see Plate 1).[34] That Luang is the centre of the Lao Buddhist spiritual universe and is "the central symbol through which the nation remembers itself" (Evans 1998:41). Thus, we have the religious symbol of That Luang and the secular, cultural symbol of the *khaen*, together projecting a lowland Lao image for the nation state of Laos. Nowhere are minority groups represented, save for the ubiquitous three ethnicities depictions discussed in chapter 2. There is, of course one major incongruity; the widespread use of the *khaen* in neighbouring northeast Thailand which, with its much larger ethnic Lao population, has many more *khaen* players and *khaen* manufacturers than Laos. This incongruity is apparent only from the Lao government's ethnically-based view of the nation but one that is easily explained when viewed from the culture area perspective.

The adoption of the *khaen* and That Luang as national symbols of Laos was born of the Lao nationalist conscience stimulated by the national renovation movement of the early

1940s (see chapter 2). The rationale behind the adoption of That Luang as national symbol is clear; the monument is physically situated in Vientiane which has been the political capital since independence and is of spiritual significance to Lao Buddhism. However, the choice of the *khaen* is less obvious, especially in light of its ubiquitousness over the border in northeast Thailand. Laos' colonial heritage holds the answer. French scholars of the late-colonial period first introduced the Western world to the Lao *khaen* (see chapter 4 for more detail), which they described as a quintessential Lao musical instrument. Thus, when independence arrived in 1953 the *khaen* had already been identified and labelled as the instrument characterising Lao culture. It was then only a small step for the fledgling Lao nationalists to claim it as the national instrument, in the process forgetting that the *khaen* was equally important to ethnic Lao people in northeast Thailand. The earliest English language reference to the national status of the *khaen* I have found is in *Courts of Love and Poetry* which refers to the *khaen* as the "Laotian national instrument of music" (Abhay 1959a:206). Abhay, a prominent figure in the national renovation movement, would no doubt have been aware that, like the works of the traditional Lao literary canon, the *khaen* existed within the borders of another nation-state, a state of affairs that could have upset the movement's plans to delimit Lao culture.

To manoeuvre around this problem Lao scholars and officials claim that the important elements of Lao culture, such as Buddhism, literature and so on, are a valuable heritage received from the former Lao kingdom of Lane Xang, an entity that is viewed as synonymous with the modern nation state of Laos (Houmphanh 1992a:197). Since all Lao are aware that the provinces of northeast Thailand were once part of Lane Xang territories the underlying claim being made is that the provinces in this region, and the Lao culture within it are somehow still Lao. The approximately ten million ethnic Lao people living in northeast Thailand, however, do not look to Laos for cultural or political leadership but instead identify strongly with the nation of Thailand and its monarch (Smalley 1994:100).

Within Laos' borders, the government is faced with the opposite problem; how to claim similarity across the broad range of ethnic groups in the face of obvious difference. One approach has been the invention of the tripartite ethnic labels all prefixed with 'Lao', however, more recently there is a tendency to gloss over differences by promoting lowland Lao culture as a standard supplemented by a few minorities' colourful variations. For example, the three stamps illustrating three types of mouth organ in Plate 6 suggest similarity through their method of sound production (i.e. the free reed) but their differences

of physical form and function are glossed over by classifying all three as *khaen* rather than by their respective indigenous names. And, as we have seen above, official portrayal of Lao secular culture is achieved through the symbol of the Lao *khaen*, and not the *qeej* or *naw*.

As Lao tourism has dramatically expanded over the past decade, the *khaen* has gained more attention from visiting tourists and Western expatriates based in Laos, a trend I noticed during 1999 as Westerners sought out my *khaen* teacher from the NSMD for private tuition. Yet *khap-lam* vocal music in its traditional form is probably too culture-specific and language based to have any significant appeal to an international audience, and as a product of lowland Lao culture is not as alluring to tourists to the same extent that 'hill-tribe' culture has proven to be in Thailand, Vietnam, and now Laos. Instead, most performances of *khap-lam* designed for tourist consumption are reduced to short song-like formats and sung by singers using simplified accompaniment patterns and a fixed text rather than by skilled *mohlam*.[35] These performances are placed alongside other music and dance that is supposedly representative of Lao culture including classical pieces and minority dance choreographed by lowland Lao performers and teachers from the NSMD (Mahoney 1995).

A New Approach to Classification: The Lao Cultural Platform

We are now aware that scholars and government have applied opposing concepts of culture to the multi-ethnic situation in Laos. The first and most useful concept is the culture area; a broad geographical area encompassing numerous diverse but interconnected cultures. In the culture area paradigm, ethno-linguistic grouping and national borders are not assumed to be absolute boundaries delimiting cultures from one another. Instead, the cultures and languages of groups within the culture area have indistinct boundaries across which some, but not all, of a culture's defining traits or materials will either seep or flow into adjacent cultures. This seep and flow travels in both directions but will usually favour one direction over another. Political and social pressures may induce some of these cultures to adopt traits from adjacent cultures. For example, Evans (1999c) has described a circumstance in a remote district of Sam Neua province in which some members of a Tibeto-Burman group, the Sing Moon, are shifting towards a Thai Dam (Black Thai) identity. This exemplifies a process Condominas (1990) has termed "Tai-ization".

Minority Tai groups show signs of a similar identity shift too, mostly towards the politically dominant and higher-status Lao group via this process of "Lao-ization". Changes of this nature have been observed in the Lue population of Muang Sing in Luang Namtha province, whereby a connection to lowland Lao culture and identity is made through their common observance of Buddhism (Khampheng 1999). In stark contrast, Lue groups in Yunnan province fiercely proclaim their Tai identity in the face of the dominant Han Chinese culture (cf. Davis 1999).[36] For non-Buddhist groups such as the Thai Dam, it is secular institutions like the education system, media and government communiques to the general population, which are the primary forces for Lao-ization because they encourage wider use of the Lao language and perpetuate lowland Lao culture (Evans 1999c:144-145). The broad culture area that encompasses Laos is increasingly subject to additional influences from beyond the culture area boundaries as the instruments of globalisation, radios, video screenings and satellite television make their way into the everyday life of its numerous cultures.

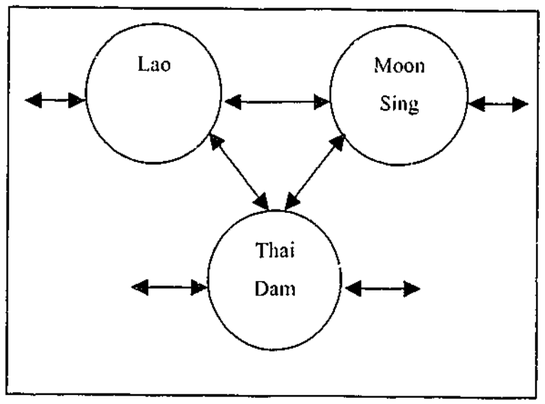


Figure 3-4: Interacting cultures within a culture area

One way in which this network of cultures within a culture area can be represented in diagrammatic form, is as interconnected circles, shown in Figure 3-4 above. By illustrating the three-way exchange between the Moon Sing, Thai Dam and Lao cultures described above, we can see how this system works. Each of the three circles represents one of the three cultures above, contained within the Lao/Thai culture area. The arrows indicate that influences can flow both ways, but they do not, in this diagram, indicate the amount of influence one culture may exert upon another or the amount of exchange occurring. Possible ways to indicate dominant cultures could be to vary the size of the

circles, larger ones denoting more influential cultures towards which smaller ones gravitate. Arrowheads could similarly be made large or small to indicate the relative amount of influence moving in that direction. Note that the arrows link into other cultures not depicted in the diagram.

The second conceptualisation of culture, perpetuated by governments in their endeavours to construct the nation and national identity, is the political one. Culture is viewed as an entity tightly contained within the social space of the nation's borders, resulting in an homogenised national culture that is interpreted through the culture of the politically dominant group. Differences of minority cultures are glossed over, and/or reinterpreted using the concepts of the majority culture, while any similarities between them are emphasised. Once again using the above three cultures as an example, Figure 3-5 below, shows how a national Lao culture is imagined primarily in terms of lowland Lao culture, represented by the largest circle. Although minority cultures are acknowledged, they are interpreted through lowland Lao culture, mostly in terms of similarities, and so are wholly contained within the circle of lowland Lao culture.

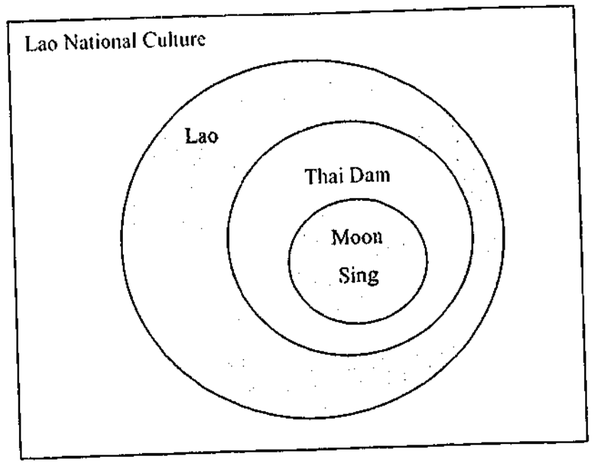


Figure 3-5: Political interpretation of national culture

Returning to the earlier discussion of classification issues, it is evident that past classifications of *khap-lam* genres have been largely modelled upon political concepts of culture. It is also clear that culture area concepts are yet to be adequately explored and applied to the context of vocal music genres in Laos. Official use of the moniker *khap-lam*

as a blanket term for all vocal music traditions in Laos is indicative of the government's political conceptualisation of culture, by which important distinctions between diverse cultures are reduced. It is these differences, however, which should present an intellectual challenge to music researchers, a challenge which has not yet been taken up by Lao or Western scholars, who have largely been content to categorise music along broad ethno-linguistic lines and not seek out differences within them. It is my contention that a more reliable and consistent approach to classifying Lao vocal musics can be taken by acknowledging that:

(i) fundamental cultural differences exist between *and within* the main ethno-linguistic groups of Laos: Tai (including lowland Lao), Tibeto-Burman/Hmong-Yao, and Mon-Khmer.

(ii) many cultural similarities are also to be found between the above groups, as well as others not normally associated with Laos (e.g. Vietnamese, Chinese), all of whom are encompassed by the broad culture area and the *oikoumenê* beyond (extending into mainland and insular Southeast Asia).

(iii) cultural differences and similarities are often the result of historical contact between cultures, and cannot be reduced to simple ethnic or linguistic categories. These contacts are not necessarily traceable.

These three points allow us to move beyond ethno-linguistic concepts by searching both within these boundaries and beyond them. Not only can the important differences which separate the music of a minority Tai group, such as the Thai Dam, from the lowland Lao be accounted for, but the common elements between the two can also be noted, and in turn related to common features of a much broader Southeast Asian context. Thus, the culture area concept allows us to explore diverse musics from a micro or macro perspective while avoiding largely arbitrary ethno-linguistic groupings.[37]

Although the culture area concept is designed as a way to avoid the inherent problems faced in making definitive statements about a specific culture, it is still possible, and useful, to identify a culture's fundamental elements so that some distinctions can be made. Below is a list of lowland Lao cultural elements I have identified as important to the vocal music genres of, what I call, the broad Lao *khap-lam* tradition. The broad tradition encompasses any of the regional genres that are traditionally performed by the lowland Lao ethnic group. These elements enable us to make a viable distinction between lowland

Lao vocal music and the vocal music of the minority Tai and non-Tai groups in Laos and its neighbours.

1. Performance takes place in the context of a Buddhist celebration, the *bun*.
2. Texts are based upon traditional Lao literature and *phañaa* oral tradition in (a) themes and (b) use of *kòòn aan* and other poetic structures.
3. All texts are sung in mutually intelligible dialects of the Lao language.
4. All musical genres are primarily accompanied by one of three types of *khaen* (*khaen pèèt*, *khaen cêt*, northern *khaen*).
5. All vocal melodies and *khaen* accompaniment are based upon one of two pentatonic scales.

These criteria make up what I call the Lao cultural platform, upon which the various genres found within the Lao *khap-lam* vocal music tradition are based. The four primary components of the Lao *khap-lam* tradition are drawn from the fundamental cultural

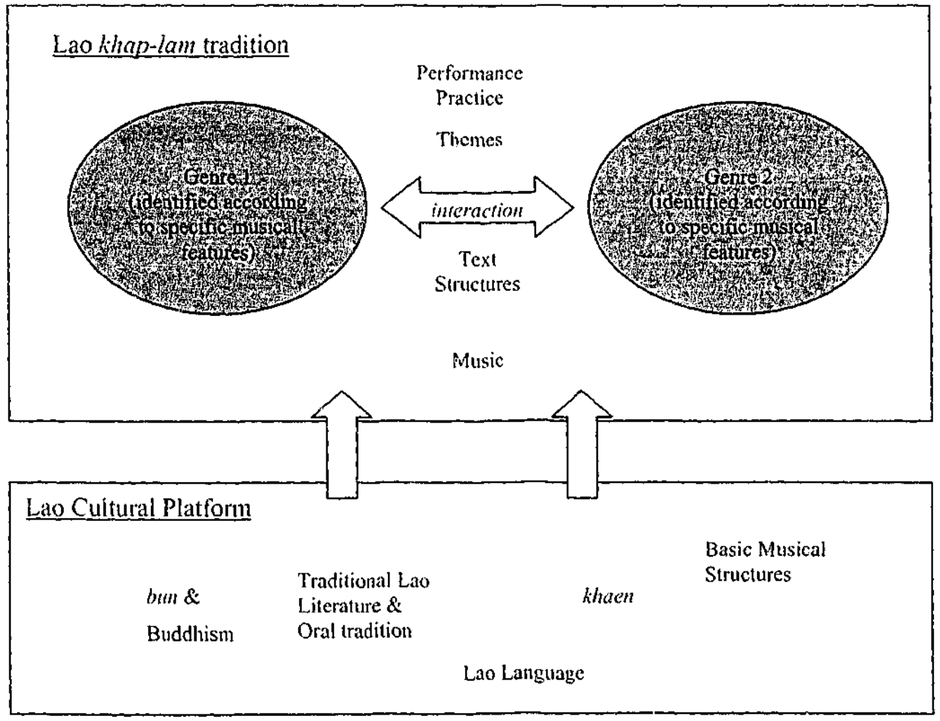


Figure 3-6: The Lao *khap-lam* tradition and the Lao cultural platform

elements of the Lao cultural platform, as shown in Figure 3-6 above. It would be a mistake, however, to view the Lao cultural platform as a strictly bounded entity when elements of it are closely linked to the numerous surrounding cultures (as depicted in Figure 3-4). For example, Buddhism is also a feature of the Lue, Thai and Cambodian cultural platforms, and this results in other cultural elements, such as a number of traditional tales, being shared across several discrete cultural platforms.

The vocal music of minority Tai and non-Tai groups should not be classified as belonging to the broad Lao *khap-lam* tradition unless they can be shown, on a case-by-case basis, to share exactly the same cultural platform as the Lao *khap-lam* tradition. For example, when examining the music of the Lue we would expect to find a number of similarities, such as performances being staged in the same, or similar, socio-religious context of the Buddhist *bun*. We might also expect to find similar thematic devices within the text, however, there would be crucial differences in language and formal textual structures in which the verses are composed. A separate cultural platform could be postulated for the music of the Lue, which would have some shared, or at least closely related, elements to ones found in the Lao cultural platform. The above paradigm is designed to be flexible and may be modified to suit any of the surrounding music cultures in Laos, Thailand, Vietnam, and beyond. By using the same basic paradigm, differences and similarities between neighbouring music cultures can be assessed systematically. This will allow us better to distinguish between processes of "musical transculturation", Southeast Asia-wide elements, and less significant cultural interactions (cf. Kartomi 1981:232).

Using this paradigm, the following chapters embark upon a description of the *khap-lam* tradition's constituent parts as they occur in three *khap-lam* genres. Before this is commenced, a brief account of previous research of Lao vocal music is given in chapter 4, in order to put the current study into perspective with other works in the field of Lao music.

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[1] Both *khap* and *lam* have a nominal function as well as a verbal function. The compound *khap-lam* is purely nominal in function. Hence a person would be able to *khap* a *khap* (song) and *lam* a *lam* (song) although they are seldom used as verb and noun together like this as it is redundant. Miller is not clear on the nominal/verb issue when he states that "lum is a verb" (1985a:22-23). I use a hyphen between *khap* and *lam* to indicate that it is a compound word.

[2] The relationships between lexical tone and melody is examined in detail in chapter 6.

[3] The topic of textual improvisation is discussed in some detail in chapter 7.

[4] See Appendix 1 for a more extensive discussion.

[5] An English example is 'buy', as a verb 'I will buy the house'; as a noun 'that house was a good buy'.

[6] This term is listed in modern Thai language dictionaries too (Ramkhamhaeng 1991:21).

[7] There may be some exceptions to this, for example Acaan Vanna (2/5/1999) stated that *khap* is used by at least one of the Mon-Khmer groups in the south of Laos, the Suay, to which he claims membership, however, the Suay are highly assimilated into lowland Lao culture and have borrowed many Lao words

[8] There are a number of ways that this term has been transcribed; *mohlam* (Compton 1974; 1979), *mawlum* (Miller 1985a) and *molam* (Miller 1998a). I prefer the first spelling because it accounts for the existence of contrasting back vowels; rounded /o/ and unrounded /ò/, or /oh/ as it is transcribed in *mohlam*. I prefer not to follow the current trend towards using *molam* because of this problem.

[9] The phoneme /r/ is often replaced by phoneme /l/ by Thai speakers in all regions of Thailand, not just the northeast. The mistranslation of mohlam as 'doctor of dance' has also been included in a popular travel guide to Laos (Cummings 1997:49).

[10] There is no doubt, however, that Central Thai is exerting more influence on Lao than was previously the case. For an excellent discussion of this topic the reader should consult Enfield (1999).

[11] There are problems with the terms 'court' and 'classical' music in Laos because the music and ensembles were not restricted to the royal courts at Luang Prabang and Champassak. The Lao have their own term, *pêêng laaw deem* (ເພງລາວດັ້ງເດີມ) 'Lao traditional compositions' which denotes the 'classical' or 'court' music of the *phinpaat* or *sêêp ñaj* (ເສບໃຫຍ) and *maholi* or *sêêp nòòj* (ເສບນ້ອຍ) orchestras. In these pages I prefer to use classical as used by Miller and Williams (1998:6) to signify music that was largely restricted to the aristocratic classes but not necessarily confined to the royal courts of Southeast Asia. Chapter 4 contains some more detail on the Lao classical tradition.

[12] Vestiges of this tradition still exist in the unaccompanied recited genre called *aan nangsùù*, now found only in Luang Prabang.

[13] Miller (2000) notes that *lam tat* is another term for the Isan genre of *lam klawn*, however, Compton says it is a structure similar to *kaap* poetry which Duang Phaeng calls *kòòn fûang* (see chapter 7).

[14] See for example, the repertoire lists in Miller (1985a:47-48). These names are prefixed by *klawn* (Thai)/*kòòn* (Lao) here but participants from the south with whom I worked would often use *lam*. See chapter 7 for more detail.

[15] Unlike Lao *khap-lam* genres, the genres in northeast Thailand are not named after geographical areas/features, however, distinct regional variations are found within the genre of *lam klawn* (*lam kòòn*) (Miller 1985a).

[16] This topic is discussed at length in chapter 5.

[17] The Phuan are one of the minority Tai groups not too dissimilar to the lowland Lao. They are Buddhist and their language, while not mutually intelligible with Lao, is not so far removed as to totally hinder communication. The musical genre, however, appears to have undergone some change as it is sung largely in

a Lao dialect rather than Phuan. It may also be the case that Phuan culture has been largely assimilated into lowland culture.

[18] The Lao text is as follows:

ສຳລັບຢັບລາວສູງ, ຢັບໄຫເມ້ຍ, ຢັບໄຫໄລ່, ຢັບໄຫສີ, ຢັບໄຫຄຳ, ນັ້ນເຜີ່ນນິຍົມໃຊ້ກອນທີ່ເປັນພາສາຂອງແຕ່ລະ ຊົນເຜົ່າເອງ ແລະກອນຂອງເຜົ່າຕ່າງໆ ນີ້ ກໍມີກິດເກນການແຕ່ງໄປຕາມແບບ ແລະລັກສະນະຂອງພາສານັ້ນ

[19] The original text reads: ໝໍຢັບໝໍລຳຈຶ່ງສາມາດນຳເອົາກອນພະຍາຕ່າງໆ ໄປຢັບໄດ້, ຈະແມ່ນໝໍຢັບທາງເຂດເໜືອ ກໍ່ສາມາດນຳເອົາກອນລຳຂອງພວກໝໍລຳໃຕ້ ມາຢັບກໍ່ໄດ້ສະບາຍ ໝໍລຳໃຕ້ນຳເອົາກອນຢັບຂອງໝໍຢັບທາງເໜືອ ໄປລຳກໍ່ໄດ້ສະບາຍ ຕ່າງແຕ່ສຳນຽງເທົ່ານັ້ນ

[20] This is a Sanskrit term, being of the same origin as the Indonesian term *kachappi*. In northeast Thailand this instrument is commonly referred to as *phiin*, derived from the Sanskrit *vina* (Miller 1985a:17).

[21] This term also applies to the same instrument in Thailand and Cambodia musical ensembles.

[22] For example, Duang Phaeng referred to *khap som* in her interview on 22/6/99.

[23] These two names may refer to the one genre.

[24] I recorded a performance of *khap meej* in January 1999 at the MIC office in Paksan, Bolikhamsai province.

[25] These include cassettes issued by LS (Lao Song) Promotion and a 1972 recording obtained from Lao National Radio.

[26] *cêt* means 'seven' and *pèèt* means 'eight'

[27] See photographs in Condominas (1975:268, 266), Meyer (1930:24), Jean-Renaud (1930:98), among others.

[28] Since all *khaen* pipes are tuned by the process of cutting notches within the pipe wall, the physical length of a pipe is not necessarily its speaking length. For example, the R-1 and L-1 pipes of a *khaen* are always the longest, however, neither of them produces the lowest pitch on the instrument. A longer series of pipes, however, will enable the *khaen* maker to produce a *khaen* in which the pipes can have a longer speaking length, and therefore a lower relative pitch to a *khaen* made from shorter pipes.

[29] The first two notes appear as capital letters to identify them as belonging to the lower octave.

[30] In practice the size of the interval was found to vary considerably from instrument to instrument and from ensemble to ensemble.

[31] Note that these two terms appear to be of Isan origin. The labels *san* 'short' and *ñaaw* 'long' refer to the singing style in which the text is delivered, with the *san* scale used for more rapid syllabic delivery in *lam thaang san*, and *ñaaw* for melismatic delivery often in parlando-rubato in *lam thaang ñaaw* (Miller 1985a:105 & 146). Miller derived the scale names from these two generic names.

[32] Sutton (2000:97-98) notes that the meaning of mode here is somewhat loose for *khaen* music and a number of other Southeast Asian musics with the criteria including "hierarchical weight of individual tones within a particular scale, melodic contour (especially at cadential points), pitch level of melodic contours, accompanying drones, tone clusters and final tones, as well as associative criteria such as mood, appropriate time of performance and place or culture of origin".

[33] The position of Tai Studies has strong echoes with pan-Thai claims of former Thai Prime Minister Phibun Songkram that were mentioned in the previous chapter.

[34] That Luang replaced the communist hammer and sickle on the Lao crest in 1992, thus only those banknotes designed since then, the 1000, 2000 and 5000 kip notes have the new crest.

[35] Many of the *khap-lam* arrangements I learnt through the NSMD were not the same as the patterns played by *mohkhaen* who specialised in particular *khap-lam* genres but were based upon modern, popular arrangements.

[36] This has only been possible in recent times as the government in Beijing have allowed some minority groups a degree of political and cultural freedom.

[37] Enfield and Evans (1998:11) have noted how linguists such as Dixon have called into question the model of a language 'family tree', saying that relationships among languages are often the result of intensive language contact, rather than descendants of a historical proto-language.

Chapter 4

LAO MUSIC: AN UNDER-RESEARCHED FIELD

This chapter presents an overview of literature pertaining to Lao *khap-lam* music. In general, the amount of useful information contained within the literature is sparse because, until very recently, research into Lao music has been of a lesser quality and quantity than that of other aspects of Lao culture and history. A range of topics, all relating to aspects of Lao vocal music, are covered in this review including, poetry, general culture, geography, politics, anthropology and history and a brief review of recent recordings of Lao vocal music is also included at the end of the chapter.

The vocal music traditions which originated in Lao village culture are the focus of the thesis, not the classical, largely court-based music tradition. Therefore, this review does not consider the few available works about the classical tradition, except where they help to shed light upon the development of scholarship on Lao music. It is possible to largely exclude the Lao classical tradition from this review, because the two traditions are radically different and must be explored on their own merits. All aspects of the classical tradition differ from the *khap-lam* tradition: the tuning of instruments, the scales used, ensembles, and the contexts in which they were/are performed (see Miller 1998a:353-360). Lao classical music, known as *pêêng laaw deem* (ເພງລາວເດີມ) 'original Lao compositions',[1] is based upon two ensembles, the *sêêp ñaj* (ເສບໃຫຍ່) and the *sêêp nòòj* (ເສບນ້ອຍ), known as *piiphaat* (ปี่พาท) and *mahooli* (มะโหฺรี) in Vientiane and Thailand. The Lao classical tradition is part of a broader musical tradition, encompassing the classical traditions of Thailand and Cambodia, although there is debate over what distinguishes the Lao and Thai traditions (Miller 1998a:353-354). In the old royal capital of Luang Prabang, classical music was attached to the royal court, providing entertainment at festivals and various ceremonies and rituals. It also accompanied theatre, most notably the Lao version of the Ramayana, the Pha Lak Pha Lam (ພະລັກພະລາມ) (see Mahoney 1994).

Classical music had a mostly aristocratic audience, although at larger festivals commoners had the opportunity to hear it. After 1975, this close association with royalty led to it being condemned as decadent aristocratic culture by the new socialist government. This perception was also reinforced by the parallel tradition that had emerged in Vientiane

in the late 1950s at the Natasin school. The Natasin tradition was also considered as an aristocratic art because its teachers had all received their training from Thai musicians in Bangkok, connecting them to the Thai monarchy. Consequently, Lao classical music ceased to be performed, and the musicians and teachers left as refugees for the USA and France. However, since the early 1990s, classical music has been revived by the government, and is now played at official functions and taught at the NSMD (Mahoney 1995), but the court-based ensemble of Luang Prabang has not been revived.[2]

To assist the discussion of how research ideas and agendas have developed since Laos was colonised by the French, I divide the past into three periods of Southeast Asian scholarship, loosely based upon the periodisation identified by Kartomi for Indonesia and the Malay world (1995:367), as follows: high colonial (mid 19th century to World War Two), late colonial (World War Two to the America-Vietnam War), and the post-colonial period (from the end of the America-Vietnam war in 1975 to the present). The last period can be further broken down into the socialist (1975-1986) and post-socialist periods (1986 to the present). I have omitted Kartomi's early colonial period because Laos was not colonised until 1887. I have also extended the length of the high colonial period (and thereby shortened the late colonial period), having it end at World War Two (WW II) rather than World War One because few significant developments, historical or scholarly, distinguish the period between the two World Wars. Although an indigenous Lao scholarship began to emerge in the mid 1930s, I have chosen WWII as the pivotal period because it coincides with the national renovation campaign begun in 1941 (see chapter 2). The campaign marked the beginnings of Lao nationalism and the consolidation of an indigenous scholarly elite whose impact is still felt in Laos today.

The late colonial period saw Laos gain independence from France in 1953, after which time Lao politics became fragmented, and a communist movement began its push for power. Although Laos was independent, Lao scholarship was still heavily influenced by French ideas, and the political situation became mired in the American-Vietnam war. The USA, dubbed 'neo-colonialists' by the Lao communists, frequently interfered in Lao domestic politics, while the communists benefited from the political and military support of the Vietnamese. The late colonial period saw the beginnings of serious Western scholarship on Lao culture, bringing an improvement in quality compared to the writings of the high colonial period. However, the declaration of the Lao PDR in 1975 marked the beginning of the post-colonial period, and the cessation of all Western scholarship on Laos.

For the next eleven years until 1986, few Westerners were permitted inside Laos, and Lao research served the political aims of the times. After 1986, the situation began to change as socialism was abandoned by the Lao government, and the country reopened to the West, allowing researchers access.

Pre-Colonial Literature

To date, no pre-colonial Lao accounts of the classical court or village *khap-lam* traditions have been located by Lao or Western researchers. Miller, in his work on the Lao vocal music of northeast Thailand, points out, however, that some of the "most interesting documents" concerning Lao folk music comes from the above mentioned accounts from the Siamese court of King Mongkut (Rama IV) (Miller 1985a:37) (see chapter 3). No other documents in Lao or Thai appear to exist. This lack of detailed written information concerning Lao vocal music places it alongside other mainland Southeast Asian folk music traditions, the oral basis and relatively low status of which, have precluded the compilation of written information on musical theory and performance practice. David Morton has also noted that "almost no information is available on the Thai music of the past" and that much of what is known is not particularly old, dating from the 19th and early 20th centuries (Morton 1968:1). Indeed, the dearth of detailed historical information about musical traditions of any sort is typical of Southeast Asia (Sutton 2000:95).

The numerous tales of the traditional Lao literary canon that form the structural and thematic basis of sung *khap-lam* texts, are, however, well preserved. These manuscripts survived because the literary tradition, which was widespread across the former territory of Lane Xang, was dispersed throughout the palm-leaf manuscript libraries of village and town temples. Few of these documents, however, are older than one hundred years because the palm-leaves upon which they were written rapidly perish in the tropical climate. Preservation of these tales was facilitated by copying them on a regular basis. As each copy wore out and decayed, young novices and monks would make replacement copies, during which numerous mistakes and changes to the text were made, some deliberate, some accidental (cf. Koret 1999). Traditional literature is integral to the creation of Lao *khap-lam* texts, both structurally and thematically. In this regard, the existence of a significant body of indigenous literature relevant to vocal music exists, but there is nothing concerning musical or performative aspects.

The High Colonial Period (1867-1940)

The earliest accounts of Laos were those published by French explorers in the second half of the 19th century. Possibly the earliest French description of Lao vocal music is one made by Francis Garnier in his 1873 report on the Mekong Exploration Commission of 1867 led by Doudert de Lagrée, who died during the expedition (Garnier 1996a; 1996b; Delaporte and Garnier 1998). His description, which follows, reveals that the performance he witnessed almost 140 years ago has a number of elements in common with my description of a performance at the beginning of this thesis. These are, a vocal music sung to the accompaniment of the *khaen*, the serving of alcohol, dancing on the part of the singer, the use of bawdy verses, and interaction between audience members and the performer.

> The next day I took a walk which gave me sweeter memories. In the evening I strolled dreamily along the path that leads to a neighbouring hamlet. The road was lined with great mangrove and tamarind trees with their light foliage; the plumes of palms and big bamboo trees swayed in the wind. My attention was drawn to the sound of a chant accompanied by a musical instrument: I approached and saw, under an old, ruined roof, some twenty men, farmers or oarsmen, sitting close to each other. In the background, two or three hill tribesmen hid as well as they could and barely dared to show themselves. In the middle, there was a singer and a musician who accompanied him by playing the Laotian instrument called *khèn*, the soft and melancholic sounds of which recall the low notes of a [sic] oboe played very softly. Some of these locals had already come to look at the Frenchmen in town. They thronged around me, made me sit in the best place and the musicians took up their chants with a new zeal. Cups full of rice wine were served to refresh the thirsty artists or the audience. Some of them held large flares in their hands which lent a reddish tinge to the copper skin of those present. The singer stretched his naked arms up in the air and rhythmically moved his hands. From time to time, he addressed himself to one of the assistants and improvised some pleasantries which made the crowd laugh. They applauded by shouting loudly and by gesturing when he made some sly remark. While everyone was listening, two women, one old and wrinkled, the other young, pretty and very well-built, had come closer and closer to look at the foreigner. They seemed to enjoy the spectacle and they were soon in the first row. Suddenly, the singer signalled with one hand to the listeners and with his other he indicated the two curious women and addressed them, no doubt using a few very saucy words, because my embarrassed and red-faced villagers fled then and there, running all the way to their houses. (Garnier 1996a:208)

Following Garnier's account, it was not until the turn of the 20th century that brief articles about Lao music began to sporadically appear. These were mostly written by

members of French academic organisations such as the École Française d'Extrême-Orient, founded in Saigon in 1898, and the Societe des Etudes Indochinoises, founded in 1883. Although a number of articles and a few books on Lao music were published by French authors from the turn of the 20th century until World War Two, none gave a comprehensive account of Lao music (Lefèvre-Pontalis 1896; Maynard 1904; Dedebet 1908; Brengues 1904; Knosp 1922; Guillemet 1923; de Gironcourt 1942). For the most part, these publications reflected many of the values and methods of colonial scholarship, frequently romanticising the Lao and their cultural materials and practices. In relation to music, the early scholars focussed upon two topics: the music of the *khaen* (although no comprehensive account of it was given until the 1970s), and the *phañaa* poems used in village courting rituals, which they usually labelled as 'the courts of love'. Descriptions of *khap-lam* genres were very brief, with some writers likening *mohlam* to French troubadours, as exemplified in the excerpt below:

> Voilà les vrais *Mo-lam*, ceux qui au Laos comme dans tous le pays du monde représentent la tradition. Ils sont l'analogue de ce qu'était en Grèce les aédes créateurs du cycle homérique, ou nos trouvères ou troubadours en France. (Brengues 1904:590)

French scholars who thought the *khap-lam* genres were analogous to Homerian epic tales, were most probably referring to the now-extinct genre of *lam phùun* (ລຳພື້ນ). In this genre, a single male singer performed a story from the Lao literary canon to an audience, usually over several consecutive evenings (Miller 1985a:40-42). At the turn of the 20th century this genre was still popular throughout Laos and northeast Thailand, but suffered a dramatic decline after World War Two. However, in the 1950s the genre reinvented itself in response to changing audience tastes. It blended aspects of Thai *like* theatre to produce *lam lùang* (ລຳເລື່ອງ) in Laos and *mohlam muu* (ໝໍລຳໝູ) in northeast Thailand (Miller 1985a:78). Today, only the Lao genre of *lam lùang* survives, with a number of private troupes and one state-operated troupe working in Laos, while in northeast Thailand *mohlam muu* has been completely overpowered by a new genre, *lam sing* (ລຳຊິ້ງ) (Miller 1998b).

Few Western scholars in Indochina during the high colonial period showed an interest in the region's performing arts, concentrating instead upon religious, literary and anthropological studies; an observation that can be confirmed by examining the articles in any French-produced journal from the first half of the century, such as *Revue Indochinoise* (first published in 1893), or the *Bulletin de la Societe des Etudes Indochinoises* (first

published in 1883). Consequently, the early scholars failed to produce any definitive studies that can now be used as a reliable historical yardstick by which to make diachronic assessments of Lao music. Their descriptions of Lao music were sketchy, and did not attempt any classification of regional *khap-lam* genres nor did they provide any significant detail of musical structures.

Scholars of the high colonial period were influenced by the theories and methodologies of the natural sciences, which led them to produce the "positivistic-tending scholarship of the day" (Kartomi 1995:369). One such approach was an evolutionary theory of musical development espoused by Jules Combarieu (1910). Combarieu postulated that music is subject to a process of evolution similar to that of the natural world. Music, in the Western world, was viewed as having progressed from the simple rhythms that dominated "primitive music" to the highly organised orchestra, in which each instrument's part was carefully recorded in notation (Combarieu 1910:305-306). The two 'primitive' stages of musical evolution were: i) magic and incantations, in which rhythm is the dominant element and words are meaningless, ii) religious music, in which lyricism and melodic invention are developed. Following these two stages was the most evolved stage of art music, which is characterised first by the symphony orchestra and later by opera (Combarieu 1910:98-102).

In addition, harmony and counterpoint were considered as superior musical expressions, placing the polyphonic Western symphonic music ahead of heterophonic traditions, such as those of Southeast Asian orchestras and ensembles. By following the evolutionary model, Western scholars could believe that Western symphonic music was the highest stage of musical evolution yet attained by humans. Consequently, early Western scholars could equate the music of the royal courts throughout Southeast Asia, often based upon large ensembles and some with written notation, with Western art music, leading them to presuppose court traditions to be superior to rural, orally-transmitted folk music traditions which usually used fewer musicians and instruments. These views found expression in French scholars' equating Lao vocal music traditions with medieval European wandering minstrels. These evolutionary theories were still prevalent in Lao music scholarship of the late colonial period, as we shall see in the following section.

Kartomi (1995:366) has noted that the research agendas of European scholars "complied with the social, economic and political priorities of the colonial powers and associated local court-centred artistic interests, though not always consciously". Early

French studies of Lao culture reflected a French historiography that acknowledged the former greatness of the kingdom of Lane Xang but "portrayed the Lao as a people under threat, needing the continued protection of France just to survive" (Stuart-Fox 1997:2). A significant amount of early French scholarship in Laos centred upon the activities of the royal court at Luang Prabang, where the French had first established their presence in Laos.

Another common theme in the study of European folk music during the high colonial period was a tendency to adopt a theoretical approach that was "associated with romantic nationalism and a quest for the natural and the pure" (Cooley 1997:9). French authors certainly adopted this approach in Laos. Romanticism was used as a vehicle to conjure images of a Lao past, designed to establish a basis for the existence of Laos as an entity separate from Siam. The end of the high colonial period was marked by French encouragement of Lao nationalist sentiment through the national renovation movement. This approach suited the political agenda of the French colonialists at the time, who wished to repudiate any Thai claims of sovereignty over Lao territory, whilst validating their own position as protectors of Laos. However, these nationalistic and naturalist themes were retained well into the late colonial period, because they suited the Lao scholars who had begun to formulate concepts of Lao national culture during the national renovation movement. Notions of a "natural and pure" culture formed part of this process, by which they could make further distinctions between the cultural materials and practices of the Lao and those of the Siamese.

The Late Colonial Period (1941-1975)

The late colonial period in Laos began with the national renovation movement, which marked the emergence of Lao nationalist thought as well as Lao scholarship. The early Lao scholars were concerned with Lao language, literature, and history, producing well-researched and considered publications on a variety of topics (e.g. Katay 1943; Sila 1935; 1961). Members of the Comité Littéraire Lao, including Pierre Nginn, Sila Viravong, Kou Aphay and Bong Souvannavong were responsible for much of this work (Enfield 1999:265). Although the Comité was not officially formed until 1951, its core members had been together since the national renovation movement began ten years earlier (Ivarsson 1999:73). The Comité's work on literature and its attempts at standardisation of the Lao language, were integral to a growing awareness of national identity among the Lao

elites. Lao literature was a vehicle by which Laos could assert its nationalist credentials and prove that her culture (in this case Lao language, literature, and history) had attained an "advanced state" or *khuam caleen* (ຄວາມຈະເລີນ), as Sila described it (Koret 1999:250).

The influences of the natural sciences upon the Comité's agenda of scholarship was apparent. Possession of a national literature was viewed as an essential credential behind the claim for advanced nation status. The Comité's efforts resulted in the restoration and publication of numerous literary texts from the canon of traditional literature, these mostly comprised Buddhist Jataka tales. It also resulted in the creation of the first grammar for the Lao language, which included Sila's rules for Lao versification (see chapters 6 and 7). This step marked the beginning of a modern analytical literary scholarship, which largely replaced the earlier indigenous scholarship that was more intuitive and interpretive in its approach (cf. Koret 1994a).

The links between nationalist sentiment, language and the development of print literature has been explored in depth by Benedict Anderson. He noted that literacy and certain forms of literature, in particular the novel and the newspaper, have been a motivating force for establishing nationalist movements throughout the world. These standardised forms of written literature assist a population to become an "imagined community" through the sharing of common ideas expressed in a common language (Anderson 1983); something oral forms of communication cannot do because they are prone to regional variation and are not able to be standardised.[3]

The first Western style melodies (i.e. marching tunes and simple song melodies using a seven step diatonic scale) composed by Lao composers appeared between 1941 and 1945, including Lao Huam Samphan (ລາວຮ່ວມສຳພັນ) and Lao Houam Vong (ລາວຮ່ວມວົງ) by Thongdy Sounthone Vichit. Outama Chounlamany, later the director of the Neo Lao Hak Saat (the Lao Patriotic Front) music troupe and school in Sam Neua, composed the perennial favourite, Champa Muang Lao (ຈຳປາເມືອງລາວ), as well as Sao Noum (ຊາວໜຸ່ມ), and Vientiane Muang Ngaam (ວຽງຈັນເມືອງງາມ) (Kham-Ouane 2000). Some of these songs were published in the *Lao Nhay* newspaper during the early 1940s, and may also be found in the recent publication *Five Eras of Lao Songs* (ເພງລາວຫ້າສະໄໝ) (Department of Fine Arts 1991). Mostly these were short, patriotic pieces, possibly intended as a sign that Laos too could produce 'advanced' artistic compositions as befitted the nationalist dialogue of

the time. Many of these songs, produced under the auspices of the Laotienne Artistique et Sportive, with Bong Souvannavong as its president, are still popular today, and are included in the text books used at the NSMD, as well as played by ensembles in restaurants that cater to the high end of the tourism market. The national anthem was also composed by Thongdy Sounthone in the early 1940s. After the change of government in 1975, the melody was retained but the lyrics were rewritten to reflect the socialist aspirations of the new government.

The activity surrounding musical composition and performance in the early 1940s, was not complemented by a similar trend in music research. From the start of WWII, only one publication addressing Lao music appeared; several pages in de Gironcourt's (1942) survey of music in French Indochina presented brief transcriptions of Lao melodies, but little else. Like many other French scholars of his time, de Gironcourt gave Lao music a cursory examination, preferring instead to concentrate upon the musics of Cambodia and Vietnam. It was not until the mid-1950s that music scholarship re-emerged with two publications: one by Souvanna Phouma, a Lao prince and politician; the other by ethnomusicologist Alain Danielou, known primarily for his work on Indian music. Comments in these articles indicate that much of the thinking which characterised the Western research of the high colonial period retained some currency in Laos during the late colonial period.

Souvanna, in his article *Music of Laos*, gave a very brief overview of Lao music and musical instruments, featuring transcriptions of Lao melodies taken directly from de Gironcourt's 1942 publication. It appeared twice, once in the *Music Academy Journal* in 1958 and again in Rene de Berval's landmark book on Laos and Lao culture, *Kingdom of Laos. The land of a million elephants and the white parasol* the following year (Souvanna 1958; 1959). Souvanna's article is of particular interest because it appears to be the first treatise on Lao music by a Lao. It exemplifies the mindset of the French-educated Lao elite of the time, which was greatly influenced by colonial French scholarship. It is worth taking a little time to examine his work closely, since it highlights many of the high colonial attitudes towards Lao vocal music that inhibited comprehensive studies of Lao music from being undertaken. A feature of Souvanna's article is his reference to Combarieu's evolutionary theory. By the 1950s, most Western scholars considered such theories to be dated, criticising their assumptions that change is an automatic unfolding process, which cannot explain sudden breaks with the past (Allen 1962:266).

The general tone adopted by Souvanna is a mix of apology for Lao music and romanticism about the delights it offers. He refers to *khap-lam* genres as a "great cult of vocal music in Laos", noting that its "poverty of melodic invention generally derives from the systematic importance of the words" (Souvanna 1959:91). Like French authors before him, Souvanna remarks that vocal music features tales of legendary heroes or themes of love, with the following romanticised musing:

> Is anything more melodious than the delightful melody of the Khena [sic.] alternating with the notes of love-songs falling from young lips into the limpid night? (Souvanna 1959:91)

Souvanna also embraces Combarieu's evolutionary theory of musical development, placing Lao music at the beginning of the third stage, the emergence of art music. The compositions found in Lao music are, he states:

> ...little more than a repetition of very short musical phrases faintly reminiscent of the flourishes and ritournelles of the Middle Ages. (Souvanna 1959:89-90)

This repetition, coupled with the singer's frequent use of nonsense syllables to prolong notes or complete rhymes, led Souvanna to suggest that vocal music still exhibits features of magical music, Combarieu's first stage of musical evolution. Thus, Souvanna concludes, Lao music has not yet progressed beyond the entertainment phase and is still to develop "individual expression" and "naturalism", the remaining two phases of the third evolutionary stage. The importance of individual expression as a sign of development, is a theme which appears earlier in the article, when Souvanna comments that certain Lao melodies "are doubtless the work of highly gifted composers whose names are now lost" (he names "the Thum" i.e. *khap thum*, "the Siphan-Don" i.e. *lam siphandon*, and "the Sut-Sa-Nen" i.e. *suutsanèèn* among others) (1959:90). Such a statement reflects how little was known about the processes of oral transmission at that time. Souvanna concludes with the opinion that Lao classical music is more "evolved" than vocal music, therefore "only its [Laos'] instrumental music deserves detailed study" (1959:92).

Alain Danielou's *La Musique du Cambodge et du Laos* was also disparaging of Lao music. It focussed upon the classical music of Cambodia, treating Lao classical music as a poor cousin of the Cambodian tradition, rather than acknowledging its unique Lao characteristics (Danielou 1957). In a tenuous analysis, Danielou posited an Indian source for Cambodian and Lao tunings and scales, an analysis strongly refuted by David Morton in his book *The Traditional Music of Thailand* (Morton 1968:22). Miller and Jarernchai

also took exception to Danielou's thesis in a review of a recording of Lao music produced by Danielou:

> Danielou's peculiar ethnocentrism relates everything, not to Europe, but to India. It would appear that the scales are Indian, the singing styles are Indian, and even the instruments. While Indian influence on Indochinese culture is not to be denied, there is no evidence of direct Indian influence on Lao music; Danielou does not justify his assertions. (Miller and Jarernchai 1980:129)

Despite the title of this work, Danielou paid scant attention to Lao classical music. Nor did he make more than passing mention of *khap-lam* folk genres. Apparently he included reference to the *khap-lam* tradition only because of its intimate connection to the music of the *khaen*, an instrument which had long attracted the attention of Westerners, due to its perceived uniqueness. In all, Danielou devoted one cursory paragraph, reproduced below, to the repartee singing of *khap-lam*, and did not attempt to analyse the texts or even the musical genres.

> Dans la musique vocale il existe au Laos deux genres de compositions. La première, célébrant les exploits de héros légendaires, se développe en improvisations. La seconde, ayant pour thème l'amour, est faite de phrases rythmées, ornées parfois de vocalises, alternées entre un chanteur et une chanteuse. On intercale souvent des syallbes dénuées de sens pour allonger la phrase muicale et compléter la rime. Au Laos, le khène suit le chant dans l'accompagnement. (Danielou 1957:16)

Danielou classified two vocal music genres on the basis purely of their textual themes: the telling of epic tales and love themes; in doing so he failed to acknowledge that Lao vocal music is performed in a number of distinct regional musical genres. In the above excerpt, Danielou adds nothing to the themes identified by Brengues over fifty years before.

Two articles by the Lao scholar Thao Abhay Nhouy, relating to textual aspects of *khap-lam* music, appeared in de Berval's *Kingdom of Laos* (1959a; 1959b). In the first article "Versification", which is essentially a summary of Sila's work, he explains the structures of Lao poetic verse, noting that it is designed to be read aloud to an audience. The second, much briefer article, "Courts of Love and Poetry" is of interest because, like Souvanna's article above, it shows that the leading Lao scholars of the late colonial, post-independence period (after 1953) were struggling to shake off their colonial legacy. The title serves as a preview of a somewhat romanticised picture in which Abhay portrays the traditional courting poetry called *phañaa* (ພະຍາ):

> At that happy time when Laos, with tranquil eyes, watched the hours slip past, tradition allowed that every young girl of over sixteen might work alone on the verandah in the evenings, whilst her parents slept. And whether the surroundings shone silver in the moon-light, or whether, submerged in darkness, the village yielded to its fear of malicious *Phi*, still the *phusao's* spinning-wheel would creak and groan and make heard its call, whilst down the paths the *phubaos* on their round would attune their lovesongs to the *khene*. (Abhay 1959a:206)[4]

Abhay alludes to the strong links between the *phañaa* forms and *khap-lam* texts which are still to be found today. However, he provides the reader with little more than an idyllic story about traditional village courtship routines. Similar descriptions of Lao courtship centred upon *phañaa* appeared in other French works, such as Ajalbert's 1926 novelette *Chansons de Sao Van Dii*, which placed French translations of *phañaa* poems into a fictional story about a young Lao woman in rural Laos (Ajalbert 1926). Miller and Jarernchai claim that French writers confused *phañaa* poems, used in the 'courts of love' with the male-female love repartee of *khap-lam* (Miller and Jarernchai 1980:126). However, my own research reveals that *phañaa* are considered by many present-day Lao *mohlam* to be the basis of *khap-lam* repartee,[5] with much of the love and courting banter incorporating a number of *phañaa* poems (see chapter 7). Furthermore, the relationships between *phañaa* and traditional Lao literature are strong; they have been intimately linked for generations (Koret 2000:218-219). Since *khap-lam* texts have a similarly strong link to traditional Lao literature, it should come as no surprise that *phañaa* and *khap-lam* texts are considered by performers to belong to a single literary tradition, termed *vannakhadii laaw* (ວັນນະຄະດີລາວ) 'Lao literature'. The boundary between *phañaa* and *khap-lam* poetry is further blurred, since *phañaa* occur as both spoken and sung forms depending on the context and on the genre being performed.[6]

The late colonial period in Laos was not marked by an increase in serious musical scholarship, either on the part of Lao or Western scholars. Music remained in the shadows while the quality of scholarship in other disciplines improved dramatically. Anthropological studies by Archaimbault (1964; 1971; 1973), Condominas (1968; 1975) and Halpern (1958; 1964a) are widely accepted as generally reliable accounts of events and social conditions in Laos' recent past. However, the European outlook that the Lao elites adopted towards their own culture did not assist the development of music research. Their preoccupation with signs of 'advancement' in Lao literature and art led them to overlook the largely oral-based *khap-lam* tradition. Indeed, as Koret (1999) has indicated,

Lao scholars ignored much of the oral basis of their own literary tradition too, through the imposition of a prescribed set of rules and search for "correct" versions of tales which adhered to the prescribed rules (cf. Abhay 1959b:358). However, as the late colonial period drew to a close, research by Lao and Western scholars entered a new phase.

The Close of the Late Colonial Period

Considering the attraction that the *khaen* held for early French scholars, it is surprising that the first in-depth study of the instrument did not appear until (1970), when a Lao musician, Kham-Ouane Rattanavong, produced a bilingual French-English 'how-to-play' manual, *Apprenez la Khene*. This volume was also serialised over several issues of the *Bulletin Amis de Royaume Lao* of the same year. Kham-Ouane's work was soon followed by a Lao publication containing numerous "classical" Lao melodies with a tri-lingual introduction in Lao, French and English (Rangsy 1972). In spite of the label "classical", many of the melodies included in Rangsy's book were, in fact, composed only thirty years beforehand during the national renovation movement, including some of those mentioned above. Each author took a slightly different approach. Kham-Ouane preferred to use Western notation and provided a mixture of *khap-lam* accompaniments, Western melodies and Lao compositions in Western style, whereas Rangsy presented only Lao "classical" compositions in cipher notation.

It was not until the early 1970s that research into Lao *khap-lam* music and song texts took a systematic approach to analysis and classification. At this time ethnomusicologist Terry Miller and linguist Carol Compton simultaneously conducted separate fieldwork on aspects of Lao folk music and texts; Miller pursuing the bulk of his fieldwork among ethnic Lao musicians in northeast Thailand (the region also known as Isan), while Compton worked in the southern Lao town of Pakse. The resulting publications adopt very different approaches. Miller explores the technical aspects and social contexts of *khaen* playing and *lam* singing, in a text emphasising musicological aspects. Miller's 1985a analysis is largely couched in Western terminology (see Kartomi 1986), a critique that might be applied to his more recent work as well (Miller 1998a). In contrast to Miller, Compton examined two selected texts from the *lam siphandon* genre,[7] focussing on linguistic and poetic devices employed by singers in their composition of the texts (Compton 1977; 1979).

Compton's textual analysis was the first of its kind. One criticism of her study is that it concentrated on surface structures only and avoided examination of the deeper aspects of textual content, such as the various levels of parallelism that can be found in a text (see Koret 1994a). However, Compton largely met her stated aim of providing "a description of one form of oral literature" (1979:2). The study is necessarily limited to a single, truncated performance in which each *mohlam* sings only two rounds because, at all-night performances, this amount of text would be sung in the first hour or so, but Compton did not fully explain this situation. The inclusion of more detail on the social contexts in which *lam siphandon* was performed during the early 1970s, would have provided useful historical reference points for this thesis. In spite of these limitations, Compton's work still stands as the only serious attempt at a detailed analysis of a *khap-lam* text to date.

Through continuous publication and commentary, Miller has established himself as the main authority on Lao vocal music. However, due to political circumstances in Laos very little of his work has been based upon systematic fieldwork in Laos itself. Following his major study of Lao music in northeast Thailand (1985a), Miller's work largely dealt with the music of Lao refugees in the USA. These are useful as studies of the post-1975 Lao refugee diaspora in the *khap-lam* tradition. However, they have little relevance to the musical situation inside Laos today (e.g. Miller 1985b; 1985c). Little detail on performance practice and contexts inside Laos appeared in any of these studies, nor in the "Laos" entries he authored for the first *New Grove* encyclopedia, all of which were based upon his work in northeast Thailand (Miller 1980a). However, data for more recent studies (Miller 1998a; 1998b; 2000) is drawn from fieldwork conducted in 1991, a time when research inside Laos was still relatively difficult to organise and conduct. As a result the analysis was based entirely upon set-up performances lacking any cultural and social context since they were arranged by the Ministry of Information and Culture specifically for Miller to record. Nonetheless, these trips did allow him access to music and musicians who would have otherwise been inaccessible.

Miller's work naturally presents a Thai perspective on Lao music since the bulk of his work and experience centred upon ethnic Lao musicians in northeast Thailand. Evidence of his Thai perspective may be seen in a preference to use terminology based upon Thai rather than Lao pronunciation and idioms. For example, in the "Laos" chapter of the Southeast Asia volume of *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, Miller occasionally includes consonant clusters and consonant phonemes which occur in Thai but

not Lao (e.g. *khreuang bucha* should read *kheuang busa*) (Miller 1998a:340). He also misses the contrastive distinction that the Lao make between the palatal nasal phoneme /ñ/ and the palatal glide /j/, stating that *jaaw* (*yao*) 'long' is "sometimes pronounced *nyao* in Lao", when in fact it is always pronounced *ñaaw* (*nyao*) (Miller 1998a:339-340). This usage results from his early decision to romanise Lao by using Thai pronunciation or "spelling" for his study of Lao music in Isan (Miller 1985a:xx). This is an understandable decision in light of the lack of a standardised spelling for Isan dialects, which is also written using Central Thai script. However, this approach is one that is not justified when working in Laos, a language with its own writing system. Another cause of the Thai-like pronunciation of some terms, is the nature of Lao dialects in Isan which, as a result of prolonged and intense exposure to the Central Thai language, have incorporated more of its speech sounds and lexicon than have the Lao dialects spoken in Laos (cf. Enfield 1999:285; Smalley 1994:96).

Although these linguistic errors are not major problems in themselves, Miller's preference for Thai terms over Lao ones is likely to cause concern among Lao scholars who, following official guidelines, are continually at pains to present Lao culture and language as a separate entity from Thai culture (cf. Evans 1999b:6). Although there is no denying that the Thai language is exerting more influence upon Lao than ever before, opinion is divided among the Lao population as to whether this influence is benevolent or not. The Lao government is generally not in favour of promoting it, although they are finding it difficult to stem the tide (Enfield 1999:283-84; Hongthong 28/1/2001). Bearing Lao sensitivities in mind, I advocate representing local terminology and pronunciation as accurately as possible, otherwise small but important distinctions between closely related themes may be lost or overlooked.

Nevertheless, Miller's use of Isan terms is most useful when discussing *khaen* modes, because the Lao of Isan have developed a tradition of solo *khaen* playing for which a more consistent terminology has also developed. Using Isan names for the various *khaen* modes makes identification easier than is the case when using the vaguer Lao terms.[8] Since many Lao *khaen* players have become familiar with this terminology, particularly those players from the southern provinces, our use of these terms is acceptable because it does not impose a totally foreign taxonomy upon Lao music. However, more caution is required in the use of terminology pertaining to the more remote northern *khap-lam* genres which

are further removed from the Thai sphere of influence, and are accompanied by a different type of *khaen* (see chapter 3).

The Post-Colonial Period

Once Compton and Miller had completed their studies, opportunities for Western researchers to work inside Laos were cut short by the fall of the RLG and subsequent declaration of the Lao PDR in December 1975. This caused all research into Lao culture and society to come to a grinding halt. Between 1975 and 1986, very little independent research in any discipline was undertaken at all, apart from one or two investigations into the language and religion by Soviet scholars whose work has not received widespread distribution (Blagov 1991; Morev et al. 1979).[9] Grant Evans proved to be the exception when, in 1981, he was probably the first independent Western scholar to conduct field research inside the Lao PDR. The result was an in-depth study of Lao peasants and the effects of socialist policies upon their social and economic lives (Evans 1990; 1995). Evans acknowledges that he was "extremely lucky" to have had the opportunity to conduct field research in Laos at that time, but his movements were restricted to a number of villages within the Vientiane Municipality (Evans 1995:xxv).

Since the Lao government's abandonment of socialist tenets in 1986 (in practice, not officially), field research activity dealing with cultural, linguistic and anthropological topics inside Laos has gradually increased. Most early field research undertaken by Western scholars was conducted in connection with a variety of development projects sponsored by the United Nations or the aid organisations of various Western governments (e.g. Øvensen 1993; Trankell 1993). From the mid-1990s onwards, independent research has become easier as the Lao government, keen to establish and strengthen international links in areas other than economic assistance, relaxed internal travel restrictions from April 1994. Obtaining visas has also become much easier, especially with the rapid growth of tourism since the mid-1990s. Researchers, however, are still required to have a sponsoring institution and approval from the relevant government ministry for their project.

Following the trend of previous eras, music research in Laos seems to have progressed more slowly than it has in other disciplines. This state of affairs is confirmed by the absence of a chapter on music in *Laos: Culture and Society*, the first extensive publication on Lao culture in almost fifty years, which contains contributions from the fields of anthropology, linguistics, and literature studies (Evans 1999). Only Mahoney

(1995) and Jarernchai (1990) have produced detailed studies in English since 1975. A number of Japanese institutions, including the Kyoto Museum and private recording companies, have been pursuing projects concerning music in different parts of Laos, but I am yet to sight any English language publications detailing the outcomes of these Japanese sponsored projects. Outside of Laos, there has been a smattering of research into *khap-lam* texts as performed by ex-patriot Lao performers in France and the US (Johnston and Merrill 1993; Choron-Baix 1980; 1985). Like much of Miller's work, this is useful as comparative material but gives little information about the cultural and social significance of the genres as they are performed in Laos. These publications also provide useful information concerning the maintenance of tradition in overseas Lao communities, a topic that is worthy of continued extensive research. Finally, one less well-known work, a doctoral thesis in literature by Pheuiphanh Ngaosyvathn (1986), entitled *Khab et Lam: Theme et Structure* discusses relationships between text and context in *khap-lam*, but does not address musical aspects.

Recent Indigenous Lao Music Scholarship

All music research by Lao scholars is presently conducted from within the MIC, the sole organisation authorised to conduct such work. The departments within the MIC currently conducting music research are the Department of Fine Arts, the Department of Literature and Mass Culture, the National Library of Laos, and the Institute for Research on Culture (IRC). Unfortunately, very few studies from researchers belonging to these bodies have been published to date, as finances to fund research are scarce. The director of the IRC, Houmphanh Rattanavong, has written two articles, translated into English (Houmphanh 1992a; 1992b), which deal with political and historical aspects of Lao music. All other output to date has been in Lao and is not widely circulated.[10] Funding for a great deal of the music research conducted inside Laos in recent years has come from foreign organisations such as the Toyota Foundation of Japan and ASEAN. In 1998, the Fine Arts Department of the MIC was also actively involved in a number of international projects on traditional musics, the main one entitled "Sonic Orders in ASEAN Traditional Music", which was organised and funded by the ASEAN secretariat's Committee on Culture and Information (COCI).

To date, it is the Department of Literature and Mass Culture, not the Department for Fine Arts that has produced the majority of publications on *khap-lam* genres. Their focus, however, has been upon texts rather than musical or contextual features. Perhaps one

reason that the Department of Literature and Mass Culture has taken on much of the responsibility for *khap-lam* research is the government's classification of *khap-lam* as a form of mass culture (cf. Houmphanh 1992a). This official designation of *khap-lam* as the culture of the masses led to it being used extensively to disseminate LPRP policies in the post-1975 period. During the revolutionary years between 1976 and 1986, no analytical research into *khap-lam* was undertaken, the few publications that did appear were usually compilations of poems written by anonymous authors or by one or two well-known revolutionary poets like Sau Desa. Some of these compilations were loosely categorised as *kòòn lam pavatsaat* (ກອນລຳປະຫວັດສາດ) 'historical *lam* poems' (Sau 1996), which meant that they were about events in the communists' thirty-year struggle for power. The little commentary on *khap-lam* that appeared in texts published in the newly-formed Lao PDR focussed solely upon its role as a tool of the revolution. The following excerpt from the only major work on Lao literature from the revolutionary years (1975-1986), shows the politicised approach of the time:

> We promoted and expanded our precious heritage during the national democratic revolution to save the nation from the American imperialists and their lackeys. We may also say that poetic literature [*vannakhadii khap-lam*] has played a great part in revolutionary tasks. For example, mobilising the nation's masses in resolute solidarity, causing them to rise up against the imperialist invaders and build our nation. At present, *khap* and *lam* exist in many varieties that have the ability to greatly arouse listeners; they have become an efficient vehicle in the class struggle, and are a vital ingredient in the education and training of revolutionary thought, morals and practice for the Lao people, transforming them into new socialist man. (Bosaengkham and Buakaew 1984:142)[11]

Thus, *khap-lam* and the theatrical *lam lùang* genre were promoted as the art of the masses and used by the LPRP to disseminate its messages to the general population. Classical music, on the other hand, was condemned for its connection to the Lao aristocracy and suffered greatly as a consequence. However, it has since been rehabilitated and now occupies an important position in the official performances used to portray traditional Lao culture to an international audience (cf. Mahoney 1998). Of course, this rehabilitation has not been extended to the ensemble of the royal palace at Luang Phrabang.

Since 1998, MIC publications about *khap-lam* have begun to analyse selected texts which were acquired from individual *mohlam*, who gave them to MIC researchers (as is the case for much of Thongkham's book), or else transcribed from recordings of

performances (Kavin 1997:50). Texts are analysed in terms of poetic structures, normally in reference to a theoretical, ideal, formal structure (a matter which is discussed in detail in chapter 6). However, little analysis of content is attempted. Instead the sung texts are presented like a book of poetry for readers to read and appreciate. Musical aspects are largely ignored or, if included, given very brief treatment. For example, in a book of 497 pages Thongkham dedicates just 19 pages to musical transcriptions and a further seven to a sketchy musical description (Thongkham 1998:57-64, 478-497). Similarly, Kavin provides five pages of music transcription and a single page of musical description from a total of 108 pages in his book on the *khap ngeam* genre (Kavin 1997:35-41). The textual orientation of both books make clear that it is the literary aspects of the traditions that hold the highest status in Lao culture.

Contemporary Lao music scholarship appears to retain elements of Combarieu's evolutionary concepts of musical evolution, a sign of conceptual inertia, akin to the three ethnicities approach that has characterised ethnological description in Laos over the past one hundred years. This is hardly surprising, given the historically poor state of the Lao education system since colonisation and the restrictions on free thinking that have characterised education and intellectual pursuits under successive governments. The incorporation of socialist ideas is evident in all literature about *khap-lam* written by Lao scholars since 1975. The changes in *khap-lam* vocal music genres are described as advances or development, and couched in scientific terms. This approach can be traced to the early years of the Lao PDR when the three revolutions were instigated. These aimed to revolutionise the following three areas of the Lao economy and society: the relations of production, scientific and technical areas, and in ideology and culture (Stuart-Fox 1997:169)[12] (see chapter 2 of this thesis for more detail). The clearest example of the merging of evolutionary ideas and socialist notions of 'scientific' advancement are found in Phosikaew's (1991:9, 17, 22) book on the *khap-lam* genres of Savannakhet. in which the history of each genre is described in the following distinct stages:

> After researching and collecting data on the traditional art of *lam khon savan* we have determined four stages of development:
>
> 1. Reading of palm-leaf manuscripts (i.e. *aan nangsùù*).
> 2. Addition of the *khaen*.
> 3. Becoming known by the name *lam khon savan*.
> 4. Modification and blending of traditional ensmbles with Western ones. (Phosikaew and Bunteu 1991:9)[13]

Although these stages by no means misrepresent the probable development path of *khap-lam* genres, Phosikaew's explanation of the fourth stage reveals the Lao socialist preoccupation with "development", in which he notes that the post-1975 period saw *khap-lam* become a "stage art" *sinlapa wêêthii* (ສິນລະປະເວທີ). In his view, this made it equal to the arts of "other countries", because performers now stood upon a stage to perform. This meant that Lao *khap-lam* now possessed three principle features: *laksana saat* (ລັກສະນະຊາດ) 'national character', *vithañaasaat* (ວິທະຍາສາດ) 'science', and *kaaw naa* (ກ້າວໜ້າ) 'progress' (Phosikaew and Bunteu 1991:13-14). Similar sentiments are also expressed by Thongkham in his treatise on *lam siphandon* (1998:74-79).

In the decade since Phosikaew's publication appeared, Lao government policy has changed direction. While the new, popular hybrid forms of *khap-lam* are there to stay, the Lao government has become more concerned with the promotion and maintenance of traditional performance practice as it attempts to rediscover and redefine Lao cultural tradition. Government manipulation of culture was evident at a concert I attended in September 1999. Staged jointly by the local office of the MIC and the Thai consulate in Savannakhet, a number of ensembles from various districts in Savannakhet performed together with several school groups from the neighbouring Thai province of Mukdahan. Phosikaew, now a senior official in the provincial government, took responsibility for ensuring that the Lao ensembles adhered to a specific performance format, supposedly representing tradition. This format ensured that all performers remained seated in a semi-circle facing the audience, wore 'traditional' costumes, and played only traditional instruments. During the concert a number of Lao performers and officials commented on the 'incorrect' performance practice of the Thai performers, many of whom were gaudy costumes and used amplified instruments.

Even at the start of the 21st century, Lao musical scholarship is clearly in its infancy. There is no formal training in music at university level. The sole Lao institution in which music is taught is the National School of Music and Dance (NSMD), a secondary school, not a tertiary institution. However, with the current program of expansion and development under way at the National University of Laos, it is likely that music will be added to the university's curriculum in the future. A number of MIC staff were trained in Bulgaria during the 1980s to masters level and have returned to work in the Ministry and its affiliated institutions, including the NSMD. More recently, Vietnam and Thailand have

provided opportunities for several scholars to further their studies in music at masters and doctoral level. The Institute of Cultural Research within the MIC, has a number of scholars who have written on music, including its director Houmphanh who is not a music specialist. As I write this thesis, the former director and deputy-director of the NSMD, both graduates from Bulgarian Universities, are completing master's degree programs at Mahidol University in Nakhon Phathom near Bangkok; one in music education, the other in ethnomusicology. The training of Lao teachers at post-graduate level in overseas universities is helping to improve the standard of training in Laos, which will in turn allow the music education system to develop.

Currently, the most significant program of music research in Laos of which I am aware is an archival project entitled Internal Systematisation of Traditional Music in the Lao PDR, *kaan cat labob phaaj naj dontii phùùn mùang naj sòò pòò pòò laaw* (ภาบจัดละบับบาย ในด็บตีพื้นเมืองใน ส.ป.ป.ลาอ), funded by the German government. The project is administered through the National Library of Laos, and appears to be a follow up project from the German Manuscript Preservation Project.[14] The aims of the traditional music project appear to be quite broad, focussing upon the documentation and archiving of instruments and music styles occurring within the Lao PDR (Jähnichen 2001; 2002).[15] To date the project has gathered a tremendous amount of material on the music of many minority groups; an encouraging sign that progress in this area is at last being made. Given the proclivity of the Lao government to direct its time and energies into lowland Lao culture it will be interesting to see if the interest in minority group music is sustained over the long term. The existence of this project, which began in 1998, was unknown to me whilst I was in Laos and I was extremely surprised to discover its existence only after I had left the country. Even more astounding was the fact that none of my Lao colleagues in the MIC and NSMD ever mentioned the project to me.

Recordings

This is a brief review of some of the more recent sound sources of Lao vocal music that are available. Six older compilation recordings have been reviewed by Miller and Jarernchai (1980) who noted the inaccuracy of information in the accompanying literature. They also lamented that the bulk of these recordings are unrepresentative of Laos, since they are mostly Thai or northeastern Thai compositions.

Inside Laos, the number of commercial recordings of Lao classical and folk music available is small, especially in comparison to other Southeast Asia nations like Indonesia and Thailand whose local recording industries issue a large selection of titles of numerous local genres. The industry in Laos issues cassette recordings of a variety of Lao genres, but very little traditional music of non-Lao ethnic groups (presumably because there is no market for it). These include pop versions of *khap-lam*, often marketed under the generic name of *lamvong*, and other popular music. Recordings of southern *khap-lam* genres are the most common, however, I purchased a number of cassettes with traditional arrangements of *khap sam neua* and *khap xieng khouang* during 1999 (see Plate 11). Unfortunately many of these are poorly recorded and therefore difficult to use for transcription and analysis.

Record companies outside of Laos and Thailand have issued a number of recordings of Lao music since 1995, although to my knowledge only two titles, *Songs of Lao* (performances of classical music by teachers from the NSMD) and *Lam Siphandon* (a recording of Acaan Vanna), both issued by the King Record company of Japan, are recordings of performers resident in Laos. Other recordings are either of ex-patriot performers based in France or the USA (Khampha 1999; Khamvong and Khamseung 1987), or reissues of the Lao music compilations reviewed by Miller and Jarernchai.

In 1999, a CD containing a selection of newly recorded solo *khaen* pieces, entitled *The Voice of the Khene* (Khampha 1999) was produced by Lao musicians based in Melun, France. It includes a number of well known solo *khaen* improvisations, as well as several accompaniment patterns from southern *khap-lam* genres, including *lam baan xok* and *lam salavan*. The same performers also participate in the activities of a music group called Molam Lao who have performed at World of Music And Dance (WOMAD) festivals in Britain and Europe. This group has recently collaborated with British dub bass player Jah Wobble, recording dub versions of several southern genres (Jah Wobble and the Invaders of the Heart 2000), setting a new direction for *khap-lam* within the music industry category of 'world music'.

Conclusion

A recent assessment of Lao music research noted that "musically, Laos is among the least researched nations in the world", and that "few scholars have paid attention to Lao music" (Miller 1998a:336). It has largely been the accidents of Lao history; a combination

of colonial neglect, warfare, and a secretive socialist government, that have kept Laos impoverished, retarded the development of an indigenous scholarship, and ensured that Laos has remained relatively unknown to outsiders. Although some aspects of Lao culture were systematically studied by Western scholars between the 1960s and early 1970s, including Halpern, Condominas, and Archaimbault, a serious study of any Lao music, vocal or classical, has been almost completely ignored. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the classical/court tradition was felt to be a sub-standard replica of the Thai and Cambodian traditions, and was therefore largely ignored. Secondly, the strong textual orientation of *khap-lam* vocal music makes a good knowledge of the Lao language essential, which few music researchers have possessed.

To date, Miller (1985a et.al) and his associate Jaremchai Chonpairot, remain the only researchers to have developed theories and methodologies for describing the music of the *khaen*, and the sung melodies of *khap-lam*. Miller (1985a:143-144) also made the first attempt to explain the nature of the relationship between lexical tone and melody in Lao music, as well as providing some insights into textual and thematic aspects. However, apart from several brief descriptions of musical structures of Lao genres (Miller 1998a; 2000), Miller's work is mostly concerned with the Lao music of northeast Thailand, and not that of Laos. Although based upon the same musical and textual structures, the *khap-lam* vocal music tradition of Laos is performed in very different social, political, and economic environment to the music of northeast Thailand.

Clearly there remains much to be learned about Lao *khap-lam* vocal music. Although there is an adequate theory of Lao music as a base from which to work, the Lao *khap-lam* genres (as opposed to Isan genres) are still largely unexplored and there is no research detailing contemporary performance practice and contexts of Lao *khap-lam*. A great deal more work also needs to be done in describing indigenous approaches to theorising about music and text compositions. Since systematic theorising about music is virtually unknown among Lao musicians and *mohlam*, extensive and prolonged fieldwork is required to gain the necessary insights into indigenous concepts of music and text.

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[1] A variation of this term is *dontii laaw deem* (ດົນຕີລາວເດີມ) 'original Lao music' (cf. Bond and Kingsavanh 1992)

[2] The court ensemble instruments are on display in the former palace at Luang Phrabang, now a museum.

[3] This fact, however, is disputable in the Lao context where the oral traditions of *khap-lam* were employed with good effect to disseminate political ideas.

[4] The terms *phusao* and *phubao* refer to young women and young men respectively. In my transcription system, these are written as *phuu saaw* and *phuu baaw*.

[5] Acaan Som (*khap ngeum*), Duang Phaeng, and Acaan Vanna (*lam siphandon*) all concur that *phañaa* are the basis for *khap-lam* texts.

[6] Singing for females in some genres is a relatively new phenomenon. Before females sang their rounds they used to answer the male's sung round with a short unaccompanied round of spoken *phañaa*, hence their title *moh tòòp phañaa*.

[7] Recently Miller (1998a:337) has suggested that the genre was *lam som*, however, Compton's description in her 1979 book can only be of *lam siphandon*.

[8] Even Thongkham in his book on *lam siphandon* lists a number of *khaen* modes using the Isan terms (1992:60-63).

[9] The Blagov book is held in the rare book collection of Humanities library at Monash University. Morev is held at the Menzies Library, Australian National University.

[10] For example Thongkham's book on *lam siphandon*, published in 1998 was not available from the state book store in 1999. The state book store is the best source for nearly every publication issued by a government ministry.

[11] The original text reads: ໂດຍເສີມຂະຍາຍມູນເຊື້ອ ອັນດີງາມຂອງມັນ ມາໃນສະໄໝເຮັດການປະຕິວັດວັດທະນະ
ປະຊາທິປະໄຕເພື່ອກູ້ຊາດຕ້ານຈັກກະພັດລ່າເມລິກາ ແລະ ລູ່ນ້ຳ
ອັນນະຄະດີປະເພດລຳກອນເວົ້າຕລອນກໍ່ໄດ້ປະກອບສ່ວນອັນໃຫຍ່ຫຼວງເວົ້າໃນພາລະກິດອັນຍິ່ງໃຫຍ່ຂອງການປະຕິວັດຢ່າງຫຼວງ
ຫຼາຍ ເປັນຕົ້ນແມ່ນການປຸກລະດົມຍົກລວຍໃຫ້ປວງຊົນທັ່ງວັດທະນາສາມັກຄີກັນເປັນຈິດໜຶ່ງໃຈດຽວກັນ
ລຸກຮື້ຍຶ້ນຕໍ່ສູ້ຕ້ານຈັກກະພັດຜູ້ຮຸກຮານ ແລະ ສ້າງສາບ້ານເມືອງ. ປະຈຸບັນນີ້ການຮັບ, ການລຳກໍ່ມີຫຼາຍຮູບການແຕກຕ່າງກັນ,
ສາມາດສ້າງຄວາມສະເທືອນໃຈ ຢ່າງຫຼວງຫຼາຍແກ່ຜູ້ເບິ່ງຜູ້ຟັງເປັນຢ່າງດີ
ພ້ອມກັນນັ້ນມັນກໍ່ກາຍເປັນພາຫະນະອັນມີປະສິດທິພາບໃນການຕໍ່ສູ້ຊົນຊັ້ນ ແລະ
ປະກອບສ່ວນຢ່າງຫຼວງຫຼາຍເຂົ້າໃນການສຶກສາອົບຮົມແນວຄິດຄຸນສົມບັດສິນທຳປະຕິວັດ ແລະ
ກໍ່ສ້າງໃຫ້ຄົນລາວກາຍເປັນຄົນໃໝ່ສັງຄົມນິຍົມ

[12] The LPRP saw the lack of mechanised modes of production in Laos as one of the major causes of peasants' misery (Evans 1995:41). Thus, scientific advancement became one of the most important facets of the revolution.

[13] The Lao text reads: ຜ່ານຈາກການຄົ້ນຄ້ວາເກັບກຳມູນສິນລະປະອັນລ້ຳຄ່າພື້ນເມືອງຄອນສະຫວັນນີ້
ເຫັນວ່າໄດ້ມີການຂະຫຍາຍຕົວຢູ່ 4 ໄລຍະຄ້ອຍກັນ: ໄລຍະ ການອ່ານຫຳນອງໜັງສືໜາ, ໄລຍະ ລຳປະກອບແຄນ, ໄລຍະ ປ່ຽນ
ຊື່ເອີ້ນທ່ວໆ ໄປ ມາເປັນລຳຄອນສະຫວັນ ແນ່ນອນ, ໄລຍະ ປັບປຸງເປັນວົງດົນຕີພື້ນເມືອງປະສົມກັບສາກົນ

[14] This project was also a cooperative project between the German government and the National Library of Laos.

[15] There are some preliminary details posted at the following web page http://www.fho-emden.de/~ukoch/internal/. Copies of Jähnichen's 2001 research report are also available from the National Library in Vientiane.

Chapter 5

TWO REGIONAL KHAP-LAM TRADITIONS: *LAM SIPHANDON* AND *KHAP NGEUM*

This chapter introduces three *khap-lam* genres: *lam siphandon*, *lam som*, and *khap ngeum*, which are further described and analysed in the following two chapters.[1] Some background historical information is provided as well as general information concerning the current status of each genre. This is followed by a discussion of contemporary aspects of performance practice and the socio-cultural context in which these three genres are performed. The discussion shows that there are distinct regional differences in the way performance is approached and conceptualised. The three musical genres are shown to belong to two regional traditions which are chiefly characterised by discrete performance practices. The paradigm presented in chapter 3 is expanded to accommodate this new category.

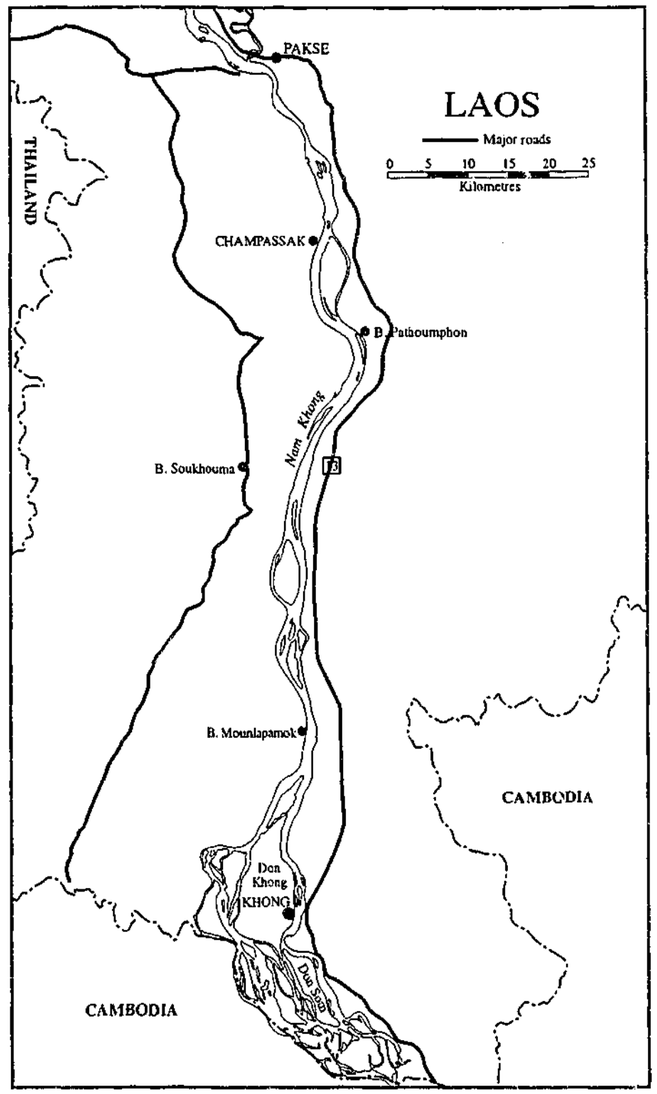
Lam Siphandon

Historical Background

The genre *lam siphandon* is named after the region of Siphandon in the far south-west of Laos where it is believed to have originated. The Siphandon region, some two hundred kilometres south of Pakse, is where the Mekong spreads out to reach its widest point, creating a wetland area with thousands of islands, similar in appearance to a river delta (see Map 2). The idyllic scenery of this vast wetland area changes dramatically in tune with the seasonal flooding and receding of the river. The Siphandon area is rich in fishing and the larger islands and river banks are perfectly suited for growing rice, vegetables and fruit crops. At the southernmost point of the Siphandon region stand two large waterfalls, *khòòn pha phêêng* (ຂອນພະເພງ), otherwise known as the Khone falls, and *lii phii* (ຮີ) which form the rapids that frustrated early French ambitions to create a new trade route into China (see Osborne 2000; Garnier 1996a; 1996b). Below these rapids, the Mekong narrows and flows south, cutting through Cambodia and into Vietnam, where it again expands as it meets the sea, forming the Mekong delta south of Ho Chi Minh City.

Khong island, or Don Khong (ดอนโขง), is the largest of the islands in Siphandon and is famous as the birthplace of many skilful *mohlam*, some of whom still live on the island. Duang Phaeng, probably Don Khong's most famous *mohlam*, moved north to Pakse in the early 1970s in order to pursue her career as a performer but her teacher Mae Sai Kham still lives in a village at the northernmost point of Don Khong. The island's other claim to fame is as the birth-place of the current Lao president, Khamtay Siphandon, who maintains a residence in Ban Hua Khong (บ้านหัวโขง), the village where he was born. Khamtay makes sporadic visits to the islands and his influence is felt in the village through his donation of considerable funds to the village temple and his sponsorship of *bun*, at which *lam siphandon* is performed, during his visits.

Performers and scholars of *lam siphandon* consider the genre to comprise two styles: *lam siphandon deem* (ลำสีพันดอนเดิม) 'original *lam siphandon*' and *lam siphandon ñuk maj* (ลำสีพันดอนยุกใหม่) 'contemporary *lam siphandon*' which are primarily distinguished by differences of tempo, the contemporary style being considerably faster. According to Thongkham, the 1950s saw significant changes to the form, *sangvaat* (สังหวาด), melody, *thamnòòng* (ทำนอง), and rhythm, *cangva* (จังหวะ)[2] of *lam siphandon*; changes that were instigated by performers belonging to the *samaakhom mohlam kokmaak khaam pèè* (สมาคมหมอลำก๊กหมากอามแป) 'Tamarind Tree Mohlam Association', an organisation established by a youthful Acaan Vanna in 1952-53. These changes resulted in a new style known as *lam siphandon ñuk maj*, the style that is most prevalent in southern Laos today (Thongkham 1998:74-75). Unfortunately, Thongkham does not explain any details of these changes to form, melody and rhythm; however, he does mention that it was also at this time that *khap-lam* genres from northeast Thailand were first incorporated into *lam siphandon* performance (as previously described in chapter 1). Sunii and Vanna confirmed this version of events to me in the course of interviews.[3] Duang Phaeng was an equally important figure in the development of *lam siphandon ñuk samaj* and instigated similar changes of tempo to the *lam som* genre (Thongkham 1998:75).



Map 2: Southern Laos, Pakse and the Siphandon area

The development of *lam siphandon ñuk samaj* was accompanied by an increase in popularity of *lam siphandon* performance throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, no doubt spurred along by the economic boom in Mekong towns that was created by the influx of US financial assistance. During this period Vanna and Duang Phaeng forged their reputations as the leaders of the new generation of southern *mohlam*. At this stage of their careers, both *mohlam* were performing constantly; during peak festival times (October to January) they would work for ten consecutive nights, take one evening off and then work

for another ten consecutive nights.[4] In addition to privately sponsored *bun*, large competitions for *mohlam* were common at the major festivals in Champassak such as Bun Vat Phou, held at the end of January (cf. Archaimbault 1959). These highly organised and commercialised affairs attracted the province's most skilled *mohlam*, who competed against one another for monetary prizes and trophies. Vanna was a regular winner at these events and declared to me that had these competitions not ceased when the RLG collapsed, he would not have space to store all the trophies he would have won (Vanna Keophilom 2/5/1999). These competitions may have been a motivation for the combative flavour of *lam siphandon* that was common before the change of government in 1975 (see also chapter 7).

The demise of the RLG and ascendancy to power by the LPRP heralded dramatic changes, which threatened the continuity of the *khap-lam* tradition throughout Laos. In early 1976, the first change occurred when the LPRP placed strict controls on the holding of *bun*, declaring them to be a waste of community resources. This effectively eliminated the primary social context of all *khap-lam* performances overnight. The restrictions on *bun* formed part of the party's general attack on Buddhism, a policy that also saw the Sangha (i.e. the monkhood) placed under party control and monks forbidden to accept offerings of food from the lay population (Stuart-Fox 1997:173). The second change instigated by the LPRP was to place many professional *khap-lam* performers under government control, a move that constituted a quasi-nationalisation of their private enterprise in step with socialist economic policies, which banned all private enterprise until 1979 (Evans 1995:55). In Pakse, this move saw the leading performers of *lam siphandon*, including Acaan Vanna, Duang Phaeng, Sunii, Kham Phaj, and Thong Bang among others, sequestrated into the *samaakhom mòòlam taj* (ສະມາຄົມໝໍລຳໃຕ້), a government-run organisation charged with delivering government policies to the masses. Private engagements, which had been the norm under the RLG became very rare, having been made almost impossible to arrange by government restrictions on *bun*, individual travel, private enterprise, and the imposition of night time curfews.

The *samaakhom mòòlam taj* lasted until the early 1990s, by which time most of its founding members had already left to pursue their private careers. The remaining performers were reassigned to the Artistic Troupe of the Pakse division of the MIC, the *nuaj kòòng silapakòòn paaksêê* (ໝວຍກອງສິລະປະກອນປາກເຊ). Although the *samaakhom*

mòòlam taj was in existence for almost fifteen years, the revolutionary political climate which created it did not last nearly as long. The early years of the association saw its members undertake extensive tours throughout Laos, disseminating government messages to soldiers, officials, and the general population through *lam siphandon* and *lam som* performances. Political messages exhorting the population to help build the new (Lao socialist) society, *sangkhom maj* (ສັງຄົມໃໝ່), new socialist man, *khon maj sangkhom niñom* (ຄົນໃໝ່ສັງຄົມນິຍົມ), and to follow the party line often replaced traditional themes, or were otherwise infused with them. Political *lam siphandon* performances complimented the daily compulsory public meetings, called *samanaa* (ສະມະນາ),[5] through which the party attempted to instil revolutionary and socialist ideals in the general population. The association was highly active for a number of years, staging performances in every province of Laos. Many of these performances were arranged through the Ministry of Defence, to which they were assigned for six months of the year. Duang Phaeng and Vanna suggest that these performances were crucial in making the *lam siphandon* genre familiar throughout Laos.[6]

A change of political climate came with the Fourth Congress of the LPRP in 1986 and the introduction of "new thinking", *cintanakaan maj* (ຈິນຕະນະການໃໝ່), and the New Economic Mechanism. It also marked a move away from the use of overtly socialist rhetoric towards a more nationalistic one. Although a number of the original socialist-driven reforms such as cooperative agriculture and the restrictions on *bun* had been relaxed some years earlier, 1986 marked the beginning of a significant policy shift that was further accelerated when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. Consequently, the political function of the southern *mohlam* association diminished, and many of its members were permitted to resume their private pursuits while remaining under government supervision. When the association disbanded in the early 1990s, Vanna relocated to Vientiane, taking several other *mohlam* and *mohkhaen* with him, where he established his own company, the Centre for the Promotion of Lao Arts and *khap-lam*, *suun songseem silapa lè khaplam laaw* (ສູນສົ່ງເສີມສິລະປະ ແລະ ຂັບລຳລາວ). Other performers who remained in Pakse, either retired from performance altogether or else resumed their private careers.

Current Status of lam siphandon

Over the last decade, *lam siphandon* performance has gradually reclaimed the ground it lost during the revolution, although recent modernisation presents a challenge to its popularity. Privately-held *bun* are once again a common event since the government now encourages the observation of traditional cultural activities. Nevertheless, the genre still retains some vestiges of its political function, although political themes are now restricted to official functions or radio and television broadcasts, and never occur in a privately sponsored event.

Pakse is the main home to performers of the *lam siphandon ñuk maj* style. Although many of the *mohlam* who developed and established this contemporary style are originally from outlying districts of Champassak province (e.g. Duang Phaeng from Khong, Vanna from Sukuma, Som Sii from Champassak), they forged their reputations after basing themselves in Pakse. At the beginning of the 21st century, performances of the genre appear to be in robust health with a core of highly skilled, professional performers engaged in re-establishing the tradition following its hiatus during the revolutionary years. Four of the best known *mohlam*, Vanna, Som Sii, Duang Phaeng, and Thong Bang are based in Pakse; a city whose relative affluence and larger population provides them with more opportunities for performance than elsewhere. The majority of their engagements are in the districts close to Pakse, however, these performers will occasionally travel considerable distances to other districts of Champassak, and even eastwards to Attapeu and Salavan provinces to perform. It is less usual for them to perform in the Siphandon area, because locally based *mohlam* are generally preferred and easier to arrange. Due to health problems, Duang Phaeng has been in self-imposed semi-retirement for several years and only rarely performs all night. Several other *mohlam* of this genre, including Nuu Phai and Khamphan, relocated to Vientiane along with Acaan Vanna in the mid-1990s but did not return to Pakse with him in 2000. During 1999, the busiest performing pair of *mohlam* in Pakse were, without doubt, Som Sii and the relatively inexperienced, but young and therefore popular, Chindavan.

The older and slower style of *lam siphandon deem* retains its popularity among the population of Don Khong. Four *mohlam* skilled in this style live on the island, including: Acaan Lin Kham (ຂີ່ນຄຳ) of Ban Dong (ບ້ານດົງ) the only male performer, and three female *mohlam*, Chansamorn (ຈັນສະມອນ) and Thong Saj (ທອງໃສ) of Ban Hua Khong (ບ້ານຫົວໂຂງ)

and Lin Kham's neighbour, Maali (ມາລີ). Of these performers, only Lin Kham appears to travel any significant distance in order to perform, sometimes heading north to Pakse to perform with Duang Phaeng. Whilst visiting Don Khong, I was told that other *mohlam* can be found elsewhere in the Siphandon region, however, I have no information regarding their activities. Lin Kham is teaching his youngest son, now in his early teens, in the verbal arts of *lam siphandon* and aims to begin taking him to performances once he completes his schooling. The main challenge to the long term survival of the *lam siphandon* tradition (and many other regional *khap-lam* traditions) is to recruit a new generation of *mohlam* to learn from the current generation who are now mostly aged in their fifties and sixties.

The Widespread Popularity of Southern Genres

Today, most southern genres are known and enjoyed beyond the southern provinces where they originated. This is particularly true of *lam siphandon*, *lam khon savan*, *lam tang vaaj*, *lam phuu tai* and *lam salavan*. In contrast, the northern *khap-lam* genres, including *khap ngeum*, enjoy the same degree of recognition only in the regions where they occur. This may be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the northern areas of Laos are more remote and have, until recently, lacked the road, air and river links that connect the southern regions of Laos to Vientiane. This is further reflected in the fact that southern performers usually know more than one genre, whereas northern performers rarely know genres other than their own. Secondly, the southern genres have been popularised through their adaptation for commercial electrified versions, to which their metrical accompaniments are well-suited (cf. Miller 1998a:360). It is mostly in this commercial format, rather than their traditional format, that the southern genres are known to non-southerners. A third reason that southern genres enjoy widespread recognition, is the nationwide tours undertaken by the *samaakhom mohlam taj* in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Duang Phaeng and Vanna suggest that the high proportion of southerners in the top positions of the LPRP leadership predisposed them to favour assigning southern performers (and therefore southern genres) to political tasks.[7] This supposition appears to be well-founded because the powerful southern leaders of the LPRP since its inception in 1972[8] have included: Kayson Phomvihan, the first prime minister of the Lao PDR and later president (1991-1992) from Savannakhet; Nuhak Phumsavan, Lao president from 1992-1997, also from Savannakhet; and the current president, Khamtay Siphandon, from Don

Khong in the Siphandon region. All of these men have held the position of general-secretary of the LPRP, *phuu nam phak* (ຜູ້ນຳພັກ) 'party leader'.

Southern performers have also had opportunities to take *lam siphandon*, and *lam som* to international audiences. Duang Phaeng and Vanna also performed *lam siphandon* overseas before and after the 1975 revolution. Duang Phaeng visited Canada and the United States some time during the early 1970s, although when I interviewed her she was unable to recall the precise year of the trip.[9] After 1975, Duang Phaeng also travelled to the Soviet Union, and several other Eastern Bloc nations, as part of a cultural touring group, show-casing Lao culture. Similarly, Acaan Vanna reported that he attended the Moscow Olympic Games in 1980 as part of the Lao entourage.[10] Both performers have made several visits to the neighbouring countries of Cambodia, Vietnam, and Thailand in order to perform. Most recently, Acaan Vanna led a troupe of six *lam siphandon* performers to Canada in 1999 for several months to perform for the expatriate Lao community there. He has also had additional international exposure through a recording released by the King Record company of Japan. Performers of other *khap-lam* genres, apart from a number who have resettled in France and the USA, have not had similar opportunities to perform outside Laos.

Four Thousand Islands? What Does Siphandon Really Mean?

A widely-held folk meaning for the name *siphandon* (ສີພັນດອນ) is 'four thousand islands', the name deriving from the numerous islands that characterise the area. A quick glance at the three syllables, *si* 'four', *phan* 'thousand' and *don* 'island', appears to confirm this. However, as Thongkham correctly points out, this interpretation overlooks the spelling, and thus the lexical tone, of the first syllable '*sii*', which is written without the *maj êêk* (ໄม้เอก) tone marker as ສີ, indicating that it takes a rising tone. For the syllable *sii* to mean 'four' it must be pronounced with a mid-level tone, a tone that requires the *maj eek* tone marker, giving ສີ (Thongkham 1998:13). Thongkham argues that the first syllable *sii* means 'most precious; beloved' and that the full term, *siphandon*, is a name that praises the Siphandon region, the river and the thousands of islands, as being most beloved to the population who make their living from it. The word, *sii* ສີ, derived from the Pali language, appears in many place names throughout Thailand (e.g Sri Ayuthaya and Nakhon Srithammarat) where it is romanised (but not pronounced) with the 'r' that occurs in the

original Pali form, and which is preserved in the Thai orthography. It is also the same word that appears in the name of the nation of Sri Lanka. However, despite Thongkham's well-articulated explanation, the folk etymology of *siphandon* to mean 'four thousand islands' is the one that retains the most currency inside Laos today.

Readers familiar with Laos are probably acquainted with the name *sithandon*. This can be used in place of *siphandon* when referring to the musical genre or the geographical region. Under the RLG, *sithandon* was the official name of a province encompassing the area now known as *siphandon*. This name was dropped from official usage when provincial boundaries and names were revised after 1975, at which time Sithandon province was incorporated into the present-day Champassak and Attapeu provinces. Although *sithandon* no longer has any official use, many southerners, especially older generations, often refer to *lam sithandon* and the *sithandon* region. However, *siphandon* is by no means a new term; Compton (1974:11) notes that *siphandon* was the term favoured by older people in the early 1970s, suggesting that the name has now come full circle and is in current use again.[11]

Thongkham relates two local legends concerning the origins of the name *sithandon* (1998:14). The first tells of an event when a rogue elephant named Sithan (ສີທັນ) ran amok in Vientiane many hundreds of years ago, causing widespread damage. Sikhotabong (ສີໂຄตะบอง), a legendary ruler of the time, killed the elephant, throwing it into the Mekong whereupon the river current swept the elephant's corpse downstream. When the corpse reached the far south of Laos, it became stuck at what is now the top of Khong island, blocking the river and thereby forming Khong and the other islands. The legend says that as a consequence the area was named *sithandon*, 'the island(s) of Sithan', that is, after this legendary elephant. In casual conversations with *mohlam* and residents on Don Khong, I heard a variation of the tale, which says that the elephant became stuck at the southern most end of the Siphandon area, where the Lao-Cambodian border is now located. The elephant's corpse blocked the river forming the Khone falls and the islands that lie upstream from them. The second tale related by Thongkham is from folk etymology; it draws from Hindu-Buddhist religious cosmology in which, according to the Lao Buddhist scripture, the *taj phuum* (ไตพูม) 'three baskets', the name of the sea surrounding the sacred Mount Meru is *sithandon* (cf. Kerr 1992:377). The scripture describes the sea as a place of immense natural beauty and surrounded by rugged

mountains. Thongkham says that the natural beauty of the Siphandon area inspired its inhabitants to name it after the mythical sea in this legend of Indic origin.

Lam Som

Lam som, the second of the two *khap-lam* genres thought to have originated in the Siphandon region, is closely associated with the *lam siphandon* genre. Every *mohlam* who can perform *lam som* is also a performer of *lam siphandon*, although the reverse is seldom true. Thongkham (1998:64) describes *lam som* as a "variety" of *lam siphandon* (the other two varieties being *siphandon deem* and *siphandon ñuk samai*). However, this view of *lam som* was not offered by any of the *mohlam* participating in this study. Instead, *mohlam* use *lam taj* (ลำใต้) 'southern *lam*' to refer collectively to these two genres from the Siphandon region. According to performers of these genres, only *lam siphandon* and *lam som* qualify as *lam taj*. Other genres from nearby provinces such as *lam salavan* and *lam khon savan* are not *lam taj*, although many observers tend to classify any genre south of Bolikhamxai province as southern. The label *lam taj* signals that *lam siphandon* and *lam som* are seen as elements of a single tradition despite their different musical structures; a topic that is discussed further later in this chapter.

Historical Background

Two Lao scholars, Thongkham from the MIC in Vientiane and Khamdaeng from the Pakse division of the MIC, have made attempts to determine the origins of *lam som*, but were unable to reach any firm conclusions (Thongkham 1998:21). They agree that *lam som* was developed in the Siphandon region during the first half of the 20th century by a *mohlam* named Pho Som (ພໍ່ໂສມ) (lit. 'father Som'), after whom the genre is named. Revered by present-day southern Lao *mohlam*, Pho Som is also credited with being the first *mohlam* to develop the ability extemporaneously to compose texts, a technique called *som bòò khùt* (ສົມບໍ່ຄິດ) which, like the *lam som* genre, reputedly bears his name (see chapter 7 for an assessment of extemporaneous composition).

Lao scholars and performers debate as to which genre, *lam som* or *lam siphandon*, appeared first. *Mohlam* Sunii and Duang Phaeng[12] claim that *lam som* is the predecessor of *lam siphandon*, and that the latter genre then developed from the former because *lam som* was essentially a rendition of stories from palm-leaf manuscripts such as *saan lùùp pha*

suun (ສາບລົບພະສູນ). This theory is partly supported by the fact that *lam som* today is accompanied by a *khaen* mode based on the *ñaaw* scale, featuring a sixth, 'sour' note;[13] the same mode used to accompany the narrative genre of *lam phùùn* (ລຳພື້ນ) of northeast Thailand (Miller 1998a:344; 2000:262),[14] however, it seems unlikely that *lam siphandon*, based on the *san* scale, would have evolved from *lam som*.

Two other scenarios concerning which genre came first were offered to Thongkham by elderly *mohlam* from Don Khong and Don Som (Thongkham 1998:68-72). They are Duang Phaeng's teacher, Mae Sai Kham and Acaan Sulat from Pho Som's village of Ban Saalaa on Don Som. Both say that Pho Som was the performer of *lam siphandon* who effectively began the genre by adding his own brief poems to the end of each *lam siphandon* round. Some listeners gave these additional verses, characterised by particular rhythmic and melodic patterns, the name *lam som*. Since *lam siphandon* and *lam som* are sung to contrasting *khaen* accompaniments, a definite musical change must have occurred, however, this is only alluded to in Thongkham's account. Such a change of scale and accompaniment from *san* to *ñaaw* at the end of a performance is a common feature of the *lam kòòn* (*lam klawn*) genre in northeast Thailand (Miller 1985a:146). Furthermore, the *san* scale-based vocal melody of *lam siphandon*, often exhibits signs of a shift to the *ñaaw* scale throughout a round (Miller 1998a:343). These features indicate that a shift from one scale to another is not an uncommon occurrence in Lao *khap-lam* genres (see chapter 6 for a musical analysis of *lam som*). Thus, this indigenous theory is not without merit.

According to another recent account, *lam som* is "said to be named after a river" (Miller 1998a:343). To my knowledge, however, the only geographical feature which might have given its name to the genre is Don Som (ດອນໂສມ), 'Som island', the birthplace of Pho Som. Don Som, however, does have a river of sorts, with peculiar characteristics which may be the one to which Miller refers. It is a peculiar river because it is not really a river but a channel that cuts across the island meeting the Mekong at both ends:

> The centre of the island [Don Som] is full of rice fields and there is a reasonably large river which cuts through the middle of the island. The mouth of the river at the eastern side of the island they call *paak soom manaa* (ປາກໂສມມະນາ). The river's source arrives from the Mekong at the western side of the island, and is called *dòòn maak faj* (ດອນໝາກໄຟ). The water that traverses this island is that of the Mekong river. When the wet season comes, the Mekong fills to its banks and flows across [the island] to the river's mouth, but in the dry season the water dries up

completely. The villagers of the island have named this stream *huu sêê* (ຮູເຊ).(Thongkham 1998:65-66)[15] (my translation)

Current Status of lam som

Lam som is widely known in parts of Laos, mainly due to the extensive airplay on the national radio and television stations of several recorded performances by Duang Phaeng. *Lam som* is, and perhaps always was, a marginal genre in comparison to *lam siphandon*. Remarking upon this, Miller reported that; "by 1991, *lam som* evidently survived in the repertoire of only one singer, Duang Phaeng" (1998a:344). This statement is not entirely accurate, as the recording of *lam som* sung by Som Sii illustrates (see Transcription 4 and listen to track 4 of the accompanying CD). However, Som Sii and the few other *mohlam* who occasionally perform *lam som* do not have the same degree of competency as Duang Phaeng; a fact Duang Phaeng herself attested to when she observed that although others could perform *lam som*; their performances and skill levels were "not one hundred percent"[16] (Duang Phaeng Hanmani 22/6/1999). Today the only other surviving *mohlam* fully competent in *lam som* is Sunii, but he no longer performs, having retired in the early 1990s. Neither Sunii nor Duang Phaeng anticipate that *lam som* will survive beyond their own lifetimes.[17]

Beyond Champassak province, *lam som* is also performed by *mohlam* Keo Lammon of Ban Kaeng Kok (ບ້ານແກ່ງກອກ), Champon district, Savannakhet. In September 1999, I attended a *bun* in Savannaket during which *lam som* was incorporated by Keo Lammon into the evening's performance of *lam khon savan*. How Keo Lammon, a *mohlam* from outside the *lam siphandon* tradition, came to acquire *lam som* is an interesting story. Prior to becoming a *mohlam* Keo Lammon was employed as a singer with the artistic troupe attached to Lao Aviation, and later the Lao police force in Vientiane.[18] While in government employment during the 1980s, Keo Lammon was sent to Pakse for a year in order to study techniques of poetic composition with Duang Phaeng and Vanna at the *samaasòòn mohlam taj*. During the time spent there she also learnt *lam som*.

The reasons for the endangered status of *lam som* are not entirely clear. A loss of musical knowledge does not appear to be the reason since the *khaen* accompaniment patterns for *lam som* are essential to the repertoire of every southern *mohkhaen*, all of whom follow the same basic pattern modified with their individual stylistic elements (*khaen* patterns are outlined in chapter 6 and detailed in transcriptions 3 and 4 of appendix

2). Nor is a loss of knowledge in the area of textual composition likely to be the cause, as *lam som* employs the same basic poetic structure, *kòòn aan*, that is found in *lam siphandon* (and indeed in all other *khap-lam* genres). It appears the loss of knowledge affects a combination of thematic content and melodic patterns, but these are difficult to fully appreciate without an intimate knowledge of texts and performance.

Not only is *lam som* marginal in terms of the number of performers proficient in the genre, but it also occupies a marginal position in performances. Unlike *lam siphandon*, *lam som* is not a core genre; it is performed as a contemplative respite from the main musical genre being performed, usually *lam siphandon* (although in Savannakhet, Keo Lammon incorporates it into *lam khon savan* performance). It is difficult to judge whether *lam som* has always occupied this supporting role, because we do not fully understand its historical relationship with *lam siphandon*. If we subscribe to the theory that it developed from the idiosyncratic *lam* style of Pho Som, then it is likely that *lam som* has never occupied the central role in performance. However, if we take the other view, then it appears that *lam som* may be a regional variation of the *lam phùùn* genre, which has lost ground to *lam siphandon*.

One certainty is that in recent years, the performance of *lam som* has, like *lam siphandon*, increased significantly in tempo. Since Sunii and Duang Phaeng have been the only fully-proficient performers of this genre for the past twenty years, the changes must be largely attributed to their activities. Sunii himself, claims that it is Duang Phaeng who bears responsibility for changing aspects of the genre, particularly the increase in tempo:

> Now it's changed, the rhythm is like *lam siphandon* [i.e. fast]. When they'd sing in the past it was slow, not like the way Duang Phaeng sings now you know. Yes, Duang Phaeng sings quickly now…it's wrong, not correct at all, you can't use it. (Sunii Kasoemlat 23/6/1999)[19]

Yet during the same interview Sunni also admitted that audience tastes and demands have a great deal to do with tempo changes and the shift of themes away from traditional stories, like *saan lùp phasuun*, towards simpler ones which require little interpretation on the audience's part (see chapter 7 for a discussion of thematic content).

Khap-Ngeum

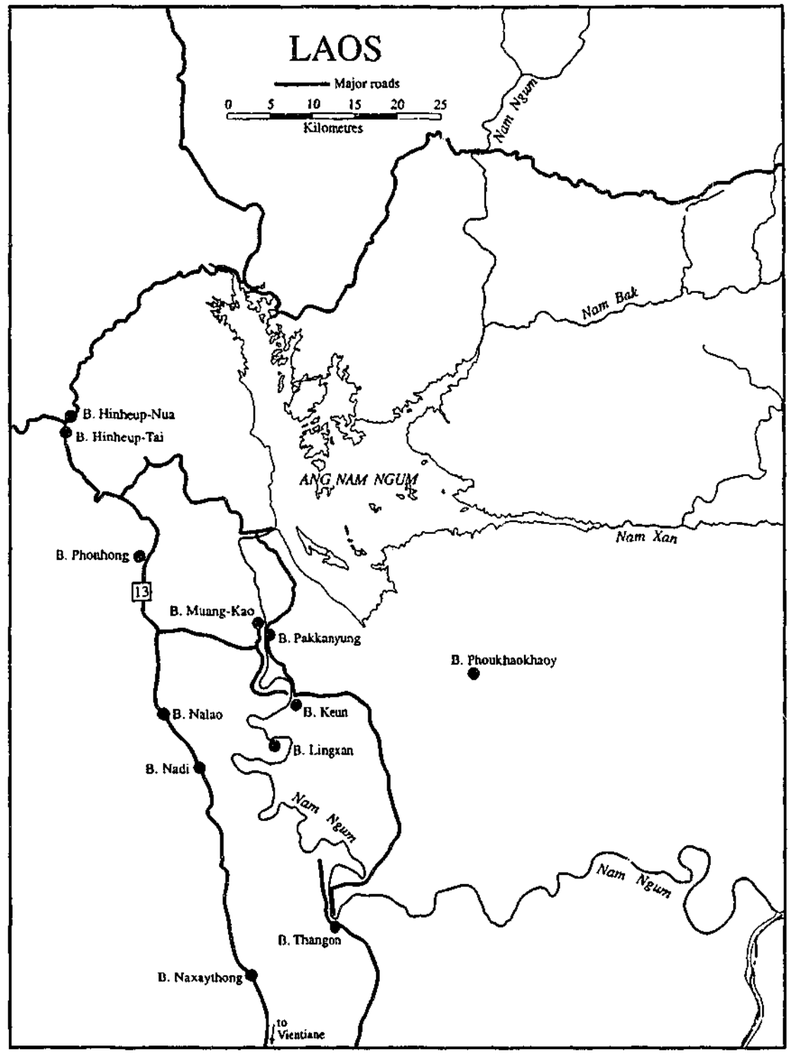
Historical Background

Khap ngeum takes its name from the Nam Ngeum (ນ້ຳງື່ມ), the river which flows down into the Vientiane plain from the highland plateau of Xieng Khouang and Vientiane provinces. Having descended from Xieng Khouang, the river then meanders across the Vientiane plain to meet the Mekong one hundred kilometres downstream from the capital. Although the Nam Ngeum was dammed in the late 1960s to provide electricity for both domestic consumption and export to Thailand, the river still plays a vital role in the livelihood of the villagers living alongside its banks, both upstream and downstream from the dam. The majority of *khap ngeum* performers live on the Vientiane plain below the dam and within 20 kilometres of the river (see Map 3); hence the link between the river and the genre which takes its name.

The *khap ngeum* genre of Vientiane province differs from the southern Lao *lam* genres in that the entire text is sung slowly, non-metrically and in a declaimed manner, using the *ñaaw* scale (a, c, d, e, g). Accompaniment on the *khaen* is related to the *laaj nòòj* mode and is non-metrical with intermittent drones[20] (Miller 1998a:347). These features place *khap ngeum* firmly in the northern category of *khap-lam* genres, however, the sung poetry lacks any of the northern dialectal idioms which occur in *khap phuan* (ຂັບພວນ) and *khap sam neua* (ຂັບຊໍ້າເໜືອ). At first it may appear somewhat unusual for a genre found in the lowland area of Vientiane to be related to northern genres of *khap-lam*. However, it must be remembered that the Nam Ngeum has its source in the highland plains of Xieng Khouang, situated less than 200 kilometres from Ban Koen, a district centre in the heart of the Vientiane plain. Migration of peoples coming from the Xieng Khouang region following the river down to the Vientiane plain is the most likely explanation for the presence of this northern genre in a region that is not generally considered as a part of northern Laos (Kavin 1997:7-8).

As discussed in chapter 3, the origins of *khap ngeum*, and indeed of all *khap-lam* genres, are not recorded in writing. Probably they originated in the *aan nangsùù* genre, the public reading of Buddhist Jataka tales, *nangsùù saadok* (ໜັງສືຊາດົກ), and other tales from Lao literature. Over time, these traditional stories absorbed the Lao oral tradition of *phañaa ñòòj* (ພະຍາຍອຍ). During readings listeners would keep their ears tuned for these

familiar forms (Koret 2000:218-219). Eventually the *aan nangsùù* tradition adopted a musical accompaniment and evolved into the various *khap-lam* genres known today (Kavin 1997:11).



Map 3: The Vientiane plain and Nam Ngeum to the north of Vientiane city

In the process of researching *khap ngeum*, Lao scholar Kavin interviewed village elders in the Vientiane region seeking their theories concerning the origins of *khap ngeum*. These elders put forward two theories. Firstly the development of *khap ngeum* was seen as a logical evolution of *aan nangsùù*, as audiences gained an intimate knowledge of verse

forms, *phañaa* riddles and traditional stories through continued exposure to the readings. Eventually their knowledge led them to actively participate in performances of *aan nangsùù*, adding their own *phañaa* verses whenever appropriate. In turn this led to the development of a new oral tradition specialist called *mohphañaa* (ໝໍພະຍາ). This person would be invited to perform at *bun* together with the readers of palm leaf manuscripts. Finally, as musical accompaniment was added to the performance format, the *mohpañaa* evolved to *mohlam* (Kavin 1997:12-13).

Kavin states that it was not until the 1930s that male *mohphañaa* began to *khap* their verses rather than speak them (Kavin 1997:13). The transition from speech to song, or *khap*, is not as great a step as might first appear. Firstly, the reading of traditional stories from manuscripts required performance skills which men would have gained through their experience of being monks in the village temple. Part of their duties as monks was to read sermons, or *thêêt* (ເທດ), which were often the same Jataka tales used during *aan nangsùù* readings.[21] The poetic structures of Lao poetry (which are explained in chapters 6 and 7 following) produced particular melodic and rhythmic patterns that gradually made their way into the *phañaa* performances. Kavin supports his theory by noting how the melodic patterns that occur in the *thêêt* performed in the area around the Nam Ngeum have strong similarities to the melodic patterns of *khap ngeum* (Kavin 1997:14; see also Koret 1999:230); a claim I have not yet been able to investigate.

Secondly, the village elders suggested that the melody of *khap ngeum* may have developed from the sound of instruments like the *khaen* and *sòò*, which young men used to play while courting young women. This echoes Abhay's earlier account of *phañaa* in village courting rituals (Abhay 1959a). Kavin also says that some people have suggested that *sòò* players would sing while bowing the *sòò*. The players' singing was based upon the melodies of *aan nangsùù* performances, which eventually developed into the melody of *khap ngeum*. Although these origin theories cannot be proven one way or another, one thing that is certain is that female performers have not always sung their rounds. Once the male performer finished singing his round, the female would always reply using *phañaa*, a pattern still found in *khap phuan* today. This was also formerly the case in *lam khon savan*, and probably other genres as well (Phosikaew and Bunteu 1991).

The person performing this non-singing role is known as a *mohtòòp* (ໝໍຕອບ), meaning 'answering specialist.' The manner in which female *mohtòòp* delivered their text

began to change some time during the late 1960s, when they started to sing rounds that were equivalent in length to those of male performers (Kavin 1997:15). Paeng Thong (23/4/1999) and her mother Paa Nyaeng (21/8/1999) confirmed this claim when they noted that the beginning of Paeng Thong's career (in the early 1970s) and the end of her mother's (in the late 1960s) coincided with the change of women's mode of delivery. Miller's claim that "typically the woman answers in *phanya*" (Miller 1998a:347) appears to be no longer the case; all female *mohlam* sang throughout every performance I attended during 1998-99. This state of affairs also lends credence to the first theory mentioned above, because it leads to the suggestion that at some point in time male performers probably spoke their part as well, bringing us back to the *mohphañaa*.

The effects of the post-1975 revolutionary years upon *khap ngeum* are difficult to assess. In the course of interviews and conversations I was able to elicit only partial information, and there is no accessible written documentation to shed any additional light upon this period. I have found no evidence to suggest that a *mohlam* association was established for *khap ngeum* performers to serve the government's political interests. This government message-expressing role appears to have been the exclusive domain of the Pakse-based *samaakhom mohlam taj* described earlier in this chapter. Although performers of *khap ngeum* and other northern genres may have been ignored for this role at the national level, there is no doubt that regional divisions of the MIC employed their services locally. At least one performer, Kheua Kham a female *mohlam*, was employed with the Vientiane municipality division of the MIC during the early 1980s, performing politically-oriented *khap ngeum* (Kheua Kham 4/9/1999). In Vientiane, as in southern Laos, private performances of the local *khap-lam* genres ceased for a time when the restrictions on *bun*, travel and private enterprise were introduced.

The provincial government in Vientiane established an association for *khap ngeum* performers in the early 1990s. Based in Muang Kaew Udom (ເມືອງແກ້ວອຸດົມ) and headed by Acaan Som, the association was as a centre of training as well as a central booking agency for all the performers registered with the association. In keeping with other government-run organisations for performing artists (e.g. the Central Performing Artists Troupe, the MIC Pakse troupe), the performers were required to live on the association's premises in Kaew Udom. However, the experiment failed after only several months, as the provincial government did not have the funds to support the venture and Acaan Som returned to his home in Pak Kanyung.

Current Status of khap ngeum

Today *khap ngeum* maintains its popularity in the Vientiane region, although it is favoured more in the provincial areas than in the capital's urban centre, where people have a greater choice of types of entertainment to book for their *bun*. Competition is keen. Younger audiences in the urban centres usually prefer a rock band playing Lao and Thai popular songs, or a karaoke system over a performance of *khap ngeum*. These are readily available and easily organised, making them a doubly attractive alternative to a traditional *khap ngeum* performance. To make a booking it is simply a matter of making a telephone call or else going to the business premises, which are clearly marked by bright, hand-painted billboards (see Plate 12). In contrast, none of the *mohlam* living in the regional districts of Vientiane province are contactable by telephone, necessitating a trip out to their village to book them for a performance. These difficulties aside, Vientiane province and municipality manages to sustain a core of around ten *mohlam* who earn their primary income from performance.

In the regional areas of Vientiane province, *khap ngeum* performances are regularly held in towns and villages lying alongside the banks of the Nam Ngeum, including those along Route 13 as far north as Kasi. Paeng Thong reported that she seldom has to travel further than a hundred kilometres in order to perform, however, occasionally she has gone as far east as Pakxan (ปากຊັນ) in neighbouring Bolikhamxai province and to Muang Hom (ເມືອງຮົ່ມ), which is only accessible by boat across the Nam Ngeum reservoir (Paeng Thong Sisutham 29/11/1998). A lack of good roads in the western areas of Vientiane province prevents *khap ngeum* performers from venturing there.

The village of Ban Pak Kanyung (ບ້ານປາກກະຍຸງ), located several kilometres upstream from Ban Koen, has earned a reputation for producing *mohlam* of the highest calibre. This is largely because it is home to Acaan Som, the most famous and admired performer of his generation (see Plate 13). Although now well into his seventies, having retired in the mid-1990s, Acaan Som wields considerable influence over much of the genre in his capacity as teacher and mentor to at least three generations of *mohlam*. Among his former students are the two most senior male *mohlam* still performing, Acaan Sing and Acaan Thong as well as one of the more junior female *mohlam*, Khammani (who is Paeng Thong's daughter-in-law). Acaan Som is famous throughout Vientiane, reputed by some to possess magical powers that assist him in performance.[22] When I asked him about this one

evening, Acaan Som appeared somewhat bemused, noting that "people often said such things", but he neither confirmed nor denied these assertions.

While no other single village can match Pak Kanyung for its number of performers, many well-known performers live close by in Phon Hong district, including Acaan Sing and Acaan Thong. These two male performers have taken over the role of senior performers in the region since the retirement of Acaan Som. As with the southern tradition, *khap ngeum* faces its greatest challenge in attracting a young generation of performers to continue the tradition when the current generation retire. It appears to be particularly difficult to attract young males.

Performance Contexts

The bun

Traditionally *khap-lam* performances take place within a larger socio-religious event known as the *bun* (ບຸນ). The Lao word *bun* has two primary and related meanings and translations; 'merit' and 'festival (for making merit)'. The fundamental purpose of every *bun* is to make merit, *hêt bun* (ເຮັດບຸນ), both for the participants making offerings and for the monks, lay people, or spirits of deceased persons to whom, or on whose behalf, the offerings are made. The *bun* fulfils both a social and religious role, acting as a focal point for both communal and family activities. Referring to pre-1975 Lao society, French anthropologist George Condominas notes that "the desire to make merit is unquestionably the chief motivation in the spiritual life of the Lao peasant" (Condominas 1975:253), an observation that still holds true in contemporary Laos, despite the lingering effects of the current government's anti-Buddhist policies during the early years of its rule.

In the description that opens this thesis, the *lam siphandon* performance takes place in the context of *bun kathin*, the occasion when new robes are presented to monks at the village temple. This is a good example of a collective *bun* in which an entire community is involved; however, individuals may also arrange a *bun* for a private family purpose to which they invite friends and neighbours. Every *bun*, whether communal or private, requires a sponsor or sponsors, *caw sathaa* (ເຈົ້າສັດທາ), who fund the event and make monetary donations to the village *vat*. Religiously motivated sponsorship is a strong and long-standing tradition in Laos; almost every village *vat* has lists of donors painted on the

walls of buildings which their donations have helped build or restore. In the past, the task of copying traditional Lao literature from a decaying palm-leaf manuscript to a new one was often sponsored by lay people, whose name would be recorded on the particular copy their donation funded (Koret 2000:212 & 231).

All-night entertainment for guests is a feature of all large *bun* be they collective or private. The original forms of entertainment provided at *bun* were most likely *aan nangsùù* performances, which have been gradually replaced by *khap-lam* genres over the past century or so (Kavin 1997:11). Both the traditional tales of *aan nangsùù* and the poems of *khap-lam* blend religious and secular themes into performance, a mixture that is the direct result of Lao literature being largely a product of village society, since the largely religious-focussed tales had to incorporate aspects of daily life to maintain an audience's interest (Koret 2000:211).[23] Over the past fifty years, the advent of new technologies has made possible the introduction of other forms of entertainment which now compete with traditional *khap-lam* performances for audiences' attention and the sponsors' funds. When attending large community *bun* in all parts of Laos today, one can expect to encounter deafeningly loud performances by theatrical *lam lùang* troupes, video screenings, and rock bands playing Lao and Thai pop songs in place of, or alongside traditional *khap-lam*. Competing entertainment is sometimes a feature of private *bun* as well, usually in the form of videos and card playing.

Private *bun* can be quite sizeable, often attracting a crowd of fifty or sixty people. Well-off families or large communities in urban areas can often afford the resources required to stage a larger, more ostentatious event, if they wish. This is not a completely new phenomenon, as Halpern noted in his observations of Luang Phrabang society in the late 1950s, which state that urban Lao could contribute between 10,000 and 20,000 Kip (US$285-$570)[24] to a communal *bun* and that costs for individually sponsored *bun* could be even higher (Halpern 1964b:92). Privately held *bun* in Vientiane and Pakse in 1999 could incur costs of up to A$1000 if it was a particularly lavish affair with a large number of guests. Yet despite the great strain that these expenses put upon the household resources, Halpern (op.cit.) notes that "[a] villager does not regard these contributions as an onerous burden; rather it is one of the ways in which he may gain merit for his future life". For the new rich in urban Laos, holding a *bun* provides the sponsor with a means to establish or enhance their status as a *phuu ñaj* (ຜູ້ໃຫຍ່), 'big person'. The Lao communists viewed such

lavish celebrations as a waste of resources. Thus, they banned the holding of *bun*, firstly in the liberated zone, and then nationwide during the early years of the post-1975 revolution.

Outside of this thesis, very little detail on the socio-religious contexts of *khap-lam* performance in contemporary Laos is available. While Miller's study of Lao music in northeast Thailand during the early 1970s covers a number of performance contexts, the study is not, of course, representative of performance inside Laos. It does, however, provide a useful reference point allowing some comparisons and contrast to be made between Laos at the end of the 20th century and northeast Thailand almost thirty years earlier. Of the studies pertaining to music in Laos, Compton has briefly addressed the differences between traditional and new "channels" of performance, but her discussion centres upon performance formats and the mediums by which it is transmitted to an audience, with little detail of the socio-religious contexts (Compton 1992a:150-155). Miller's more recent research has listed events throughout the Lao Buddhist calendar year as being the occasions at which *mohlam* perform, including: Lao new year, *bun pii maj laaw/bun song kaan* (ບຸນປີໃໝ່ລາວ/ບຸນສົງການ); the rocket festival *bun bang faj* (ບຸນບັ້ງໄຟ); the presentation of robes to monks, *bun kathin* (ບຸນກະຖິນ); celebrating the life of Prince Vetsandòòn, the penultimate reincarnation of the Buddha, *bun phavêêt* (ບຸນພະເວດ); ordinations, *bun buat* (ບຸນບວດ); temple fairs; weddings, *kin dòòng* (ກິນດອງ); cremations, *bun hùan dii* (ບຸນເຮືອນດີ); ceremonies for the dead, *bun cèèk khaw* (ບຸນແຈກເຂົ້າ); blessing a new house, *bun khùn hùan maj* (ບຸນຂຶ້ນເຮືອນໃໝ່); national holidays and so on (Miller 1998a:342; 2000:259). However, space limitations in these summaries does not permit detailed explanations of context to be made. My experiences in Laos during 1999 revealed a more limited number of occasions at which *khap-lam* genres, at least in their traditional form, are performed.

Interviews with *mohlam* from both Vientiane and Pakse indicate that a number of occasions from the above list no longer feature among their engagements. Furthermore, in some cases *mohlam* reported having never performed at some of them, in particular *bun hùan dii* (ບຸນເຮືອນດີ) (the period during which the deceased's corpse lies in the house awaiting cremation) and *bun bang faj* (ບຸນບັ້ງໄຟ). The former occasion is not considered to be appropriate for a *khap-lam* performance, instead, the relatives wait until the ashes are to be interred, when they arrange a *bun cèèk khaw* (see below). The latter occasion usually

involves music, however, this is not performed by professional *mohlam*, but by village performers. This type of music, known as *seeng* (ເຊີ້ງ), consists of a basic *khaen* pattern with a call and response verse, and is also a feature of the boat racing festivals, *bun suang hùa* (ບຸນຊ່ວງເຮືອ), held around the same time as *bun kathin* (cf. Miller 1985a:288).

Few *mohlam* I spoke to reported having been employed to perform at weddings, (*kin dòòng* ກິນດອງ), ordinations (*kòòng buat* ກອງບວດ), or Lao new year (*bun pii maj* ບຸນປີໃໝ່). Today, weddings and Lao new year celebrations are more likely to have one or more local pop/rock bands in attendance than a traditional *khap-lam* performance, particularly in the more developed parts of the country. Furthermore, *khap-lam* performances are no longer common at most large collective *bun* celebrations which have become commercialised. When *khap-lam* is performed at these events it is in a modern commercial context with the performers located upon a stage, at a distance from the audience. For example, in 1998 I watched a small group of performers from the Phon Hong district in Vientiane province, attempt to perform *khap ngeum* at Bun That Luang in Vientiane. They began by sitting down in the traditional manner, however, the large stage and commercial atmosphere of the *bun* was not appropriate for a traditional performance. Not only were the performers far removed from the audience and difficult to see, but they also had to compete with at least three other stages scattered around the parade ground. The sonic output from these stages was excruciatingly loud. As a traditional performance it simply did not work.

The observations made above are applicable to the urban centres in Laos; in the more remote and less affluent parts of Laos the occasions at which performances are staged may well be different. In such places, few of the resources required to stage large commercialised *bun* are available, however, as I have been unable to investigate the situation in remote areas this remains a topic for future research.

During field research, I attended performances in several contexts, most of which were sponsored by individual families as follows:

1. *bun cèèk khaw* (ບຸນແຈກເຂົ້າ), lit. '*bun* to distribute rice': a ceremony to make merit for a relative who has recently died. Usually this kind of *bun* is held after the deceased's ashes have been collected together for interment into a funerary *thaat* (ທາດ) at the village temple (cf. Condominas 1968:114-115). The *bun* is usually held on an

auspicious date identified by the local monks. The morning after the performance the deceased remains are taken to the temple to be interred.

2. *bun atta* (ບຸນອັດຕະ) '*bun* for the soul' or *bun thaan haa* (ບຸນທານຫາ) 'to give alms for another': a ceremony held to benefit the spirit of a dead person. This *bun* is similar to the *bun cèèk khaw* mentioned above, except that it is held for people who have been deceased for some time. The usual time to hold this *bun* is close to the anniversary of the person's death. A Lao dictionary describes this as being a ceremony for paying respects to monks (Thongkham 1992:784); however, this was not the primary aim of the *bun attha* which I attended in Laos. I have, in fact, attended one in which the beneficiary was still alive. Lao friends queried this when I told them, saying that the beneficiary is supposed to have died. However, as I knew the sponsor of the *bun* I was able to discover that they had arranged the *bun* because the family had the finances to fund the event, but were afraid it may not be possible to do so in the future after the beneficiary had died.

3. *bun khùn hùan maj* (ບຸນຂຶ້ນເຮືອນໃໝ່) '*bun* for moving into a new house': a ceremony held when a family moves into a newly constructed house. Monks are invited to perform a blessing for the house in the morning with the performance following in the evening.

4. *bun kathin* (ບຸນກະຖິນ) '*bun* for presenting robes': a ceremony to present new robes and other goods to monks after *phansaa* (ພັນສາ). *Phansaa*, beginning with the full moon of July and lasting until the full moon of October, is often referred to as Buddhist lent (Kerr 1992:893). During the wet season, monks are required to return to their *vat* at the end of each day, which means that they are restricted in their movements. It is a time when some lay people will abstain from certain practices or habits, such as drinking alcohol. Formerly, *phansaa* was a time when *khap-lam* performances were not held, but this has changed in recent times. Once *phansaa* is over, *bun kathin* immediately follows. It is held between the first night of the waning moon of the eleventh month until the full moon of the twelfth month (mid-October to early-mid November).

5. Other *bun vat* 'temple *bun*': many larger village temples hold *bun* at various times throughout the year which are usually associated with the major events on the

religious calendar, in particular *bun kathin*.[25] *Bun vat* are a useful way for the *vat* to raise funds as the sponsors, stall holders, and performers donate a portion of their proceeds to the temple. In district centres, as the largest *bun vat* become more commercialised, traditional *khap-lam* performances are being replaced with more modern entertainments.

All of the above *bun* are a blend of religious and secular activities. If sponsors' funds permit, the *bun* activities may take place over a period of two days. Less affluent families may observe *bun* through a simple offering at their local temple. For a two-day ceremony, the morning of the first day begins with a religious ceremony held at the sponsor's house. Monks from the village *vat* are invited to the house to chant a series of prayers, *suatmon* (ສວດມົນ), which are offered to the beneficiary of the ceremony. Once prayers are completed the monks receive offerings of food from those in attendance, who are usually only family members and close friends. This food offering is called *tak baat* (ຕັກບາດ) 'alms giving', after which the morning's rituals conclude with the scattering of sacred water by the senior monk upon the heads of the participants. Once this ceremony is completed, the monks return to the *vat*. Condominas' explanation of *bun* festivities below only partially describes the transfer of merit that takes place in the description above:

> These Buddhist ceremonies, whether individual, familial, or village wide are occasions for offering gifts to the monks and thereby "acquiring merit". (Condominas 1975:253)

Missing from this description is the frequently reciprocal nature of these transactions. It is not only the donors of gifts and food who gain merit but also the monks to whom they give. A third party is often the primary beneficiary of merit making, for example, when a *bun* is held to make merit for a dead relative, the donors are making their offerings on behalf of the deceased to obtain merit for them. In performing this action they also make merit for themselves. Reciprocity is not restricted to merit-making, but is a feature of Lao peasant life whereby 'help', *suaj lùa* (ຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອ), in the form of labour, is offered to neighbours at various times in the year (ploughing, planting, harvesting) (see Evans 1995:141-145).

After the *tak baat* ceremony, the family and their guests normally take their midday meal, beginning the feasting that continues until the following day. The afternoon is generally spent preparing for that evening's entertainment with the preparation of food, drink and other refreshments, as well as arranging the performance space and equipment.

As the night falls, arriving guests are welcomed with offerings of food and drink. The performers usually arrive together about an hour before the performance begins, whereupon the sponsors welcome them with their evening meal, drink and cigarettes. Some time between eight and nine o'clock in the evening the performance begins and continues until the dawn breaks. The all-night duration of *bun* is universal; it is not restricted to *bun* at which *khap-lam* or some other entertainment is provided. I have also attended many privately arranged *bun* in Australia at which participants are perfectly happy to sit around, talk and play cards all night; however, in Laos, *bun* are seldom without live entertainment of some kind.

A sponsor plays a significant role in the direction of a performance by indicating to the *mohlam* which topics he/she would like to be addressed at different stages throughout the performance. During performances which I observed, sponsors usually consulted the performers during the performance whenever they wished to instruct the *mohlam* to address a particular theme. Much of the time a *mohlam* will address the performance context in ways that are appropriate. For example, Paeng Thong (13/8/99) reported that at performances associated with a *bun cèèk khaw* or *bun atta*, a *mohlam* may call the spirit of the deceased to be present at the performance. This is usually done in the early hours of the morning, around two o'clock. After singing several verses to the spirit, which inform the spirit that the *bun* is being held for their benefit, the *mohlam* will then send the spirit back to heaven.

Although a number of thematic variations may be introduced by sponsors, audience members or *mohlam*, every *khap-lam* performance follows a conventionalised order. This order determines many of the themes that are addressed throughout the night (see chapter 7 for more details). The role of sponsors is addressed in more detail in the section on performance practice below.

Bun *Since 1975*

The previous section introducing the three genres referred to restrictions on *bun* that were put in place after 1975. These were part of the LPRP's attempt to reduce the central role that the Buddhist religion had in daily lives of ordinary Lao people, it aimed to substitute the new Lao state for religion. Religious-based state rituals gave way to purely state-based, secular ones. Buddhism lost its status as the state religion. The Sangha was placed under the control of the party's front for national construction, the *nèèw laaw saang*

saat (ແນວຄວາມສັ້ງຊຸກ) (Evans 1998:57). At the village level, *bun* were restricted on the grounds that they were wasteful of both time and money, with the rhetoric couched in economic rather than political terms (Evans 1998:58). In addition to these general restrictions, other government policies also affected the viability of holding *bun*. Travel restrictions, night time curfews, and controls on alcoholic consumption all contributed to the demise of the village and privately sponsored *bun*, at least for a few years. The following excerpt from the BBC summary of world broadcasts (dated 15th July 1977) shows how the rice shortages in 1977 affected other aspects of daily life: "The use of rice or corn for liquor distillation must be strictly minimised, and we must avoid unnecessary parties or religious rice donations" (from Evans 1998:59), which meant that:

> [...] even the free flow of liquor and good times that normally go with a Lao festival were under threat. For ordinary people the new regime had definitely become *boh mouan* (unpleasant). Indeed, government attempts to restrain alcoholic revelry is echoed in subsequent years through various instructions released before festivals (Evans 1998:59).

Although there is little doubt that *bun*, both public and private, put great strain upon resources, the perceived benefits of observance far outweigh any economic strain that is felt. Furthermore, there is not necessarily a strain on resources, since the *bun* is a traditional method by which the village surplus is redistributed (Evans 1990:86). The anti-*bun* policy had the added effect of severely restricting opportunities for *mohlam* to perform throughout the country, because *bun* had provided the setting for the vast majority of *khap-lam* performances. From the end of 1975, instead of being able to stage a *bun* whenever one had the resources and inclination, any person or organisation wishing to hold a *bun* was required to obtain permission from the village headman, *pathaan baan* (ປະຖານບ້ານ), or other authorised person. Even then, permission was difficult to obtain. The economic hardships of the late 1970s were an additional obstacle to staging a lavish *bun* in the early years of the Lao PDR.

Although the effects of these social policies were immediately felt by the general population, the Lao government could not maintain them over the long term. Restrictions on *bun* were progressively eased after 1977; and the state-based ritual calendar never successfully penetrated into the rural areas of Laos where the traditional calendar of events based upon the agricultural cycle and centred upon the *vat* held their ground. By the mid-1990s, the state-based ritual calendar had all but retreated from public view, and *bun* were once again held on a regular basis.

While Buddhism was temporarily weakened in Laos by political decrees in the post-1975 period, it has nonetheless retained its influence over the lives of many Lao people, particularly the older generation. In the post-revolutionary period, Buddhism is now being promoted by the government as the central ingredient of Lao national identity, reversing its earlier policies which discouraged, and even attacked, the central tenets of Buddhism. Evans has noted that since the beginning of the 1990s the LPRP "has turned increasingly to Buddhism in its search of new ideologies, and of a reformulated Lao nationalism" by undertaking a process of "re-Buddhification of the Lao state", in which monks are held up as the guardians of traditional Lao knowledge and culture (Evans 1998:67). This is one of the changes indicative of the Lao government's return to an ethnically-based view of the nation. By this dramatic reversal of policy, the Lao government appears content to ignore a reality it once exploited so well; that only half of the nation's population are lowland Lao Buddhists (cf. Evans 1995:196).

Another major development that has occurred since the mid-1990s has been the large numbers of expatriate Lao returning to Laos in order to visit the many relatives they left behind when they fled the country. Only a decade or so ago, many expatriate Lao would have feared retribution of some kind upon returning to Laos; however, the on-going changes made by the Lao government in the economic and social arenas have alleviated many of these fears, and people are now returning in increasing numbers. Some quit their expatriate lives, returning to Laos permanently but most prefer to visit for a few weeks and then return to their adopted country. The growing number of returning Lao is having a considerable impact upon the frequency of *khap-lam* performances now taking place in Laos, at least in the larger urban centres. Over half of the performances that I attended in Vientiane and Champassak during 1998 and 1999 were sponsored by expatriate Lao visiting relatives. Given that Lao from all over the countryside left after 1975, it is reasonable to assume that expatriate-sponsored *bun* are now commonplace throughout Laos, and that a number of these involve *khap-lam* performance. Expatriate Lao sponsors favour having traditional *khap-lam* performances over other forms of entertainment at the *bun* they sponsor, because they are nostalgic for their past and because *khap-lam* performance is in very short supply in their adopted countries (cf. Miller 1985c).[26]

The increase of expatriate-sponsored *bun* was explained to me by Kheua Kham, a female *mohlam* from Ban Naa Dii in Vientiane province, during an interview in early 1999:

> But since last year, and into this year I've been going [out to perform] all the time. Mostly it's those people who have gone to live overseas. Then they come back home to visit their father or mother and arrange a *bun* ..., like they'll say "Oh! I'd better arrange a *bun* straight away" so then they'll come and find me and I'll go off to their event. (Kheua Kham 4/9/1999)[27]

Although Kheua Kham does not say so, there is a strong expectation among Lao people that their relatives will be generous during their return visits. The enormous social pressure upon them to provide for their poorer relatives makes sponsoring a lavish *bun* almost mandatory for the visiting relative before they return home. The costs of holding a *bun* are not inconsiderable; there is food and drink to be bought and prepared, donations to be given to the monks/temple, the performers fees, and the hire costs for a PA system and marquee paid. A total bill of A$500 or more is not uncommon if the event is large and is held in one of the larger urban centres such as Vientiane or Pakse.

In view of the poor economic situation in Laos during 1998 and 1999, the injection of money from this foreign source has certainly helped the professional performers earn their livelihood in recent years. Without this source of income, performers fees may have been lowered considerably by the poor economic climate. The effect of this overseas source of funds cannot be overstated; a 1999 report by the State Planning Committee indicated that remittances from abroad are the largest single source of household income in the Vientiane region, contributing twenty-eight percent of total income (Lintner 30/9/2001). In Vientiane and Pakse, the occasional *bun* is arranged by some of the many foreign organisations that maintain a presence in Laos, however, these are not yet frequent enough to have any effect upon the tradition.

The Professionalism of Performers

Present-day *mohlam* of Vientiane and Pakse are professionals, receiving monetary reward for their services. Acaan Som, Paeng Thong and other performers living in Ban Pak Kanyung, note that professionalism is a recent development in the Vientiane area, having begun sometime in the early 1970s.[28] Before that time, performers would be rewarded with an evening meal and perhaps some gifts of food to take home. In southern Laos, Duang Phaeng, Sunii and Acaan Vanna, stated that payment for performance has been the practice in the Pakse area for about two generations, becoming widely accepted in the mid-1960s. Miller has claimed that singers of the *lam khon savan* genre in Savannakhet province, are the only Lao *mohlam* likely to have been professional "for generations" (1998a:345). I

have been unable to confirm or deny Miller's claim; however, given the immediate proximity of Savannakhet to the Thai border, and the relatively high level of musical activity in that province, his claim cannot be dismissed. Professionalism is found elsewhere in the Tai world. For example, the *zhangkhap* tradition of the Lue people in the Xipsongbanna region of Yunnan province in China has, like some Lao *khap-lam* traditions, had professional performers for several generations (Davis 1999:74). We could surmise that the development of *mohlam* as a professional vocation in Savannakhet probably occurred at the same time as it did in the neighbouring provinces of northeast Thailand, that is, around the end of World War Two. Whether they are professional or not, *mohlam* are viewed, together with monks, as the main bearers of cultural knowledge in Lao society.

During 1999, performers in Vientiane and Champassak charged similar fees for a performance. In Pakse, Som Sii and Chindavan earned 250,000 kip (c.A$55) each per performance. Their *mohkhaen* earned considerably less, usually around 80,000 kip (c.A$13). If long distance travel to Salavan or Attapeu is required, the fees usually increase to 300,000 and 100,000 kip respectively. In Vientiane, *khap ngeum* performers reported similar rates, with *mohlam* receiving between 250,000-300,000 kip for a performance, and *mohkhaen* 50-60,000 kip. The disparity in status and importance between the *mohlam* and *mohkhaen* is clear from the gap in their performance fees, however, without the *mohlam*, the *mohkhaen* would have no work.[29] In both Vientiane and Pakse the performers are employed as a troupe. Normally the sponsor seeks out the male *mohlam*, who draws up a contract stating the time and place of the performance, together with the performers fee. Once the booking is made, the male *mohlam* will then visit the other members of the troupe to inform them of the upcoming performance.

Comparative Performance Practice

At the end of chapter 3, we noted that the four primary components of Lao *khap-lam* vocal music — music, text structures, themes, and performance practice, all draw from a common Lao cultural platform. In this section, we explore the similarities and differences between performance practice of *lam siphandon* and *khap ngeum*. Although performances of these two genres exhibit more similarities than they do differences, it is the differences which help to broaden our definition of regional genres beyond purely musical features and help us view them as regional traditions with their own distinctive performance style.

Common Elements

The traditional setting for a *khap-lam* performance is an all-night event that takes place in a private home or a communal space, such as the village temple. If it is held in a private home, the performance area is often situated under a *phaam* (ພາມ) 'marquee' erected for the occasion.[30] Performances may also be located on the verandah of the house. Straw or plastic mats are placed upon the floor for the performers and audience to sit upon. Simple refreshments, snacks, water, cigarettes and the like, are put out for the performers. When a performance event is held in a communal space, it generally takes place in the temple *sala* (ສາລາ) 'pavilion', a space where communal activities connected to the temple are held. Alternatively, a special stage may be constructed within the temple grounds, or other communal space, to accommodate the performers and audience (as per the performance described in chapter 1). The host, or patron, of a *bun* event is responsible for providing all food, drink and entertainment for their guests. In addition to the *khap-lam* performance, the sponsor also needs to provide for those guests attending the *bun* who, rather than actively participating in the performance event, prefer to watch videos or bet on card games. The larger the event, the more likely it is to find competing forms of entertainment on offer.

Guests interested in more actively participating in the performance seat themselves close to the performers. The party of performers, most often consisting of two *mohlam*, one male and one female, are seated together with two *khaen* players in an approximate semi-circle facing their audience, who move in closer to the performers as the evening progresses. Alcohol, consumed in copious quantities, is conspicuous at performance events; indeed, *mohlam* consider audience alcohol consumption to be a vital ingredient of a successful performance event because it removes inhibitions and encourages members of an audience to take an active role.

Performances follow a conventionalised format founded upon male-female repartee, which takes the form of alternating rounds. A performance by a pair of singers, one male and one female, begins some time between eight or nine o'clock in the evening. The male *mohlam* takes the first round, *ñok*, which usually lasts only five minutes or so. The female *mohlam* then replies with a brief introductory round, whereupon the main part of the performance begins in earnest. The repartee singing continues all night, with only one short meal break at around midnight (see Plate 14) before finishing just as dawn breaks.

The performers then wait to get to paid, after which they go home. During a performance, the *mohlam* are required to fulfil a number of the audience's, as well as the sponsor's expectations as they sing their texts. It is of utmost importance that the *mohlam* are able to respond to each individual performance situation; this is the reason why the ability to compose poetry on the spot is vital to becoming a successful performer (see chapter 7 for details on content).

Most often there is one male and one female *mohlam*, however, readers will recall that the *lam siphandon* performance described in chapter 1, featured three *mohlam*, one male and two female. This format is not particularly unusual. I attended a *khap ngeum* performance at That Luang in Vientiane which also featured two female *mohlam*, Paeng Thong and Khammani, performing with one male, Acaan Thong. This mixture is acceptable because it allows the imagined scenario of husband, wife and minor wife/lover to be developed during the performance. In contrast, I have never witnessed, or heard of performances being held, in which there are two male *mohlam* to one female *mohlam*.

Throughout a night-long performance event, sections of the audience come and go as they please. An overall pattern of audience behaviour was apparent in the *lam siphandon*, *lam khon savan*, and *khap ngeum* performances I attended. In this pattern, women constitute the bulk of the attentive audience in the hours before midnight (see Plate 4). Towards midnight, more men move into the audience and begin to listen and participate, many of whom have previously focussed their attention on playing cards and drinking. It is no coincidence that this is the time that the more bawdy and competitive material is performed. Once the men have established their presence, a proportion of women usually leave to return home, while others sleep for a while at the peripheries of the audience so that they can rejoin the event after resting. There are always a number of women, however, who stay for most of the night, maintaining the feminine element necessary for the banter and teasing between the sexes. Audience members usually align themselves with the *mohlam* of the same sex, who can act as a conduit for their comments and innuendo. These remarks may be directed at other audience members or at the other *mohlam*.

The early departure of many females is most likely due simply to fatigue arising from their domestic tasks, particularly as most have been involved with the preparation of food for the event, a huge task that is carried out by women almost exclusively. Paeng Thong (23/4/1999) noted that the people who like to stay all night are those who are

closely connected to the *bun* (i.e. family members and sponsors), as well as those who like to drink and listen to *khap-lam*.

In Vientiane, one would expect to hear *khap ngeum* performed for most of the evening, although if the performers know another genre as well, they may include it, should the audience or sponsor request it. However, this is quite rare. In Pakse and Muang Khong, *lam siphandon* is the main genre performed, but, as described in chapter 1, a number of genres from northeast Thailand are commonly incorporated during the early hours of the morning. As *lam som* is no longer performed by most *mohlam*, a sponsor wanting to hear this genre will seek out a *mohlam*, nearly always Duang Phaeng, who is capable of performing it.

Regional Variations

A number of significant regional differences exist in some aspects of performance practice between the two *khap-lam* traditions. In *khap ngeum*, the male and female *mohlam* are each accompanied by a *muu* (ໝູ) 'friend' of the same sex. This person's role is to keep the *mohlam* company, and to enhance the atmosphere of the performance by ensuring that it is *muan* 'fun, pleasant'. The main task of the female companion is to pour shots of *laaw law*, 'rice whisky', for the performers and guests. This role provides the name by which this female participant is usually referred, *phuu saaw ñêên law* (ຜູ້ສາວເຫຍ້ນເຫລົ້າ) or 'drink pouring girl' (see Plate 17). A different role is required of the male companion, whose main task is to add the falsetto-like, cascading whoops at the end of the main sections within each performer's round (see chapter 6). This additional singing is known as *sòòj* (ສອຍ); thus, the person who leads the audience in adding this material is called a *mohsòòj* (ໝໍ່ສອຍ) (see Plate 16). The term *sòòj* also applies to extraneous comments that audience members might add during the break between rounds, often in the form of a *phañaa* poem. As the night wears on, the *mohsòòj* encourages members of the audience to join him in the cascading *sòòj* section. He will often add his own spoken witticisms or comments at the end of a round and encourage others to do the same. These additional members of the performers' party receive a small payment of 10,000 to 20,000 kip for their role. In *lam siphandon*, there are no additional members to the party of four or five performers. As there is no conventionalised sung *sòòj* part in *lam siphandon*, a specialised *mòòsòòj* is not required, although audience will inject their own spoken *sòòj* witticisms at the end of

rounds if they feel inclined. Similarly, no one specific person takes on the role of pouring drinks; it is shared among audience members.

Another notable feature of *khap ngeum* performance practice is the activity called *thèèm somphaan* (ແຖມສົ້ມພານ), meaning 'to add merit'. This is when audience members donate small amounts of money to the performers. At the commencement of each *khap ngeum* performance, the sponsor places a silver (or aluminium) bowl, called *khan* (ຂັນ), in front of each *mohlam*, for the purpose of receiving donations from the audience. Once the opening rounds have been completed, members of the audience begin to write brief messages, which they hand to the *mohlam*. As they submit their message to the *mohlam*, they place a small sum of money as a donation into the bowl (see Plate 18). Upon receiving these messages, the *mohlam*, using their extemporaneous composition abilities (see chapter 7), incorporate its sentiments or message into their round (see Plate 15), as well as thanking and blessing the giver of the donation. To assist them in this process some *mohlam* use a notebook and pen which they may use to write poems when they are not singing, or to provide audience members with writing materials to make their requests. During the course of the evening's performance, each *mohlam* earns a bonus amount of money from *thèèm somphaan*. The amount a *mohlam* makes from these donations is a way that he/she, and their peers, can judge their popularity. During *lam siphandon* performance, *thèèm somphaan* does occur, but it lacks the formalised conventions that occur in *khap ngeum*. Furthermore, I noticed that donations from audience members were not always obvious in every *lam siphandon* performance I attended, in fact the only occasion in which it was openly given was the Ban Niw performance described in chapter 1.

A distinctive feature of *lam siphandon*, not found in *khap ngeum*, is dancing by *mohlam* and audience members. Dancing also occurs in other genres of southern Laos; however, *lam siphandon* dancing has its own distinctive traits. In *lam siphandon*, only the *mohlam* who is singing dances, executing gestures from the waist up in the manner described in chapter 1. Flirtatious language filled with a mix of taunts and praise is used in the poems which accompany the dance. The *mohlam* not singing usually feigns disinterest at the attention being directed at them (see Plate 19). Although most dance gestures are uniform throughout Laos, in *lam siphandon* the gestures can become quite intimate at times, as the *mohlam* use their hands to trace the outlines of each other's bodies and faces (see Plate 3). The *mohlam* reinforce these intimate movements by making frequent

references to touching, or not touching, the other *mohlam*. In contrast, performance of dance in *lam khon savan* features dance of a less intimate nature, and is mostly performed by the *mohlam* who is not singing. Audience members in both *lam siphandon* and *lam khon savan* participate in similar ways, dancing or clapping their hands in time to the *khaen* accompaniment whenever they feel motivated to do so, which is usually after a particularly witty or rude remark has been made by a *mohlam*. These rounds which feature dancing use a different verse structure, based upon poetic *kaap* form, called *kòòn fùang*, that is further explained in chapter 7.

The incorporation of genres from northeast Thailand (most often *lam kòòn*)[31] into *lam siphandon* performance has resulted in a hybrid performance practice. Whenever these additional genres are performed, the *mohlam* adopt aspects of performance practice associated with them. For example, in the *lam kòòn* genre from northeast Thailand, *mohlam* and *mohkhaen* stand while performing to a seated audience. It is also usual for the *mohlam* who is not singing to dance, while the singing *mohlam* may join in during breaks in their round (Miller 1985a:50). When *lam kòòn* is included in a *lam siphandon* performance, both performers and audience stand, often with everyone dancing (see Plate 5). One reason for this extra activity is that in Laos, *lam kòòn* is used as a way to enliven a tiring audience. By standing up to perform, the *mohlam* draw a clear distinction between the two Lao *lam taj* genres and those imported from northeast Thailand.

One final but minor difference in performance practice involves the use of small pillows by *khap ngeum* performers. The sponsor provides these pillows to all members of the performers' party for their comfort, which they place in their laps throughout the performance (see Plates 15, 16, 17 and 18). There appears to be no other purpose, apart from comfort, for the use of these pillows. Sponsors of *lam siphandon* performances also provide pillows or cushions for the performers comfort, however, the performers do not place them in their laps in the same habitual way as their *khap ngeum* counterparts. This may simply be a reflection of the different relative amounts of activity that *mohlam* from each tradition engage in during a performance.

Table 5.1 below, summarises in point form, the similarities and differences between performance practice in the *lam siphandon* and *khap ngeum* traditions.

lam siphandon	***khap ngeum***
♦ performed in *bun* context	♦ performed in *bun* context
♦ male-female repartee	♦ male-female repartee
♦ *khaen* accompaniment	♦ *khaen* accompaniment
♦ texts based on *kòòn aan* form	♦ texts based on *kòòn aan* form
♦ spoken *sòòj* only	♦ spoken and sung *sòòj*
♦ professional performers	♦ professional performers
♦ incorporation of other genres	♦ single genre only
♦ seated performance (except when Isan genres are being performed)	♦ seated performance
♦ pillows not used as a prop.	♦ performers cradle small pillows in their laps.
♦ dancing (from waist up) by the singer, during the *fòòn* section only. Dancing in Isan style when Isan genres are performed.	♦ no dancing.
♦ 4 performers is standard (2 *mohlam*, 2 *mohkhaen*)	♦ 4 performers plus 2 companions is standard
♦ audience-performer interaction centred upon verbal messages; monetary donations infrequent. *Mohlam* do not use a notebook and pen.	♦ audience-performer interaction centred upon passing of notes; frequent small monetary donations (*thèèm somphaan*). *Mohlam* may use a notebook and pen.

Table 5.1: Comparison of performance practice of the *lam siphandon* and *khap ngeum* regional traditions

Approaching Performance: Learning and Preparation

Learning Methods

The majority of *mohlam* from the *khap ngeum* and *lam siphandon* traditions who participated in this study reported that they had undertaken very little formal study with a teacher. Some *mohlam* stated that their learning involved their teacher either writing or reciting texts which they had to memorise and then perform for them. Although many participants were taught by practicing *mohlam* (Duang Phaeng, Paeng Thong, Sunii), others (Acaan Vanna, Acaan Som) were taught by monks or retired monks who, having received a high standard of religious education, were familiar with the compositional techniques of Lao poetry (see Koret 1994a; 1999; 2000). The following quotations from

Acaan Vanna and Chindavan are quite typical of the responses I encountered when inquiring about the learning process:

> He didn't teach me all that much...he wasn't a *mohlam*, he was a literary scholar, a Maha,[32] and had taught himself [poetic composition]. Now, he'd read a lot of palm-leaf manuscripts [i.e. traditional literature], and knew a lot because the flavour, the intricacies, the essence of verbal arts..., the whole basis of *lam* is in palm-leaf manuscripts, in the books, like *Tèèng òòn*, *Kalakêêt*, *Singkaloo*, *Thaaw Kam Ka Dam*. All of these the scholar has gathered together in his head. (Vanna Keophilom 2/5/1999)[33]

> Sometimes I'd get my verses from the teacher...but mostly I'd just watch him perform. It was up me to apply myself..., when I went to be tested, my teacher would practice with his partner. I'd sit and observe the things they did and then I'd have to do them myself [...], but he only really taught me a little, mostly I've learnt by myself. (Chindavan Sithavong 15/11/1999)[34]

Chindavan also said she had sought out former monks in order to learn essential religious and literary knowledge as well as learning from Som Sii, her performing partner:

> I've had to seek out literary scholars, those who have been monks. Sometimes I'd go to find a learned monk at some *vat* and say "Acaan I'm having trouble with this or that, can you please explain it for me?" [...] Now when I perform with Som Sii, who is learned and has been a monk, well I learn from him. If I can't do something then he'll explain it to me, then the next time I'll be able to reply. (Chindavan Sithavong 15/11/1999)[35]

Rather than the formally supervised rote learning of poems apparently common to *mohlam* in northeast Thailand (Miller 1985a:43-47), most Lao *mohlam* I interviewed claimed to have learnt the majority of their skills by observing and imitating accomplished *mohlam* of their era. The most valuable part of the learning process involved attending numerous *bun* at which students could observe the strategies employed by the *mohlam* to cope with shifting themes and contexts during performance.

Performers' emphasis upon observation and imitation indicates that they felt these were the most important part of the learning process. It is difficult to assess whether or not participants deliberately underestimated the role their teachers played in their acquisition of basic performance competency, because there is no way of going back in time to verify their claims. In light of some of their comments concerning their own students, I feel that most participants relied a great deal upon their teachers during the early stages of their learning. These underestimations aside, all participants saw the formal arrangement with their teacher as essential for their development into skilled *mohlam*, as it was from their

teachers that they acquired a number of incantations, known collectively as *òò lam* (ອໍ້ລຳ), which assist both learning and performance.

Incantations to Aid Learning and Performance

All Lao *mohlam* possess a series of incantations which serve two interrelated purposes: i) they are a means by which the *mohlam* pays respect to his/her teacher; and ii) they empower the *mohlam* in aspects of learning and performing *lam* texts. In Laos, the ritual in which a *mohlam* pays respect to his/her teacher(s) is known as *vaj khuu* (ໄຫວ້ຄູ), or *ñok khuu* (ຍົກຄູ). The Lao *vaj khuu* ritual is part of wider tradition which extends into Thailand, and Cambodia. Deborah Wong's book, *Sounding the Center* (2001), presents an in-depth examination of the *wai khruu*[36] ritual as it is performed by Thai classical musicians in Bangkok. Wong describes a highly elaborate ritual that is attended by numerous students and teachers and officiated by a senior performer who is "entered" by the spirit of the Old Father, the first teacher of music and dance from whom all performing knowledge is passed down through a succession of teachers to the students of the present day (Wong 2001:9-11). In the Thai ritual, incantations are used to summon Hindu-Buddhist deities to the performance and to empower performers (2001:65, 130, 290).[37] The *vaj khuu* ceremonies of Lao *mohlam* serve a similar function although they are much smaller and less formal than Thai rituals, usually involving just the *mohlam*. The incantations that Lao *mohlam* use are detailed below.

Acaan Som (23/4/1999) stated it was important to recite *òò* (i.e. perform the *vaj khuu* ritual) on *van sin* (ວັນສິນ) 'holy days', of which there are four per month: the 8th, 15th days of the waxing moon, and the 8th and 15th days of the waning moon.[38] This may reflect a difference in practice between *khap ngeum* and *lam siphandon* performers, the latter of whom all stated that they recited *òò* before leaving for performances and did not mention any association with *van sin*. Before reciting *òò*, all *mohlam* arrange a number of offerings on a tray, often referred to as *khaaj hian* (ຄາຍຮຽນ). These consist of *khan haa khan pèèt* (ຂັນຫ້າຂັນແປດ), bundles of five and eight candles arranged on a tray together with a number of other assorted items including, a bottle of whisky, a chicken egg, a bolt of material, a comb, a small mirror, and four *suaj* (ຊວຍ), flower holders made from banana leaves (Thongkham 1998:49-50; Miller 1985a:46). Many Lao and Thai dictionaries and scholars have defined *khaaj* simply as the collection of materials offered by the student (Preecha

1989:181; Miller 1985a:46; Thongkham 1992:156), however, it also includes the agreement, *patiñaan* (ปะติยาน), between the teacher and his/her student. The following description from Thongkham (1998:48-49) summarises the information I have gained through conversations with numerous *mohlam*:

> *khaaj lam* or *khaaj hian lam* is the obligation, belief, the mind and heart energy that are of utmost importance for the teacher and student. This gives them faith and belief in their knowledge, wisdom and study of *lam*. It allows them to concentrate their mind, to have patience and bravery to cut through all kinds of obstacles.[39]

Performers who do not recite their *òò* regularly, or do not perform according to the agreement they have made with their teacher are considered to be in breach of the agreement, *phit khaaj* (ผิดสาย). When such circumstances arise, it is said that the *mohlam* will either fall ill or experience difficulties in their performances, such as forgetting certain poems or being unable to provide adequate responses to jibes and questions posed by the opposing *mohlam*.

Performers tend to guard their incantations carefully, having inherited them from their teachers, who do not pass them on to the student until the teacher is satisfied that the student is fully committed to learning. Incantations designed for the same purpose have different texts according to their lineage. That is, one performer's incantations will not be exactly the same as those belonging to one of their peers from a different line of teachers.

The topic of *òò* was not explored by Compton in her 1979 study; and was only briefly mentioned by Miller (1985a:46) in his work on Lao music in northeast Thailand. However, the Lao authors Thongkham (1998:52-54) and Kavin (1997:29-34) have placed importance upon this aspect, with its dual functions in the learning process and performance practice. Using their work as a starting point, I questioned several *mohlam* on this aspect of performance. The majority reported that the series of *òò* incantations was the most important knowledge they gained through establishing a formal relationship with their teacher. Without exception all participants rated this knowledge as being more important than any poems or other techniques that were formally taught. The *òò* incantations are not sung but muttered, *com* (จิ่ม), by the *mohlam* before commencing their performance in order to ensure a lucid and entertaining performance. In most circumstances, a *mohlam* will recite his/her *òò* at home before going to the performance, however, *òò* may also be recited immediately prior to a performance if circumstances do

not permit an earlier recitation. These incantations may be either wholly in Lao or Pali, or else a combination of both languages.

All participants whom I interviewed described the same set of four *òò* that they believe are the most useful to *mohlam*, especially while they are still learning. These incantations are not exclusively used by *mohlam*, however, as they are also useful to anyone requiring a good memory. Students studying for examinations have been known to use *òò* to aid their recall. The following descriptions are based on information provided by Acaan Som, Acaan Vanna, Duang Phaeng, Som Sii and Sunii (there is some minor variation in the names that individual performers give to these *òò*, the ones listed below are those I heard most often):

1. òò caj pòòng	ອ້ໃຈປ່ອງ	This incantation aids *mohlam* in speaking and singing. It ensures that they are able to maintain fluency as they perform, whether reciting from memory or composing text extemporaneously. According to Vanna it also aids courage when taking on a more skilled opponent.
2. òò cam khòò	ອ້ຈໍ່ໆ ອ້	This incantation is used to assist memory. It is particularly useful for *mohlam* when they first begin learning verses, either written or recited, from their teacher.
3. òò sòòng hên	ອ້ສ່ອງເຫັ້ນ	Literally translated this means 'insightful incantation', and is used to assists fluency of thinking, enabling the *mohlam* to think of answers to problems posed to them during the course of performance. This incantation complements *òò caj pòòng* since it aids fluency and recall.

4. *òò mahaa niñom* ອ້ຳມະຫານິຍົມ This incantation is used to ensure that a *mohlam's* performance is favourably received by the sponsor and audience. This has particular importance for *mohlam* who are professional, depending upon frequent performance to earn their living. A good response from audiences and sponsors alike ensures that they will gain a reputation as an entertaining performer.

In the course of my field research I was unable to elicit any examples of *òò* from the *mohlam* who participated in this study. I asked several *mohlam* if I could record the *òò* they had been taught but my requests were met either with a hesitant response or else they changed the topic of conversation. This secrecy is most probably due to the power associated with such incantations; a secrecy also observed by Thai officiants of the *wai khruu* ritual who closely guard their *khaathaa* incantations for calling deities and empowering students (Wong 2001:130).

Below are two examples of *òò*, the first is a text of *òò caj pòòng* which appeared (source uncredited), in Thongkham's (1998:50) book on *lam siphandon*. I suspect that this *òò* most probably belongs to either Duang Phaeng or Acaan Vanna because these two performers receive the most attention throughout Thongkham's book:

ໂອມພຸດໂທ	ນะโมเป้นเลี้ำ	Om, O Buddha I bow to you, the eminent one
ฟังเถิเจ้ำ	จอมมิ่งอีสอบ	listen to me! Isuan[40] the supreme jewel
ขอจิ่งขอบ	เทพาทลิงเทด	may I invite the divine to see and act
เทเอดเจ้ำ	แผ่นฟ้ำยืมผิม	Indra the supreme angel of earth and sky
ยืมผิบาม	ถืสอบแท่ฟ้ำ	god of the dead, bearing the arrow, leading the front
ขอย่ำให้ซายาบขุ่ำ ในใจ		prevent me from being coarse at heart
ขอให้แปปิไส	ตามลอวพะเจ้ำ	please assist my character and offer me Buddha's protection
ขอให้เอ้ำในแท่ว ปะถิมมำ		may I enter the elementary state

Example 5-1: *òò caj pòòng* of a *mohlam siphandon* (Thongkham 1998:50)

The second incantation is of an *òò maahaa niñom* belonging to Acaan Som, taken from Kavin's book on *khap ngeum*:

ອົมนิยิม	มะหานิยิม	Om[41] I have respect, great respect
ອิมมุกลิน	ยังมีช้ำงเจ็ดล้าน สะถิดยู่อิมาบลำ	Om mankind, there are 7 million elephants in the celestial abode
ข่ให้ฆาอยู่ยอง	เหิงหัวกูเบิ	may they come to rest upon my head
ทิสุใต้ขอ้บหัวกู	สิถั่งพะพุด และ พะทำ	and place the essential energies on my head such as the Buddha and Dharma
มาแก้ไขข้ำบี้..	ใช้บ้ำใจผองใส	and to save this servant, making my spirit brilliant
ตักสิลา	สิยิมหาลิงนิมิด	dipping into the rock, like lightening sending an omen
เอ้ำในจิดเธ้ำบี้	ไอถั่งอิน	into my mind as fast as Indra
ข่ให้สยงกูถ้ง	ถั่งสยงฟ้ำ	may my voice be loud like the sound of thunder
ข่ให้สยงกูม่อนห่ เพ็อนถั่งนิกกำละฮึก ซ่ำงอัน		may my voice be joyous like the sound of a bird
สยงม่อน ห่ซ้ำงพาอัน โตซ่ำงธ้อง		a joyous voice like the raucous elephant Phaavan
สิถั่งสยงกิ่ลัยอง	เมืองมัน	tumultuous like the striking of a gong
อิมติณา	อิมผุดหานุสะติ	Om connects with me, the memory of the Buddha
ทำมานุสะติ	สังฆานุสะติ	the Dharma and the Sangha
อิติปิโส	พะละอา	*itipisoo* O Buddha

Example 5-2: Incantation *òò mahaa niñom* of Acaan Som (Kavin 1997:33)

It is difficult to convey the full meaning of these incantations in English translations. However, it is clear that each one is a call to the supernatural deities to assist the *mohlam* in certain tasks. In Example 5-1 the *mohlam* appeals to Hindu-Buddhist deities to assist him to remain in an alert state of mind, while in Example 5-2, Acaan Som directs his request to the triple gems of Buddhism, asking that he be able to display enticing characteristics of voice and body during performance.

Regional Traditions

The above discussion of background histories and performance practices shows that discrete regional traditions exist within a broader Lao *khap-lam* tradition. It also indicates the focus of ethnomusicological study should be at the level of the regional tradition rather than the musical genre. This is because each region's tradition is not only characterised by its musical genre(s) but also by the performance practices and processes which accompany them. Some regional traditions, such as *lam siphandon* and *lam khon savan*, have a core musical genre around which other genres may be performed but other traditions, most

notably those in northern Laos, are centred upon a single musical genre. Therefore, a regional tradition is best described as a convergence of musical genres, performance practices and processes that are specific to a particular group of event participants. The paradigm in Figure 5.1 below shows how the paradigm first proposed in chapter 3 can be modified to accommodate regional traditions which may or may not utilise multiple musical genres (and their associated performance practices).

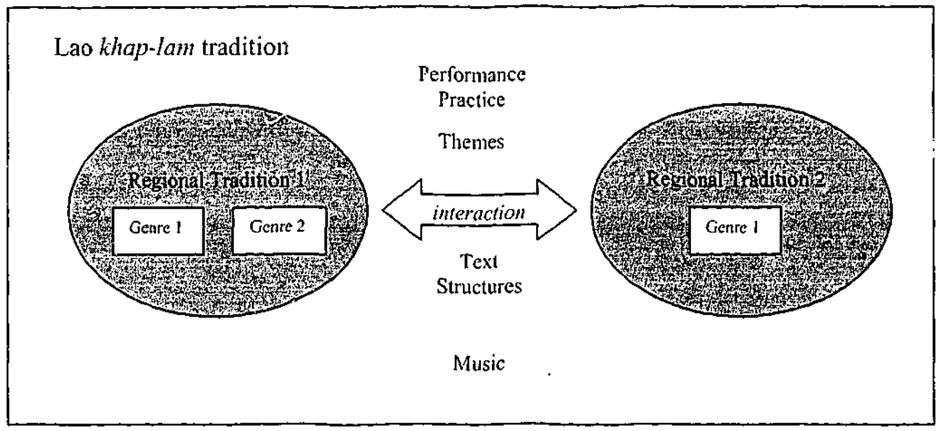


Figure 5-1: Paradigm showing regional traditions and genres within the broad *khap-lam* tradition

This chapter has also identified features of *khap-lam* performance practice and context that have parallels in other Southeast Asian vocal music traditions, both within the Lao culture area and beyond it. Three features are particularly apparent: all-night performance; religiously motivated performances; and male-female repartee/responsorial format. All-night performances are found in vocal music traditions of the neighbouring Khmer *ayai* and *chrieng chapey* (Sam-Ang Sam et al. 1998), Vietnamese *hát* (Nguyen 1998) and Shan (Uchida and Catlin 1998) traditions, as well as the upland peoples of the southern Philippines (Maceda 1998) and the Torajans of Sulawesi (Kartomi 1998) (see Appendix 4 for a comparative checklist). These parallel features within Southeast Asian music cultures are further evidence that researchers must focus upon the differences between similar traditions and cultures in order to determine the true significance of such similarities.

[1] The information presented in this chapter is primarily sourced from a series of formal interviews with performers of the three genres, although remarks made in the course of informal conversations are included wherever they provide further insights into claims. Additional field information comes from my own observations and experiences in combination with various comments and observations made by *khaen* players, audience members and performers of other genres, in particular *lam khon savan* and *lam salavan*. Publications by contemporary Lao scholars provide another valuable source of information. Comments and observations are directly attributed to their source where this can be done, and where it is prudent to do so; occasionally, certain remarks remain anonymous, at the request of the participant, if they concern a sensitive topic.

[2] These terms are not necessarily concomitant with the English musical terminology. See the discussion in chapter 2.

[3] Vanna (6/12/1999) and Sunii (23/11/1999).

[4] Both Vanna (6/12/1999) and Duang Phaeng (22/11/1999) related this information to me.

[5] There were actually two entities which were given the name *samanaa*. The first and most severe were the re-education camps which were set up as places to which people connected with the old regime were banished. The second were the compulsory public meetings where the population were given the party's version of the thirty-year struggle, and received instructions on revolutionary ideals and behaviour.

[6] Duang Phaeng (22/6/1999), Vanna (2/5/1999).

[7] Vanna (6/12/1999), Duang Phaeng (22/6/1999)

[8] Before 1972 the LPRP was known as the Lao People's Party, established in 1955 by Kayson and Prince Suphanuvong.

[9] Duang Phaeng (22/11/1999).

[10] Acaan Vanna (2/5/1999).

[11] The term *siphandon* also appeared in Souvanna's (1959) paper on Lao music.

[12] In interviews (Duang Phaeng Hanmani 22/11/1999) (Sunii Kasoemlat 23/6/1999).

[13] The 'sour note', *siang som* (ສຽງສົ້ມ), in this mode is one step above the finalis (a, b, c, d, e, g).

[14] This genre is now almost extinct (although according to *mohlam* Samaan a revival is under way in parts of northeast Thailand). It was perhaps the first stage in the transition of *aan nangsùù* into the modern *khap-lam* genres (see also Miller 1985a:40-42).

[15] The Lao text reads: ໃຈກາງດອນເຕັ້ມໄປດ້ວຍຫີ່ງນາ ແລະ ມີນ້ຳເຊ

ໃຫຍ່ສົມຄວນໜຶ່ງສາຍໄຫລຕັດຜ່ານສະໜລຽງເຫິ່ງກາງດອນ. ປາກຂອງເຊຢູ່ຫາງເບື້ອງຕາເວັນອອກເພິ່ນເອີ້ນວ່າ "ປາກໂໝມະນາ" ຍອດເຊຊອກໃສ່ແມ່ນ້ຳຂອງ ຫາງເບື້ອງຕາເວັນຕົກຂອງດອນ ແລະເອີ້ນວ່າ "ດອນໝາກໄຟ" ນ້ຳທີ່ໄຫລຜ່ານດອນນີ້ ແມ່ນນ້ຳຂອງ. ຕົກລະດູຝົນນາ ນ້ຳຂອງເຕັ້ມຝັ່ງ ແລະ ຈະໄຫລຜ່ານເຂົ້າໄປຕາມປາກເຊ. ແຕ່ເມື່ອຕົກລະດູແລ້ງມາແລ້ວ ນ້ຳກໍຈະຍົກແຫ້ງໝົດ. ຊາວບ້ານພື້ນຖານຂອງດອນນີ້ ພາກັນໃຫ້ຊື່ສາຍນ້ຳຜ່ານນີ້ວ່າ ຮູເຊ

[16] Duang Phaeng used the following Lao expression: ບໍ່ເຕັ້ມຮ້ອຍ

[17] Sunii (23/11/1999) and Duang Phaeng (22/6/1999).

[18] During the revolutionary years (1975-1986) it was usual practice for government ministries and enterprises to have their own amateur performing arts troupe. These troupes usually performed songs and music which

referred to the government's socialist policies, and were part of the government's attempts to create a 'mass culture' with Lao socialist characteristics.

[19] The interview transcript reads: ບາດນີ້ຕົ້ນໆມັນປ່ຽນເປັນຈ້ຽຫວະສີຫັນດອນເພິ່ນເຫັນວ່າມັນຊ້ຳຫຼາຍໂຕນັ້ນ
ເພິ່ນລຳແຕ່ກໍ່ມັນຊ້ຳທໍ່ໃດ໋ຍ໌ວ່າສາວດອງແພງລຳດຽວນີ້ໂດ ເອີສາວດອງແພງລຳນີ້ເພິ່ນໄວເອ້ົ້ຳ ມັນຜິດບໍ່ຖືກດອກ ໃຊ້ບໍ່ໄດ້ດອກ

[20] These contrast with drones used for the entire duration of a round, which are created by plugging the finger hole of one, or several, pipes with *khii suut* (a black wax). For intermittent drones the player uses his fingers so that he can release or change the drone as required.

[21] For example, the story of phaña khankhaak (Wajuppa 1996:26-27)

[22] I heard this comment from several of the tuk tuk (a three-wheeled motorbike taxi) drivers who lived near my house in Ban Saphang Moh.

[23] Koret also notes that much Lao literature was written in both religious script, termed *aksòòn tham* (ອັກສອນທຳ), and the normal Lao script, often called *thaj nòòj* (ໄທນ້ອຍ) by Thai scholars.

[24] In 1957 there were 35 Kip to US$1.

[25] The monthly religious festivals that are observed in Laos are known collectively as *hiit sip sòòng*, 'the twelve customs'.

[26] An interesting contrast exists here. The people who remained in Laos are usually less nostalgic for the past and are anxious for their material surroundings to improve, on the other hand expatriates returning to Laos have missed the cultural life of home and find that things in Laos are no longer as they were.

[27] The interview text reads: ແຕ່ວ່າຕົ້ກໆໃນປີກ່ອນນັ້ນມາຫາປີນີ້ນີ້ ໄດ້ໄປຕະຫຼອດ
ສ່ວນຫຼາຍແມ່ນພວກອະເຈ້ົາທີ່ໄປຢູ່ຕ່າງປະເທດເນາະ
ແລ້ວອະເຈ້ົາກັບມາບ້ານມາຍາມຜ່ຍາມແມ່ລະກໍ່ມາຕັ້ງກອງຂຶ້ນແບບວ່າມາເກືອບໜຶ່ງ ຈັ່ງວ່າຊິ
"ໂອ້ຍ້ອຍຈະຕ້ອງຕັ້ງກອງບຸນເຮັດແບບກະທັນຫັນ" ອະເຈ້ົາກໍ່ມາຫາ ກໍ່ໄດ້ໄປງ່ານຈັ່ງຊັ້ນ

[28] This information was gained through general conversation with performers, and cannot be attributed to a specific interview.

[29] Solo *khaen* playing is unusual outside of performances given by the NSMD,and Central Artists troupes in Vientiane. Blind beggars will sometimes go from door to door playing for a small donation.

[30] A *phaam* is usually an old parachute or a metal frame with a tarpaulin roof.

[31] Lao *mohlam* usually incorporate all three sections of *lam kòòn*: *lam thaang san*, *lam thaang ñaaw*, and *lam teej* (cf. Miller 1985a:49-51).

[32] Maha is a title given to a person who has passed the fourth level of religious examination.

[33] The transcript reads: ເພິ່ນບໍ່ໄດ້ສອນຫຼາຍ... ບໍ່ໄດ້ເປັນໝໍລຳເພິ່ນເປັນນັກບາດເອາຈານຣຽນເປັນມະຫາ
ເພິ່ນໄດ້ກະທຳເອງ...ປັດປຶ້ອ່ານໃບລານຫຼາຍມັນຮູ້ແຕກເນາະ ເພາະວ່າຄວາມແຊບຄວາມສອຍຄວາມອັນນະຄະຕິ
ເອີພື້ນຖານຂອງມັນຢູ່ໃນໃບລານຜຸ້ນ ຢູ່ນຳໜັງສືແຕ່ງອ່ອນບໍ່ເອີຍ ກະລະເກດບໍ່ເອີຍ ສິງກະ ໄລ ທ້າວກຳກາດຳ
ໝົດນັກບາດເອາຈານເຕົ້ຳລວມຫໍ່ສະໝອງໄປສົ່ງໃສ່ໜັ້ນໝົດ

[34] The transcript reads:
ບາງຄັ້ງກະໄດ້ເອົານຳ...ເອົາກອນລຳນຳອາຈານ...ຈຸດພິເສດສ່ວນຫຼາຍມີແຕ່ວ່າເບິ່ງວ່າດສະແດງຂອງເພິ່ນຕື້ນໜາ
ຄວາມຕັ້ງໃຈຂອງເຮົາເອງວ່າຊັ້ນສາ ເວລາເຮົາເວ້ົ້ານີ້ສອບວ່າຊັ້ນສາ ອາຈານເພິ່ນກະສົມແຕ່ຄູ່ເພິ່ນ
ເຮົານີ່ງຢູ່ຕ້ໍລວງສັງເກດຕື້ນໜາ ເພິ່ນກະເຮັດແນວໃດແນວໃດເຮົາກໍ່ຕ້ອງສະເໜີເອົາເອງຕື້ນໜາ ເລີຍວ່າສະໝອງເຮົານີ້ມັນຈັບໄດ້

[35] The transcript reads: ຊອກຫານັກຄູອາຈານ ຊອກຄູນຳນັກບາດອາຈານ ຜູ້ທີ່ເຂ້ົ້າໄດ້ບອດໄດ້ຣຽນ
ບາງເທື່ອໄປຫາຢູ່ໃຫຍ່ໆໃນວັດຜຸ້ນ "ອາຈານເຂ້ົ້ຍອ້ານ້ອຍຄາຍັນນີ້ຍັນນັ້ນ ອະທິບາຍຍ້ານ້ອຍຟັງແນ"... ບາດໄປລຳ
ລຳກັບອາຈານໂສມສີ ຜູ້ເປັນຜູ້ໃຫຍ່ ເພິ່ນເຂ້ົ້ຍໄດ້ຜ່ານເຂ້ົ້ຍໄດ້ບອດໄດ້ຣຽນເຮົາກໍ່ໄດ້ຣຽນນຳເພິ່ນ ເຮົາບໍ່ໄດ້ເພິ່ນກະເວ້ົ້ຳໃຫ້ຟັງ

[36] Here I use Wong's transliteration in which she uses *ai* to represent ไx whereas I use *aj*.

[37] In the Thai ritual the incantations are referred to as *khaathaa* not *òò*. The word *òò* is a Lao term not found in the Thai language, however, *khaathaa* is common to both.

[38] The *van sin* are actually spread over two days. The day before each phase of the moon is known as *van sin nòòj* 'minor *van sin*' and the day of the moon's phase is *van sin ñaj* 'major *van sin*'; *òò* can be said on either of these days.

[39] The original text reads: ຄາຍລຳ ແລະ ຄາຍຣຽນລຳ ກໍ່ແມ່ນສິ່ງຜູກພັນທາງຈິດໃຈແມ່ນສິ່ງທີ່ເກີດຢູ່ໃນຄວາມເຊື່ອໝັ້ນ ແລະ
ເປັນພະລັງຈິດພະລັງໃຈ ທີ່ສຳຄັນທີ່ສຸດໃຫ້ກັບໝໍລຳ ຫຼື ນັກຣຽນລຳ ໃຫ້ມີຄວາມເຊື່ອໝັ້ນຢ່າງໜັກແໜ້ນໃນຄວາມຮູ້ສະຕິປັນຍາ
ແລະ ວິຊາກອນລຳ ທີ່ຕົນໄດ້ຣຽນມາ ແລະ ພະລັງນີ້ເອງຈະເຮັດໃຫ້ເຂ້ົ້າເຈ້ົ້າມີສະມາທິ ເປັນກຳລັງແຮງຕ້ອນຈິດຫຸ້ມຫ່ຽງ ແລະ
ກ້ຳຫານຜ່ານຜ່າອຸປະສັກນາໆ ປະການ

[40] Isuan is the Hindu deity Shiva. Wong (1991:338; 2001:274) notes that Isuan is especially revered by performing artists in Thailand.

[41] Om represents the three jewels of Buddhism: the Buddha, the Dharma (teachings), and the Sangha (monkhood). It is derived from the Sanskrit term a-u-ma (to give aum) which represent Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma.

Chapter 6

THE INTERACTION OF MUSIC AND TEXT

This chapter is divided into two parts which describe and analyse musical and textual structures in *lam siphandon*, *lam som*, and *khap ngeum* genres respectively. After outlining the methodological procedures used in the analysis, it gives a brief overview of the poetic and musical structures used in *khap-lam* vocal music. It also reviews and expands upon the basic musical structures first presented in chapter 3. Part one of the analysis focuses upon the vocal melody of each genre, in which each singer's range, the degree of melodic direction change, level shift, and tone repetition are discussed in reference to the genre and the individual performers. Part two of the analysis looks at the complex relationship between lexical tone and musical pitch, in which the overall poetic structures play an important role.

Orientation

The Performance Corpus

The following analysis is based upon six performances; two from each of the three genres, consisting of one male and one female performance. All recordings selected for this analysis were made in the artificial performance environment of a recording studio. I recorded the performances of *lam siphandon* and *lam som* on January 25th 1999 in the Lao National Radio (LNR) building in Pakse. LNR recorded the *khap ngeum* performances for a United Nations health program some time in 1997. Although these recordings lack the context of the performance event, as defined by Stone (1982), I am confident that they are representative of the same compositional processes and musical features present in a 'natural' performance event. A 'natural' performance event, in this case, is an all-night performance within the *bun* context at which an audience is present. Such a performance is described in chapter 1. They are representative because, all the performers recorded are professional, considered by their peers and audiences to be fully competent in their art.

The professionalism of the chosen performers was readily apparent in informal discussions I held with audience members during performances at which these *mohlam* performed. During these discussions, audience members would remark upon certain aspects of a *mohlam's* performance, using words like *kêng* (ເກ່ງ) 'skilful', and *muan* (ມ່ວນ)

'fun', to describe the ability of each *mohlam*. A *mohlam* who regularly pleases an audience has what may be called the '*muan* factor'; an ability not only to sing well but to deliver an entertaining text that responds to the demands of the performance context (see chapter 7 for more discussion). Furthermore, all the *mohlam*, whose performances are analysed here, are either teaching, or have taught pupils. Two of them, Duang Phaeng and Acaan Sing, have attained the status of *acaan* (ອາຈານ) or 'teacher'. This title signifies peer recognition of their talents and abilities. I also observed, recorded and participated in, a number of 'natural' performance events, at which each *mohlam* whose singing is analysed here, performed. In the context of the performance event, I neither heard nor saw anything to indicate that the musical and textual aspects of the performances analysed here differ significantly from those that are characteristic of a natural performance event.

Certainly, a number of aspects connected to the performance event, such as audience-performer interaction and the socio-cultural context of the performance event, are either difficult or impossible to reproduce in a controlled recording environment.[1] The context in which the natural performance event takes place, significantly affects a performer's choice of textual themes, however, the basic text-music relationships and melodic motifs remain the same, regardless of thematic content. Chapter 7 examines the relationship between performance contexts and texts produced in response to the demands of a natural performance.

Methodology

I made detailed transcriptions of both music and text for each performance (see Appendices 2 and 3). Transcription was aided by the use of a computer program which allowed me to alter the speed of the recording either with, or without, a corresponding change in pitch.[2] This was especially useful for accurately notating melismas, as well as transcribing texts. To facilitate analysis, these transcriptions were then reduced to a melos, a melodic reduction as defined by Kartomi (1973) in her study of Javanese *macapat* songs. These simplified transcriptions show only note heads, omitting repeated tones and all rhythmic values, setting out the melody with one musical phrase per line. The purpose of this system is to show "the essential melodic structure of a song, unencumbered by tone repetition and rhythmic and ornamental detail" (Kartomi 1973:96). Black note heads indicate single, short occurrences of notes, while white note heads indicate either a long time value, or a string of at least three repetitions of a single pitch. Pitch repetitions are

only noted if the final pitch of a musical phrase is the same as the initial pitch of the following phrase.

I acknowledge that the corpus analysed in this chapter is too small to permit any definitive conclusions concerning typical features of each genre. However, many of my findings concur with previous descriptions provided by Miller (1998a, 2000), who based his analysis upon a similarly small corpus of songs. Furthermore, this analysis permits some comment to be made upon typical generic features and the individual style of certain *mohlam*. Figures for tone prominence and repetition, level shift, and melodic direction change, were calculated to provide some general characteristics of each genre, and also of differences between individual performers' styles. The terms level shift, tone prominence, tone repetition, and melodic direction change, and their definitions as described below are paraphrased from Kartomi (1973:98-101).

Tone prominence estimates any given tone's frequency of occurrence in a song, taking into account the number of times it appears, and whether it occurs as the initial, final, highest, or lowest tone of the song. A tone's relative duration and the number of times it is repeated are also accounted for. Every tone in each melos was awarded points using the scoring system employed by Kartomi:

> Each tone received one point for an appearance in the melos and an extra point if it was final tone of a line, if it was the initial, final, highest, or lowest tone of the song range, if it had a relatively long time-value or if it was repeated at least three times in succession. (Kartomi 1973:98)

Although this scoring system accounts for frequently occurring tones, it does not always indicate the most important tones of a given melody, such as finalis and cadence tones. The most prominent tones were recorded and compared for each genre, and for each singer of that genre. The results are surprisingly uniform across all genres with the same degrees of the scale favoured by male and female singers alike. This system is a particularly quick and useful method by which a transcription can be simplified, making its major components stand out.

Level shift measures the percentage of ascent or descent of a melody and is determined by the relationships between the highest, lowest, initial and final pitches of a song (see Kolinski 1965).[3] The degree of melodic direction change enables the amount of melodic movement within a song to be calculated. I found this a particularly useful tool for measuring the relative amount of ornamentation used in *khap-lam* genres. Melodic

direction change and adjacent tone repetition are expressed as percentages of the total number of tones within a given song.[4] Direction change accounts only for changes in direction (i.e. up or down), but not the size of the intervals. Finally, the amount of adjacent tone repetition was calculated in a similar manner.

Like Javanese *macapat* songs, each poetic line of a *khap-lam* text is structurally significant to the music. In southern Lao genres, two poetic lines are sung together as a musical unit consisting of several musical phrases. Each musical unit is separated by a pause in the singing for one or two measures while the *khaen* continues playing. Conversely, *khap ngeum* uses a single poetic line as the basic musical unit, although two lines may sometimes constitute a single unit. The difference in the number of poetic lines in a musical unit results from the tendency of *khap ngeum* performers to use more additional syllables (see section below), and because it is typically sung using a lot of ornamentation.

Lao poetic structures restrict the lexical tone contours that may occur on certain syllables within each line. These restricted syllables affect the overall melodic contour of each musical phrase, because many musical cadences fall on these syllables. Groups of four lines, while theoretically constituting a complete verse in *kòòn aan*, are not sung as a single musical unit, since it would be too long for a *mohlam* to sing comfortably. Musical aspects of *khap-lam* genres cannot be adequately explained without frequent reference to the text (cf. England 1964:224). The text, however, may be examined on its own merits, although any analysis must be made with regard to the contexts in which it was created as well. A detailed explanation of poetic structures used in *khap-lam* genres is necessary, if the reader is to understand how the text is interconnected with melodic structures.

Foundations of khap-lam Texts: Kòòn aan Poetry and Phañaa

The poetry sung by *mohlam* in every region of Laos is based upon the *kòòn aan* (กอนอาน) form (literally 'poetry to be read'). The term *kòòn*, meaning 'verse', is probably derived from its homonym *kòòn* (กอน), meaning 'latch'. The specific type of latch denoted by *kòòn*, is a large wooden bar used to latch temple doors and windows shut. A strong association exists between the two meanings, because the deeper structures of *kòòn aan* poetry, such as parallel verbs and parallel themes, act as agents latching the work together into a single entity, readily identifiable as poetry (Koret 1994a; 1996).

Kòòn aan is the typical verse form found in the palm leaf manuscripts of traditional Lao literature, from which the *khap-lam* genres are thought to have originated. The other form considered important by scholars and *mohlam* alike is *kòòn phañaa* (ກອນພະຍາ) (see chapters 4 and 5 for more detail). It is possible that *kòòn aan* may have developed from *phañaa*, as they occur frequently in the stories of traditional Lao literature (Koret 2000:218). *Phañaa* once formed the basis for Lao courting rituals in which young women and their suitors would engage in playful exchanges of wit and tests of knowledge. This is the reason why many *phañaa* are composed in riddle form (cf. Abhay 1959a). Although these older courting rituals have disappeared, *phañaa* riddle-poems as an oral form have survived, forming the basis of *lam kiaw*, or courting themes in modern-day *khap-lam*.

Before moving on to discuss music and text relationships, a number of issues and problems concerning *kòòn aan* structure require discussion. To do so, we must examine a number of important findings in the study of traditional Lao literature and briefly explain the lexical tone contours in the Vientiane and Champassak dialects of Lao.

Tone Contours in Vientiane and Champassak Lao

Lao has a number of regional dialects which, although mutually intelligible, are differentiated by lexical items and tone contours. The following two charts set out the tone contours of the two Lao dialects in which the analysed genres are sung.

phaa1	phaa2	phaa3	phaa4	phaa5	paa3
ຜ່າ	ຜາ	ຜາ	ຜ້າ	ຜ້ າ	ປາ
'to split'	'to lead'	'cliff'	'machete'	'cloth'	'fish'
44	34	213	51	21	213
high-level	high-rising	low-rising	high falling	low-falling	low-rising[5]
T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T3

Figure 6-1: Vientiane Lao tones (5 tones)

phaa1	phaa2	phaa3	phaa4	phaa5	paa6
ຜ່າ	ຜາ	ຜາ	ຜ້າ	ຜ້ າ	ປາ
'to split'	'to lead'	'cliff'	'machete'	'cloth'	'fish'
33	41	34	21	21	22(1)
mid-level	high-falling	mid-rising	mid-falling	low-falling	low-level
T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6

Figure 6-2: Champassak Lao tones (6 tones)[6]

The first line contains transcriptions of Lao words with minimal phonemic contrasts. Five out of the six words are distinguished on the basis of the tone contour alone. Each tone contour is given a number from 1 through to 6 for easy identification, and this is written at the end of the transcription. Note that the tone numbers 1-4 used here for Vientiane Lao correspond to the same number-contour relationships used in the labelling system for Mandarin Chinese (Ladefoged 1982:230). The second line contains the Lao words written in Lao script, beneath which is written an English gloss. The last two lines contain a two-digit numerical representation of the tone contour that is not related to the tone contour numbers. In this system the highest relative pitch is 5, the lowest 1. A contour is represented using its relative initial pitch and its final pitch. Thus, a tone written as 51 begins at the highest relative pitch and falls to the lowest relative pitch. The last two lines of each table contain a verbal description of the contour, followed by the abbreviation for that contour that is used throughout the text. The abbreviations are prefixed with a 'T' for 'tone' and followed by th tone contour number. See appendix 1 for more information on the Lao language.

Differences in tone contours are not as complicated as they might first appear since the phonological features that produce them are the same from dialect to dialect, making the differences predictable. Thus, the phonological features which produce a high-rising tone contour in the Vientiane dialect will produce a high-falling contour in the Champassak dialect. However, because the features which determine both tone contours are the same, they can be described as a single tone type, T2. For example, the word ຜາ /phaa/ 'to come' is unstopped; it begins with a low-class consonant which is followed by a long vowel, and there is no tone marker. In Vientiane Lao, this word takes a high-rising tone, but in Champassak Lao, a high-falling tone.

In the analysis of pitch-tone relationships presented in part two of this chapter, it is essential that the tonal differences between the Champassak dialect (spoken in Pakse and Khong), and the dialect spoken in the Vientiane region are taken into account. This is because the regional dialect differences are realised in the relationship between the direction of the melodic line and the tone contour (see the following section for tables describing tone contours in the Vientiane and Champassak dialects). However, for the following discussion, only the Vientiane dialect tones are referred to and the abbreviations T1, T2 etc. are used.

Maha Sila Viravong and the Study of Lao Literature

Formal study of Lao literature by Lao scholars began in the early 1930s. Before this, Lao literature was analysed not from a scientific but from a religious perspective. The literary specialists were monks who learnt poetic structure and form by osmosis, through the copying of old palm leaf manuscripts to new ones. This copying procedure was a vital process in the maintenance of temple libraries, since palm leaf manuscripts had a limited life span in the tropical climate. Traditional written literature had none of the visual form in which today's printed versions are set, with neat four-line verses and consistent use of tone markers. Instead it was set out in long, continuous lines across the width of the page, the pauses were felt intuitively (Koret 1999:238 & 243). In addition, these early literary specialists concentrated upon finding the multi-layered and often obscure meaning of the texts; hence the traditional term for works of Lao literature *nangsùù nanghaa* (ໜັງສືໜັງຫາ) 'books of search'.

The first analytical study of traditional Lao literature was written by a Lao scholar born in northeast Thailand, Maha Sila Viravong (1935), Sila's work has shaped the current approach to the study and teaching of Lao literature by Lao and non-Lao alike. He concluded that Lao poetry was composed according to a set of 'rules', which he had, in effect, rediscovered. Since Sila's publications appeared in various forms from the late 1930s through to 1970, most Lao and Western scholars have accepted his rules of composition, though with little critical evaluation of them (Compton 1979:135; Miller 1985a:105; Phoumi 1991; Kavin 1997:42; Thongkham 1998:446-447). A few scholars, most notably Peter Koret and Jit Phumisak, have recently questioned some of the assumptions upon which Sila's rules of *kòòn aan* composition are based (Koret 1999:238-245). Before discussing these criticisms, Sila's rules for *kòòn aan* composition need to be explained first.

The verse structure for *kòòn aan* poetry, as described by Sila, is set out in Figure 6-3 below. There are four lines, *vak* (ວັກ), which make up a stanza or verse, *baat* (ບາດ). A unit of two lines, the structure common to many *khap-lam* texts, is called a *fùang* (ເຝືອງ). Each of the four lines has a core of seven syllables, or 'words', *kham* (ຄຳ). These are represented in the figure below by the o symbols located within the dotted vertical lines. Extra, optional, syllables can be added to the start and end of each line (indicated by the o

symbols outside the dotted lines). These are called *kham buphabot* (ຄຳບຸພະບົດ), if they precede the core syllables, and *kham sòòj* (ຄຳສ້ອຍ), if they follow them. Certain syllables within each line take a predetermined tone, indicated in Figure 6-3 by the *maj êêk* (ໄມ້ເອກ) ◌́, and *maj thoo* (ໄມ້ໂທ) ◌̋ tone markers (Thongkham 1998:456; Sila 1961:7; Phoumi 1991:204; Abhay 1959b:353). For the remaining unmarked syllables, including the *kham buphabot* and *kham sooj* syllables, tones are not predetermined. I refer to each of the predetermined tone-syllables as 'tone-slots', into which words bearing the required tones are placed. From this point on, I shall use the terms, *êêk* tone-slot, and *thoo* tone-slot, when referring to these predetermined syllables.

1.	o	o	o	ó	ő	o	ó	o	o	o	o
2.	o	o	o	o	o	ő	o	o	ő	o	o
3.	o	o	o	o	ő	o	o	o	ó	o	o
4.	o	o	o	ó	ő	o	ő	ó	o	o	o

Figure 6-3: Sila's model for *kòòn aan* poetic structure

Apart from words marked with the *maj êêk* (ໄມ້ເອກ) tone marker (which always produces the high-level tone, T1)[7] (see Figure 6-1 and Figure 6-2 in part two of this chapter), any *êêk* tone-slot also permits the use of words ending with the stop consonants ກ ດ ບ (i.e. stopped or 'dead' syllables), realised as phonemes /k, t, p/ in final position. This means that any *êêk* tone-slot may be occupied by more than one tone; the tone varies according to the class of the initial consonant[8] and the vowel length of the syllable. For example, a word that begins with a high- or mid-class consonant, such as ຕ /t/, and ends with the stopped consonant, ດ /d/, will produce a high-rising tone (T2) if the vowel is short, e.g. ຕັດ /tat2/[9] 'to cut'. A low-falling tone (T5) will result if the vowel is long, e.g. ຕາດ /taat5/ 'waterfall'. If a low-class consonant is in the initial position of a word ending with a stop, this produces high-falling T4 if the vowel is long, e.g. ຂາດ /khaat4/ 'to expect', or high-level T1, if the vowel is short, e.g. ຂັດ /khat1/ 'to select'. Thus, any *êêk* tone-slot may accommodate one of four possible tones: T1, T2, T4, or T5. In contrast, any *thoo* tone-slot only permits those words marked with *maj thoo* (ໄມ້ໂທ), producing either, T4 with a mid-

or low-class initial consonant, e.g. ຂ້ າງ /khaang4/ 'to be stuck', or T5, with a high-class consonant, e.g. ຂ໊ າງ /khaang5/ 'side, direction' (see Figure 6-4 below).

êêk tone-slot	*thoo* tone-slot
T1	T2
T2	T4
T4	
T5	

Figure 6-4: Possible tones in fixed tone-slots

With a few notable exceptions, Sila's rules have been widely accepted by Lao, Thai and Western scholars alike, as depicting the process of composing traditional Lao literature. What makes this approach somewhat incredible, however, is Sila's own admission that only one literary work, Sang Sin Say (ສັງສິນໄຊ), adheres to his rules in its entirety; all other works being 'not quite correctly" composed (Sila 1961:20). Before Koret conducted his research, few scholars had paused to ask whether it was the rules that did not fit the form, or if it was the form that did not fit the rules.

Koret claims that Sila's rules are flawed because he modelled his research upon an essentially Thai literary scholarship, that focussed upon the poetry of the Thai court, as opposed to that of the common Lao folk. The Thai literary scholarship dealt with poetry composed to appeal to the eye, in which the orderly lining up of tone marks across a page was desirable. In contrast, the Lao poetry analysed by Sila from this Thai viewpoint, had been composed to be read aloud to an audience of listeners, who were common, mostly illiterate, rural folk. In short, Lao poetry was composed for an entirely different purpose to Thai poetry. Hence, the name *kòòn aan*, 'poetry to be read (aloud)'. Since the Thai and Lao poetic traditions differed considerably in terms of their context, content and audience, Sila's efforts have effectively forced the characteristics of one medium upon the poetry of another (Koret 1999:240-241). Perhaps the best illustration of this approach is Sila's insistence on the correct placement of tone markers on specific syllable tone-slots, as set out in Figure 6-3 above. Although tones occurring in these fixed-syllable tone slots within the line, impart a regular sound pattern to the verse, the effect is primarily visual, not aural. The reader scans the page and sees the markers, each in its correct place, but a listener is just as likely to listen for other devices, such as rhyme, assonance, and repetition in order to ascertain that the text is poetic.[10] Koret is likewise sceptical of Sila's claim that a

rulebook of versification must have existed at some stage in the past, because the extensive copying of texts that took place in the Lao temples precluded such consistency:

> When a story is consistently copied and changed in detail, line by line, for hundreds of years, by transcribers who are frequently novices of under sixteen years of age, from manuscripts in which poetic form is not easily discernible, how is it possible for a text to remain consistent in the following of precise poetic rules? At the same time, what would be the benefit in keeping the poetry precise? Would the subtle difference between flexible and rigid adherence to such rules even be noticeable to a listening audience? (Koret 1999:243)

The above quotation also highlights other problems with parts of Sila's analysis concerning tone markers and poetic form. Although tone markers have been used in Lao orthography for several hundred years, they have only been used in a consistent manner since the latter half of the 20th century. The palm-leaf manuscripts, which comprise the majority of Lao literature about which Sila was writing, do not have a standard visual poetic form, nor is the text fixed.[11] Stories were not separated into hemistiches, lines, verses and chapters; rather the entire work was run together in one long, unbroken section from start to finish (Koret 1999:243). Photographs of palm-leaf manuscripts in Miller, provide a clear illustration of what these manuscripts look like (Miller 1985a:26). In contrast, written Thai was standardised by the middle of the 19th century, and has employed tone markers in a consistent manner since that time.

Koret (1999:244) claims that Sila's work has created "a misunderstanding on the part of the contemporary generation of Lao", because the widespread acceptance it enjoys has meant that contemporary publications of traditional Lao literature are often touched up to meet his requirements (four lines in every verse, with tone markers in their correct place), often to the detriment of overall coherence. Contemporary, printed versions of traditional literature have become fixed as the social role of literature has diminished. In turn, literature has become the object of research by scholars, rather than being the object in which meaning was sought. Sila's influence is also evident in the compositions of modern-day Lao poets, whose work is published in government publications, such as *Vannasin* (ວັນນະສິນ) and *Siang Khaen* (ສຽງແຄນ). Contemporary Lao poetry is carefully crafted in accordance with Sila's rules (Koret 1999:244), as Example 6-1 below, in which I have underlined the fixed tone-slots, clearly shows:

ບູຮານເພິ່ນວ່າໄວ້ ໄອກ່າວເປັນຄຳສອນ
ບາງຕອນເປັນຄະທີ ໃຫ້ຮ່ຳຮອນເຮັ່ນຖ້ອນ
ບໍ່ຄວນທຳໂຕໃຫ້ ຫາມເຮືອນຢ້ານປ່ຽ
ເພາະຈະພາໃຫ້ເຈົ້າ ອັບເສົ້າບໍ່ຈະເລີນ ໄດ້ແລ້ວ

Example 6-1: Excerpt of modern Lao poetry from "Speak true, act true" by Saysana (12/1998)

Essentially, the result of Sila's work has been to create a visual standard by which poetic composition, both old and new, is measured and judged, a standard that did not exist when the literary canon was originally composed. If Sila's work has had such an effect upon contemporary Lao poets, what affect if any has Sila's work had upon contemporary *mohlam*, who rely on the *kòòn aan* form as the basis for their sung texts? Most modern-day, professional *mohlam* are literate, having received some schooling in the Lao education system, in which poetry, based upon Sila's research, has been taught since the 1960s. Lao literature has traditionally played an important role in the *khap-lam* tradition, in spite of its essentially oral transmission. Palm-leaf manuscripts have served as reservoir of knowledge for the teaching and transmission of the traditional tales, that are essential to the *mohlam*'s repertoire. However, literature's role has been to provide the *khap-lam* tradition with thematic material and poetic structures, with which audiences are familiar, rather than fixed portions of texts.

Literacy among *mohlam* in Laos is not particularly recent, in spite of Miller's tentative claim to the contrary (1998a:343). In a study of literacy in a village in Udon Thani province of northeast Thailand, Tambiah notes that *mohlam* are among the few specialists in the village with literacy skills; the males gain literacy through their education in the village temple, the female *mohlam* gain theirs from these educated males (Tambiah 1968:63).[12] In the mid-1960s, when Tambiah conducted his study, northeast Thailand was still very remote, so it is reasonable to assume that the villages of nearby Laos, especially the areas along the Mekong, would have been in a similar situation. In the course of my own research in Laos, I heard of very few illiterate *mohlam*. Those that were illiterate, were all elderly females born and living in remote areas; people who would not have been entitled to attend school in the local *vat*, and who probably would not have attended a secular school, even had there been one nearby.

One such person is Mae Saay Kham (ແມ່ສາຍຄຳ) of Ban Haat Ngiw (ບ້ານຫາດງິ້ວ) on Don Khong, who is well known throughout Champassak, as one of the best *mohlam* of her generation. Mae Saay Kham's method of remembering poems was to have her husband read them to her. She is reputed to have been able to commit the poem to memory after only two or three readings. The other great skill of this *mohlam*, was her ability to compose verse on the spot, a technique known as *som bòò khùt* (ສົມບໍ່ຄິດ) which is discussed in the following chapter (Thongkham 1998:381).

Although most *mohlam* possess varying degrees of literacy, Laos is by no means a highly literate society. Printed media is relatively scarce, especially in comparison to neighbouring Thailand. In Laos, moves made towards a standardised written language have been gradual, and the process is still not complete (cf. Enfield 1999). Most probably, it originated around the time of the national renovation movement, as the Lao began to construct a national identity and assert the nation's advanced state. Their ideas of what constituted a state of advancement was heavily influenced by French ideas of the time. In cultural terms, advancement meant, among other things, a written literary tradition. Thus, Sila's work set out to prove that Lao literature was an established written tradition with its own set of rules and principles.

Since the 1960s at least, printed *khap-lam* texts have appeared in magazines and political publications of both the RLG and LPRP. In the revolutionary years (c.1976-1988) texts praising the Party, its leadership, and policies were commonplace in the small number of books and magazines available. However, many of these were written by poets, rather than by practicing *mohlam* (see for example Sau 1996). Unlike many *lam* texts published in northeast Thailand, these Lao publications have not, to my knowledge, been used by performers as references and teaching aids (Koret 1999:231; Miller 1985a:47). In present-day Laos, performers occasionally submit written work to the MIC for approval, or to its researchers, like Thongkham and Kavin, for publication in their monographs. Other avenues of publication are either unavailable, or not pursued by *mohlam*. This means that there is less pressure for Lao *mohlam* to produce texts which conform strictly to Sila's rules.

Koret (1999:242) points out three major discrepancies between Sila's rules and Lao *kòòn aan* verse, as it is found in palm-leaf manuscripts:

1. that verses are seldom fixed at four lines. Instead, two-line verses are frequent, most often using the patterns of lines 3 and 4 from the model in Figure 6-3 above. One- and three-line verses also occur.
2. up to three extra syllables can be added to the core of seven, and
3. tones do not always appear in their specified slots within each line.

These three discrepancies are all evident in the *khap-lam* texts explored in this thesis, as the discussion in this and the following chapter will show. For example, an examination of the texts in transcriptions 1 through to 6, shows that some verses are constructed as sequences of *kòòn aan* lines 3 and 4. *Mohlam* also frequently add extra syllables to the core of seven, ranging from a single syllable to an entire phrase. A number of other poetic structures occur in *kòòn aan* poetry, however, these are explained in chapter 7 because they are not directly connected to the analysis discussed in the following two sections. An example of *kòòn aan* in a *khap-lam* text, in which all tone-slots are correctly filled, appears below. Note also the *sòòj* syllables at the end of the third line, shown in italics.

Line 3
ນາງ ເອີ່ຍ ກັບ ຄືນ ມາ ຫາ **ຫ້ອງ** ເຮືອນ ຊານ **ບ້ານ** ***ຊ່ອງ***
naang2 eej6 **kap2 khùùn2 maa2haaj** hòòng5 **hùan2 saan2 baan4**sòòng1
Oh my dear, come back to your room, your home
Line 4
ນາງ ເອີ່ຍ ເຈົ້າ ຊິ ຮ້ອງ **ຮໍ່າໄຫ້** ຫາ **ອ້າຍ ຢູ່ ບໍ**
naang2 eej6 **caw4 si1 hòòng4** ham1haj5 **haa3** aaj4 juu1 **bòò6**
Oh my dear, do you ever cry and think of me?
Line 1
ສ່ວນ ***ວ່າ ອ້າຍ ຄິດ ຜໍ້ ມີ ປີ໋ງ*** *ສາມ ເວລາ ນວນ ໜ້າ ນາງ ເອີ່ຍ*
suan1vaa1 aaj4 khit1 phòò4 **mùù4**nùng1 **saam3vee2laa2** ***nuan2*** ***naa5 naang2eej6***
As for me, I think of you three times a day, my soft-faced lady
Line 2
ຫລັບ ຈະ ຕາ ລົງ ໃບ ໝອນ **ຮໍ່າ** ຄະນຶງ ບໍ່ **ນ້ອງ**
lap2 ca1 taa6 long2naj2 mòòn3 ham1 **kha1ning3 nam2** nòòng4
I close my eyes, rest my head on the pillow and think of you

Example 6-2: Text excerpt from *lam som* showing tone-slots (transcription 4, lines 4.19-4.23)

While it is true that the divergences from Sila's model, noted by Koret, also occur in *khap-lam* texts, it must be remembered that Koret's analysis is of the traditional Lao literature canon, and that his research concentrated upon palm-leaf manuscripts several generations old. In contrast, the *khap-lam* texts described here, although based upon *kòòn aan* form, are all newly composed and therefore, like modern Lao poems, possibly

influenced by Sila's work. Poetic lines in *khap-lam*, being sung to musical accompaniment, use more *buphabot* and *sòòj* syllables than is usual for written *kòòn aan*. Recent Lao publications dealing with *khap-lam* texts examine them in terms of Sila's rules. These contemporary Lao analyses normally contain a section discussing the rules of *kòòn aan* structure and composition, in which the correct placement of tones features prominently. In his 1998 book on *lam siphandon* and *lam som*, Thongkham frequently reminds his readers that *mohlam* should follow Sila's tone placement rules in order for the verse to be correctly composed, and for it to be *muan* (ມ່ວນ) 'fun; enjoyable'. However, he also makes the important point that other elements of composition, such as internal and external rhyme, are also considered as vital for the overall impact of the poetry:

> The most important thing is to pay attention to the placement of external rhyme so that it joins lines one, two, three and four (Thongkham 1998:457).[13]

External rhyme has a rhyming element at the end of one line which is then linked to its rhyme in the first part of the following line. There are a number of different compositional strategies, that *mohlam* employ to build their texts to create the '*muan* factor'; these strategies are described and discussed in chapter 7.

Koret's point is, that before Sila's work, verse forms were "learned not by memorising written rules", but "rather by consistent lifelong exposure to oral performances" (1999:242-43). Prosodic features like rhyme, together with vowel and consonant repetition, are better indicators for listeners to ascertain that what they are hearing is poetry, than are strategically placed lexical tones. It is these features that are vital to the *khap-lam* genres, in which the text is composed for, and performed in front of, an audience of people possessing no special literary skills, either analytical or compositional. It appears that modern-day *mohlam* may be positioned somewhere between the two approaches to composition. When submitting poetry for publication, *mohlam* are more likely to take particular care in composing the text, so that it complies with the rules of tone-placement. However, during a performance other compositional strategies outweigh the perfect placement of tones in importance, hence the occasional line that does not comply with the tone placement rules. Therefore, Koret's suggestion that tone placement is intuitive rather than learned, holds true for contemporary *khap-lam* composition (Koret 1999:241). Parts one and two below, show that tone placement is an

important feature of textual composition, because it is directly related to the melodic patterns to which the text is sung.

Verse Structure and Melodic Phrase Relationships

When lines of *kòòn aan* are sung as *khap-lam* texts, they may be sung in pairs (the most common musical unit in *lam siphandon* and *lam som*) or singly (the most common unit in *khap ngeum*). When sung as pairs, line 1 is paired with line 2, and line 3 is paired with line 4. As we saw in the explanation of poetic structures above, each poetic line consists of two hemistiches plus several, optional, pre- and post-syllables (*kham buphabot* and *kham sòòj*). Usually these parts of the line structure are each sung to a melodic phrase, and these phrases combine to give, what I call, a musical unit. Each musical unit is clearly defined by a noticeable pause in the singing, during which the *khaen* accompaniment continues. The majority of line pairs begin with a melodic interval sung to several *kham buphabot* syllables. In *lam siphandon* and *khap ngeum*, this melodic interval serves as a distinctive motif for the genre. In *khap ngeum*, the length of the musical unit sung over a single poetic line is frequently extended with the addition of *kham sòòj* post-syllables.

In *lam siphandon* and *lam som* most musical units consist of four or five discreet musical phrases, as per Example 6-3, featuring a 3-4 pair taken from Som Sii's *lam som* performance (transcription 4, lines 4.7 & 4.8):

Phrase 1 (*buphabot*)	Phrase 2	Phrase 3
ນາງ ເອີ	ຕັ້ງ ແຕ ຄາວ ກັກ ເຄ້ົ	ສອງ ເຮ໊ ເວ໊ ກັນ ອອນ
naang2 eej6	**tang4tèè1 khaaw2 kok2 khaw4**	**sòòng3 haw2vaw3 kan6 òòn1**
	Phrase 4	Phrase 5
	ຕອນ ວ ໄດ ຄວາມ ອ້	ພັ ແໜງ ໜ ນ້ ຊ້
	tòòn6 vaa1 daj4 khuam2aaj4	**phat1 nèèng3 naa5 naaj1saaj2**

Example 6-3: Possible musical phrases within a pair of lines (*lam som*)

The number of musical phrases depends upon whether the *mohlam* opts to emphasise the breaks between hemistiches and lines, either through a brief pause or by singing a longer note on the syllable. The addition of *kham buphabot* and *kham sòòj* syllables also affects the number of musical phrases. In *khap ngeum*, the use of single poetic lines as a single musical unit allows for frequent and extended use of both pre- and post-syllables. This means that a single poetic line can be made up of five or six musical phrases. These longer

musical units most often appear at the end of a section, as the post-syllables bring the *mohlam* to the finalis cadence, at which point a cascading chorus line is sung (see part one below). Example 6-4 below, shows a single *kòòn aan* line (line 4) divided into four musical phrases.

Phrase 1 *buphabot*	Phrase 2	Phrase 3
ໂອ ນ໋	ພວກ ນ້ອງ ເປ້ັນ ສ໋ ຜ ນ້ອຍ	ຊ ຝ ເຈ໊ ດອກ ກາວ ກອນ
oo1 nòò2	**phuak4 nòòng4 pên3 sam1phuu5nòòj4**	**sii fang2caw4 dòòk5 kaaw1kòòn3**
	Phrase 4 (*sòòj*)	
	ຜ ດ ເອ	
	phuu5 dii3 eej3	

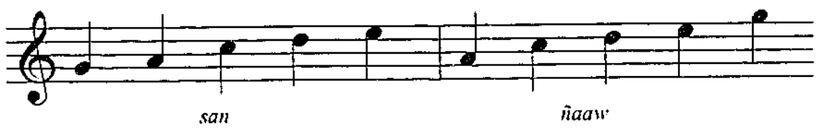
Example 6-4: Musical phrases within a single line of *khap ngeum*

A number of other permutations of poetic line/musical phrase division arise when *mohlam* insert additional phrases into the middle of a poetic line. However, this introduction has explained the most common forms, and equips the reader with enough knowledge to understand the description and analysis presented in part one below. Further discussion of syllabic structures is presented in chapter 7.

Lao Scales

Miller is the only scholar who has undertaken any systematic research into Lao *khap-lam* music, firstly in northeast Thailand and more recently in Laos (1985a; 1998a). His initial study of Lao genres in northeast Thailand during the early 1970s presented an analysis and description of technical aspects which remains valid for the genres found in Laos today (see Miller 1998a; 2000). The two pentatonic scales used by *mohlam* and identified by Miller, are the same as those used in Laos and Miller's findings serve as the basis for the discussion which follows here. In chapter 3 it was noted that the two scales are referred to as the *san* (ສັ້ນ) 'short' (g, a, c, d, e) and *ñaaw* (ຍາວ) 'long' (a, c, d, e, g) scales (see Example 6-5 below). Miller describes them in the following excerpt:

> The first comprises five pitches with a prominent major third (C to E) while the second has a prominent minor third (A to C). (Miller 1985a:24)



Example 6-5: The two scales used in *khap-lam* vocal music: *san* and *ñaaw* (Miller 1985a:24)

In northeast Thailand, the *san* scale is used for songs in which both the accompaniment and singing are metrical, whereas the *ñaaw* scale is usually reserved for non-metrical accompaniment and singing. In the Lao genres examined here, and in most other Lao genres, the metrical/non-metrical distinction between the two scales is the same as the northeastern genres with regard to musical accompaniment, but not always so with sung melody. In Lao genres, strictly metrical singing is less common, with *mohlam* preferring to sing their texts in a declamatory style, often paying little attention to the rhythm set down by the *khaen*.[14] This is the reason why the rhythmic values of the melodic lines, depicted in the detailed transcriptions contained in appendix 2, often appear to be highly complex.

Miller also indicated that musical terminology, both practical and theoretical, often differs in Laos from that used in northeast Thailand (1998a:340-41). As a general statement this is accurate enough. However, I found that *mohlam* and *mohkhaen* in southern Laos were familiar with and, from time to time, used the terminology from northeast Thailand especially when referring to genres from that region. For example, when southern Lao *mohkhaen* spoke with me about *lam siphandon* and *lam som*, they would usually refer to the *khaen* accompaniment they used with the Lao terms *nòòj* 'small' and *ñaj* 'large', rather than the northeastern labels *poo saaj* and *sòòj*. However, the northeastern labels were used by Suun, Kham Sing and Ki Kong, all *mohkhaen* from the *lam siphandon* tradition, whenever we discussed *khaen* playing techniques.[15] In Vientiane, *mohkhaen* of the *khap ngeum* tradition were less familiar with these modal names, and usually knew how to play a smaller number of genres than their southern counterparts. Also significant was the fact that all of the *khaen* mode names from northeast Thailand were unknown to my *khaen* teacher at the NSMD in Vientiane, a former student of the school who is not a member of any regional *khap-lam* tradition.

Transcription Methodology

For transcription purposes, I have not found it necessary to invent or adopt a specialised notation system, as the Western system adequately conveys the essential

features of the music to the reader. In chapter 3, we noted that the absolute tuning of individual *khaen* varies considerably. Therefore, rather than transcribe the actual pitch of each instrument and the accompanying singing for each performance, I prefer to follow the method established by Miller (1985a:Ch5). This method always transcribes the *khaen* as being tuned to an a minor scale, from which the six different pentatonic modes are derived. The primary reason for this is simplicity; it permits instant recognition as to which pipes of the *khaen* are being played. For example, the actual finalis pitch in Transcription 1, *lam siphandon* by Duang Phaeng, is close to e, giving a *san* scale of notes e, f #, a, b, c #. However, it is simpler to transcribe this without incidentals by adhering to Miller's system of an a minor tuning for the *khaen*. This allows the reader easy visual recognition of all six possible *khaen* modes, regardless of the actual pitches produced by the *khaen*. This system also allows easy reference to the specific *khaen* pipes (e.g. L-8, L-6, R-3 etc.) being played, regardless of their actual pitch. Duang Phaeng's performance of *lam siphandon* is thus transcribed using d as the finalis, although the pipes R-3 and L-5 are producing a pitch close to e. This gives the d, e, g, a, c version of the *san* scale, or the *sòòj* mode (cf. chapter 3). Transcriptions showing absolute pitch do not clearly identify the systems at work in Lao music.

In contrast to the transcriptions and melos' produced in this analysis, the performers of *khap-lam* genres use no notation whatsoever to communicate musical ideas to one another. Western musical notation is known only to a very small number of Lao people, including teachers, current and former students at the NSMD, and a few others who have been educated in Bulgaria, Thailand and Vietnam. Teachers of Lao instruments at the NSMD make use of a cipher notation system which uses the numbers 1 to 7. In this system 1 equals c (doh),[16] however, it is not used by traditional musicians outside of the education system. Other than the terms discussed above and in chapter 3, there is little other explicit theorising about musical sound made by *khap-lam* performers (cf. Miller 1985a:295). *Khaen* players, like *mohlam*, tend to learn from observation and mimicry when first starting out, developing their own style as they gain experience.

I have used a few diacritics, set out at the start of appendix two, to indicate certain vocal articulations. Of course, there can be no substitute for witnessing a live performance, but for the purposes of presenting findings to a broader audience, audio recordings, musical transcription, and the written word must suffice. To this end, a Compact Disc is included to enable the reader to listen to the recordings, and to gain a better understanding

of the music drawn from aural experience, as well as the visual representations presented here (see appendix 5). It has frequently been noted by ethnomusicologists, that the accuracy of written representations of music, either in words or musical transcriptions are only approached, never completely achieved (cf. England 1964).

Readers will also note that in each transcription the *khaen* accompaniment has only been partly transcribed. This is because the accompaniment patterns played in all genres are repetitive and only partially coordinated with the melody sung by the *mohlam*. Furthermore, the effect of the *khaen* accompaniment is more rhythmic than melodic, particularly in the two southern genres. In the transcriptions of *lam siphandon* and *lam som*, the *khaen* is transcribed for the first fifty or so measures in order to show some of the variations within the pattern that occur throughout the round. Throughout the remainder of the transcription the *khaen* staff is filled with slash notation, except for certain cadential points when the accompaniment pauses or sustains a note or chord. The last few measures of *khaen* accompaniment are also transcribed in each transcription.

A similar approach was taken for the transcriptions of *khap ngeum* despite the non-metrical nature of both the singing and accompaniment. The *khaen* introduction and a number of subsequent phrases are transcribed to allow the reader to gain an impression of the basic khaen patterns and their matching to the vocal melody. The *khap ngeum* transcriptions are set out slightly differently from the southern genres with each line of sung verse begins on a new staff. This is because of the *khap ngeum*'s non-metrical rhythm which makes it more difficult to set out using music notation software than metrical rhythm.

Part One: Musical Structures (Vocal Melody)

Lam Siphandon

The *lam siphandon* performances analysed here consist of two single rounds: a male round sung by Som Sii, and a female round sung by Duang Phaeng. Both rounds are of similar length (5 minutes 28 seconds, and 5 minutes 38 seconds), sung to tempos averaging 108 and 109 quarter-notes per minute, although these fluctuate within each round. These tempos coincide with the average tempo for Ubon-style *lam klawn*[17] (Miller 1985a:142). This is not altogether surprising, since Laos' Champassak province shares a land border

with Thailand's Ubon Province. Furthermore, *lam siphandon* has been observed to be "most similar to Ubon-style *lam klawn*" (Miller 1998a:343).

Both *mohlam* have quite rapid rates of delivery, with Duang Phaeng managing 2.5 syllables, and Som Sii 2.4 syllables per second, for the duration of their rounds. If the introductions, which feature a lengthy instrumental section during which no text is sung, are subtracted from the equation, delivery rates increase marginally to 2.9 syllables for Duang Phaeng, and 2.7 syllables for Som Sii. In contrast, Miller (1985a:142) reports a delivery rate of 4.6 syllables per second for Khon Kaen-style *lam klawn* (faster than the Ubon style) for a young female singer, and 3.4 for a older male singer.[18]

The difference in tempo between the Lao and Isan genres is significant and appears to be influenced by two factors. Firstly, the degree to which the text is memorised must have some effect upon delivery speed. A *mohlam* who simply recites a memorised text requires less time to think than does a *mohlam* who is utilising extemporaneous compositional processes, known in the *lam siphandon* tradition as *som bòò khùt*. There is some debate over the extent to which text is extemporaneously composed in *khap-lam*. This, and other issues concerning extemporisation are discussed is detail in chapter 7.

The second factor influencing increases in tempo appears to be social and economic modernisation. Miller notes that in Isan, tempos have increased in both the Ubon and Khon Kaen styles of *lam klawn*, with the current generation of performers singing to faster tempos than the previous one. In recent years, the *lam* genres of northeast Thailand have effectively been replaced by the new, electrified and faster still, genre of *lam sing* (Miller 1998b); a term which is derived from the second syllable of the English word 'racing', implying speed. The genres of southern Laos have followed a similar path to the *lam klawn* genre of northeast Thailand, with tempos increasing from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s (see chapter 5).

In sharp contrast to northeast Thailand, economic and infrastructure development has been slow in Laos over the past four decades. This, in combination with strict government controls, has restricted the development and expansion of mass media in Laos, although the increase of radio and television ownership in Laos over the past decade has given Lao people easy access to the Thai mass media.[19] Whether or not Lao *khap-lam* genres will need to reinvent themselves, as the genres of northeastern Thailand have done, remains to be seen. Miller for one, does not hold much hope, convinced that Lao genres

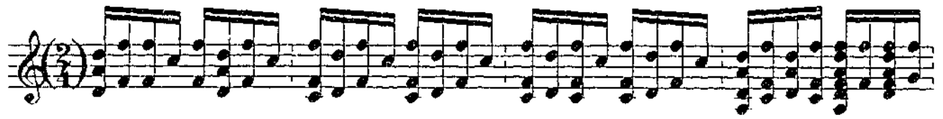
will eventually be eclipsed by an "outbreak" of *lam sing* (Miller 1998b:95). However, this viewpoint does not account for the tight controls that the MIC wields over cultural activities inside Laos which are still fuelled by the desire to restrict 'corrupt' culture from affecting traditional Lao culture. Although the government's attempts to define a Lao national culture often look futile in the face of the onslaught of global culture via radio, satellite television, and material goods, their policies have nonetheless been an effective force for conservation. The low material standard of living in Laos has doubtlessly assisted them in this task.

In the two *lam siphandon* recordings discussed here, the *khaen* accompanies both singers, using a *san* scale, confirming observations made by Miller (1998a:343). As in northeast Thailand, Lao *mohlam* sing in tune to the accompaniment of one of three possible *khaen* modes based on the *san* scale: *sutsanèèn* (finalis on g), *poo saaj* (finalis on c), and *sòòj* (finalis on d) (Miller 1985a:107). The selection of mode is determined by the singer's range and the tuning of the *khaen* itself, which the *mohkhaen* matches to suit the vocal range of the *mohlam*. Ki Kong (26/6/1999), the *mohkhaen* performing in these recordings, notes that female singers prefer the *sòòj* mode with finalis d, but with the low d as the drone instead of the usual upper d'. He referred to this as *sòòj ñaj*, reflecting the usual preference to call lower pitched modes *thaang ñaj* (ທາງໃຫຍ່) 'large scale'. Male *mohlam* prefer *poo saaj* with finalis c, which Ki Kong referred to as *thaang nòòj* (ທາງນ້ອຍ) 'small scale'. The overall preference is to accompany female *mohlam* with a lower pitched *khaen* and mode, male *mohlam* with a higher pitched *khaen* and mode.

Although distinguishing between modes is an important feature of Lao *khaen* music, such distinctions are not necessary for the analysis of vocal melody presented here, because these two modes are all derived from a single scale. In order to facilitate comparison between the performances of each *mohlam*, in this analysis I refer to vocal melody pitch in reference to the pitches of the basic *san* scale g, a, c, d, e, rather than having to alternate from one mode to another. In the *san* scale there is a pitch, the c a fourth above the finalis, which also "functions as a secondary tonic between full cadences" (Miller 1985a:24). This pitch is utilised extensively by the *mohlam* when performing *lam siphandon*. The expanded texts of the two *lam siphandon* rounds set out in appendix 3 and the detailed music transcriptions in appendix 2 are written according to the *khaen* mode in which they were originally performed (i.e. *sòòj* and *poo saaj*). The approximate Western

pitches which correspond to the steps of the *san* scale are a, b, d, e, f sharp for Som Sii's round, and e, f sharp, a, b, c sharp for Duang Phaeng's.

The *khaen* accompaniment to *lam siphandon* is played in duple time. The *mohkhaen* places strong accents at the front of every beat, while playing repetitive sixteenth-note based patterns, as shown in the excerpt of Example 6-6 below. The final measure of the example also shows clusters used as a rhythmical accent, a typical playing technique.



Example 6-6: *Khaen* accompaniment pattern for *lam siphandon* in *poo saaj* mode, showing cluster accents (drones at g', c')[20]

Constant repetition of the accompaniment pattern means that the *mohkhaen* is not required to strictly match the melody line the *mohlam* is singing, as is the case in the Isan genre of *lam klawn* (Ubon style). One explanation for this may be due to the extemporaneous nature of the text, and therefore the melodic line, as Miller explained for Ubon-style *lam*:

> The second technique is for the kaen player to repeat two-measure patterns over and over with little variation. This is especially possible in Oobon (sic.) style where melody and beat are continuous, though the player must watch for lines of five measures and adjust to them. (Miller 1985a:145)

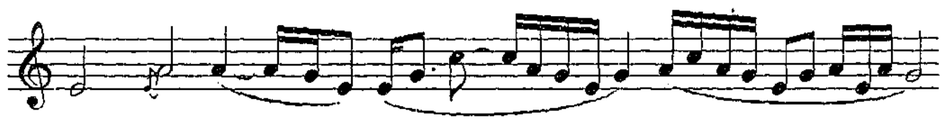
In *lam siphandon*, the *khaen* accompanist need not worry about lines of five measures because the vocal line is not always strictly metrical, however, he must watch for long pauses made by the *mohlam* and follow them into the pause. The first pause always occurs at the completion of the introductory verses, which then leads into the main body of the round. Duang Phaeng's round also has a notable pause in the middle of the main body of text, which is signalled by a striking vocal ornamentation (see Example 6-12 below), however, Som Sii makes no similar pause in his round. At each pause, the *mohkhaen* matches the pitch being sung by the *mohlam*, usually the secondary finalis c.

The opening line of every round of *lam siphandon* begins with a phrase almost always using the following syntactic frame, or a variant of it (this also occurs in *lam som*):

Expressive	***kèèm* 'cheek'**	**2nd person pronoun**	**Expressive**
ong tong	*kèèm*	*caw/nòòng/aaj*	*ong tong*

'Expressives' are a Lao word class that perform an adjectival-like function in this frame; they are discussed in more detail in appendix 1 (see also Chapman 1996; Crisfield 1978). The stereotypical opening line is followed by several more lines which complete the introductory verse. The length of the introduction depends upon the *mohlam* and the message they wish to communicate to the audience. Several decades ago, the introduction consisted of only one or two lines, but in recent years it has become appreciably longer (Thongkham 1998:455). The introduction then descends to a cadence on the finalis, or in the case of Duang Phaeng and other female *mohlam*, the secondary finalis, note c.

A bridging section, consisting of a series of notes sung to euphonic vowels, follows the introduction. Beginning on the e (a sixth above finalis g), the melodic line shifts upwards a fourth to a', then drops down before ascending once again, this time reaching the upper c', before descending to note g', the octave above the finalis as shown in Example 6-7 below. This final g' note is held by the *mohlam* and the *khaen* for one or two measures, at which point the *khaen* player resumes the rhythmic pattern. The *mohlam* then releases the note into a brief melismatic descent to an undiscernible pitch. After a slight pause of several measures, he/she begins the main body of the text which, in these recordings, is composed entirely in *kòòn aan* form. In contrast, the introductory and ending verses are composed in *kaap* or *kòòn füang* form, in which there are no predetermined tone-slots (see chapter 7 for more information on this poetic form). In the recordings, upper c' marks the extent of Som Sii's range, however, Duang Phaeng reaches a full tone higher, using upper d' to great effect at certain points throughout the round.



Example 6-7: Bridging section in *lam siphandon*, as sung by Duang Phaeng

Male and female *mohlam* alike, avoid the finalis throughout the main body of the song, reserving it for three points: the cadence between the introductory verse and the main body of text; leading into and out of the bridging section; and the final cadence which completes the round. Duang Phaeng avoids it almost entirely, except for a very brief, barely audible, moment as her round ends. Initially, I suspected that the finalis pitch was

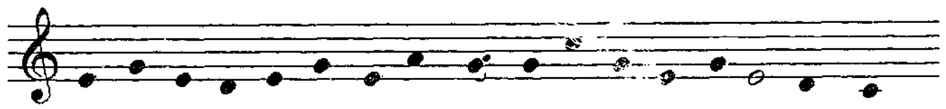
below her comfortable singing range, raising questions about the matching of *khaen* with voice. However, for this recording Duang Phaeng performed with an accompanist familiar with her range and singing technique, so the possibility of a mismatch was discounted. I then cross-checked with a number of other recorded performances, both natural and staged, which revealed that avoidance of the finalis is most likely a deliberate strategy employed by female *mohlam* in the performance of *lam siphandon*, although other females tend to fully articulate it at the final cadence.[21] The pitch utilised at cadences is the secondary finalis, pitch c, referred to earlier.

Earlier in this chapter we learned that verses are sung in groups of two poetic lines strung together as a musical unit, made up of several musical phrases. Most often there is a short pause in singing once a unit has been completed, during which time the *khaen* maintains the metric rhythm over one or two measures. In the *lam siphandon* recordings, the *mohlam* sing verses that follow the line structure set out in the *kòòn aan* model, however, they usually arrange the lines in 3-4 1-2 order and not 1-2 3-4. The primary musical cadences most often occur at the end of line 2, with the final fixed tone-slot syllable taking a mid-falling contour, T4, to match the melodic descent to the cadence (see part two below). At other times, a *mohlam* may sing verses of 3-4 3-4 composition, or else a verse/musical unit may consist of a single line. In some of these sections built using 3-4 3-4 form, line 4 does not seek out musical cadences nearly as often as line 2. This allows musical tension to build over these sections until a finalis cadence is reached, either through a verse composed in 1-2 form, or a non-*kòòn aan* verse at the end of the round.

Duang Phaeng utilises the secondary finalis at c for the cadence of over half of the verses she sings, regardless of whether they are composed in 3-4 form or 1-2 form. At the end of her round (transcription 1, lines 1.72 to 1.79), Duang Phaeng sings an extended 3-4 3-4 structure, which leads into the final cadence of the round. During these eight lines of 3-4 3-4 structure, the cadence at c is avoided entirely, giving particular prominence to the cadence at c that appears at the end of the concluding lines 1-2. This then descends to a barely audible finalis g. Som Sii also adopts the same strategy in his round (transcription 2, lines 2.74 to 2.79).

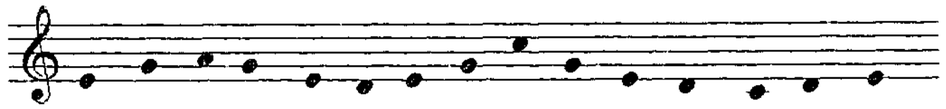
Each musical unit often begins with a very short phrase of a single melodic interval sung to one or two syllables, which functions as a distinctive motif for this genre. In Duang Phaeng's case, twenty-three of a total of forty-four musical phrases begin with an ascending minor third interval. This interval often occurs on *kham buphabot* pre-syllables,

with a'-c' and e-g' the most common notes, as shown in Example 6-8 and Example 6-9 below. Frequently used words include, *cang vaa* (จังวา) 'so, thus', *mèèn vaa* (แม่นวา) 'yes, that's so', *mùù nii* (มื้นี้) 'today', *bat nii* (บัดนี้) 'now', and so on. Occasionally this interval is extended to a fourth. Example 6-8 below, shows a melos of a 1-2 line pair sung by Duang Phaeng. The first two pitches constitute the opening motif phrase of a minor third, after which the melody undulates through the next two musical phrases, coming to an end with the characteristic descent to the secondary finalis at c.



Example 6-8: *Lam siphandon* melos of Duang Phaeng's 1-2 verse structure with initial interval motif and cadence on secondary finalis c. (Transcription 1, lines 1.16 & 1.17)

The 3-4 line pair in Example 6-9 below, also exhibits the opening motif and an undulating melody, with the highest pitches in the second half of the unit. Unlike the previous example, the 3-4 line pair does not conclude on a finalis pitch.



Example 6-9: *Lam siphandon* melos of Duang Phaeng's 3-4 verse structure with initial interval motif of a third (Transcription 1, lines 1.14 & 1.15)

Som Sii's round exhibits the same opening interval, although he uses it less frequently. In his round, twelve out of forty-three musical units commence with the ascending minor third e-g', while nine of them begin with the fourth e-a' (as shown in Example 6-10 below). Also note that Duang Phaeng and Som Sii have similar undulating melodic contours in their 3-4 verses.

Example 6-10: *Lam siphandon* melos of Som Sii's 3-4 verse structure with initial interval motif of a fourth (Transcription 2, lines 2.37 & 2.38)

Although the opening interval motif, varying between a third and fourth, imparts a distinctive sound to *lam siphandon*, its use cannot be predicted on the basis of word tone.

This is because most musical units begin with a phrase sung to *kham buphabot* syllables, which frequently take the T5 level tone (see part two below). Therefore, the ascending interval motif does not match the tone contour. Nevertheless, because these two initial intervals appear frequently in every performance of *lam siphandon* I have heard, I regard them as a formulaic feature specific to the genre.

The overall melodic line of each phrase is partly related to the position of the tone-slots in *kòòn aan* form. This is certainly true with respect to lines 2 and 3, each of which has a tone-slot on the final core syllable. This produces some consistency in the relationships between tone contour and musical pitch in these slots, particularly when no post-syllables are added. The *thoo* tone-slot at the end of line 2 takes a mid-falling tone, T4, or occasionally the low-falling tone T5. In *lam siphandon*, line 2 normally ends on cadences; Duang Phaeng coming to rest on the secondary finalis at note c, and Som Sii on note a, a second above the finalis. The *mohlam* are consistent in the intervals they use to arrive at these points, Duang Phaeng descending a second from note d to c (as per Example 6-8), Som Sii descending a fifth from note e, through the secondary finalis, note c, to arrive at a (see Example 6-11 below).

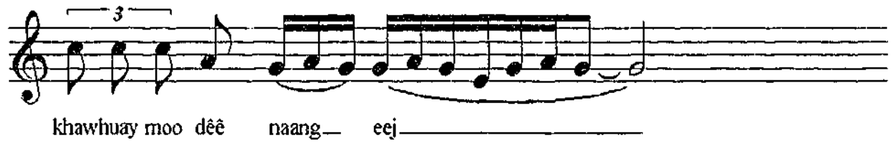
Example 6-11: *Lam siphandon* melos of Som Sii's 1-2 verse structure with ending cadence at a. (Transcription 2, lines 2.39 & 2.40)

Another predictable ending occurs in line 3, in which the final syllable nearly always takes a mid-level tone, T1. However, line 3 does not often coincide with main cadences because its final musical phrase often runs directly into the musical phrase that begins line 4. Even so, both *mohlam* have a distinct preference for certain notes at the end of line 3; Duang Phaeng most frequently arriving at g', and Som Sii at note e. When these notes occur, there is often a brief pause before line 4 is commenced, or else the note may be of slightly longer duration. However, when the two lines are sung in quick succession, the pitch for T1 at the end of line 3 normally coincides with the higher pitches of the piece. Som Sii sings a number of short phrases consisting of line 3 only (transcription 2, lines 2.43, 2.52, 2.57) which end on either d or e.

As a result of musical phrases being primarily based upon pairs of lines (i.e. 1-2, 3-4), lines 2 and 4 end in cadences more often than lines 1 and 3, which only do so when

they are sung in isolation. Unlike line 2, line 4 has no fixed tone-slot on its final syllable, so it does not exhibit the same degree of consistency in its final lexical tone and associated pitches. Overall, there is a tendency for the *mohlam* to end line 4 with a descending interval, although the *mohlam* sometimes use ascending intervals here too (see Example 6-10). These intervals are most commonly seconds in Duang Phaeng's case, and minor thirds for Som Sii. Descending intervals usually end on pitch c, the secondary finalis, while ascending intervals often end on pitch e. There is no conclusive evidence that the direction of the interval is determined by the word tone on this final syllable of line 4 (see part two below). Melodic patterns in line 4 do not exhibit the same degree of consistency as those in line 2; cadences at the end of line 4 do not reach the secondary finalis c as often as the cadences falling on the end of line 2. Both Duang Phaeng and Som Sii run several verses composed in 3-4 form together as a means to avoid the finalis cadence, and to build their text before seeking the cadence with a verse composed in 1-2 form (e.g. see transcription 2, lines 2.46-2.60).

Both *mohlam* utilise similar amounts of melodic direction change and a moderate degree of tone repetition, less than 25 percent in both instances. However, the degree of level shift varies considerably between the two singers, with Duang Phaeng producing a smaller degree due to her narrower range which spans 14 semitones, compared to Som Sii's span of 16 semitones. At cadences, Duang Phaeng prefers to employ the secondary finalis c, whereas Som Sii nearly always descends to the lower a, gliding through c but avoiding finalis g in all but two cadences. One distinctive stylistic feature of Duang Phaeng's performance, is the striking ornamented passage of mostly alternating seconds at the end of line 1.53 (see Example 6-12 below). At the end of the ornamentation she holds the octave of finalis g for an extended time, while the *khaen* holds a unison pitch. Throughout the round, Duang Phaeng delivers the occasional line in a rapid parlando-rubato, providing some contrast to her strong singing voice.



Example 6-12: Striking ornamentation by Duang Phaeng (Transcription 1, line 1.53)

	Duang Phaeng	*Som Sii*
Level Shift	-53.3 °	-33.52 °
Melodic Direction Change	44.43%	47.42%
Tone Repetition	24.64%	21.61%
Prominent Tone(s)	e, g', a', c	e, g', d, g
Range	c-d' (14)	g-c' (16)

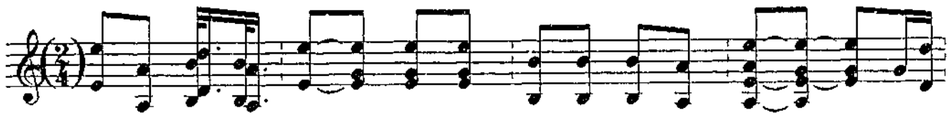
Table 6.1: Statistics for *lam siphandon*

The prominent tones, listed in hierarchical order, indicate a preference on the part of both *mohlam* for pitches e and g'. These coincide closely with Miller's observation (1998a:343) that pitches e and a' are emphasised throughout the text, the major difference here being Som Sii's choice of pitches. The e and a' pitches are the ones that feature prominently in the bridging section between the introduction and the main body of the text (see Example 6-7 above). Both *mohlam* prefer to maintain the melody in the middle of their range, employing the highest notes for particular effect, while leaving the lower notes for the main cadences.

Lam Som

This genre is based upon the *ñaaw* scale a, c, d, e, g, but includes an extra tone b, a second above the finalis a. Both a and b are prominent at cadences giving this genre an immediately recognisable sound. Unlike *lam siphandon*, the *khaen* accompaniment for *lam som* is only ever played in one mode, there being no *ñaj-nòòj* distinction made by the performers.[22] Differences in the male-female voice tessitura are accommodated by matching *khaen* to suit the vocal range of each *mohlam*.[23] The accompaniment is metrical but the sung melody is not, being "declaimed in rhythms that rarely relate to those of the khene [sic]" (Miller 1998a:344). The slow, declaimed style of vocal delivery that *lam som* has in common with northern genres has led to this genre sometimes being labelled as *khap som*, rather than *lam som*.[24] However, a crucial difference in vocal delivery between *lam som* and at least one northern genre, *khap ngeum* is that the main musical unit generally contains two poetic lines, whereas a musical unit in *khap ngeum* generally consists of a single poetic line. The two performances analysed here are sung to moderately slow tempos of around 80 quarter note beats per minute, lasting for 5 minutes and 14 seconds (Duang Phaeng), and 4 minutes and 43 seconds (Som Sii).

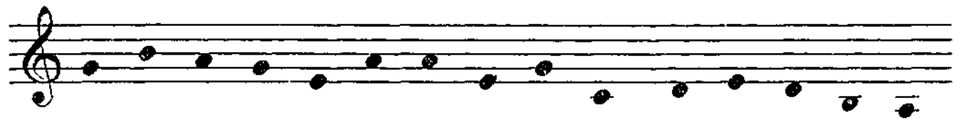
While playing, the *mohkhaen* must pay particular attention to follow the b-a vocal motif of the *mohlam* at the main cadences, which fall at the completion of every line 2. This four measure, cadential pattern is the main musical motif of this genre, and is shown in Example 6-13 below. The matching of *khaen* and voice is not precise, however, as the final syllable of line 2 does not always fall in the same position of the four measure pattern (see transcriptions 3 and 4). Secondary cadences occur at the end of line 4, but do not descend to the finalis, instead settling at pitches e, c, or f, with e being the pitch preferred by both *mohlam*.



Example 6-13: Cadential *khaen* pattern in *lam som* (drones at a, a')

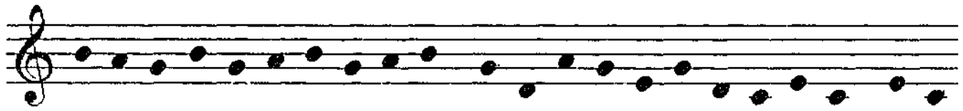
In terms of poetic structure, *lam som* is virtually identical to *lam siphandon*. Both begin with a short introductory verse that opens with the same stereotypical syntactic frame (described above). After the introduction, the *mohlam* moves straight into the main body of the poem, which is composed in *kòòn aan* form. There is no bridging section such as the one found in *lam siphandon*. The same relationships between *kòòn aan* form and melody that exist in *lam siphandon* are also found in *lam som*, but in *lam som* they appear to be more predictable. The b-a cadences described above, always occur on T4 in the final *thoo* tone-slot of line 2, but never at the end of any other *kòòn aan* line. This cadence also appears at the completion of the introduction, and at the end of the round, where the poetry is composed in a *kaap*-like form rather than *kòòn aan*, in which case T4 is not always present on the final syllable. The consistently accurate (but not absolutely precise) placement of the b-a cadences by the *mohkhaen* shows that they must possess an awareness of verse structures, and be listening carefully to the *mohlam* so that they know when to play the cadential pattern.

In the *lam som* rounds analysed here, the text is generally sung in verses consisting of four lines in 3-4 1-2 pattern, the b-a cadence coming at the end of line 2, as shown in Example 6-14 below.



Example 6-14: *Lam som* melos of Som Sii's 1-2 verse structure with final b-a cadence (Transcription 4, lines 4.9 & 4.10)

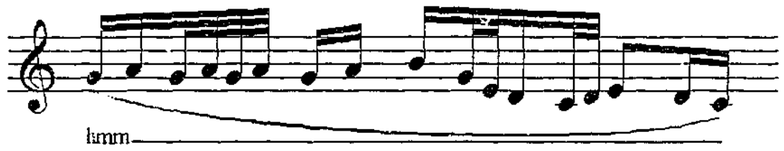
During her performance, Duang Phaeng sings one section composed as a 3-4 3-4 3-4 sequence, which then concludes with lines 1-2 and the b-a cadence. Unlike *lam siphandon*, there are no recurring interval motifs at the start of musical units. Line 3, with its predominant T1 ending, tends to finish on notes d and a', while line 4 ends on a variety of tone contours, with T2 by far the most frequent. Duang Phaeng usually ornaments the final syllable of line 4, with the ornamentation beginning and ending on e. Som Sii prefers a shorter melisma on this syllable, using the intervals d-e or e-c. The melos in Example 6-15 below, shows the latter interval at the end, and the first d pitch is the T1 tone-slot at the end of line 3. The example also shows how the melodic contour undulates before descending towards the cadence.



Example 6-15: *Lam som* melos of Som Sii's 3-4 verse structure (Transcription 4, lines 4.7 & 4.8)

In the two singing rounds analysed, Duang Phaeng has the greater range spanning 17 semitones, while Som Sii's spans 15 semitones. Both singers use the b-a motif at main cadences, however, Som Sii makes greater use of the lower half of the scale than Duang Phaeng, who prefers to sing using the upper part of the scale and into the higher octave. Furthermore, Duang Phaeng favours ornamentation, placing it on the last syllable or two of line 4, a line that is not dominated by the b-a motif. Occasionally, Duang Phaeng adds an extended ornamentation between verses, such as the one in Example 6-16 below. This particular ornamentation begins with a trill-like alternation of pitches, which is then concluded with a turn-like phrase (see measures 39-41, 58-59, 75-77 in transcription 3 for other examples). This is not unlike the few ornamentations she uses in *lam siphandon*, both of which conclude with a turn-like phrase (see Example 6-7 and Example 6-12 above). In contrast, Som Sii avoids ornamentation almost entirely, following in the style of his elder brother, Sunii, who does not appear to use ornamentation either.[25] In fact, this appears to

reflect an overall male syllabic singing style for both of these southern genres. These ornamentations are the main reason why Duang Phaeng's round has a considerably greater amount of level shift than occurs in Som Sii's round.



Example 6-16: Long ornamentation by Duang Phaeng in *lam som*

	Duang Phaeng	*Som Sii*
Level Shift	-29.41 °	-13.3 °
Melodic Direction Change	50.65 %	51.95 %
Tone Repetition	15.19 %	20.45 %
Prominent Tone(s)	a', e, g	a', g, e
Range (semitones)	a-d' (17)	a-c' (15)

Table 6.2: Statistics for *lam som*

The figures of tone repetition in *lam som* indicate that Duang Phaeng is less likely to use repeated tones in this genre than she is in *lam siphandon* (compare her figures in Table 6.1 and Table 6.2). This is due to a more consistent, deliberate style of articulation in *lam som* in which Duang Phaeng does not employ any parlando-rubato style of delivery. In contrast, Som Sii's figures for tone repetition show little variation between the two genres, reflecting his consistent style of unornamented articulation across the two genres. The prominent tones are almost the same for both performers, in which they favour the octave of the finalis and the seventh. Duang Phaeng also has a considerably higher percentage of level shift, also indicative of her highly ornamented style.

Khap Ngeum

Musically, *khap ngeum* is quite distinct from the two southern genres examined above. Accompaniment is non-metrical and, like the southern genres, played on *khaen* alone. If a sixteen pipe *khaen* is used, the two highest pitches are not played. In the recordings analysed here, Acaan Sing was accompanied by the *laaj nòòj* d, f, g, a, c mode, and Paeng Thong by the *ñaj* mode a, c, d, e, g. These modes are based on the *ñaaw* scale, having a prominent minor third between the first and second degrees. In the following discussion, the melody of both performances are referred to using the basic *ñaaw* scale a, c, d, e, g. The performances are 6 minutes and 10 seconds (Paeng Thong), and 6 minutes and 1 second (Acaan Sing) in length.

Each round of *khap ngeum* opens and closes with a single, highly ornamented line which begins on the fifth and descends to the finalis. The text of the opening phrase uses a similar syntactic frame to that which occurs in *lam siphandon* and *lam som*. In the performances analysed here, the *mohsòòj* (see chapter 5) also sings in the introduction, however, this did not occur in the natural performances I attended. The *mohlam* then move into the main body of the poem, which is divided into distinct sections, the ends of which are signalled by a long ornamentation that descends to the finalis. As they reach the finalis, the *mohsòòj* joins in with his falsetto-like line (described below). The closing line of the round is similar to the one that opens the round. The text is declaimed in a slow fashion, one line at a time, with a small pause that the *khaen* player fills with rapidly alternating pitches a third apart. The *khaen* player is expected to follow the singer's melody, making familiarity with the genre and style of individual *mohlam* essential for a successful career as an accompanist.

Miller describes the melodic patterns of *khap ngeum* in the following way:

> Phrases tend to begin on the fifth or seventh tone and descend to the third, with sectional endings descending to the "tonic." (Miller 1998a:347)[26]

These patterns certainly occur in the performances analysed here, but there is more variability than Miller suggests. In both performances, it is common for the pre-syllables to be sung to a succession of two e-g intervals, creating a melodic motif typical of the genre. Like *lam siphandon* this motif is a minor third, however, the different singing styles and accompaniment patterns gives them distinctly different characters. The end of each poetic line often descends to the third at c, however, other pitches also occur. The finalis, a, while dominant at section endings, also appears in non-cadential positions of the melodic line. In these positions it tends to be of short duration, and is not always fully articulated because it falls in the middle of a poetic line.

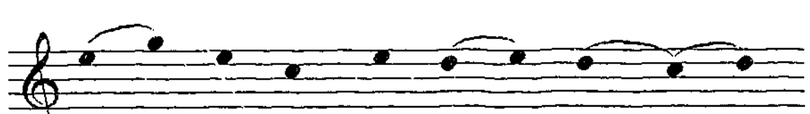
In the introductory section of this chapter, we noted that the poetic structure of *khap ngeum* texts is primarily based upon single poetic lines rather than pairs of lines, and that this allowed frequent use of pre- and post-syllables. Post-syllables most often occur at section ends, coinciding with line 4. In the two performances analysed here, section ends fall on lines 4 (seven times), 2 (once) and 1 (twice), and are always signalled by a long

melismatic descent to the finalis (see Example 6-20 below). Although the links between the tone-slots of *kòòn aan* lines and finalis cadences are less prominent in *khap ngeum* than in the two southern genres, a number of text/melody relationships are still apparent.

In both performances the use of line 1 at main cadences is quite uncommon, so no generalisations about its melodic patterns can be made here. However, on line 2, Paeng Thong usually reaches the finalis, passing the third at c via a descending d-c-a run on the final *thoo* tone-slot. Example 6-17 below, shows this final, melismatic syllable, as well as two minor third e-g' opening motifs sung to pre-syllables (the slurs in the melos indicate melismatic moves from one pitch to another).

Example 6-17: *Khap ngeum* melos of Paeng Thong's line 2 with initial interval motif, and use of finalis d (Transcription 5, line 5.7)

In contrast to Paeng Thong, Acaan Sing uses line 2 just four times in his performance, so it is not possible to describe a general trend for his melody on this line. However, he does have a preference for ending his lines with a c-d pattern, regardless of which *kòòn aan* line is used, or whether *kham sòòj* are added or not (see Transcription 6, lines 6.2, 6.5, 6.7a, 6.9, 6.12, 6.23a, 6.24a, 6.33a, 6.34). Example 6-18 below, shows the c-d pattern at the end of line 3 and the opening e-g' melodic motif.

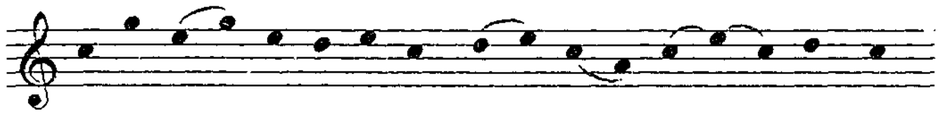


Example 6-18: *Khap ngeum* melos of Acaan Sing's line 3 showing c-d ending on post-syllables and opening e-g' motif (Transcription 6, line 6.2)

Paeng Thong's use of the finalis is noticeable at the end of other phrases too; it appears at the end of *kòòn aan* lines 1 (four times), 3 (seven times) and 4 (four times), plus the six section ends. However, the finalis only occurs three times outside of section ends in Acaan Sing's round.

One significant difference in *khap ngeum*, is that the single line musical units often allow the *êêk* tone-slot on the final syllable of line 3 to end a musical unit. The melodic realisation of lexical tones is particularly noticeable in this slot because it allows one of

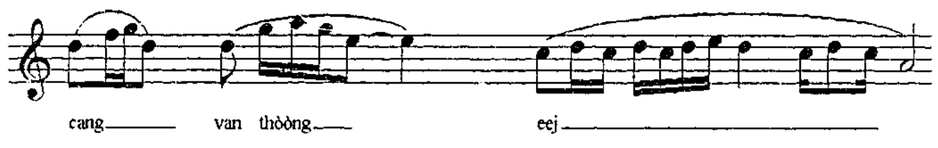
four different tone contours (T1, T2, T4, and T5). When the high-level tone, T1, appears in the slot, both *mohlam* usually opt for pitch c or d, as shown in Example 6-19 below.



Example 6-19: *Khap ngeum* melos of Paeng Thong's line 3 with opening motif and T1 realised as c (Transcription 5, line 5.8)

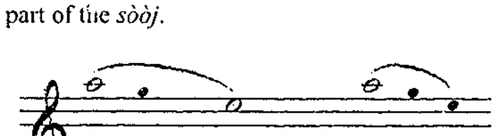
However, when a falling contour appears (either T4 or T5), the *mohlam* use a descending melisma; Paeng Thong opting for the d-c-a line, and Acaan Sing c-a, although he predominantly uses T1 in the tone-slot at the end of line 3. Part two below, contains a more extensive discussion of lexical tone and melodic relationships.

The section end cadences are preceded by long, melismatic ornamentations on the final core syllable and subsequent post-syllables, as shown in Example 6-20.



Example 6-20: *Khap ngeum* cadence ornamentation on post-syllables at a section end (Transcription 5, line 5.23a)

As the ornamentation descends to the finalis, the *mohsòòj* joins in with a falsetto-like motif that begins on a' then glides melismatically through g' to be held at e'. Most *mohsòòj* voice these pitches with a trill-like intonation. When the first melisma is over, the *mohsòòj* immediately follows with a whooping cascade over the same notes, although the final e pitch is not held this time, as shown in Example 6-21 below. Members of the audience will also sing this second part of the *sòòj*.



Example 6-21: *Sòòj* chorus motif at section ends in *khap ngeum*

If the *mohsòòj* feels inclined, he may sing a brief phrase such as *mèèn la bòò* (ແມ່ນລະບໍ່) 'that's right!' as the first part of the *sòòj*, then run the last syllable into the final whooping

motif. The *sòòj* is a distinguishing feature of the *khap ngeum* genre, and, to my knowledge, there is no similar line in any other *khap-lam* genre.

In the recordings, neither *mohlam* extend their range beyond the octave of the finalis, a'. This is a considerably smaller vocal range than that used by Duang Phaeng and Som Sii in the two southern genres. The degree of level shift is the same for both singers because of their similar ranges, and because they both start and finish the round on the same notes. Melodic direction change is quite high due to the large amount of ornamentation this slower style of sung delivery allows. In this respect, *khap ngeum* shares some similarity with *lam som*, although unlike *lam som*, the male *mohlam* is just as likely to use extensive ornamentation as the female *mohlam*. As noted above, ornamentation is largely reserved for the ends of each section and often blends into the responses provided by the *mohsòòj* and audience.

	Paeng Thong	*Acaan Sing*
Level Shift	-58.3 °	-58.3 °
Melodic Direction Change	50 %	51.8 %
Tone Repetition	7 %	12.7 %
Prominent Tone(s)	a, c, e	c, a, e
Range	a-a' (12)	a-a' (12)

Table 6.3: Statistics for *khap ngeum*

Although the singing range of both *mohlam* is restricted to a single octave here, there is much less tone repetition in comparison to the two southern genres. This is because performers do not use parlando-rubato style delivery which accounts for long strings of a single tone in the southern genres. Furthermore, *mohlam* are probably less constrained by the *kòòn aan* tone-slots in *khap ngeum* because they do not have the same predominance at finalis cadence points. A decrease of tone repetition was also noted when the slower of the two southern genres, *lam som*, was compared with *lam siphandon*. In *khap ngeum*, the slow vocal delivery allows for better articulation of the lexical tones, giving this genre a higher degree of lexical tone-musical pitch coordination in comparison to the other two genres, and resulting in a small amount of tone repetition.

Conclusions to Part One

The analysis permits a number of conclusions to be drawn concerning the general character of musical and textual relationships in *khap-lam* texts. These are summarised in point form:

1. Musical units are normally determined by poetic structures, primarily the *kòòn aan* line. In the southern genres, a musical unit is normally a pair of lines, but a single line in *khap ngeum*.
2. A musical unit always consists of several musical phrases which are loosely determined by the hemistich structure of poetic lines.
3. All three genres exhibit undulating melodic contours, but the final pitch of each musical unit is lower than the initial pitch.
4. Recurring melodic motifs normally appear at the beginning and end of musical units. Initial motifs usually comprise ascending minor thirds, but fourths and fifths also occur.
5. Improvisation of the melody is freer in the middle of musical units, as the opening and closing phrases are usually dominated by relatively fixed melodic motifs.
6. The highest pitches of the piece tend to be in the middle of the musical unit. In the southern genres, this is normally where the first *kòòn aan* line ends and the second begins.
7. A clear relationship exists between line 2 of *kòòn aan* form and finalis cadences. Finalis cadences are normally reached through a descending melisma with intervals of a second or minor third. It is more prominent in the two southern genres than in *khap ngeum*, in which the melody is less constrained by *kòòn aan* structures.
8. Melodic motifs which begin a musical unit usually have no relationship to word tone contours, whereas those at the end often do.
9. Songs sung in slower tempos exhibit more ornamentation and less tone repetition.

10. Southern male performance exhibits a large amount of syllabic singing, with female *mohlam* using a more melismatic style. In *khap ngeum* male and female *mohlam* use similar amounts of melismatic phrasing.

The analysis has also broached the question of relationships between lexical tone and musical pitch throughout the sung melody. Part two of this chapter presents an analysis and discussion of these relationships.

Part Two: Correspondences of Lexical Tone and Pitch

The tone languages of Southeast and East Asia are commonly categorised as mono-syllabic and isolating. Essentially, the label 'mono-syllabic' denotes a language without derivational morphology, meaning that the form of individual words does not alter in order to create plural forms, nor to mark for tense, mode or aspect. As a result, mono-syllabic languages tend to have a large number of single syllable forms because, rather than alter a word using derivational morphology, other devices are employed to mark tense, aspect and modality. The most common strategy is to assign a secondary function to a lexical item. For example, in Lao, the word *lèèw* may stand alone as the verb 'to finish', but when placed after a verb, it provides a sense of completion to that verb (e.g. *kin* 'to eat', *kin lèèw* 'to have (already) eaten'). Mono-syllabic languages also tend to develop phonemic tones as a means of distinguishing otherwise identical items from each other. The number of contrastive tone contours varies from language to language; Mandarin Chinese has four tones, while Central Thai and Vientiane Lao have five. Within a single language there may be different dialects which employ different numbers of tones as well. For example, in the Lao dialects spoken throughout Laos and northeast Thailand, the number of tones varies from five to eight (Brown 1967). The tone contours in Lao are explained in part one of this chapter.

Earlier in this study, it was mentioned that *khap-lam* genres are commonly defined as a song type in which the melody is generated by the word tones (Miller 1985a; 1998a; Mosel 1961:50; Mahoney 1995). However, this definition is not particularly useful when we consider that "most Lao people have trouble explaining the nature of tones" (Koret 1999:241). Performers and audiences do not consider *khap-lam* genres to be *phêêng* (ᨽᩮᩬᩴᨦ) 'song(s)'; they are *lam* or *khap*, and the link between lexical tone and melody is implicit in

these terms. List has noted that some cultures have specific labels for forms that are neither speech nor song (of which the words *khap* and *lam* are Lao examples):

> Other cultures distinguish forms other than speech or song which to us may seem to be intermediate forms. The nomenclature applied to these intermediate forms will vary considerably from culture to culture as will the social function of the form. (List 1963:3)

In discussing various methods of classification for determining the boundaries of speech and song, List noted the difficulty of classifying song forms in tone languages because of the complex relationships between tone, intonation and musical melody (List 1963:12).

This is especially true in languages like Lao, which have contour tones that are relatively unstable in regard to List's definition of song,

> "...as a form exhibiting relatively stable pitches, possessing a scalar structure at least as elaborate as the heptatonic, and showing little, if any, influence melodically of speech intonation" (List 1963:3).

Lao lexical tones are, of course, determined by changes in relative pitch, not changes of absolute pitch. Therefore, we might refer to *khap-lam* singing as a form of heightened-speech, although at times most *khap-lam* genres fluctuate between speech and song, never remaining stable in either their speech-like nor song-like qualities.

Interaction between a syllable's lexical tone and the musical pitch at which it is sung, has been the subject of previous examinations in tone languages such as Thai, Cantonese, and Mien among others (List 1961; Mendenhall 1975; Yung 1983; Purnell 1992). The basic aim of all these investigations, regardless of specific language or cultural aspects, is to discover the extent of one fundamental relationship:

> We want to know whether the melodic behaviour of the music is in *any way* related to the linguistic tone behaviour. (Yung 1983:36) (my emphasis)

I have emphasised "any way" in the above quotation, in order to reinforce the idea that we do not always expect to find total coordination of lexical tone and musical pitch on every syllable (although we still look for it). Instead we may expect to find some way in which these two variables interact throughout the course of any given song.

Trying to determine exactly how lexical tone and musical pitch interact is often a complex, inexact and difficult exercise, especially when performers do not explicitly state any systematic rules governing tone-text relationships. In the case of Lao *khap-lam* genres, I was informed by Duang Phaeng and Acaan Som that the melody "follows the

language".[27] This was the closest reference to word tones which I could elicit without asking direct questions concerning the role of word tones, known as *siang vannañu* (ສຽງວັນນະຍຸດ), or by referring directly to Sila's rules of *kòòn aan* structure. Even when I mentioned tones and tone-slot rules *mohlam* did not discuss them. As noted earlier, any recourse to a discussion on the nature and behaviour of lexical tones is fraught with difficulties because Lao people perceive and produce lexical tones intuitively, and never analyse them in the manner that the linguist or music researcher does.

In the absence of an articulated Lao treatise or theory on tone and melody, a useful starting point for analysis is to check for "absolute matching" and "relative matching" (Yung 1983:37), because these become readily apparent in the process of matching musical transcription with texts. The former term refers to a one-to-one relationship between tone and melodic pitch; that is, every time a given tone is sung it has the same pitch, or pitches. The latter term refers to the phenomenon in which the general contour of a tone is duplicated in the direction of musical pitch intervals, although the tone-pitch correspondence is not exactly the same. Relative matching categorises a rising tone as coordinated with musical pitch if it is sung to an ascending interval, although a given lexical tone does not have to begin or end on the same pitch every time it occurs. Finally, another phenomenon to be aware of is the relationship between rising and falling tone contours, and the consistency of the interval size to which they might be sung. In the case of the three genres examined in this chapter, absolute matching is not found. However, there is good evidence of varying degrees of relative matching.

The analysis of musical and text structures in the previous section identified melodic patterns which are coordinated with specific lines in the structure of *kòòn aan* poetic verse. For example, in the two southern genres, the main musical cadences normally occurred in conjunction with the final syllable of line 2, which is occupied by a *thoo* tone-slot filled with a falling tone (T2, T4). However, many genre-specific melodic motifs, such as the initial ascending intervals in *lam siphandon* and *khap ngeum*, are not related to tone-slots, or to lexical tone. As we saw in part one, the structure of poetic lines is significant because *mohlam* prefer to sing two poetic lines as a single musical unit (usually grouped as lines 1-2 and 3-4). This means that main cadences usually fall at the end of a pair of lines. *Khap ngeum* differs in this respect with only a single poetic line to a musical phrase. Thus, we have already described a degree of correspondence between lexical tone and melody.

This section describes these cadential points, and other lexical tone-melody correspondences, which occur in non-cadential points of the text.

To date, there has only been one other attempt to explain lexical tone-musical pitch correspondences in a *khap-lam* genre (Miller 1985a:142-44). Miller's analysis, based on samples of *lam ploen*,[28] a genre from northeast Thailand, concluded that lexical tone and musical pitch rarely exhibit one hundred percent relative coordination. Miller also found that specific tones did not always generate predictable melodic patterns, meaning, for example, that a falling tone did not always end on a pitch lower than the pitch it began on. Indeed, at times, some tones did not realise their contour at all, and were sung either to a single pitch, or to an interval moving in the opposite direction from the normal tone contour (e.g. a falling tone sung to an ascending interval). To accommodate these variations, Miller decided to treat:

> ...contour tones sung on a single pitch as coordinated if the following pitch is lower or higher according to the word-tone. In other words, if a high-falling tone is sung on g' alone and the following pitch is d', the word is considered to be coordinated since there is no conflict. In the case of level tones, however, it is sometimes difficult to say which are coordinated and which are not. (Miller 1985a:142-43)

However, Miller's solution appears to discount some instances which, in my data, could otherwise be categorised as coordinated. For example, when consecutive occurrences of high-falling tones (T2) are all pitched on the same single note (g'), as happens in transcription 1 (Duang Phaeng's performance of *lam siphandon*), lines 1.54 and 1.58,[29] the second T2 does not occur on a pitch lower than the previous T2. There appears to be no good reason to discount this instance as not coordinated, simply because the second occurrence of T2 does not start at a lower pitch than the previous occurrence of T2. Why should this be an instance of incoordinate tones when both occurrences of T2 would naturally seek out a relatively high point, from which to begin the syllable? Furthermore, in spoken Lao, the tone of each syllable is relatively independent. Therefore, to assess the starting point of one syllable in terms of where another syllable should end (but doesn't), is to impose a system that is not found in normal speech. In this analysis, occurrences such as these are considered to be coordinated.

The scenario I describe above would, according to Miller's criteria, only allow three consecutive occurrences of T2 on a descending run to be classified as coordinated (e.g. e'-d'-c' would be accepted, but e'-e'-e' would not). However, there is evidence in this corpus

that a tone contour may not be realised by a distinct interval, but rather by an ascending or descending glide to a definite pitch from an indistinct pitch, or by a glide from a definite pitch to an indistinct one. In such instances, the tone-syllable must be said to occur on a single pitch, but the direction of the glide noted and compared with the tone contour. In the expanded text transcriptions in appendix 3, the symbol < indicates the glide ascends while > indicates it descends (see Example 6-22 below). Placing these symbols before or after the note letter shows that the glide either leads into, or away from, the note. The analysis presented here confirms many of Miller's tentative findings but, being drawn from a larger corpus of material, it provides a better overall assessment of the tone contour-musical pitch relationships that might be present in *khap-lam* genres in general.

Methodology

Where it was required, each performance was re-transcribed into a single scale in order to eliminate the male/female modal variations of the *khaen* accompaniment. For this analysis, I used a simplified transcription that was a modification of the melos used in the first part of the analysis. This retained some of the melodic detail such as note repetition, because I needed to see the pitch at which each syllable was sung. Ornamentations were simplified, with only their initial and final pitches noted. Next I wrote the corresponding tone contour number beneath each syllable. This enabled a quick visual approximation of the extent of lexical tone/musical pitch correspondence in each line before more detailed analysis was carried out. It also facilitated quicker comparison between male and female performances.

Each line of the detailed text transcriptions in appendix 3 is set out with four lines of information. The first line contains the name of the note(s) to which each syllable is sung,[30] below which the sung text is written in Lao script. The third line is a phonetic transcription, modelled on the IPA, that includes a number indicating the lexical tone of the syllable (from 1-6). The fourth line contains a free translation in English. Line 1.1, taken from transcription 1, is set out below as an example:

D'	**D'**	**G'>**	**E**	**E**	**B**	**D'**
ເຢິ່ນ	ເວິ່ນ	ອ~ຍ	ແ~ມ	ອ~ຍ	ເຢິ່ນ	ເວິ່ນ
peen1	**veen1**	**aay4**	**kèèm4**	**aay4**	**peen1**	**veen1**

So clear and bright, your cheeks are so clear and bright

Example 6-22: Four-line expanded transcription showing note names, Lao text, phonetics and English translation

I decided that the tone-slots of the *kòòn aan* structure, in which the majority of the texts are composed,[31] would serve as the starting point for tone-pitch analysis. This decision was made on the basis that tone-slots have predictable tones, and perform a central role in the composition of the text. The tones occurring in each slot were noted for each singer and genre, revealing strong similarities in the tone contours chosen to fill the tone-slots (see the sections on each genre above). The next step was to broaden the examination by carefully checking each song text, line by line, noting all tone-pitch correspondences.

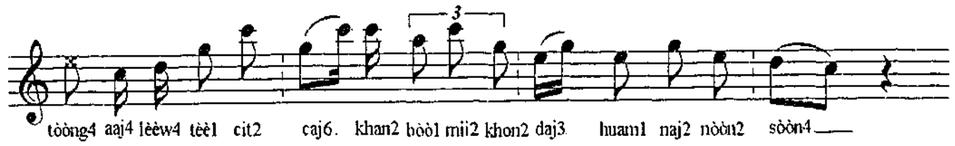
This search revealed that the majority of tones are sung to single pitches, or to indistinct intervals where the initial or terminal tone of the interval cannot be accurately determined. These indistinct intervals were treated as single pitch realisations of tones, although the direction of the interval, whether ascending or descending, was noted. Next, tones sung to distinct intervals were noted, and generalisations made about the correspondence between tone contour and interval direction. These procedures enabled a line-by-line image of each song text to be built, revealing the most frequent tone-pitch correspondences for each tone. Finally, a line-by-line analysis of each text was made in an attempt to explore the interrelationships between neighbouring lexical tones.

This last stage presented a number of problems in defining tone-pitch correspondence between one syllable and the next. When spoken and heard in isolation, the intrinsic tone contour of any lexical item is always clear and well-articulated. However, in normal speech words and their tones, are run together in quick succession giving rise to what is known as tone sandhi. This is a change of tone contour brought about by the influence exerted by one tone upon another (Ladefoged 1982:231). Whether or not tone sandhi occurs in vocal music sung in tone languages has not, to my knowledge, been researched. There appears to be little evidence for tone sandhi in spoken Lao (Enfield: personal communication, 24/4/2001), which would suggest that it is unlikely to be found in Lao *khap-lam* vocal music.

Rather than tone sandhi, a different type of tone change is found in spoken Lao, which occurs on words performing a secondary semantic role in an utterance. Instead of taking their normal tone contour, these unstressed words lose their tone, becoming neutral or 'unstressed'. For example, the verb *maa2* 'to come' will take its normal tone in a statement such as *phen1 maa2* 'he came', but will be unstressed when it acts as a directional verb, as in *phen1 aw0 maa0 haj5* 'he brought it to me'. Determining if, and

where, such unstressed syllables might occur in a *khap-lam* text is problematic, as the pitch contour clues normally available in spoken language are masked by the imposition of a melody, frequent unusual grammatical constructions, and the 'marked'[32] form of the text.

The second part of the tone-melody analysis, in which we examine lexical tones sung to intervals, indicates that melody is not always directly related to word tone contours. Example 6-23 below, in which the syllables occupying the fixed tone-slots are in bold, illustrates some coordinate and incoordinate tone-melody relationships. The musical transcription shows the last three hemistiches of the two *kòòn aan* lines written below. The first two occurrences of T4 are clearly incoordinate because the melody ascends, going against the falling tone contour. The following T1 and T2 are coordinate but the following T6 (an accented hemistich-final syllable, see the section entitled *non-tone-slot syllables* below) is not. Every tone in the following two hemistiches is coordinated, as each either follows the contour melismatically or otherwise ascends or descends according to the tone's usual initial relative pitch.



Line 1

ຫຼື ຖ້າ ອ້າຍ ມີ ຜູ້ ຕ້ອງ ອ້າຍ ແລ້ວ ແຕ່ ຈິດ ໃຈ

lùù3 thaa6 aaj4 mii2 phuu5 tòòng4 **aaj4 lèèw4 tèè1 cit2 caj6**

or if you need someone, it's up to your heart

Line 2

ຂັນ ບໍ່ ມີ ຄົນ ໃດ ຮ່ວມ ໃນ ນອນ ຊ້ອນ

khan2 bòò1 mii2 khon2 daj3 huam1 **naj2 nòòn2** sòòn4

if you have no-one to share your bed

Example 6-23: Melodic and textual transcription illustrating coordinated and non-coordinated tone-melody in *lam siphandon* (Duang Phaeng, transcription 1, lines 1.30 and 1.31)

Tone-Slots

The tone-slots of *kòòn aan* structure are the logical place to start an examination of the interaction between lexical tone and melodic pitch. Theoretically, the *êêk* tone-slot is able to accommodate up to four tones (T1, T2, T4 and T5), but in practice singers do not make full use of all four tones. For *lam siphandon*, Compton reports that both male and female singers prefer to place mid-level tone, T1 in the *êêk* tone-slot and mid-falling tone, T4 in the *thoo* tone-slot (Compton 1979:188).

My analysis of the tone-slots in *lam siphandon* concurs with Compton's findings. This result was not altogether unexpected, however, as Duang Phaeng's performances are a common element of both studies. The same tones are also preferred by Som Sii and Duang Phaeng in *lam som*, and also by Paeng Thong and Acaan Sing, in their *khap ngeum* performances. The figures in Table 6.4 below, indicate the frequency with which certain tone contours occur in the two tone-slots. Note that the *êêk* tone-slot is predominantly occupied by mid-level tone, T1, with the low-falling tone, T5, as second choice. Occurrences of T2 and T4, the other two possible tones in this tone-slot, were very rare among all the performers, although they were used to a greater extent in the *khap ngeum* performances. The *thoo* tone-slot was occupied by both possible tones, however, all four performers made much more use of T4 (high-/mid-falling tone) than they did of T5 (low-falling tone) in this slot. This was especially apparent in the *lam siphandon* rounds. The low incidences of T5 in both tone-slots and the avoidance of T4 in the *êêk* tone-slot, suggests it may be a tactic *mohlam* have evolved in order to maintain strong distinctions between the two tone-slots. Furthermore, the high frequency of high-/mid-falling tone, T4, in the *thoo* tone-slot facilitates the performer's descent to the frequent cadential points, which fall on the final syllable of line 2 occupied by a *thoo* tone-slot. It is notable that the low-falling tone, T5, never occupies this slot at a final is cadence in any genre.

		êêk slot	*thoo* slot
Lam Siphandon	*Duang Phaeng*	T1 (71%); T5 (23%)	T4 (88%); T5 (12%)
	Som Sii	T1 (79%); T5 (20%)	T4 (89%); T5 (11%)
Lam Som	*Duang Phaeng*	T1 (79%); T5 (19%)	T4 (72%); T5 (29%)
	Som Sii	T1 (84%); T5 (10%)	T4 (79%); T5 (21%)
Khap Ngeum	*Paeng Thong*	T1 (60%); T5 (18%)	T4 (83%); T5 (17%)
	Acaan Sing	T1 (69%); T5 (17%)	T4 (60%); T5 (40%)

Table 6.4: Most common tones found in tone-slots across all three genres

In all genres, the majority of words occurring in the *êêk* tone-slot are marked with tone marker *maj êêk* (e.g. kaaw1 ກ່າວ), rather than being unmarked short vowel syllables ending with a stop consonant (e.g. phop1 ພົບ). The tone marker *maj êêk* produces the high-/mid-level tone T1, whereas stopped syllables may produce several tones, depending upon the class of the initial consonant. Low-falling tone T5, and high-/mid-falling tone T4 are produced with long vowel sounds. In the case of short vowels sounds, T1, or high-/mid-

falling tone T2, may be produced, depending upon the class of the initial consonant (see Appendix 1).

In the figures for *lam siphandon* and *lam som*, Som Sii and Duang Phaeng show a remarkable consistency in the frequency of the particular tones they use; their matching of tone contour with tone-slot is maintained across the two genres. The figures in Table 6.4 above, reveal that regardless of genre both *mohlam* not only place the same tones into the tone-slots of *kòòn aan* structure, but that they do so with consistent degrees of variation between the options available to them. The only major discrepancy is Acaan Sing's tone preferences for the *thoo* tone-slot in *khap ngeum*, in which he makes greater use of T5 than any other performer. This overall consistency across performers and genres suggests an intuitive use of tones indicating that all performers have gained their compositional ability as a result of "consistent lifelong exposure" to oral performance rather than having learned the technique according to a set of rules (Koret 1999:243).

Non-Tone-Slot Syllables

Consistency of tone placement at particular points in the text is not restricted to the fixed tone-slots of *kòòn aan* structure, but continues with other syllables that are important in the construction of *khap-lam* texts. According to Compton, the most important tones, in *lam siphandon* at least, are those falling on musical beats 2 and 4; the last syllables of the first and second hemistiches of each line. These tones are important because the pattern "is related to the singer's frequent use of words having particular tones at the end of hemistiches in each verse" (1979:187). Compton's analysis suggests that the singing is metrical, with these tones regularly falling upon the beat. However, the *lam siphandon* texts analysed here are not entirely metrical, shifting from metrical to non-metrical throughout a round. Som Sii's round is less metrical than Duang Phaeng's. What is clear, however, is that in the *lam siphandon* rounds both *mohlam* accent all hemistich-final syllables whether they are fixed tone-slot syllables or not. Fixed tone-slots which do not fall on the final syllable of each hemistich, tend not to be accented and are less likely to obey the tone-slot rules. Using Compton's assessment of important tones as a guide, I then examined the *lam som* and *khap ngeum* texts to discover that the same syllables are similarly emphasised in these genres, in spite of the non-metrical nature of these genres. This means that the accent is inherent in the texts rather than the musical accompaniment.[33]

Returning now to the *kòòn aan* model, it is clear that the majority of these important tones coincide with the predetermined tone-slots discussed above. The only hemistich final syllables without a tone-slot are those at the ends of lines 1 and 4, and at the end of the first hemistich of line 2 (see Figure 6-5 below).

1	0	0	Ọ	0	Ọ	0	Ọ	0	Ọ	0	0
2	0	0	Ọ	0	Ọ	0	Ọ	0	Ọ	0	0
3	0	0	Ọ	0	Ọ	0	Ọ	0	Ọ	0	0
4	0	0	Ọ	0	Ọ	0	Ọ	0	Ọ	0	0

Figure 6-5: Syllables emphasised in *khap-lam* texts of *kòòn aan* form

The remaining syllables are all *thoo* tone-slots, except for two *êêk* tone-slots; one in line 1, the other at the end of line 3.

Compton's observations indicated that in the non-tone-slot, hemistich-final syllables, certain tones occurred with a higher frequency than others. In *lam siphandon* Compton reported that the male *mohlam*, Sunii preferred the following tones; in line 1 T3, in line 2 T3/T5, in line 4 T2/T3, while Duang Phaeng, the female *mohlam* used T3/T2 in line 1, T2/T3/T5 in line 2 and T3/T2 in line 4 (Compton 1979:188-89). In the corpus examined here, similar results for Duang Phaeng can be seen, with the exception of the tones used at the end of the first hemistich in line 2. Some similarities exist between Sunii's choice of tones and the choices made by Som Sii. In interpreting these results, it must be remembered that Compton's analysis was based upon a larger amount of textual material, therefore a greater amount of variation was possible. The results of a search through the three genres analysed, presented in Table 6.5 below, shows that the placement of tone contours in certain syllables is remarkably consistent across all three genres.

		Line 1	*Line 2*	*Line 4*
Lam Siphandon	*Duang Phaeng*	T2/T3	T2/T6	T2/T3
	Som Sii	T6/T3	T3	T3
Lam Som	*Duang Phaeng*	T3	T2/T1	T2
	Som Sii	T3	T2/T3	T2
Khap Ngeum	*Paeng Thong*	T3/T4	T2	T2/T4
	Acaan Sing	T3	T2	T3/T2

Table 6.5: Common tones at hemistich ends (non-tone-slot syllables)

The consistency of tone contour/tone-slot correspondence in these six performances, lends weight to claims made by *mohlam* and Lao scholars that there is no difference in the structure of sung verses from one genre to another. This was substantiated through several interviews with *mohlam*. For example, Acaan Vanna claimed to have written verses that were performed to genres other than *lam siphandon*, and that moving from one genre to the other presents no problems:

> "Now...*kòòn lam siphandon* right? Well, we can take that and (*lam*) *lam khon savan*, no problem, because it's all from the same literature." (Vanna Keophilom 6/12/1999)[34]

Considering that the majority of verse in *khap-lam* texts is based upon the *kòòn aan* form, this ease of interchangeability of texts between genres is not unexpected. However, if texts can be freely moved from one genre to another what, then, are the defining features of each particular genre? Certainly there are distinguishing musical features, such as those described in part one above, which are immediately apparent; but why then should a skilful *mohlam* like Duang Phaeng, who sings several genres, claim to be unable to perform certain genres such as *lam baan xok* and *khap ngeum*? The answer appears to lie in the degree of familiarity each performer has with the melodic motifs peculiar to each genre. There may also be some regional differences in the themes of the sung texts, but this remains to be fully explored.

The next stage of the analysis is to examine the correspondence between the lexical tones appearing in the *êêk* and *thoo* tone-slots and the pitches to which they are sung.

Tone-Pitch Correspondence in Tone-Slots

The following three tables list the results for the most commonly used tone contour/musical pitch combinations found in the fixed tone-slots in each of the three genres. The figures are listed in hierarchical order with percentages denoting frequency of occurrence of specific pitches within the tone-slot specified.[35] Pitches which occur infrequently in each tone-slot are listed at the bottom of each box without a percentage.

	êêk slot		*thoo* slot	
	T1	T5	T4	T5
Duang Phaeng	g' = 30% e = 27% d = 11% a'	e = 11% d = 4% g' = 2% c a'	e = 28% d = 24% a' = 15% c' = 10%	e = 6% d = 6% c = 3%
Som Sii	e = 41% d = 22% g' = 9% c	c = 13% e = 4% d = 2%	e = 39% d = 30% c = 14% g' = 5%	c = 4% d = 3% e g'

Table 6.6: Tone-slot/pitch correspondence in *lam siphandon*

The results for *lam siphandon* in Table 6.6 above, show that both *mohlam* are consistent in their coordination of tone-pitch combination for T4 in the *thoo* tone-slot where they heavily favour pitches e and d. In all tone-slots Duang Phaeng exploits the upper range, using upper pitches g', a', c' to a greater degree than Som Sii. As noted beforehand, the regularity of the *thoo* tone-slot is largely due to the cadential points falling on the end of line 2, in which the last syllable is a *thoo* tone-slot. In *lam siphandon* there is an overall preference not to add *kham sòòj* syllables to the lines falling on cadential points, allowing the falling tone to match the descending interval to the cadence.

	êêk slot		*thoo* slot	
	T1	T5	T4	T5
Duang Phaeng	d = 45 % a' = 19 % g	e = 8 % g = 6 %	a' = 24 % b = 17 % g = 17 % d	d = 9 % c = 9% e
Som Sii	d = 36 % a' = 24 % g = 13 %	c = 4 % b	g = 22 % a' = 19 % b = 19 % e, b'	c = 8 % d = 6 % b', g

Table 6.7: Tone-slot/pitch correspondence in *lam som*

The figures for *lam som* in Table 6.7 above exhibit similar trends to the figures for *lam siphandon*. Both *mohlam* predominantly use pitches d and a when T1 occupies the *êêk* slot. Som Sii is slightly less consistent than Duang Phaeng as he uses a third pitch g as well. Pitches with T5 in the *êêk* slot are infrequent and no consistent pattern of use is evident. In *lam som*, both *mohlam* use T5 in the *êêk* slot much less frequently than they do in their *lam siphandon* performances. As with *lam siphandon*, both *mohlam* are consistent

in their matching of pitch and tone contour in the *thoo* slot, with roughly equivalent distribution between the same three pitches. Once again T5 appears infrequently, although both *mohlam* are quite consistent in their matching of pitch to this tone contour. The frequent use of pitch b on T4 is a distinguishing feature of *lam som* as no other genre uses a pitch a second above the finalis.

	êêk slot		*thoo* slot	
	T1	T5	T4	T5
Paeng Thong	c = 24% d = 11% e = 9% a, g'	c = 20% d = 6%	d = 47% e = 27% c, a	c = 12% d = 5%
Acaan Sing	c = 30% d = 17% e = 13% a	c = 13%	e = 41% d = 14% c	c = 16% d = 7% a

Table 6.8: Tone-slot/pitch correspondence in *khap ngeum*

The figures for *khap ngeum*, shown in Table 6.8 above, are remarkable for the high degree of consistency in the pitch-tone correspondences employed by both *mohlam*. The limited range of both performers is evident in the limited number of pitches that are employed in the tone-slots. Three pitches, c, d, e dominate both tone-slots. In the *thoo* slot T5 is usually sung to lower pitches than T4, suggesting an element of pitch-tone correspondence. However, the same is not true of the *êêk* slot in which T5 is usually sung to the highest of these three pitches, c. The narrow range of *khap ngeum* means that, in comparison to the southern genres, fewer distinctive patterns of lexical tone-melody relationships emerge.

The next set of tables gives the overall matching between lexical tone and pitch in all three genres. Every occurrence of the tones was counted, and the most frequent correspondences listed for the six tones in the southern genres and five in *khap ngeum*.

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
Duang Phaeng	g' e	c' g' a'	c g'	e g'	e	e c
Som Sii	e d	g' a'	e d	e d	c d	e d

Table 6.9: Overall pitch-tone matching in *lam siphandon*

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
Duang Phaeng	d a'	e a' d'	g a' e	g d a'	d g e	g d a'
Som Sii	d a'	e a' g'	a' e g	g a' e	c g	a' g' e

Table 6.10: Overall pitch-tone matching in *lam som*

In the two southern genres (shown in Table 6.9 and Table 6.10 above), the main pattern that emerges is that the tone contour which begins at the highest relative pitch, T2, is consistently used with the highest melodic pitches of each performance. Similarly, T5, the tone contour with lowest relative pitch, is generally restricted to the lower pitches of each performance. Most tone contours are frequently sung to one of three pitches, which are influenced by the general melodic movement of the musical phrases in which they occur. That is, if a *mohlam* is singing towards the top of their range they do not suddenly shift to the lower part of their range in order to accommodate a low-falling, T5 contour.

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
Paeng Thong	c e d	c e d	c a e	e d c	c e
Ajarn Sing	e c d	c d e	c d e	e c d	c e

Table 6.11: Overall pitch-tone matching in *khap ngeum*

The overall pitch-tone matching for *khap ngeum* is less useful because the restricted range that both *mohlam* use in these performances gives less scope for pitch-tone contrasts to be made. It must be remembered that the figures for overall pitch-tone correspondences presented above do not take into account the unstressed tones that were mentioned earlier in part two. This, in turn, affects any analysis of the effect of adjacent tones upon tone-melody relationships. Until the status of unstressed tones can be accounted for a full description of adjacent tones is likely to complicate matters rather than clarify them. Therefore, these results are a guide only, and cannot be considered as definitive.

Tone Contours Sung to Intervals

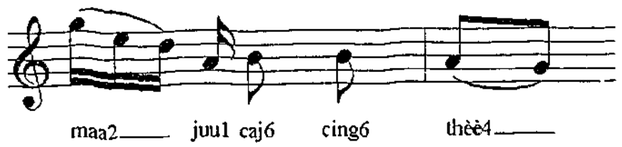
The majority of syllables are sung either to a single pitch, or to an interval in which only one pitch (either the initial or final) is distinct. However, there were also numerous occurrences of contour tones sung to an interval in which both the initial and final tone could be assessed. In these instances, the issue of whether or not the direction of the interval matches that of the tone contour is of interest. In general, it was found that tone contour direction produces a corresponding direction in the melodic line when sung over an interval. A great deal of consistency in the selection of certain tones sung to intervals was also noted across all three genres. It was also noted that the two level tones, T1 and

T6, were occasionally sung to an interval. This interval could be either ascending or descending, with little indication as to what factors determine the direction of movement. Adjacent tone contours did not appear to have any direct or consistent affect upon these intervals. The following three tables show the most commonly occurring intervals and the direction of the interval for each genre.

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
Duang Phaeng	e-g' ⇑	a'-g' ⇓ d-c ⇓	e-g' ⇑ e-a' ⇑	d-c ⇓ g'-e ⇓	e-g' ⇑ c-d ⇑	c-g' ⇑ a-g ⇓
Som Sii	e-g' ⇑ e-d ⇓	a'-d ⇓ e-c ⇓	e-g' ⇑ d-e ⇑	d-a ⇓ e-c ⇓	c-d ⇑	d-e ⇑ e-a ⇓

Table 6.12: Common tone contour-intervals in *lam siphandon*

In *lam siphandon*, both *mohlam* show virtually the same trends in the direction of the movement which predominantly matches the direction of the tone contour. It is only with the two tones which do not have a contour, mid-level tone T1 and low-level tone T6, where the direction of movement is unstable. High-falling T2, low-rising T3 and mid-falling T4 tone contours all consistently match the direction of the interval to which they are sung (see Example 6-24 below).



Example 6-24: Coordinated melismas to high-falling T2, and mid-falling T4, tone contours in *lam siphandon* (Duang Phaeng, transcription 1, line 1.27)

However, the low-falling T5 tone contour is consistently sung to an ascending interval by both Duang Phaeng and Som Sii. In the process of interpreting these results, the differences of tonal system between the Champassak dialect and the Vientiane dialect are of utmost importance; the falling contour of T2 in Champassak Lao is reflected in the descending interval to which this tone is sung, as shown in Table 6.12 and Example 6-24 above.

The types of intervals employed exhibit more variation than does the direction of the interval. In keeping with the overall interval patterns throughout the verses, both *mohlam* use small intervals, mostly minor thirds and seconds, although there is a single occurrence of a descending fifth by Som Sii. Duang Phaeng is the more consistent of the two *mohlam*, using minor thirds and seconds in both directions, whereas Som Sii's patterns

appear to be more random. Both *mohlam* sing the ascending interval on tone contour T3 using the same degrees of the scale, g-a'. This also occurs in relation to the most common interval for T5, but this is less significant because T5 is a level tone.

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6
Duang Phaeng	d-e ⇑ g-e ⇓	e-d ⇓ a'-g ⇓	g-a' ⇑	b-a ⇓ g-e ⇓	a'-b' ⇑	g-a' ⇑ d-e ⇑ b'-a ⇓
Som Sii	g-b' ⇑ a'-b' ⇑	e-d ⇓	g-a' ⇑ d-e ⇑	b-a ⇓	g-b' ⇑	d-e ⇑ e-d ⇓

Table 6.13: Common tone contour-intervals in *lam som*

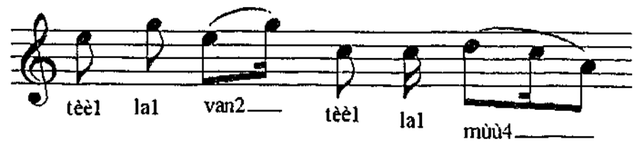
Similar trends are evident in *lam som* with T2, T3, and T4 all showing strong correspondence between the tone contour and interval direction. Once again T1 and T6 are the least stable, being sung to both ascending and descending intervals. Also noticeable is that the low-falling contour T5 is consistently sung to ascending intervals in both genres. The reasons for this are uncertain, and require a closer assessment of where they occur within the poetic line.

The matching of tone contour and intervals is much more precise in *khap ngeum* than in the southern genres. Both *mohlam* employ the same intervals based upon the same degrees of the *ñaaw* scale. Seconds, minor thirds, and fourths are the predominant intervals, with minor thirds used only with descending intervals (see Table 6.14).

	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5
Paeng Thong	c-a ⇓ d-a ⇓	c-d ⇑ d-e ⇑	a-d ⇑ c-a ⇓	d-a ⇓ e-d ⇓	c-a ⇓
Acaan Sing	c-e ⇑ d-e ⇑	d-e ⇑ c-d ⇑	c-d ⇑ c-a ⇓	e-d ⇓ d-c ⇓	c-a ⇓ d-c ⇓

Table 6.14: Common tone contour-intervals in *khap ngeum*

In keeping with the southern genres, the tones with rising and falling contours, T2, T3 and T4 consistently occur with a corresponding interval (see Example 6-25 below).



Example 6-25: Coordinated melismas to high-rising T2, and high-falling T4, tone contours in *khap ngeum* (Paeng Thong, line 5.23)

However, in *khap ngeum* both *mohlam* occasionally use a descending interval with low-rising tone T3. Most significantly, the high-rising contour of T2 in the Vientiane dialect is realised with a corresponding ascending interval in *khap ngeum*. In the southern genres this contour was sung to descending interval, mirroring the falling contour of T2 in Champassak Lao (compare T2 in Example 6-24 with T2 in Example 6-25). There is also consistency with low-falling tone T5, which, unlike the southern genres, is always sung to a descending interval. However, the two *mohlam* differ in the interval direction used with high-level tone T1. Paeng Thong prefers descending intervals while Acaan Sing uses ascending intervals.

Conclusions to Part Two

Previous studies have observed that lexical tones and melody do not necessarily exhibit one hundred percent correspondence, even in song types where the melody is fixed and tone/pitch correspondence is high (cf. List 1961; Purnell 1992; Yung 1983a). The above analysis has shown that there are significant correspondences between melody and lexical tone in *khap-lam* genres from which the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The matching of lexical tone and melody is relative, not absolute.
2. Male and female *mohlam* consistently use the same tone contours in the *êêk* and *thoo* tone-slots in all genres.
3. *Mohlam* show definite preferences for specific tone contours on all accented syllables in *kòòn aan*. This suggests the existence of a conventionalised tonal structure, in addition to the fixed tone-slots.
4. Lexical tones with contours beginning or ending on a relatively high pitch (e.g. T2, T4) most commonly occur on the higher melodic pitches of the performance.
5. On melismatic syllables, the direction of a tone contour (i.e. falling, rising) is normally mirrored in the direction of the melisma.
6. Lexical tones with level contours may be sung to melismas, in which case the direction of the interval is not consistent.
7. Accented syllables appear to occupy a more prominent role in the realisation of melody than non-accented ones. However, in order fully to appreciate the significance of the accented/un-accented contrast, more research into the phenomenon of de-emphasised tones is required.

The question of exactly how *mohlam* produce the melody from the text remains unresolved for the time being. The information presented in this chapter indicates that a number of elements are involved in the realisation of melody, including: poetic structure, genre-specific motifs, accented tones (i.e. those syllables which are emphasised), and individual style. In order to discover how these elements interact, a future study will need to employ a detailed acoustic analysis (using spectrum analysis) of the vocal melody rather than relying upon transcription by ear alone. The same text spoken by the same performer would serve as an excellent basis for comparison.

The overall conclusion for this chapter is that close relationships exist between melodic and textual structures in Lao *khap-lam* vocal music; relationships which are crucial to classifying these genres as part of the broad *khap-lam* tradition. Although differences in textual and musical structures between the two regional traditions are readily apparent, the analysis shows that they are all based upon a common sound patterning system which is based upon a traditional poetic form. *Mohlam* in both regional traditions have evolved a similar set of tone-text strategies which contribute to the melodic line that they sing, giving Lao *khap-lam* vocal music traditions their distinct character.

Other vocal music traditions in Laos, such as those of the Hmong (Uchida and Catlin 1998; Catlin 1997), and Lue undoubtedly exhibit close relationships between their melodic and textual structures. However, it is unlikely that they would possess the same set of relationships identified here because they are not based upon Lao *kòòn aan* poetry. Although minority Tai groups in Laos use some poetic structures that are found in traditional Lao literature, Koret (1994a) has shown that *kòòn aan* is unique to lowland Lao culture. Vocal music based upon poetic structures is another feature of the Lao *khap-lam* tradition that has parallels throughout Southeast Asia. A similar form of poetry to *kòòn aan* is found in the Khmer *ayai* tradition (Sam-Ang Sam, Roongruang et.al.1998), while Balinese *tembang* (Harnish 1998) and Javanese *macapat* (Kartomi 1973) are based upon poetic stanzas of four-lines (see appendix 4).

In the following chapter, the composition of texts and their relationship to the performance context is discussed and analysed.

[1] I managed to record one performance at Som Sii's house in Pakse (2/12/99) which attracted around twenty villagers and thereby creating something of a performance event context.

[2] This shareware program is called *Transcribe!*, and is available through the internet (www.demon.seventhstring.co.uk). This program enables the transcriber to manipulate recorded music in a number of ways. A piece of music may be tuned to any reference pitch desired; a process which also alter pitch and tempo. However, once the piece is tuned, the program allows further alteration of speed without affecting pitch. My method was to tune each sample to my own *khaen*, enabling me to better hear the particular sonorities being employed by the players in the recordings. Vocal melodies were checked against my own voice as well as *khaen* and guitar.

[3] The concept of level shift was developed by Kolinski (1965). He used the following formula to determine the degree of level shift in a given piece:

Level Shift = $\frac{100\,(a-b)}{c}$ where a = the interval (in semitones) between the lowest and final tone, b = interval between initial and lowest tones, c = range of the song. The result is expressed in degrees (usually a minus figure).

[4] Melodic direction change = $\frac{100\,x}{y}$ % where x = the number of direction changes, y = the total number of tones in the song (Kartomi 1973:181).

Adjacent Tone Repetition = $\frac{100\,z}{y}$ % where z = the number of adjacent repeated tones, y = the total number of tones in the song (Kartomi 1973:181).

[5] This is the tone normally marked as 'low-level' in most English-Lao texts (cf. Kerr 1992).

[6] This is based upon analyses by Hoonchamlong (1984) and Compton (1979:185), although Compton's contour names are preferred here.

[7] Note that T here stands for (lexical) tone, and the following number denotes the contour type.

[8] See Appendix 1 for an explanation of consonant classes.

[9] Note that in Lao orthography final stop consonants are written as voiced ດ, ບ /d, b/ but realised as unvoiced as if spelled ຕ, ປ /t, p/.

[10] Koret says that when checking a text, a Lao reader will read the relevant section aloud several times, in order to ascertain the correct tone (Koret 2000:226)

[11] Since the advent of printing and analytical scholarship the texts of traditional Lao literature have become increasingly fixed.

[12] This is probably the reason why, in many *khap-lam* genres, females used to speak a brief *phañaa* reply to the male's sung round. As literacy has increased women have been able to expand their role.

[13] The original text reads: ສິ່ງສຳຄັນທີ່ສຸດຈະຕ້ອງເອົາໃຈໃສ່ຄຳສຳພັດນອກໃຫ້ສອດສານລະຫວ່າງວັກໜຶ່ງ, ສອງ, ສາມ, ແລະສີ່

[14] The accompaniment must be metrical, however, and any player faltering in their rhythm is open to criticism from *mohlam* and listener alike.

[15] Interviews with these performers took place on the following dates: Suun Siimanta (Suun Siimanta 22/6/1999-23/6/1999; Suun Siimanta 11/11/1999), Ki Kong (Ki Kong 26/6/1999), Kham Sing (Kham Sing 23/5/1999).

[16] Cipher notation is primarily used for Lao classical music with its seven tone roughly equidistant tuning. Teachers at the NSMD use cipher notation for the *khaen* and *sòò* as well.

[17] This genre is now virtually extinct in northeast Thailand but is performed by southern Lao singers as a way to maintain an audience's interest. In Laos this genre is normally called *lam khuu lam kòòn* (ລຳຄູ່ລຳຫາຍ).

[18] These figures may not be readily comparable as I do not know the method Miller used to calculate the rate of delivery. However, there is little doubt that the Lao genres are appreciably slower than Isan genres.

[19] The merits and pitfalls of Thai influence are continually being debated in Lao society today (e.g. Hongthong 28/1/2001).

[20] All musical and textual transcriptions in chapters 6 and 7 are made by Adam Chapman unless otherwise noted.

[21] Performances of two female *mohlam*, Thong Bang and Nuu Phaj were used for comparison.

[22] A *mohkhaen* might use *ñaj* and *nòòj* to refer to the male/female tessituras, however.

[23] *Mohlam* work closely with their *khaen* accompanists in order to select instruments which suit their vocal range.

[24] This is true for performers of the genres as well.

[25] Not having had the opportunity to hear Sunii perform I have based this observation upon a single commercially available recording of Sunii and Duang Phaeng performing *lam som*. LS Promotion ຂັບໂສມ ຊຸດ ຄລຍອ້າຍກ້ຽມໆ

[26] Miller's numbering of tones here could be confusing because he is not referring to the degrees of the five-tone Lao scale but how it relates to a seven tone octave. Thus, in the basic *ñaaw* scale, in which a is the finalis, he is referring to notes g (fifth), d (seventh), and e (minor third).

[27] Som (20/1/1999) and Duang Phaeng (22/11/1999) both used the phrase: ຫ້ານຂອງມັນໄປຕາມພາສາ

[28] In Lao this is called *lam peen* (ລຳເພີນ).

[29] The first digit refers to the transcription number; the second refers to the line number.

[30] Note that the text transcription in appendix 3 contain the notes which relate the accompanying *khaen* mode.

[31] *lam siphandon* performance also features poetry not composed in *kòòn aan* form. Other poetic forms are discussed further in chapter 7. No tone-pitch analysis of non-*kòòn aan* forms is presented here because my field recordings were not clear enough to permit accurate transcription.

[32] The term 'marked' denotes speech forms which operate at a different level from everyday, 'unmarked' language. Examples of marked speech include, formal speeches, use of royal vocabulary, polite language, and song texts.

[33] This relates to performer's concepts of *cangva* 'rhythm', which is conceptualised on the basis of text. See chapter 7 for more detail.

[34] Vanna's actual words in Lao are: ກອນລຳສີພັນຄອນຕົ້ນ ມັນຈຶ່ງເອົາໄປລຳຄອນສະຫວັນກະໄດ້ ບໍ່ມີບັນຫາ ເພາະວ່າວັນນະຄະຕີຢູ່ດຽວກັນ ອັນດຽວກັນ

[35] Percentages were determined by counting up the total number of occurrences of each tone slot and using that as the figure to derive the percentages of the different notes occurring in the tone slot.

Chapter 7

TEXT IN PERFORMANCE: STRUCTURES, THEMES, AND CONTEXT

This chapter explores three fundamental aspects of *khap-lam* texts in performance: 1) the relationships between poetic structures and creativity; 2) extemporaneous composition of texts; and 3) repertory and its relationship to performance context. Its aim is not to analyse a selected number of texts as Carol Compton (1979) did, but to instead provide the reader with an overall insight into the creativity and repertoire of Lao *khap-lam* texts. An important part of this discussion is the presentation of a number of indigenous concepts of textual structures, compositional methods, and thematic conventions. This culture-emerging terminology is important to our understanding of how performers conceptualise the poetic structures of *khap-lam* texts. It also highlights the similarities and differences between the two regional traditions of *lam siphandon* and *khap ngeum*. The chapter concludes with a number of textual examples to illustrate some of the different themes and compositional methods that *mohlam* employ during a performance.

Structure, Convention, and Creativity in *khap-lam* Texts

Lao poetic structures are based upon conventions which *mohlam* manipulate when they compose texts. These conventions, in combination with numerous thematic formulae, form the "tools whose creative use depends upon the skill of individual composers" (Koret 2000:215). A *mohlam* performs a text either by repeating verses that have been committed to memory or by extemporaneously composing them from his/her store of learned poems (see the section on repertory below). Conditioned to oral performance and Lao poetic conventions, audiences appreciate a *mohlam* who shows particular flair and skill in his/her use of poetic language. Performances are usually judged as either *muan* 'fun, entertaining', or *bòò muan* 'not fun, not entertaining', on the basis of the *mohlam's* ability skilfully to adapt poetic conventions to fit the requirements of the performance.[1] This is what I call 'the *muan* factor', by which I mean the degree of mastery that a *mohlam* has over the conventions of poetic composition. If they lack the *muan* factor, he/she cannot hope to have a successful career.

Thus, a performer's creativity is not judged in terms of large-scale originality, but by his/her creative skill in using the numerous available poetic conventions. These include surface structures, such as various rhyming patterns (as explained below), parallel structures, and thematic devices. Audiences are not particularly concerned with the overall plot of the story that is being told, because it normally follows a conventional pattern in which the outcome is already known (for example, a courting scene will usually end with the couple parting, their love unresolved). However, the *mohlam* may choose to alter aspects of the plot by using or avoiding certain formulaic plot devices, thereby playing with the expectations of the audience (cf. Koret 2000:213). It is not the story's destination that is important, but the path that is taken to get there. Koret's comments on the oral performance of Lao literature are equally relevant to Lao *khap-lam*:

> Plot in Lao literature (with a few exceptions) is comparable to the prompting device in Karaoke videos (for example, the shading in of song lyrics and suggestive visuals) which help singers in their performance of a song, but are not to be mistaken for the song itself. What is important in Karaoke is the performance of the man with the microphone, whereas, in Lao literature, similarly, the essence of a work lies not in the plot of a story, but in its telling. (Koret 2000:213-124)

In *khap-lam* performance, the *mohlam*, is the "man with the microphone"; it is his or her individual style of delivering the sung text that is important. Originality in *khap-lam* textual composition is measured by the performer's skill in manipulating sound structures, thematic devices, stock phrases, and his/her ability to sing in a way that is pleasing to the ear. However, unlike traditional literature, the text that a *mohlam* delivers has immediately to respond to the changing demands of the opposing *mohlam* and the audience. Much of the performance is a kind of verbal jousting match between the sexes, in which *mohlam* pit their wits, knowledge and compositional ability against one another (these aspects are detailed in the following section). For example, the opposing *mohlam* may introduce a particular topic, or else the audience and/or sponsor might request the *mohlam* to address a particular theme or story. It is likely that extemporaneous composition would have developed in response to these kinds of demands. Thus, the telling of the story is especially important in *khap-lam* texts because the poems tend to be more individualised, and the most favoured performers are those who possess the ability to compose entertaining texts as they sing.

Traditional Lao literature has two broad facets of creativity, composition and transcription (Koret 2000:212), both of which have parallels in *khap-lam* texts.

Compositional creative processes are found in the manipulation of speech sounds, themes, formula (stock phrases), and parallelism. Sound conventions are particularly important in *khap-lam* because they indicate to the listeners that they are listening to poetry, as opposed to everyday speech. Whenever traditional Lao literature was copied from an old palm leaf manuscript to a new one, the transcriber was able to alter the manuscript, correcting errors and lengthening or shortening certain scenes in order to improve the story or its telling. A transcription-like process occurs in the performance of *khap-lam* texts as skilful *mohlam* modify memorised verses to suit the demands of the context, audience and sponsor.

The following section describes the poetic surface structures that *mohlam* must utilise skilfully if they are to perform with the *muan* factor.

Surface Structures: Sila's Observer-Imposed Taxonomy

In the process of creating their texts, *mohlam* employ a number of formal poetic devices which allow listeners to identify the text as poetry. These include placement of tones within the lines of *kòòn aan* poetry (as discussed in chapter 6) and a number of rhyming devices. Lao scholar Maha Sila Viravong, the pioneer of analytical scholarship of Lao literature, was the first formally to identify and name these devices (1935; 1961). Compton, in her 1979 analysis of a *lam siphandon* text, and Miller in his study of Lao music in northeast Thailand (1985a:105-105) also used Sila's terminology and rules to describe the structures of *khap-lam* texts. Koret calls structures of sound manipulation (tone patters, assonance, alliteration etc.) a "fundamental aspect of Lao creativity" (2000:221). In this section, each formal rhyming type is identified and illustrated, using examples from the six transcriptions contained in appendices 2 and 3. We begin by using Sila's terminology, but then move to indigenous terms used by performers.

According to Sila's model, rhyming structures in Lao poetry are divided into two main categories: internal rhyme, *samphat naj* (ສຳຜັດໃນ), and external rhyme, *samphat nòòk* (ສຳຜັດນອກ). The following types of rhyme are categorised as internal rhyme, *samphat naj*, a term indicating that the rhymes occur within a single line of verse:

1. Assonance or Vowel Rhyme, *samphat sala* (ສຳຜັດສະລະ)

   a) Paired-Word Rhyme, *samphat thiam khuu* (ສຳຜັດຫຽມຄູ): This denotes consecutive occurrences of the same vowel sound. The example is from

transcription 3, line (3.9):

ຄຳ ເຮີຍ ຕອນ ນັ້ນ ນ້ອງ ຈາກ **ອ້າຍ** **ໄປ** ຢູ່ ແດນ ໄກ
kham2eej6 tòòn6 nan4 nòòng4 caak5 **aaj4** **paj6** juu1 dèèn6 kaj6
then I was apart from you, and you went to a far off place

b) Yoked-Word Rhyme, *samphat thiam èèk* (ສຳຜັດຫຽມແອກ): This means two or more occurrences of the same vowel, but with a non-rhyming syllable between them. In the example from transcription 6, line (6.7) below, it occurs in conjunction with paired-word rhyme (between *vaj* and *haj*):

ໂຄງ ການ ສາທາລະ ນະ ສຸກ ເຜີ່ນ ຂໍ ໄວ້ **ໃຫ້** ເຮົາ **ໄດ້** ດອກ
khoong2 kaan3saa3taa2la1na 1suk2 pheen1 khòò3 vaj4 **haj5** haw2 **daj4** dòòk5
a public health project they arranged for us

2. Alliteration or Consonant Rhyme, *samphat phañansana* (ສຳຜັດພະຍັນຊະນະ)

   a) Continuous Consonant Rhyme, *samphat lian aksòòn* (ສຳຜັດລຽນອັກສອນ): This rhyme involves consecutive occurrences of the same consonant. The example, showing two sets of this rhyme, is taken from transcription 2, line (2.8):

ຄົນ ສັ່ນ ເຊັ້ນ ສຸມ ຝີ ປ່ຶ ໄຟ ຮວມ ເຊົ້າ
khon2 **san1** **sên2** **sum3** **fiing3** **fang1** **faj2** haam2 saw4
people shiver and spend the morning crowded around the fire

   b) Separated Consonant Rhyme, *samphat khan aksòòn* (ສຳຜັດຂັ້ນອັກສອນ): This is the same as yoked-word rhyme, except that the repeated form is a consonant rather than a vowel. This example is from transcription 6, line (6.21), and contains three occurrences of the same consonant:

ໃຫ້ ເອົາ ກິນ ນົມ **ຕູ້** ຂອງ **ຕົນ** ສິ້ນ ຕະຫຼອດ
haj5 aw3 kin3 nom2 **tuu4** khòòng3 **ton3** sin5 **ta2**lòòt5
have (your baby) feed only on your own breast milk

The second major category of rhyming structures is external rhyme, *samphat nòòk*, in which the final syllable of one poetic line rhymes with the second, third or fourth syllable of the following line. Like internal rhyme, both vowel and consonant sounds are employed to create rhyming structures, although external vowel rhyme is more common. This structure typifies verses composed in *kaap* (or *kòòn fuang*, see below) form, a structure in which there are no fixed tone-slots. Compton's research (1979:141) indicated that external rhyme is infrequent in *kòòn aan* verses in comparison to verses composed in *kaap*. When external rhyme is used in *kòòn aan* verse, the rhymes occur within the pair of

lines that constitute a single musical unit (see chapter 6). Lines (4.5) and (4.6) from transcription 4, exemplify external rhyme:

ບາດ ວ່າ ໄດ້ ຮ່ວມ ຂ້າງ ຊູ້ ເກົ່າ ພໍ ກາຍ ໜີ
baat5 vaa1 daj4 huam1 khaang5 suu4 kaw1 phòò2 kaaj6 **nii3**
when we were together my old lover ran away

ປະ ສົມ **ສີ** ໜໍ ລຳ ບອກ ຮໍ່າ ໄຫ້ ບໍ່ ມີ ແລ້ວ
pa2 Som3 **Sii3** mòò3 lam2 bòòk5 ham1 haj5 bòò1 mii lèèw4
abandoning me (mohlam Som Sii) now I lament that I no longer have you

Example 7-1: External rhyme in *kòòn aan* (transcription 4, lines 4.5 and 4.6)

As many of the examples above clearly show, more than one of these structures is usually employed in a single line (see also Miller 1985a:105). By combining several different rhyming structures, the *mohlam* makes the poetry more interesting to the listeners, thus enhancing the *muan* factor (cf. Thongkham 1998:458). A prominent feature of rhyme in Lao poetry, whether in traditional literature or in *khap-lam* texts, is the highly developed use of assonance and alliteration, as can be seen in all of the above examples. Although simple rhymes of vowels and final consonant combinations (e.g. *haat* ຫາດ 'beach' with *taat* ຕາດ 'waterfall') are apparently uncommon in Lao literature (Koret 2000:221), they occur frequently in *khap-lam* texts (cf. Compton 1979:155).

In *khap-lam* performance it is more important for *mohlam* to maintain consistent rhyming patterns throughout his/her text than precisely to place tones on predetermined syllables (Pheuiphanh: personal communication, 12/6/01). Compton (1979:158) has noted that as *mohlam* develop their repertoire, they establish a number of preferred rhymes, or "rhymed collocations", which they repeatedly use in particular tone-slots of *kòòn aan* structure. For example, the word *lèèw* (ແລ້ວ) 'to finish' is often rhymed with *nèèw* (ແນວ) 'way, sort, kind', or *kèèw* (ແກ້ວ) 'glass, jewel, precious'. These are used in conjunction with a number of fixed and partially-fixed stock phrases or formulae.

Surface Structures: Indigenous Taxonomy

Although the above categories were first described and named by a Lao scholar, they are nonetheless an observer-imposed taxonomy; a taxonomy that was not used by any of the *mohlam* with whom I worked in Laos. During interviews and conversations, not one *mohlam* made specific references to Sila's categories of internal or external rhyme, nor did

they explicitly articulate ideas on the correct placement of tones within a line. Furthermore, they ignored the terms *kòòn ñeen* (ກອນເຢັ້ນ) and *kòòn tat* (ກອນຕັ໊ດ),[2] described by Sila (1961:16-18) as the *lam* variants of *kòòn aan* and *kaap* forms. Although Compton based her discussion on these two terms in her 1979 study of *lam siphandon*, neither Duang Phaeng nor Sunii, whose texts she analysed, used these terms on the occasions I spoke with them. Through numerous interviews, the existence of a culture-emerging taxonomy/theory became apparent. This culture-emerging taxonomy does not often explicitly refer to types of rhyme and the positioning of tones within the verse; instead it reflects an implicit, intuitive knowledge gained from lifelong exposure to the medium.

This discussion focuses upon the *lam siphandon* tradition because the most extensive explanation I obtained from *mohlam* pertains to a poetic form which is used sparingly in *khap ngeum* texts. However, many of the observations made here are pertinent to the broader *khap-lam* tradition; and remarks made by *mohlam* from the *khap ngeum* tradition are included where relevant. Of the *mohlam* from the *lam siphandon* tradition, Duang Phaeng, Vanna, and Sunii provided the greatest insights into the ways that performers conceptualise poetic structures. The descriptions of the terms presented below, were gained through several interviews with each of these *mohlam* in Pakse during 1999.[3]

The following terms are the ones most commonly used by *mohlam* when discussing aspects of textual composition:

1. *kòòn* (ກອນ): This is a generic term which *mohlam* apply to any type of verse they compose and sing. Unlike scholars of Lao literature and *khap-lam*, *mohlam* do not use the terms *kòòn aan* and *kaap* to differentiate the two main poetic structures that they use. Instead, all verse structures are labelled *kòòn*, 'verse', and differentiated according to the thematic and structural content of each verse as explained below. The terms *kòòn* and *lam* are interchangeable when referring to thematic content. For example, the courting section of a performance can be referred to as either *lam kiaw* or *kòòn kiaw*. The former was favoured by the *mohlam* with whom I worked, while the latter appears in Miller's discussion of repertory in northeast Thailand (1985a:47-48). The following two structural categories, however, are only ever referred to as a type of *kòòn*, never as *lam*.

   Few *mohlam* make explicit reference to *kòòn aan* or *kòòn ñeen*, but simply refer to it as *kòòn*, or *kòòn thamadaa*, (ກອນທຳມະດາ) 'regular verse', if they are distinguishing it

from *kòòn fùang* (see below). This is because the majority of *khap-lam* texts, with exception of *kòòn fùang*, are composed using the one poetic form (based on *kòòn aan*); thus, there is little need to use a specific label. Instead of conceptualising *kòòn aan* in terms of tone-slots, *mohlam* refer to the high and low pitched sounds of the language, as expressed by Acaan Som below:

> It follows the language, follows the language. A person's spoken language has low pitched sounds, it has high pitched sounds and so on. It is clear from that, that it follows the language, it follows the content [i.e. the words of the text]. (Som Pathamphii 20/1/1999)[4]

The fact that Sila's *kòòn aan* structures are not articulated by *mohlam* provides further evidence that the knowledge of poetic structures is gained through oral transmission and not from some kind of prescriptive textbook.

2. *kòòn khùa* (ກອນເຄືອ): This term is used by Duang Phaeng to describe consecutive occurrences of the same initial consonant within a single line. It is exactly the same as the continuous consonant rhyme structure described above. The meaning of *khùa* is 'vine' or 'lineage'. This structure can be employed in any *kòòn aan* or *kòòn fùang* (see below) verse structure. When a string of consecutive consonants is used, the performer is primarily concerned with emphasising the sound patterns of each line, meaning is secondary (Koret 2000:221).

3. *kòòn fùang* (ກອນເຟືອງ) 'segmented verse'. According to Duang Phaeng, this is the verse structure used in *fòòn* (dance) poetry for *lam siphandon*; a similar structure is used for the opening and closing verses of each *lam siphandon* round (see syllabic structures below). It is called *kòòn fùang* because a rhyme links the second *fùang*, or hemistich, of one line with the first *fùang* of the next line.[5] Figure 7-1 below, shows *kòòn fùang* structure with the external rhyme falling on the fifth syllable of the following hemistich. The rhymed syllables are in bold and linked by a line.

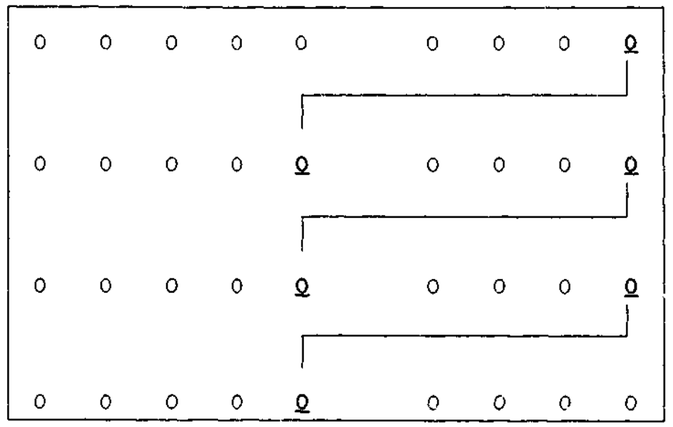


Figure 7-1: External rhyme structure in *kòòn fùang*

Scholars have referred to this poetic structure by means of applying Sila's categories of *kaap* (Thongkham 1998) and *tat* (Compton 1979). This is because of the structural similarities it has with the works of traditional Lao literature that are composed in *kaap* form, most notably *puu sòòn laan*, (ປູ່ສອນຫຼານ) 'grandfather teaches the children' (Thongkham 1998:464).[6] Duang Phaeng (22/11/1999), however, claims that the poetry is not *kaap* or *tat* precisely because it is different, having more flexibility in the number of syllables that can be used in each line. Furthermore, *kòòn fùang* requires that each rhymed pair continually alters the tone contour to ensure movement in the melodic line. Regular *kaap* and *tat* are suitable for reading but not for *lam*, because the rhyming constituents and tone contours are too regular, depriving the verse of the rhythmic and melodic characteristics that please audiences. Duang Phaeng says that if a *lam* poem were to be composed in strict *kaap* or *tat* form, it would be *bòò muan*, 'not fun, not entertaining', because of this regularity. When singing in *kòòn fùang* form, Duang Phaeng noted that several *cangva*, 'rhythms', were available to *mohlam*. Two of these *cangva*, as they were explained to me by Duang Phaeng, appear below:

a) *Kòòn kin haa* (ກອນກິນຫ້າ) 'consume five (syllables)', is also known as *kaa tên kòòn*, (ກາເຕັ້ນກ້ອນ) 'a crow jumps along rocks'. This structure is a variation of external rhyme, in which the last word of one hemistich, or *fùang*, has a vowel rhyme with the fifth syllable of the following *fùang* (as in Figure 7-1 above). That is, there are four intervening syllables between the rhymed elements. This structure is depicted in Example 7-2 below, a verse composed by Duang Phaeng (Thongkham 1998:343). Note that Duang Phaeng's structures of continually

altering rhyming vowel constituents (shown in bold) and variation of tones are prominent:

ຂ້ອຍ ຟ້ອນ ຜູ ດຽວ ດອກ ເດີ ພໍ່ **ໃຫຍ່**
khòòj5 fòòn5 phuu5 diaw6 dòòk5 dee6 phòò1 **ñaj1**
I'll dance alone

ฟ้อม ไป ถาม ซุ้ **ไฮ่** บ่ำ ห้าอ ໜໍ **ລໍ**ຳ
fòòn4 paj6 thaam3 sùù4 **khaj1** nam2 thaaw4 mòò3**lam2**
I'll dance and ask to buy eggs from you Mr. mohlam

อ่า เจ๊า ล้อง เป๊ก **ดำ** แม่น บ่ แล้อ **ท่าม**
vaa1 caw4 liang4 pêt2 **dam6** mèèn1 bòò1 lèèw4 **thaan1**
you say you raise black ducks, isn't that right?

อ่า เจ๊า มี ไฮ่ **ท่าม** เซื่อง ไอ้ ทาง ใน
vaa1 caw4 mii2 khaj1 **haan1** sùang1 vaj4 thaang2 naj2
you say you've goose eggs, stored away inside

Example 7-2: *Kaa tên kòòn* structure in *lam siphandon*

b) *kòòn kin sòòng* (กอนกินสองๆ) 'consume two (syllables)': Also known as *nam faat khaj* (น้ำฟาดไค้) 'water whips against *khaj* (a type of aquatic plant)', or *nam tòòng khaj* (น้ำต้องไค้). The only difference between these latter two names is a change of verb; *tòòng* 'to strike' becomes *faat* 'to whip, lash', to collide' (Thongkham 1998:97-98). This structure follows the same pattern as *kòòn kin haa* above, except that the external rhyme falls after one intervening syllable (not counting the short syllable /tha-/). Note also that the example below (provided by Duang Phaeng 22/11/99) contains extensive continuous consonant rhyme, *kòòn khùa*:

แมม เบิ่ง น้ำ ฟาด ต้อง ติ ตึก โตน **ผา**
nèèm2 beeng1 nam4 faat4 tòòng4 tii6 tok2 toon6 phaa3
look at the water strike and fall from the cliff

ทัง ทะลา ไหล เฒ่ย ลอย ล่ง ผืน
thang2 tha1laa2 laj3 lùa3 lòòj2 long2 phùùn4
the whole stream floats down to the earth

Example 7-3: *Nam faat khaj* structure in *lam siphandon*

Duang Phaeng also named *kòòn kin saam*, (กอนกินสาม) 'consume three (syllables)', otherwise known as, *saang thiam mèè*, (ช้างหอมแม่) 'the elephant carries mother', which has the same structure as the examples above, but with two intervening syllables. In the

process of reviewing interview transcripts, several other textual *cangva* names emerged: *fòòng faat fang* (ฟองฟาดฝั่ง) 'the wave strikes the river bank', *nok khaw thòòng* (นกเขาทอง) 'golden dove', *nam toon taat* (น้ำโตนตาด) 'water cascades down the waterfall', but I have no details on their specific structures.

Duang Phaeng says that the important aspect of *kòòn fuang* composition is to vary both the vowel and tone of the rhyming elements with minimum repetition. The continuous change of vowel sounds and tone contours provides rhythmic and melodic characteristics to the melodic line, giving it the *muan* factor (cf. chapter 6, part two). However, if a *mohlam* makes rhymes using the same vowels and tone contours, his/her poetry is generally considered *bòò muan*, and is said to be composed in *cangva kaang* (จังหวะกาง) 'middle rhythm',[7] as opposed to *cangva kaa tên kòòn* or *cangva saang thiam mèè*.

> ...they choose [their favourite performers] you know, the lis. ners. If you use *cangva kaang* it's not enjoyable. Even if it is somewhat enjoyable, it has no rhythm..., they'll say it has no low or high pitched elements. Do you see? *cangva kaa tên kòòn* and *cangva saang thiam mèè* are like this, *cangva kaa tên kòòn* means that it alternates..., it alternates the initial and final elements. (Duang Phaeng Hanmani 22/11/1999)[8]

Discrepancies in Terminology

My investigations reveal that some of these culture-emerging terms have overlapping uses. For example, Thongkham describes the terms *kòòn kin haa*, *kòòn kin sòòng*, and *kòòn kin saam*, (กอนกินสาม) 'consume three syllables', as categories of consecutive consonant rhyme (i.e. what Duang Phaeng refers to as *kòòn khùa*). In this case, five consecutive consonants would be *kòòn kin haa*, and so forth (Thongkham 1998:257-458). The following line is described as *kòòn kin hok* (กอนกินห้า) 'consume six', although I count seven syllables beginning with the consonant phoneme /t-/. Thus, like *kòòn fùang*, the first syllable is not included in the count because it is the consonant/syllable that 'consumes' the following six (remember also, that the linking particle *kòò* is not counted either).

ตาอ เตีย ติ้น ตาน ก๋ำ ตาย เต้ย ต่ำ
taaw6 teej6 ton4 taan6 kòò6 taaj6 tia4 tam1
the pandanus and sugar palms have died back to stumps

Example 7-4: *Kòòn khùa* or continuous consonant rhyme

it therefore appears that two parallel definitions of *kòòn kin haa* and *kòòn kin sòòng* exist. The first concerns *kòòn khùa*, and counts the number of consecutive syllables with the same initial consonant, not including the first occurrence of the consonant. The second relates to *kòòn fùang*; it counts the number of intervening, or 'consumed', syllables between the two rhymed elements, including the final rhyme. These two methods of producing *kòòn kin haa* etc. are not restricted to *kòòn fùang*, but are also used in relation to structures in regular *kòòn aan* verse; however, *kaa tên kòòn* etc. with their long sequences of alternating rhymes and tone contours are restricted to *kòòn fùang*.

An aspect of these terms that requires further investigation is their dual application to textual structures and *khaen* improvisations. In their respective treatises, both Kavin (1997:35) and Thongkham (1998:63) make passing mention of two *laaj khaen* (ลายแคน) '*khaen* modes/improvisations', which also bear the titles *kaa tên kòòn* and *saang thiam mèè*. The existence of similar graphic names for certain *khaen* improvisations, based upon the five basic *khaen* modes, has been documented by Miller (1985a:267-273). The most common of these are, *mèèng phuu tòòm dòòk* (แมงผู้ตอมดอก) 'the insects swarm around the flower', *saaw ñik mèè* (สาวยิกแม่) 'the girl pinches her mother', *mèè haang kòòm luuk* (แม่ร้างก่อมลูก) 'the widow cradles her child', *lom phat phaj* (ลมพัดไผ่) 'the wind blows in the bamboo', and *lom phat phaaw* (ลมพัดพ้าว) 'the wind blows in the coconut palms'. A Thai publication on *khaen* music also features an improvisation entitled *nam toon taat*, 'water cascades down the waterfall' (Samret 1995:177-178). These improvisations are played as short solo pieces and are not used to accompany *khap-lam* singing. If Kavin and Thongkham's observations are accurate we could expect that *kaa tên kòòn* and *saang thiam mèè* are either improvisations based upon one of the five *khaen* modes, or are perhaps additional names given to some of the improvisations named above. However, the relationship between the *laaj khaen* bearing the names *kaa tên kòòn* and *saang thiam mèè* and the identically named textual structures remains unclear.

Several *mohkhaen* from the *lam siphandon* tradition, Ki Kong, Lung Suun, and Kham Sing,[9] whom I interviewed volunteered no information whatever regarding *khaen* improvisations or patterns named *kaa tên kòòn* etc. I did not question them on this topic during the interviews as I was concentrating my attention upon the patterns they used to accompany *mohlam*. Each *mohkhaen* revealed in interviews that they generally use the *poo saaj* mode to accompany male *mohlam* and the *sòòj* mode to accompany female *mohlam*.

They did note that the *fòòn* section of the performance, which utilises *kòòn fùang* structures, required a change of tempo. However, no mention was made of the need to alter the pattern of the accompaniment:

> ...you have to play the *fòòn* [section] faster than [the verses] before. If you don't play fast you won't be with them [the *mohlam*]. As they move around, and up and down, you have to play along with them. (Suun Siimanta 22/6/1999-23/6/1999)[10]

Similarly, Duang Phaeng noted that the *khaen* must adapt to the different textual tempo produced by *kòòn fùang*:

> That's *kòòn fùang*, it's what they call *kòòn fùang*, it's not *siphandon* rhythm, it's *cangva fòòn* with its own specific feel. The *mohkhaen* has to *fùang* too, they both go together. It must be faster than regular *lam* [...] It's called *fùang* rhythm, it's not completely like *siphandon*. (Duang Phaeng Hanmani 22/11/1999)[11]

Suun's and Duang Phaeng's remarks above are consistent with my observations and recordings of *lam siphandon* performances, in which the *khaen* accompaniment alters its tempo but not the mode or the rhythmic pattern during the *fòòn* section of the performance. When used in relation to *khaen* playing, the terms *kaa tên kòòn* etc. may simply refer to a change of tempo rather than a specific pattern of accompaniment or improvisation. However, more research needs to be done in order to fully clarify the meaning of terms in relation to *khaen* playing.

A clue to this dual use of names lies in the term *cangva*, which has a broad meaning incorporating concepts of rhythm, tempo, and metre. It was noted in chapter 3, that this term exhibits a considerable degree of slippage in its meaning. For example, the *khaen* improvisations listed above are often referred to as *cangva*, as well as *laaj* 'mode', or *thaang* 'way, path'. Similarly, *mohlam* use the label *cangva* when referring to the characteristics of the textual structures they utilise, such as *kòòn kin haa*, *kaa tên kòòn*, and others described above. The graphic titles given to a number of these *khaen* and textual patterns, describe an image of a natural event conjured up by the melodic and rhythmic characteristics of the music and/or text. Thus, we can visualise that external rhyme with alternating vowels and tone contours falling on every fifth, third or second syllables creates a skipping-like motion of the text, which listeners and performers relate to events such as a crow jumping from one rock to another. Thongkham suggests that the names for textual *cangva* emerged at the start of the 20th century as *mohlam* began to modify *kòòn aan* text structures to fit the medium of song:

> [...] this marked the point from which the methods of verse composition began to be modified, giving rise to rhythms and melodies which walked and skipped, like a crow jumping on rocks; rhythms that were pulsing, like waves hitting a riverbank; rhythms that swayed and flowed, the same as water lashing against river-weed, and so forth. These were the source of the form and rhythm in *lam siphandon*.... (Thongkham 1998:98)[12]

In the excerpt above, Thongkham refers to the processes by which traditional texts composed in *kòòn aan* and *kaap* form were gradually adapted to suit the vocal music of *khap-lam*. The modifications include the incorporation of additional *kham buphabot* and core syllables to both *kòòn aan* and *kaap*. The latter form also having its rhyming patterns altered to produce *kòòn fùang*. As a result, both *lam siphandon* and *khap ngeum* texts feature longer poetic lines than those found in regular *kòòn aan* texts. This increase in the number of syllables per line has enabled *mohlam* to develop their own rhythmic styles.

Syllabic Structures

In chapter 6, we learned that the basic *kòòn aan* form consists of four poetic lines of seven core syllables each and that additional syllables could be placed at either the beginning (*kham buphabot*) or end (*kham sòòj*) of each line. According to Sila (1961:5-6), up to four *kham buphabot* and two *kham sòòj* can be added to each line. These are designed to clarify the line's meaning (in the case of *kham buphabot*) and for stress or emphasis (in the case of *kham sòòj*). The texts of *lam siphandon* are typified by numerous pre-syllables but relatively few post-syllables. In contrast, *khap ngeum* makes extensive use of both pre- and post-syllables. The texts of the six transcribed performances (see appendices 2 and 3), also show that there are regional differences in the lexical items which appear in the *kham buphabot* and *kham sòòj* positions, as shown in Table 7.1 below.

lam siphandon			*khap ngeum*		
mùù4 nii4	ມື້ນີ້	*'today'*	oo1 nòò2	ໂອ໋	*'ooh'*
pheen1 vaa1	ເພິ່ນວ່າ	*'they say'*	bat2 nii4	ບັດນີ້	*'now'*
bat2 nii4	ບັດນີ້	*'now'*	mèèn1 vaa1	ແມ່ນວ່າ	*'that's right'*
mèèn1 vaa1	ແມ່ນວ່າ	*'that's right'*			
cang1 vaa1	ຈັ່ງວ່າ	*'so, thus'*			
khòòj5 vaa1	ຂ້ອຍວ່າ	*'I say'*			
aaj4/naang2 heej2[13]	ອ້າຍ/ນາງເຮີຍ	*'hey brother/sister'*			

Table 7.1:Common *kham buphabot* in *lam siphandon* and *khap ngeum*

Since *lam siphandon* and *lam som* make little use of *kham sòòj*, it is difficult to make generalisations about the favoured forms. Euphonic particles such as *dee* (ເດີ), *nee* (ເນີ), and *dêê* (ເດ໋) are quite common. In *khap ngeum* texts, these particles often appear in combination with the short formulaic phrases: *cang sii* (ຈັ່ງຊີ້) 'like this', *vaa sên* (ວ່າເຊັ່ນ) 'they say thus', *nòòng/aaj eej* (ນ້ອງ/ອ້າຍເອີຍ) 'hey brother/sister', *nòòng/aaj nii* (ນ້ອງ/ອ້າຍນີ້) 'this man/woman', *kham phèèng eej* (ຄຳພ່ຽງເອີຍ) 'oh precious one', *khon/naang ngaam* (ຄົນ/ນາງງາມ) 'beautiful people/woman', *an nii* (ອັນນີ້) 'this one', and so forth.

When composing *khap-lam* texts, *mohlam* use *kham buphabot* and *kham sòòj* more liberally than is found in literary *kòòn aan* verse. Not only do *mohlam* add these pre- and post-syllables, but they also insert extra syllables into the core of seven. Most often these consist of a consonant and short vowel sound, such as the irrealis markers *si* (ຊິ) and *ca* (ຈະ) and the linking particle *kòò* (ก็). They may also include one of the several prefix-like syllables, *ka* (ກະ), *pa* (ປະ), *pha* (ພະ), *ta* (ຕະ) and so on, that are a feature of many sesquisyllabic Lao lexical items. None of these short syllables are included in the syllable count by scholars who follow Sila's rules. Koret (1994a:Ch2) notes that the *kòòn aan* verse of traditional Lao literature commonly has up to three additional syllables inserted into the core of seven. This situation is normal for the *khap-lam* texts of the three genres examined here.

Mohlam, however, not only insert these short syllables into lines, but will often insert longer syllables or even a complete phrase. When they do so, the inserted phrase is normally placed between the two hemistiches of a line. This means that the number of core syllables can be extended up to fourteen or perhaps more. Thus, the number of core syllables is flexible in *khap-lam* texts, and is by no means limited to seven, plus a number of short syllable inserts. The following example of an extended *kòòn aan* line is taken from a verse composed by Duang Phaeng. Note that the fixed tone-slots for *kòòn aan* line 3 are retained at the end of the first and third phrases (shown in bold), and that there are fifteen syllables plus two short syllables: /sa-/ and /ka-/.

	inserted phrase	
Line 3		
ນາງ ອໍ ເຕື່ອນ ສະຕິ **ໃຫ້**	ຢ່າເປັນ ຄົນ ມີ ໄວ	ຄັນ ຢາກ ໄດ້ ກະອໍ **ໝູ່**
naang2 khòò6tùan1 sa2ti2 **haj5**	jaa1pên6 khon2 mùù2 vaj2	khan2 jaak5 daj4 ka2khòò3 **muu1**

I warn your conscience, don't be impatient, if you want something ask your peers

Example 7-5: An inserted phrase in a line of *kòòn aan* (Thongkham 1998:361)

Lines 1.60 and 1.61 from transcription 1, a *lam siphandon* performance by Duang Phaeng, illustrate how a *mohlam* can creatively manipulate an existing verse (in this case a *phañaa* verse) through the addition of *kham buphabot* and core syllables. The first two syllables of each line, *hên vaa* and *khòòj vaa* are typical forms for *kham buphabot* in *lam siphandon* texts. Excluding the *kham buphabot* syllables from our count leaves nine core syllables in the first line, and ten core syllables in the second line. Since there are no *kham sòòj* at the end of either line, this means that both have more than seven core syllables, or that there are more than two *kham buphabot* per line.

ເຫັນ ວ່າ ນ້ອງ ດຳ ຮ້ **ຫຼີ** ຢ່າ ຟ້າວ **ຮີ** ເຮືອ ກາຍ
hên3 vaa1 nòòng4 dam6 khii5 **lii5** jaa1 faaw4 **khii1** hùa2 kaaj6
when you see me black as charcoal, don't hurry away in your boat

ຂ້ອຍ ວ່າ ເຫັນ ນາງ ດຳ ຄືຍ ລືຍ **ຢ່າ** ຟ້ຽ ພາຍ ເຮືອ **ມ້ຳ**
khòòj5vaa1 hên3 naang2 dam6 khòòj2lòòj2 **jaa1** fang1 phaaj2 hùa2 **mom4**
I say when you see me black as night, don't rush to paddle your boat past

Example 7-6: Modified *phañaa* poem in *lam siphandon* (Transcription 1, lines 1.60 & 1.61)

In this particular instance, the two lines are based upon a *phañaa* poem which reads:

ຄັນ ວ່າ ດຳ ຮ້ **ຫຼີ** ຢ່າ ຟ້າວ **ຮີ** ເຮືອ ກາຍ
khan2 vaa1 dam6 khii5 lii5 jaa1 faaw4 **khii1** hùa2 kaaj6
If you say I'm black as charcoal, don't hurry away in your boat

ເຫັນ ວ່າ ດຳ ຄືຍ ລືຍ **ຢ່າ** ຟ້າວ ພາຍ ເຮືອ **ເອີ້ນ**
hên3 vaa1 dam6 khòòj2lòòj2 **jaa1** faaw4 phaaj2 hùa2 **vên4**
you see me black as night, don't rush to paddle your boat past

Example 7-7: *Phañaa* poem composed in *kòòn aan* form

In the *phañaa* poem above, each line has two pre-syllables, *khan vaa* and *hên vaa*. If this is the base form, then Duang Phaeng has added a further three *kham buphabot* syllables, one in the first line and two in the second, while retaining the original eight core syllables (with a few lexical substitutions).

In *khap ngeum*, *kòòn aan* poetry is composed in a slightly different manner with greater use of *kham sòòj*. This is possible because the text is primarily delivered one line at a time in a slow and deliberate fashion. Transcription line (6.8) below, taken from a performance by Acaan Sing, features two pre-syllables, *oo nòòng*, and three post-syllables, *vaa sên dêê*, leaving a core of nine syllables (not counting the short syllables *si* and the prefix *pa* in *pacam*).

buphabot	core syllables								sòòj		
ໂອ ນ້ອງ	ມີ	ແພດ	ໝໍ	ປະຈຳ	ການ	ຊິ	ເບິ່ງ	ແຍງ	ແລ	ເຊົ້າ	ວ່າ	ເຊັ້ນ	ເດ
oo nòòng	mii	phèèt	mòò	pacam	kaan	si	beeng	ñèèng	lèèng	saw	vaa	sên	dêê

Oh, there are doctors who will care for you morning or night, they say

Example 7-8: *Kòòn aan* line from *khap ngeum*, showing pre- and post-Syllables

An analyst relying upon Sila's rules of composition might argue that the words *mii phêêt* 'there are doctors', are pre-syllables rather than core syllables in order to retain the ideal of seven core syllables. However, as these words are integral to the meaning of the line they are, in my view, best considered as added core syllables.

Parallelism

Koret (1994a) has undertaken extensive research into traditional Lao literature to reveal that parallelism is one of the fundamental conventions of literature composed in *kòòn aan* form. Parallelism is also a ubiquitous feature of the spoken Lao language, occurring in numerous constructions, some of which are detailed in Appendix 1 (see also Koret 1994a:Ch 3). The poetry of Lao literature and *khap-lam* has taken the different types of parallelism and made it a verbal art form.

In Lao literature, parallelism is often highly complex and multi-layered, the result of modifications made during successive transcriptions of a story by multiple composer-transcribers at different points in time (cf. Koret 1994a). It also operates on almost every level of the poetry, from surface structures to entire plots. Lao *khap-lam* texts, however, are still primarily oral in their transmission and while a number of stock phrases are used, the manner in which they are put together is usually the work of a single composer, resulting in less complicated patterns. A great deal of Lao parallelism is based upon a pattern of three, which Koret refers to as the AAB pattern, as explained below:

> Stated in simplest terms, an AAB pattern consists of two parallel statements (A1 and A2) followed by a third statement B that is a conclusion or result of the previous statements. This pattern, of no fixed

> length, has been traditionally used by Lao (and other Tai) poets to narrate a progression of ideas, time, or events. [...] The AAB pattern can be as small as the length of a single poetic line or as large as an entire story. The plot of a tale frequently consists of one or a few major patterns of great length, with countless layers of smaller patterns occurring inside. (Koret 2000:219)

Koret has likened the A1 A2 B structure to the English phrase 'ready, set, go', in which the first two words are parallel in meaning (i.e. get ready), and result in the action at B (Koret 1994:Ch 5). The texts of *khap-lam* appear not to exhibit the multiple layering of AAB structures which typify traditional Lao literature, but shorter parallel structures are a typical feature. I have examined a number of *khap-lam* texts and have found examples of parallelism of different lengths. Most common are AAB patterns spread across two lines, a structure also typical of *phañaa* forms, adding further credence to the strong relationships between *phañaa* and *khap-lam*. These two line structures are most creative and effective when the parallel structures are not conspicuously repetitive, but manage to convey the same observations, as exhibited in the examples below:

ຄຳ ເອີຍ ຕອນ ນັ້ນ ນ້ອງ ຈາກ **ອ້າຍ** ໄປ **ຢູ່** ແດນ ໄກ
kham2 eej6 tòòn6 nan4 nòòng4 caak5 **aaj4** paj6 **juu1** dèèn6 kaj6
then you left me (A1), and went to live in a far off place (A2)

ຢ່າ ສົງ ໃສ ຫຼາຍ ແນວ **ວ່າ** ນາງ ຊິ ມີ **ຊູ້**
jaa1 song3 saj3 laaj3 nèèw2 **vaa1** naang2 si1 mii2 **suu4**
but don't be wondering whether or not I have new lover (B)

Example 7-9: AAB parallel structure in *lam som* sung by Duang Phaeng (Transcription 3, lines 3.9 and 3.10)

ຄັນ ໄດ້ ເອົາ ຄື ນ້ອງ ຮ້ອຍ ປີ ກະ ບໍ່ ຖີ້ມ ພັນ ປີ ກໍ ບໍ່ ນ່າຍ
khan2 daj4 aw6 khùù2 nòòng4 hòòj4 pii6 ka2bòò1 thim5 phan2 pii6 kòò2 bòò1 naaj1
If had a wife like you, I wouldn't leave in 100 years (A1), I wouldn't be bored in a 1000 (A2)

ຕາຍ ເກີດ ນາ ຊາດ ໜ້າ ແສນ ຊົ່ນ ແມ່ນ ບໍ່ ໄດ້
taaj6 keet5 maa2 saat4 naa5 sèèn3 san4 mèèn1 bòò1 daj4
If I died, I wouldn't find you again in 10,000 lifetimes (B)

Example 7-10: AAB parallel structure in *lam siphandon* sung by Som Sii (Transcription 2, lines 2.65 to 2.66)

Line 1
ບາດ ນີ້ ໃຫ້ ອ້າຍ ສັງ ຕີ ຖະແຫຼງ **ເວົ້າ** ວ່າ ນ້ອງ **ອ່ອນ** ງາມ ຫຼາຍ
baat5 nii4 haj5 aaj4 sang2 tii6tha2lèèng3**vaw4** vaa1 nòòng4 **òòn1** ngaam2 laaj3
Now you've said things to me (A1), that I'm soft and lovely (A2)

Line 1 *(sòòj)*
ເຊັ່ນ ບໍ່ ອ້າຍ
sên4 bòò1 aaj4
isn't that right?

Line 2 *(buphabot)*
ໂອ່ນ ອ້າຍ ຈານ ສິງ ຄັນ ແມ່ນ
oo1nòò2 aaj4 caan3 sing3 khan2 mèèn1
Oh Acaan Sing, if

Line 2
ນ້ອງ ງາມ ເລີກ ນ້ອງ ກະ ຄົງ ຊິ ມີ ຜົວ **ແລ້ວ** ເດ
nòòng4 ngaam2 lek1 nòòng4 ka2khong2 si1 mii2 phua3 **lèèw4** dêê3
I am so beautiful, then shouldn't I already have a husband (B)

Example 7-11: AAB parallel structure in *khap ngeum* sung by Paeng Thong (from a 1996 performance recorded by LNR)

ອ້າຍ ນີ້ ເປັນ ດັ່ງ ຈອກ ຢູ່ ນ້ຳ ຮາກ ຍັ່ງ ບໍ່ ເຖິງ ດິນ
aaj4 nii4 pèn6 dang1 còòk5 juu1 nam4 haak5 ñang2 bòò1 theng3 din6
I'm like a water lettuce in the water (A1), my roots haven't reached the earth (A2)

ມີ ແຕ່ ໄຫລ ເວີນ ໄປ ເວີນ ມາ ບໍ່ ມີ ເພື່ອຍ ລ້າງ
mii2 tèè1 laj3 veen2 paj6 veen2 maa2 bòò1 mii2 füaj2 khaang4
I merely drift to and fro with nothing for support (B)

Example 7-12: AAB parallel structure in *phañaa* (Duangchan Vannabupha n.d.:33)

The extent to which larger portions of a *khap-lam* text exhibit parallel structures, for example, the text of an entire evening's performance is yet to be fully investigated. Such a study would require a clear recording and transcription, as well as extensive consultations with the *mohlam* who performs the text.

In this section the fundamental poetic conventions which provide *mohlam* with the raw material to create their own texts have been explored. While there is no doubt that most *mohlam* memorise texts and compose their own, drawing from their memorised texts and personal knowledge of poetic forms, it has been difficult to determine the extent to which they are able extemporaneously to compose texts as they sing. The following section examines aspects of this debate and discusses the various viewpoints with reference to comments made by a number of Lao *mohlam*.

Do *mohlam* Improvise The Text?

The degree to which *mohlam* improvise their texts as they sing is a vexed one for researchers of Lao vocal music genres. One side of the debate argues that performers do not improvise their texts, but repeat their verses from memory; the other side says that performers often spontaneously compose their texts as they sing. The latter view first appeared in early French scholarship on Laos (see chapter 4) and has been more recently supported by Carol Compton in her 1979 study of *lam siphandon*. Compton found that although memorisation has an important role "in the learning or apprentice stages for the *mohlam*" (Compton 1979:108), skilled performers eventually develop the ability extemporaneously to compose their own poetry (Compton 1979:112). The opposite view has, in the past, been strongly advocated by Terry Miller, particularly in relation to *khap-lam* genres in northeast Thailand. However, in recent publications Miller (1998a; 2000) has acknowledged that the most skilled *mohlam* in Laos utilise varying degrees of extemporisation.

In his 1985 study of Lao music in northeast Thailand, Miller rejected comments made by Brengues (1904) and Brandon (1967:68) concerning textual improvisation:

> They [*mohlam*] are compared to Homer, implying that the poems were extemporized in the manner of the epics that Albert Lord has described from Yugoslavia in his book The Singer of Tales. There is, however, no evidence known to me that this is the technique involved. All singers interviewed had memorized poetry from written sources, and none claimed to improvise their material except in shortening the story to fit the occasion. Singers in Laos, however, where the tempo is slower, can improvise longer passages. (Miller 1985a:40)

The claims of Brengues and Brandon were certainly weak, apparently based on supposition alone with no evidence to support them. Miller's stance was therefore justified, particularly in light of his own unfruitful search for evidence of textual improvisation. Throughout his early publications Miller maintained that the *mohlam* of northeast Thailand and Laos did not improvise their texts, saying that the poetry is "almost always memorised from written sources" and that "the order is improvised to accommodate the situation" (Miller 1980a:461; Miller and Jarernchai 1980:131).

In more recent publications, Miller acknowledges that extemporisation is quite common among highly skilled Lao *mohlam*:

> Much slower than genres from across the Mekong, Lao genres give singers time to think of variant patterns to individualize the memorized poems. Average Lao singers repeat their poems with little or no change, having learned them by rote rather than from written form; but the most skilled can create poetry as they sing. Since the Lao genres also permit breaks between couplets or stanzas (covered by the *khene*), singers have time to formulate new lines. (Miller 1998a:342)

Miller also speaks of "spontaneity within the lyrics and in the larger arrangement of poetry between singers" (Miller 1998b:92), hinting at context-determined thematic choice, an aspect of extemporaneous composition that is explored further below. This assessment is more accurate than his earlier one in which he suggested that much of Lao singers' supposedly improvised text "may be derived from *panyah*" (Miller 1985a:52). It is certainly true that *phañaa* poems feature prominently in *khap-lam* texts, however, the spontaneous rearrangement of *phañaa* requires an in-depth knowledge of Lao poetic structures (see Example 7-6 and Example 7-7 above). Furthermore, rearranging memorised *phañaa* poems and poetic structures is a creative process that is undertaken in response to the demands of the performance context and audience. Although Miller clearly understands some of the processes at work, his reservations suggest that he did not fully appreciate the creative and individualised processes surrounding the manipulation of conventional poetic structures.

My conclusion is not that Miller was incorrect in his earlier claims that improvisation was not a feature of performance in northeast Thailand; it is that we need to recognise the differences between the two regions and the reasons for differences. Several of these differences, such as tempos and breaks in the text delivery are identified by Miller in the above quotation. Another contributing factor may be the higher rate of literacy in Thailand. Although northeast Thailand is culturally Lao, it is oriented towards Bangkok. Moreover, throughout the 20th century, it has benefited from Bangkok's development of infrastructure and education, bringing the region out of the beleaguered conditions that still beset Laos today. The reliance of *mohlam* in northeast Thailand upon written sources reported by Miller is probably due in part to influences from Central Thailand's written literary tradition. In the past, Thailand had a highly developed, written, artistic tradition which provided the cultural basis for the vast amount of popular press publications produced in Thailand today. Centralised education has ensured the demise of the Lao script in northeast Thailand, a decline that was already well-advanced when Miller conducted his research in the early 1970s (Miller 1985a:11). As a result, the texts used by *mohlam* in

northeast Thailand are in the Lao language but are written using the Central Thai script. The improved literacy and extensive use of printed and written material by *mohlam* would likewise have assisted any tendencies towards the fixing of texts (cf. Sweeney 1987:70-71; Koret 1999:245).

Another plausible explanation may be found in the fact that traditional Lao stories are nearly always anonymous, owing their creation to an earlier tradition of oral story-telling common to Southeast Asian peoples. This tradition developed certain conventions which enabled multiple authorship and borrowings. It was not seen as appropriate to remember individual authors' contributions, even had they been delineable (Koret 2000:210). Miller's informants reported that they memorised texts from a number of sources; those given to them by their teachers, those they obtained from books, and those they composed themselves. I suggest that, like the transcribers of traditional Lao literature, many *mohlam* may not have considered their alterations to these memorised texts, either during performance or when writing them down, as their own compositions. In Laos today, however, many *mohlam* claim the ability to extemporaneously to compose texts, indicating that the formerly unacknowledged role of the composer has changed.[14]

A major problem with the discussion of textual composition in *khap-lam* concerns the terms "improvise" and "extemporise", and their definitions. In a recent conference paper abstract, John Whiteoak (2001) referred to the "insurmountable difficulty of producing a universally acceptable definition" for the term 'improvisation'. These difficulties are evident in the approaches to text improvisation taken by researchers of *khap-lam* genres. In his earlier work, Miller appears to have used 'improvise' to mean 'original, spontaneous composition'. However, *mohlam* do not 'improvise' in this sense because they are bound to abide by numerous compositional conventions, both thematic and structural. Any *mohlam* who ignores the conventions of the medium within which he/she operates cannot succeed, because to do so places him/her outside of the tradition.

> By being original, a Lao composer would risk making his work difficult for a reader to perform, difficult for an audience to comprehend, and difficult for a transcriber to copy. (Koret 2000:213)

The same is true of *mohlam* in *khap-lam* traditions who follow a number of thematic conventions to assist them in the composition of texts. These conventions are determined by a number of interrelated factors which affect the choice of material: context (the specific occasion at which the text is delivered); time (at which point in the

performance a particular text is delivered); sponsor/audience demand (certain topics/genres may be requested).

I suggest that instead of 'improvise', the term 'extemporise', in the sense of creating something without premeditation or preparation to suit a particular occasion, be used to indicate the compositional techniques *mohlam* employ during performance. Using this definition, we find that *mohlam* continually extemporise throughout a performance as they manipulate structural and thematic conventions as well as remembered poems to suit the occasion and the demands of the sponsor and audience. This creative process "often involves not the invention of a phrase, but rather the knowledge of how to skilfully adapt and profitably place phrases that already exist" (Koret 2000:219). Invention of new phrases does occur, but only in conjunction with the manipulation of formulaic phrases and themes which a *mohlam* builds throughout their career:

> Each time that they [the *mohlam*] sing, they create new songs out of a tradition of themes and a stock of phrases and images which have been built up over time in the culture generally and by them personally. This conclusion has been reached as the result of work with thousands of lines of data from the actual performances of many singers and from the information provided by many *mohlam* during interviews. (Compton 1979:108)

It is this adaptation of remembered phrases combined with the composition of new phrases (based upon conventional structures) that enables a *mohlam* to extemporise. This process of extemporaneous composition is utilised by all skilled *mohlam*. It also has a name among *mohlam* in southern Laos, *som bòò khùt* (ສົມບໍ່ຄິດ).

Som bòò khùt: Extemporised Sung Poetry

To the best of my knowledge, many *mohlam* who are part of the *khap ngeum* and *lam siphandon* traditions extemporaneously compose poetry, but only the *mohlam* in southern Laos have a specific term to describe the technique. In Champassak, this technique is known as *som bòò khùt* (ສົມບໍ່ຄິດ), while in Savannakhet it is known as *som sa khùt* (ສົມສະຄິດ). It may also be referred to as *lam don* (ລຳດົ້ນ) 'to *lam* extemporaneously'. The very fact that *mohlam* distinguish between singing based upon memorised verses and singing in which verses are extemporaneously composed indicates that Miller's assumptions were unfounded, at least from a Lao point of view.

Almost nothing has been written about the *som bòò khùt* technique by either Lao or Western scholars. Thongkham's detailed book on *lam siphandon* mentions *lam don* (but not *som bòò khùt*) only in reference to Acaan Vanna (Thongkham 1998:195 & 249). I have found just one mention of the term *som bòò khùt* in Phosikaew's brief history of the *lam khon savan* genre:

> The character of *lam* content then began to change, with verses from the palm-leaf manuscripts blended with *som sa khùt* verses; that is, extemporaneous verses...[the *mohlam*] uses their intelligence, getting an idea and then singing [*lam*] on the spot. The verse remains lively and flowing, continuing like regular *lam* verse. (Phosikaew and Bunteu 1991:11)[15]

The *mohlam* whom I interviewed in Pakse and Don Khong, all claimed that the term *som bòò khùt* takes its name from *mohlam* Som, who supposedly pioneered the art of extemporaneous composition. The following excerpts, taken from several interviews, provide some performers' viewpoints on the meaning of the term *som bòò khùt*:

> You *lam* straight away...that's what they call 'without thinking' (*bòò khùt*). You look at the situation and just *lam* what you see there. They call that *don* (ดั๊ม 'to sing extemporaneously'), you sing out just like that..... It's as if you're a flood, the *lam* just comes out from you. That's what they call *som bòò khùt*, just like he [Phòò Som] didn't have to think, he'd just *lam* away. That's *som bòò khùt*, the way old man Soom did it (Vanna Keophilom 6/12/1999)[16].

> Well *som bòò khùt* means to *lam* away...it means not composing [anything beforehand]... it's the way I *lam* every day! That's what they call *som bòò khùt* ...it was uncle Som [who started it] he'd *lam* without any [ready formulated] verses. He had no verses! (Duang Phaeng Hanmani 22/11/1999)[17]

> After I'd studied for a little while... 3 months... I had 40 verses. Forty verses is enough to last until dawn, but they're the sort that others had made [written] for me. You memorise them, and *lam* along....Then after that...after I'd been performing for some time, my mind got the hang of it and I could find them [verses] myself...like now I don't have any verses with me, I look for things to *lam*. I have no set of verses [memorised], I just use my eyes to see and my ears to listen, make it up and then *lam* away.(Som Sii Kasoemlat 15/11/1999)[18]

All southern *mohlam* who participated in this study claimed to rely heavily upon the *som bòò khùt* technique. Only Chindavan, who is still relatively inexperienced, admitted that she had not yet reached the stage at which she could confidently employ *som bòò khùt*. Sunii links the ability to compose using the *som bòò khùt* technique with the learning of *òò* incantations from one's teacher. In the following excerpt he is talking about the time when his father was learning how to *lam*:

> At that time..., *lam* during that time was *som bòò khùt*, the way I *lam* now. He didn't study with anyone either, all he learnt was various *òò*. Now those *òò* they weren't *lam* poems, they were incantations. That's all he studied, only *òò* ... with *mohlam* Tha Diam and *mohlam* Saam Haam. [...] All he did was mutter the *òò* and then it would come to him...think a bit, get a bit, think a bit, get a bit. My father would *lam* like that just making it up himself. (Sunii Kasoemlat 23/11/1999)[19]

The following words of Duang Phaeng, Acaan Vanna and Sunii describe how present day *mohlam* conceptualise the extemporaneous composition of poetry. These *mohlam* are all highly skilled at this technique, utilising it in most, if not all, of their performances. Acaan Vanna and Sunii noted that it takes at least five or six years of performing before one is able to extemporise using the technique of *som bòò khùt*:

> One year, two years, three years but you're still unable to extemporise...it takes five years or more. Those who have been *mohlam* for five years or less have to memorise everything until they can *lam* it, then they can go out and *lam* [...] Now if you've been going for six years or more...until you don't have to think at all...you just see [things] with your eyes, listen with your ears and then you're able to make it up on the spot, just like you've heard Duang Phaeng *lam*. She has experience, her mind has a solid foundation. We think of what we want to say and make it up there on the spot...this is what they call *som bòò khùt*. Truly, she's skilled at this. Next they'll be calling it *vanna bòò khùt*, *duang phaeng bòò khùt*, that's what they'll probably say. (Vanna Keophilom 6/12/1999)[20]

> You can't do this quickly [*som bòò khùt*], it takes six years...in my own case it took six years until I could *lam* about what was going on in front of me. I mix it [with memorised poems] [...] so I *lam* away until 'pap!'... then when I get stuck I grab a verse I've studied and continue with that, blending it in. If you've completed your studies then you have over 400 verses as I have....(Sunii Kasoemlat 23/6/1999)[21]

Although only a few *mohlam* from the *khap ngeum* tradition claimed the ability extemporaneously to compose texts, there is no doubt that this compositional process is a feature of *khap ngeum* performance. Acaan Som ·d Kheua Kham were the only *mohlam* (of the *khap ngeum* tradition) to state explicitly that they did not rely upon memorised texts. Som gave the following reply when I questioned him about the number of poems in his repertoire:

> I'm unable to count them. I can't say [how many]. I don't remember any old verses. Each time I go off to *lam* I never sing any old verses, I

> only ever *lam* new verses. Once I've sung it, I dispose of it and make up a new one. I find them myself, it enters my mind and I sing straight away. I listen to what the female [*mohlam*] or other people say...(Som Pathamphii 23/4/1999)[22]

In another interview, I asked Kheua Kham whether *mohlam* repeated memorised texts when performing, and was given the following reply:

> Mostly it's those who are still studying. They're not yet familiar [with the poetry], they mostly memorise it. But suppose it's me, well I don't memorise..., whatever the male *mohlam* sings, I think immediately and answer him. (Kheua Kham 4/9/1999)[23]

However, Paeng Thong (23/4/1999), another well-known female performer told me that she primarily relied upon verses which she had memorised.

It is clear from the opinions expressed in the quotations above that skilled *mohlam* consider their compositional abilities to include not only memorisation but also the ability to compose poetry in response to the changing demands of the audience and performance context. A full examination of these processes lies beyond the scope of this study. It would be extremely difficult without the benefit of having learned and performed texts for a number of years. Yet further study is needed. Do extemporised texts retain the fixed tone-slots of *kòòn aan* verse, or do they rely more upon rhyming structures to maintain the poetic element? Do *mohlam* in the *lam siphandon* tradition prefer to extemporise using *kòòn fuang* rather than *kòòn aan* structures? These are just two of many questions which need to be asked in order to gain a better understanding of the processes of extemporisation in the performance of *khap-lam* texts. One fact that is clear from the above discussion is that *mohlam* require an extensive repertoire of memorised poems to form the base from which they extemporise according to the demands of the performance.

Repertory

Repertoire has two aspects in regional *khap-lam* traditions; one musical, the other textual. The ability to perform more than one musical genre is important for performers of regional traditions in southern Laos, in which several distinct musical genres are often incorporated into a single performance. In northern traditions, however, a knowledge of a large musical repertoire is not necessary, since the majority of performances involve just one musical genre. Yet an extensive textual repertoire is a fundamental aspect of performance in all regional traditions. Without a thorough knowledge of poetic structures

and themes, a *mohlam* cannot fulfil the expectations of an audience regardless of how many musical genres he/she might know.

The textual aspect of repertoire has two elements. The first is a knowledge of poetic structures and formulae, which have been discussed above. The second is a thorough knowledge of different themes that allow a *mohlam* to address different topics throughout a performance. In the initial stages of their careers, *mohlam* gauge the extent of their textual repertoire by the number of poems they have memorised. However, as they gain experience the most skilled performers no longer think in terms of the number of verses that they know (see Acaan Som's remarks above), but refer instead to the themes and topics that they use during a performance. Once they have memorised a large number of verses, the most skilled *mohlam* learn to manipulate them in order to create new verses as they sing (in southern traditions this is called *som bòò khùt*, see above).

The topics about which *mohlam* choose to sing are primarily determined by the demands of the performance context (i.e. the purpose of the *bun*), the audience, and the sponsor(s). The temporal sequence of themes is conventionalised, and this sequence is never disrupted by the performance event participants. However, within the overall temporal sequencing of themes, the performers, audience, and sponsors are free to choose whatever topics they like. The following statement by Duang Phaeng attests to the primacy of the *bun* event in determining themes. It also mentions that these themes must be addressed regardless of the musical genre being performed, and indicates the important role of the audience in determining the topics:

> If we suppose that we are performing *lam cèèk* [i.e. performing at a *bun cèèk khaw*], it has to refer to the *bun cèèk* [*khaw*], the person who has died. You have to sing about the dead person, about death and birth. It [the *lam*] goes according to the situation they [sponsors and audience] have set up [...] the content remains the same. In each event...we can say that the topics the people want us to *lam* are always the same. It doesn't matter what [genre] you *lam*, whether its *lam khuu lam kòòn* or *lam khon savan*, whatever... the audience will give us topics to *lam*, to speak about. No matter what genre of *lam* we sing, we must follow their suggestions. (Duang Phaeng Hanmani 22/6/1999)[24]

Duang Phaeng's comments above, suggest a continuity of themes from one regional tradition to another. This continuity is borne out by the following discussion of repertoire in *lam siphandon* and *khap ngeum*. However, *mohlam* who regularly perform more than one musical genre may reserve one for use with certain themes. For example, Miller

(1985a:146) reports that in northeast Thailand it was common for several verses of *lam thaang ñaaw* to be sung briefly just before the performance ended. This musical genre was used to sing poems of farewell which usually expressed sad sentiments. However, in the early 1970s a third musical genre, *lam teej*,[25] centred upon the lighter topic of love banter, was added to the performance in order to have it end on a happier note (Miller 1985a:152). In a similar vein, Duang Phaeng uses *lam som* to introduce themes of sadness as a result of parting;

> ...its content is sad, but then ..., if we take it [*lam som*] and change the content to be *kathu banhaa* [i.e. questions of knowledge] it won't fit. It doesn't fit because [*lam som*] is gentle, if you make it interrogative then it won't fit...poems have to be in *lam siphandon* for combat, for challenges, for cursing each other. (Duang Phaeng Hanmani 22/6/1999)[26]

Although sad themes can be used in *lam siphandon*, *lam som* is considered to be a better vehicle for expressing feelings of sadness. Duang Phaeng notes, however, that *lam som* is not suited for the adversarial question and answer rounds which typify *lam siphandon* performance. This division of themes and genres is not available to *mohlam* whose regional tradition utilises a single musical genre.

Repertory Size

Acaan Vanna (6/12/1999) and Sunni (23/11/1999) say that in the past, a *mohlam* required some 35-40 verses (i.e. rounds) in order to perform a ten or eleven hour-long performance. Allowing for two performers, Vanna's figures average out at eight to nine minutes per round. Vanna noted that this number of verses/rounds was also a useful means of knowing how much time had passed. This was especially important in the early hours of the morning before dawn because, by counting the number of verses they had performed, the time of sunrise could be assessed:

> You had to let the sun come right out, you didn't have watches or clocks in those days, you just had to watch for the sun to rise. They call it *baj tòòng hòòj hùang* ('the yellowing of the banana leaves'), you looked at the banana trees to see if it was nearly dawn [i.e. the sun's first rays would make them change colour]. (Vanna Keophilom 6/12/1999)[27]

The large number of verses in these sets also allows the *mohlam* to be prepared to address a wide range of themes during the performance; however, every verse in a set is unlikely to be used in a single performance. In order not to repeat themselves over consecutive performances, Vanna recommends that *mohlam* have three sets, (*sut* ชุด), each

consisting of 35-40 verses. In the interview, Vanna also suggests that this was to protect his compositions from being memorised by competitors who might attend consecutive performances. This gives a total of some 105-120 rounds, an amount that would undoubtedly require an excellent memory. Sunii (23/6/1999) claimed to have amassed a staggering 407 verses during his first six years of study. Of these, he memorised 64 in his first three months of study; enough to last for two nights of performance. An excellent memory is therefore a prerequisite to a successful career.

The Structure of Sung Rounds

Each round of *lam siphandon*, regardless of its thematic content, consists of three or four parts. These parts are distinguished from one another by poetic form and content, as follows:

1. The introductory verse, *kòòn khùn ton* (กอนขึ้นต้น). This is normally composed in a form similar to *kòòn fùang*, although introductory verses are too short to adequately develop the characteristics of *kòòn fùang*. The introductory verse is used to introduce the topic the *mohlam* wishes to address. It usually signals the nature of the coming round; whether it will use courting language, bawdy language and so on. The introductory verse is always followed by a bridging section in which a series of vowels are sung to a fixed melodic phrase (as previously described in chapter 6).

2. The main verse, *kòòn kèèn nùa naj* (กอนแกนเนื้อใน). This is the main part of the round and is composed in *kòòn aan* form. If the *mohlam* opts to sing *kòòn fòòn* this part is usually very brief or else omitted altogether.

3. The dance verse, *kòòn fòòn* (กอนฟ้อน). As discussed above, the emphasis is on external rhyme utilising the different *cangva* of *kòòn fùang*. This part is optional, and is not usually included for the opening and closing rounds of a performance. When beginning *kòòn fòòn* a *mohlam* usually signals their intention to do so by singing some lines announcing that they will dance. Such lines often encourage the *mohkhaen* to increase the tempo of their playing.

4. The closing verse, *kòòn long thaaj* (กอนลิ่วท้าย). Like the introductory verse, the closing verse is usually brief and composed using a form like *kòòn fùang*. In the closing verse the *mohlam* announces whether or not they wish to continue singing about a particular topic or not. The commencement of the closing verse is often

signalled by a repeated hemistich of text (see transcriptions 1 and 2, lines 1.79 to 1.80, and 2.79 to 2.80).

Introductory verses are short, lasting only a minute or so. As the introduction ends, the *mohlam* and *mohkhaen* pause momentarily before commencing the series of bridging pitches, as described in chapter 6. The main body of the round will last for as long as the *mohlam* wishes, although rounds longer than thirty minutes are unusual. If the *mohlam* includes *kòòn fòòn*, then most of the round is composed in *kòòn fùang*, not *kòòn aan*. However, many of the texts which appear in Thongkham's 1998 book on *lam siphandon* show that *mohlam* often compose verses in the *fòòn* section which blend *kòòn aan* and *kòòn fùang* structures. Normally this involves a section of *kòòn fùang* that is concluded with line 4 of *kòòn aan*, the last syllable of which serves as the rhyme which leads back into another section of *kòòn fùang*. The text of each round in *lam som* is structured in exactly the same fashion, but without the inclusion of the *kòòn fòòn* section. As the *mohlam* finishes the round they signal their intention to end in the closing verse, this gives a verbal cue to the *mohkhaen* to prepare to stop, and informs the other *mohlam* to begin preparing their reply.

In *khap ngeum*, a round is structured a little differently. Most rounds open with a short line that does not always conform to particular poetic form. Others have a conventionalised syntactic frame commenting on the colour or shape of the other *mohlam's* cheeks, similar to the opening phrase of *lam siphandon* and *lam som*. The closing line can simply be composed in *kòòn aan* with several *khàm sòòj* added to take the melody to the tonic cadence (see chapter 6, part one). The main body of the round is composed in *kòòn aan* form throughout, with liberal use of *khàm sòòj* especially at the sectional endings. Although I have found no evidence in my own text transcriptions to suggest that *kòòn fùang* is used in the composition of *khap ngeum* texts, a brief section of verse similar in form to *kòòn fùang* appears in Kavin's transcription of a text sung by Khammani during a performance in Ban Pak Kanyung (Kavin 1997:84). This indicates that other poetic structures may be making inroads into *khap ngeum* verse, however, I am presently unable to provide further explanation of this matter.

Thematic Categories and Repartee Modes

The classification of verses according to thematic criteria is a difficult undertaking for Lao *khap-lam* vocal music. This is because Lao performers do not systematically

categorise verses as belonging to one verse type or another. Instead, they tend to describe them according to the different themes they contain and the format in which the text is presented; *mohlam* describe their texts using not one but a combination of terms. To simplify the following discussion, I have taken a number of terms used by *mohlam* to develop my own observer-imposed taxonomy. The category 'repartee mode' refers to the format in which a verse is presented, while 'thematic categories' refers to its content. These are listed in the two tables below. Readers will note that these terms are all prefixed by *lam*; this is the label by which they were described to me by *mohlam*, however, *kòòn* may also be used as a prefix.

The last four repartee modes in Table 7.2 below, are not found in the *khap ngeum* tradition; they may be specific to the *lam siphandon* tradition. Other southern traditions may also utilise these terms, but this remains to be shown through further field research. Adversarial and combative repartee modes are characteristic of the *lam siphandon* tradition, in which *mohlam* refer to their debates using words such as, *khaa kan* (ຂ້າກັນ) 'to kill each other' (denoting a fierce debate in which both *mohlam* do their best to defeat the other), *taaj* (ຕາຍ) 'to die' (this is when someone loses a debate through the inability to answer), *pasan kan* (ປະຊັນກັນ) 'to compete with each other', *siat sii* (ສຽດສີ) 'to criticise' and *daa* 'to curse, swear'. This kind of language was not used by *mohlam* in the *khap ngeum* tradition. These adversarial terms reflect the more direct nature of *lam siphandon* performance, a point which Acaan Som made clear to me during one interview, as follows:

> Southern *lam* is not soft and tender, it has no gentle or sweet gentle language. You just say 'I love you, I want you' ..., [in *khap ngeum*] you speak elegantly, it's not flammable [like *lam siphandon*]. (Som Pathamphii 20/1/1999)[28]

Repartee Modes		
1. *lam thaam kan*	ลำถามกัน	'to ask each other questions'. This is the mode used at the beginning of every performance which *mohlam* employ as a means of introducing themselves and the sponsor to the audience. Usually the questions concentrate upon the personal history and status of the people being questioned.
2. *lam coot kèè kan*	ลำโจดแก้กัน	'question and answer'. This mode differs from the *thaam kan* above, because it signifies a debate on a variety of topics, often in the form of riddles, between the two *mohlam*. These topics include geography, Buddhist morality, Lao customs, and so on. The topics debated are often chosen by the audience and sponsors.
3. *lam tòò ñèè*	ลำต่อย	'teasing'. This is associated with the *lam kiaw* part of the performance. In these verses the two *mohlam* make fun of one another.
4. *thaam banhaa*	ถามบันหา	'to pose problems, riddles'. This appears to be another name for *lam coot kèè kan* above, since it centres upon asking questions to test each other's knowledge.
5. *lam phañaa ñòòj*	ลำผะหยาย่อย	These are verses which are based upon *phañaa* poems. Most often these are used in the *lam kiaw* part of a performance, although they are employed with other themes/modes as well. Traditional *phañaa* poems are modified to fit the poetic structure preferred by individual *mohlam* (see Example 7-6 and Example 7-7 above).
6. *tha thaaj*	ท้าท้าย	'to challenge, provoke'. During my field research I only ever heard this term used in relation to *lam siphandon* verse. It implies that the rounds are more confrontational than in a normal question and answer format.
7. *lam daa kan*	ลำด่ากัน	'to insult'. This kind of verse is used to deride the abilities, intelligence or behaviour of the opposing *mohlam*. Like the above term, I only heard *mohlam siphandon* employ this term whilst I was in the field. However, *mohlam* in the *khap ngeum* tradition may also insult each other in the same fashion.

8. *maañaa*	มายา	This mode is usually employed in *lam kiaw*, although it can be used with other themes. Dictionaries define *maañaa* as 'trick, artifice'.[29] In the *lam siphandon* context, *maañaa* refers to the use of tricks and guile by which to impress the opposing *mohlam* in order to win their favour. In courting poetry the *mohlam* uses indirect references and hidden meanings which the other has to decipher. This method of verse composition is now less common as people prefer more direct courting language (Vanna Keophilom 6/12/1999)
9. *kòòn kathuu*	กอนกะทู้	'principle, riddle'. This term appears to be specific to *lam siphandon* performance. In a *kathuu* verse, the *mohlam* will pose a series of riddles and then challenge the other *mohlam* to answer them. Many of these riddles have several possible answers, however, the answering *mohlam* must know what these are if he/she is to produce an appropriate reply. The topics which can be addressed in these verses are diverse, like the *lam tòò ñèè* verses.

Table 7.2: Repartee modes in *khap-lam* genres

Thematic Categories		
1. *lam nithaan*	ลำนิทาน	'to sing about a legend'. This category covers any theme taken from traditional Lao literature. In contemporary performances, literary themes are usually incorporated by comparing *mohlam* with principal characters from traditional stories. In early 20th century performances it was often quite common for the *mohlam* to recite a particular literary tale from the viewpoint of one of its main characters.
2. *lam thaam khaaw*	ลำถามข่าว	'asking for news, information'. The *lam thaam khaaw* appears at the start of the performance. This is included as a thematic category because the questions which are asked are conventionalised, normally centring upon a person's personal history, social and marital status, as well as their physical appearance and material well-being.
3. *lam kiaw (phaalaasii)*	ลำก้อย (พาลาสี)	'to court, or flirt'. This theme constitutes the main body of most *khap-lam* performances. It revolves around an imaginary courting event between the male and female *mohlam*. A *lam kiaw* will usually begin with *lam thaam khaaw*.

4.	*lam khuam hak khuam mak*	ລຳຄວາມຮັກ ຄວາມມັກ	'songs of love'. This terms refers to the latter stages of *lam kiaw* which follows *lam thaam khaaw* and the initial courting themes. In *lam khuam hak khuam mak*, the two *mohlam* are declaring their love for one another, but at the same time expressing reservations/fears that the affair will not work. Often the love affair is unresolved and the couple part, leaving open the opportunity to meet again and resume the affair (cf. Compton 1979).
5.	*lam laa*	ລຳລາ	'to sing farewell'. These verses are sung at the end of the performance to say goodbye, and to ask for forgiveness for any offences which the *mohlam* may have caused the audience or sponsor during the performance.

Table 7.3: Some thematic categories of *khap-lam* texts

The two tables list only those terms that were used regularly in the course of interviews and conversations I had with performers and audience members. A number of themes listed in Miller (1985a:47-48), such as *kòòn saatsanaa* (ກອນສາດສະໜາ) 'religious verses', *kòòn phitikam* (ກອນພິທີກຳ) 'ceremonial verses', and *kòòn bêdtalêt* (ກອນເບັດຕະເລັດ) 'miscellaneous verses' are not included in the list, because they were not categorised by the *mohlam* with whom I worked. Instead of being named separately, these topics were usually mentioned in relation to a number of the repartee modes. For example, Sunii (23/11/1999) noted that throughout most of his career the two topics, Buddhist teachings and morals, *thamma* (ທຳມະ), and traditional Lao literature, formed the basis of all performances, and that these were utilised in the various repartee modes and thematic categories summarised above.

The overlapping of these terms becomes apparent when one discusses textual content, *nùanaj* (ເນື້ອໃນ), with a *mohlam*. Texts are referred to using a combination of the above categories, such as: *lam kiaw kòòn kathuu*, denoting a courting theme in which certain principles are debated; and *khathuu thathaaj*, describing an adversarial debate over certain points. When discussing *lam kiaw*, a performer might mention *lam phañaa ñòòj*, *lam tòò ñèè*, or *lam coot thaam kan*. Topics such as religion and the beauty of nature might appear in similarly named verses. Traditional literature, *lam nithaan*, can also appear in *lam kiaw*. For example, the *deen dong* (ເດີນດົງ) 'a walk in the forest', verses to which

Miller (op.cit) refers, are usually based upon an excerpt from Sang Sin Say, a well known tale from traditional Lao literature (Koret 2000:221).

The courting element of Lao poetry, *lam kiaw*, is referred to by most commentators (e.g. Compton 1979). Compton's study revealed that the dominant themes in the courting verses of a performance focus upon the opposing emotions of fear, *jaan* (ຢ້ານ), and desire, *jaak* (ຢາກ). The verses she analysed revolved around the *mohlam's* desire to interact with and court each other, which was contrasted with fear of the possible negative consequences of the relationship. To express these negative feelings the *mohlam* uses a number of thematic formulae; often consisting of stock phrases, including, their own ugliness (an ugly person is usually described as short and dark) and lacking enough merit to permit happiness via a suitable marriage (Compton 1979:124). Oppositions of good/evil, merit/sin, wealth/poverty, beauty/ugliness are also characteristic of verses which utilise episodes or characters from traditional Lao literature (Koret 1994b). Excellent examples of these oppositions can be seen in the text of Duang Phaeng's *lam siphandon* performance in transcription 1, set out in appendix 2.

Temporal-Thematic Divisions of a Performance

The following division of time and themes in *lam siphandon* is based upon a description by Thongkham (1998:55-56) and is supplemented with information provided to me in interviews with Acaan Vanna, Duang Phaeng, Sunii, Som Sii, and Chindavan.[30] Thongkham divides a *lam siphandon* performance into eight parts which are listed and explained below. An approximate time frame, beginning at nine o'clock and ending at seven o'clock, is given in order to illustrate the different time length of each part of a performance:

Part 1	♦ The *mohlam* sing a round, paying their respects to the triple gems of Buddhism. ♦ The *mohlam* recite their *òò caj pòòng* as a means of paying respects to one's teachers, and to enhance their performance.
Part 2 (9:00)	♦ The *mohlam* introduce themselves, stating where they are from, where they were born, who their teacher is, and what knowledge they have, and stating that they are performing to serve the listeners and sponsor(s).
Part 3 (9:20)	♦ *thaam khaaw caw sathaa* (ຖາມຂ່າວເຈົ້າສົດຫາ). The *mohlam* inquire after the sponsor(s), praising them for arranging the *bun*. They refer to the merit and goodness that will be made as a result of the *bun* being held, and bless the sponsor(s).

Part 4 (10:00)	♦ *thaam khaaw khuu tòò suu* (ถามฮาวคูต่ำสู). The *mohlam* make inquiries, one after the other, usually beginning with simple questions such as, 'where are you from?' and 'how much livestock do you have?'. This leads directly into the *lam kiaw* part of the performance.
Part 5 (10:30)	♦ *lam kiaw* (ลำเกี้ยว), *khuam hak khuam mak* (ถวามฮักถวามมัก). Courting verses. The *mohlam* begin their courting and love banter. This is the underlying theme for the parts 5, 6 and 7. ♦ *lam tòò ñèè* (ลำต่อแย). This is part of the *lam kiaw* in which the two *mohlam* will make joking, often suggestive remarks.
Part 6 (01:00)	♦ *lam kòòn kathu* (ลำกอบกะทู้). This marks the adversarial part of the performance in which the *mohlam* test each other's knowledge on particular topics, ranging from local geography to Buddhist morals and ethics. ♦ *lam kòòn kathuu thaa thaaj* (ลำกอบกะทู้หาหาย). The adversarial nature of this part of the performance becomes more combative. ♦ *lam kèè lam daa* (ลำแก้ ลำด่า). In this section the *mohlam* are also adversarial, including personal insults and highly critical language, designed to embarrass each other. ♦ Other genres are usually included sometime between three and five o'clock.
Part 7 (6:00)	♦ *lam kòòn caat/lam kathuu khuu khuan* (ลำกอบจาด/กะทู้อู่อวับ). This part of the performance occurs if one *mohlam* has embarrassed the other, through his/her inability to answer questions in the previous part to the point of having to leave the performance, in which case the victor is left to make fun of the loser.
Part 8 (6:30)	♦ *lam in òòj/lam khòò aphaj* (ละอิ่นออย/ลำขออะไพ). In closing both *mohlam* will apologise to, and ask forgiveness from, the sponsor and audience for any offence they may have caused during the performance. This is a typical Southeast Asian custom. ♦ *lam laa* (ลำลา). The *mohlam* sing their farewells.

Table 7.4: Temporal divisions of *lam siphandou* performance

Of course, not every performance follows these stages exactly; and some of these sections may be merged. For example, *mohlam* may choose to integrate their self introduction by using the *lam thaam khaaw* section of the performance. However, the general sequence of events is not interrupted. The shorter parts at the beginning and end of each performance are essential. Readers will note that Part 1 is not included in the approximate time frame. References to the triple gems of Buddhism,[31] formerly an essential part of the first round of a performance (Compton 1979; 1992:149), were not often used to open the performances I attended in 1999. This change is attributable to the removal of most religious elements from *khap-lam* performance during the revolutionary

years between 1975 and 1986, a change brought about by the LPRP's banning of *bun* and their restrictions on Buddhism (refer to chapters 2 and 5 for further details). In interviews many *mohlam* noted that although the religious motivation for performances (i.e. the *bun*) was still strong, religious themes are now less prominent than they were in pre-1975 performances.

Another change in the post-1975 period is the practice of *mohlam* taking a less combative approach in the middle parts of the performance than was previously the case. The period in which the LPRP exercised direct control over performers and performances was largely responsible for the de-emphasis of *lam siphandon's* combative elements. Before the change of government in 1975, *mohlam* in Champassak would be hired singly, often not knowing whom their singing partner would be until they arrived at the performance. This fostered a highly combative performance environment, in which *mohlam* would attempt to demonstrate they knew more about Buddhist morality/teachings, *tham* (ทำ), and other topics, than the *mohlam* opposite them. In Pakse, this situation was further encouraged by a number of *mohlam* competitions arranged by Boun-Om Na Champassak, the head of the Champassak royal family, during the late 1960s (Compton 1979:115; Vanna Keophilom 2/5/1999). In the post-1975 period, *mohlam* are now hired as a troupe, *khana* (คะนะ), a situation which means that the combative elements of the performance are controlled so that one performer does not lose face. Thus, no *mohlam* is required to leave the performance due to an inability to answer puzzles posed by the opposing *mohlam*. Furthermore, large *mohlam* competitions are now held infrequently and only young *mohlam*, *mòòlam nòòj* (หมอลำน้อย), are allowed to compete. The de-emphasis on competition probably reflects socialist ideals of equality and cooperation between people.

Performances of *khap ngeum* follow an almost identical temporal sequence to *lam siphandon*, using many of the same thematic categories and repartee modes. The temporal outline below has been compiled from information provided by informants, Kavin's book on *khap ngeum* (1997:47), and my own observations. I have included the recitation of *òò* and verses which pay respects to Buddhism in this list because these are vital to a successful performance, even if they are not always included in the actual performance.

Part 1	♦ Recitation of *òò* incantations. ♦ Verses paying respect to the triple gems of Buddhism.
Part 2	♦ The *mohlam* introduce themselves
Part 3	♦ *thaam khaaw caw sathaa*. The *mohlam* inquire after the sponsor and address the purpose of the *bun*.
Part 4	♦ *lam kiaw phañaa ñòòj*, this begins with *lam thaam khaaw* in which the *mohlam* ask about each other (where are you from? etc.)
Part 5	♦ *lam kiaw* (*khuam hak khuam mak*), the topic turns to love and suitability. This section is usually based upon *phañaa ñòòj* poetic riddles. This part also includes the *lam ròò ñèè* and *lam coot thaam* repartee modes.
Part 6	♦ *lam laa*. The *mohlam* sing their farewells to the sponsors, the audience and each other

Table 7.5: Temporal divisions of a *khap ngeum* performance

Although *khap ngeum* performance is based upon the same topics as *lam siphandon*, there are fewer parts because the adversarial repartee modes are not utilised. In spite of this difference, *khap ngeum* performers do engage in the same debates and criticise one another when unable to answer questions or solve riddles.

Text in Performance: Some Examples

This final section provides examples of some texts which relate to the temporal-thematic elements of a performance outlined above. The majority of the examples are taken from texts I transcribed from natural performances which I recorded in Laos during 1998 and 1999. Each example is accompanied by a brief explanation of the context in which it was used, together with some observations regarding the poetic structures and other creative elements. This section is not designed to provide a comprehensive analysis of the different themes that are possible in a *khap-lam* performance. Such an analysis would require a considerable amount of textual material. However, these examples should illustrate to the reader the textual realisation of themes, as well as provide an insight into the different ways that themes and poetic structures are manipulated by *mohlam* in order to produce a performance that possess the *muan* factor.

In the examples below, the fixed tone-slots of each *kòòn aan* line appear in bold, with the line number (i.e. 1-4) written above. The reader will note that in some lines not all of the tone-slots appear, however, this is normal (see chapter 6). Lines which have an

undiscernible structure are marked with a question mark, as are any syllables which could not be heard clearly in recorded examples.

Beginning a Performance

Several topics must be covered in the opening verses before the main themes of love and courtship can begin. In contemporary performances, the *mohlam* normally begin by welcoming the audience members to the *bun*, explaining its purpose and introducing the sponsor. As sponsors are now often expatriate Lao people, the introduction may also include acknowledgment of other overseas Lao who may have made a contribution of funds but are not in attendance. After this, the *mohlam* may then introduce him/herself, as well as any other guests whom they feel require introduction. When attending performances, I often fell into this latter category because, as I was usually the only non-Lao person in attendance, I was always highly conspicuous. Thus, *mohlam* often felt it appropriate to introduce me to the audience, and to explain that I was an Australian researching *khap-lam*.

The following excerpt is taken from an opening round sung by Acaan Sing at Vat That Luang Taj in Vientiane on the 25/4/1999. It names the purpose of the *bun* as *bun atta*, introduces the sponsor (old man Khambaan) and mentions that he is holding the *bun* for the spirit of his son-in-law. The *kòòn aan* structure of each line is evident and most lines have been extended considerably with long strings of *kham buphabot*.

Line 1

ໂອ່ນໍ ບາດ ນີ້ ນໍ ພີ ນ້ອງ ທາດ ຫຼວງ ບ້ານ ຄົນ ກະ ມີ ຂັນ

oo1 nòò2 baat5 nii4 nòò2 phii1 nòòng4 thaat4 luang3 baang3 khon2 ka2mii2 khan3

Oh, now, some of you That Luang villagers have prepared offerings of flowers

ດອກ **ໄມ້** ກຽມ ຖູ **ຂອກ** ປະສີຊາມ

dòòk5 may4 kiam3 thuu3 òòk5 pa2lii2khaan3

to offer to the Buddha

Line 2 (*buphabot*)

ແມ່ນ ວ່າ ມີ ນໍ ບ້ານ ຄົນ

mèèn1 vaa1 mii2 nòò2 baang3 khon2

yes, and there are others

Line 2

ເພິ່ນ ກະ ມີ ຊໍ້າ ເງິນ ຄຳ **ຫີ** ເພື່ອ ທານ ນຳ **ເຈົ້າ**

pheen1 ka2 mii2 sam4 ngen2 kham2 **thii1** phùa1 thaan2 nam2 **caw4**

they have brought money to donate

Line 3(*buphabot*)
ໂອ່ນໍ ນາງ ນີ້ ນໍ ສາທຸ ດີ
oo1nòò2 naang2 nii4 nòò2 saa3thu1 dee3
Oh, my dear, you good

Line 3
ພີ ນ້ອງ ມາ ທຳ **ຕັ້ງ** ບຸນ ສັງ ຊິ ກິນ ທານ ນຳ ເພິ່ນ
phii1 nòòng2 maa3 tham2 **tang4** bun3 sang3 si1 kin3 thaan2 nam2 **pheen1**
people have come to make this bun, and to give alms along with them (the sponsors)

Line 4 (*buphabot*)
ແມ່ນ ວ່າ ມື້ ນີ້ ນ້ອງ
mèèn1 vaa1 mùù4 nii4 nòòng4
yes, today, my dear

Line 4
ຂໍ ໃຫ້ ບຸນ ຊ້ຳ **ຊ່ອຍ ພ້ອມ** ຊິ ສູ່ **ຮົ້ນ** **ສູ່** ສະຫວັນ
khòò3 haj5 bun3 sam4 **sòòj1 phòòm4** si1 suu1 **khùn5** **suu1** sa2van3
may this merit go up to heaven

Line 1
ໂອ່ນໍ ບັດ ນີ້ ນໍ ເປັນ ຕອນ ວັນ **ເຈົ້າ** ຍາ ພໍ່ **ໃຫຍ່** ຄຳບານ ເຮົາ ນີ້
oo1nòò2 bat2 nii4 nòò2 pên3 tòòn3 van2 **caw4** ñaa2 phòò1 **ñaj1** kham2baan3 haw2 nii4
Oh no, now is the day that old man Khambaan

Line 2
ໄດ້ ກອງ ອັດຕະ ທາ **ລູກ** ເຂີຍ ໄດ້ ແຕ່ງ ພາ **ໄດ້** ທານ
daj4 kòòng3 at2ta2 haa3 **luuk4** kheej3 daj4 têêng1 phaa2 **daj4** thaan2
has arranged a bun atta to give alms for his son-in-law

Example 7-13: Opening round of *khap ngeum* performed by Acaan Thong (at Vat That Luang Taj, 25/4/99)

Later in the same round, Acaan Thong introduced me as a visitor from Australia interested in Lao culture. Readers will note that in these obviously extemporised passages, the *mohlam* do not strictly adhere to the tone-slots of *kòòn aan* structure. However, the verse is not in prose even when these fixed tones are absent, since these lines employ the types of poetic structures that distinguish poetry from prose.

Line 1 (*buphabot*)
ໂອ່ນໍ ນີ້ ນໍ ທ່ານ ອາດຳ
oo1nòò2 nii4 nòò2 thaan2 aa3dam3
oh noo, Mr. Adam

Line 1
ມາ ຈາກ ປະເທດ **ກ້ຳ** ຂ໋ອງ **ເຂດ** ອົດສາຕະລີ ມາ ນໍ
maa2 caak5 pa2thêêt4 **kam4** khong3**khêêt5** ot2saa3ta2lii2 maa2 nòò2
comes from Australia

Line ? (*buphabot*)
ແມ່ນ ວ່າ ນ້ອງ ກັບ ພີ
mèèn1 vaa1 nòòng4 kap2 phii1
yes well, brothers and sisters

Line ?
ເພິ່ນ ໄດ້ ມີ ບັນຫາ ຊິ **ຝ່າຍ** ວັດທະນາທຳ ເຮົາ ສານ
pheen1 daj4 mii2 ban3haa3 si1 **faaj1** vat1tha1naa2tham2 haw2 saan3
he has questions about our radiant culture

Line 2
ດຽວ ນີ້ ນໍ ເພິ່ນ ມາ ເປົ້າ ຍັງ **ທີ່** ເມືອງ ລາວ ກະ ຄົບ **ຫ້ວນ**
diaw3 nii4 nòò2 pheen1 maa2 paw4 ñang2 **thii1** mùang2 laaw3 ka2khop1 **thuan5**
well now, he has come to live in Laos

Line 3 (*buphabot*)
ໂອ່ນໍ ນີ້ ນ້ອງ ອາຈານ ອາດຳ ນີ້ ນໍ
oo1nòò2 nii4 nòòng4 aa3caan3 aa3dam3 nii4 nòò2
Oh noo, and now Acaan Adam

ປັດຈຸບັນ ເພິ່ນ ພັດ ຢູ່ **ໄດ້** ໂຮງ ຮຽນ ສິລະປະ ດົນຕີ ແຫ່ງ **ຊາດ** ເດ໋ ນໍ
pat2cu2ban3 pheen1 phat1 juu1 **daj2** hoong2 hian2 si2la1pa2 don3tii3 hèèng1 **saat4** dêê1 nòò2
is based at the National School of Music and Dance

Example 7-14: Part of an extemporised opening round of *khap ngeum*, performed by Acaan Thong

Once Acaan Thong had completed his round, the female *mohlam*, Khammani, performed her opening round. After she had acknowledged the *bun* and its sponsors, Khammani began to shift into *lam kiaw* by suggesting that she could be my lover, regardless of where I was from. The following excerpt is taken from this round.

Line ? (this line appears to be an inserted phrase)
ໂອ่ນ້ອງ ວ່າ ບັດ ນີ້ ອ້າຍ ຢູ່ ໃສ ກະ ຕາມ
oo1nòòng4 vaa1 bat2 nii4 aaj4 juu1 saj3 ka2 taam3
Oh I say now, no matter where you live,

Line 2
ຄັນ ແມ່ນ ອ້າຍ ບໍ່ ມີ ເມຍ ຈ້ອນ ນ້ອງ ຊິ ເຂີ້ມ ເປັນ **ຊູ້**
khan2 mèèn1 aaj4 bòò1 mii2 mia2 sòòn4 nòòng4si1 leem1 pên3 **suu4**
if you have no wife, then I shall be your lover

Line 3
แม่บ อ่า ผา ให้ ยู่ ใส ให้ เจ๊ำ เป้น อ้าย
mèèn1 vaa1 phaa2 haj5 juu1 saj3 haj 5 caw4 pên3 aaj4
yes, you can take me anywhere,

เอ๊ำ **น้อง** สาอ หมอลำ ไก้ เป้น **คู่** เด่เมิ อ้าย
aw3 **nòòng4** saaw3 mòò3lam2 daj4 pên3 **khuu1** dêê1nee2 aaj4
take this lady mohlam as your partner

Example 7-15: Part of an extemorised opening round in *khap ngeum*, performed by Khammani (at Vat That Luang Tai, 25/4/99)

Thanking Audience Members for Donations

In chapter 5, it was noted that audience members gave *mohlam* small monetary donations throughout a performance. This is a particular feature of *khap ngeum*, in which the giving of donations follows a particular procedure. After a member of the audience places money in the *mohlam's* bowl, the *mohlam* responds by singing a short verse which thanks the donor and wishes riches upon them. The verse below was given to me as an example by Paeng Thong during an interview:

Line 1 (*buphabot*)
เจ๊ำ ผู้ ทาม ให้ มา แล้อ ให้ หาย เหิม
caw4 phuu5 thaan2 haj5 maa2 lèèw4 haj5 laaj3 keen3
you who have given, may much come your way,

Line 1 (core)
ยาม มื้ แลง มื้ **เช้ำ** ให้ เต้ม **ตึง** อ่าง กะเป๋ำ
ñaam2 mùù4 lèèng2 mùù4 **saw4** haj5 têm4 **tùng1** aang1 ka2paw3
in the evening and morning, may your pockets and bowls be full and bulging

Line 2
ทาง อัด เงิน ตา ให้ ไหล มา **ฮู่** มื้ ให้ โฮม เต็ำ ยู่ **บ้าม**
thaang2 at2 ngeen2 taa3 haj5 laaj3 maa2 **suu1** mùù4 haj5hoom2taw1 juu1 **baan4**
may the path of money flow to you everyday and collect in your house

Example 7-16: *Khap Ngeum* verse thanking audience members for donations (Paeng Thong Sisutham 13/8/1999)

Acknowledging Sponsors

Normally verses acknowledging sponsors are sung at the beginning of a performance, as in Example 7-13 above. However, on occasions they can appear later in the evening. Below is one such example, a *lam som* verse that was performed by Duang Phaeng just before midnight. This is an excellent example of an extemporised verse which adheres to the *kòòn aan* tone-slot structure extremely well. I know that this particular verse

was extemporised because just several minutes before Duang Phaeng began to sing this verse, the sponsor handed her a sheet of paper containing a long list of names. The excerpt below is taken from near the beginning of the round, and it is followed by a long series of verses which incorporate the names of more than twenty different people and their families.

Line 3
เผิ่น อ่า ลัน ใม กอง กะถิน **นี้** มี จัก ลิน ซิ บอก **ซู่**
pheen1 vaa1 khan2 naj2 kòòng6 ka2thin3 **nii4** mii2 cak2 khon2 si1 bòòk5 **sùu1**
they say, for this bun kathin, there are many people who must be named

Line 4
รู้ แล้อ มาม **ก่าอ ไอ้** ใจ แสง **ทั่วง** ล่ำ
huu4 lèèw4 naam2 **kaaw1 vaj4** caj6 sèèng3 **thiang1** kham2
you'll know as I say their names, that their hearts are radiant and true

Line 1
อิก บึ่ง แม่ บุนล่ำ เป้น **เสื่อง เค้ำ** สัดทา **ใหย่** ใม ปะจำ
iik5 nùng1 mèè1 bun3kham2 pên6 **khùang1 khaw4** sat2tha2 **ñaj1** naj2 pa2cam6
firstly, mother Bunkham the major sponsor

Line 2
เผิ่น จัด บ่ำ เอ๊ำ กอง **เสื่อง** ของ กะถิน **นี้**
pheen1 cat2 nam2 aw6 kòòng6 **khùang1** khòòng3 ka2thin3 **nii4**
she has arranged this bun kathin

Line 3
ผู้ จะ มี มะโม **ซั้น** สำคัน บ่ มี **แบ่ง**
phuu5 ca2 mii2 ma1noo2 **san4** sam3khan2 bòò1 mii2 **bèèng1**
she is clear in her thoughts

Line 4
ใจ แม่ **แจ้ง** บ่ มี **แท่ง** เถือ เหิม
caj6 mèè1 **cèèng4** bòò1 mii2 **hèèng1** iùa3 keen6
her heart is clear and undivided

Line 1
อัม บึ่ง ยัง อิก ยัง **บ่** **แล้อ** ยัง มี **ลูก** หาม เหิม
an3 nùng1 ñang2 iik5 ñang2 **bòò1** **lèèw4** ñang2 mii2 **luuk4** laan3 lêên3
there are more, I'm not yet finished, there are all the relatives

Line 2
ผู้ ยู่ ทาง ลาทะลัด **เขด** อาเมลิกา **ผุ้น**
phuu5 juu1 thaang2 saa3ha2lat2 **khêêt5** aa6mêê2lii2kaa6 **phun4**
those who live far away in the US of A

Example 7-17: Extemporised *lam som* verse praising sponsors of a *bun*, performed by Duang Phaeng, Ban Niw, Muang Pakse, Champassak 13/11/99

Courting Themes: thaam khaaw/lam kiaw

The courting themes of a performance are introduced through *lam thaam khaaw*, which usually begins by asking questions of a mundane nature but then moves onto other topics. Depending upon the topics being addressed, the *lam thaam khaaw* can evolve into a debate utilising the *lam coot kèè kan* repartee mode. A main function of the *thaam khaaw* is to serve as a prelude to the *lam kiaw* that is to follow, so the questioning and debating will eventually lead to courting themes. In an interview, Acaan Vanna provided a comprehensive account of the different topics that he might include in *lam thaam khaaw*:

> At the start of the evening you *lam* the *thaam khaaw* [ask for news/information], they're not always the same, you know. *Thaam khaaw* "in which village do you live?", you ask even if you already know. Then you ask something new, you pose riddles/problems *thaam banhaa*. "Have you children? a husband? are your fields full of rice this year? Do you raise ducks? pigs? chickens? buffalo? cattle?" You ask questions like this....or sometimes you don't ask these things. You pose riddles like "how many gates [entrances] are there to your village?" Sometimes you ask things like that. (Vanna Keophilom 6/12/1999)

Below is an example of *lam thaam khaaw* composed by Sunii. This excerpt has the male *mohlam* questioning the female about her previous lovers.

Line 3
บาง ได้ ไอ ของ **ต้อม** ใช้ ซาย ใด เฮ้น **ก่อน**
naang2 daj4 khaj3 khòòng **tòòn4** haj5 saaj2 daj6 hên3 **kòòn1**
My dear, which man's presents did you open before I saw you?

Line 4
บ่อม น้อง ธึง **ห่ำ** ไว้ แม่น ใผ **ต้อง** **ก่อน** กัน
bòòn1 nòòng4 hiing2 **hòò1** **vaj4** mèèn1 phaj3 **tòòng4** **kòòn1** kan3
the one's you have packed away. Who touched you before?

Line 3
แม่น ใผ บาย ใผ **ฮั้น** ใผ คำ ใผ **จูบ**
mèèn1 phaj3 baaj6 phaj3 **khan4** phaj3 kham2 phaj3 **luup4**
Who touched you? Who caressed you?

Line 4
แม่น ผู้ ใด **จูบ** ฮัม ซม น้อง **ก่อน** พี่ ซาย
mèèn1 phuu5 daj6 **cuup5** **kèèm4** som2 **nòòng4** **kòòn1** phii1 saaj2
Who kissed you cheek and admired you before me?

Example 7-18: Excerpt from a *thaam khaaw* verse by Sunii (Thongkham 1998:207)

The transcribed performances of *lam siphandon* (transcriptions 1 and 2) are good examples of *lam kiaw* themes which employ a number of *phañaa* verses. In each text, the *mohlam* sing of being besotted with the other *mohlam* but of being afraid that he/she will

think him/her too ugly or too poor. The *mohlam* also wonders whether he/she has enough merit to be deserving of such a beautiful and meritorious mate. In the following excerpt from transcription 2 (lines 2.57 to 2.60), Som Sii is trying to assuage Duang Phaeng's suspicion that he might already have a wife and is trying to seduce her with less than honourable intentions.

Line 3
แต่ อ่า สิน ใจ **อ้าย** สาว ดวง แผง บ่ ยาก **เชื่อ**
tèè1 vaa1 son3 caj6 **aaj4** saaw3 duang6 phèèng2 bòò1 jaak5 **sùa1**
Although you're interested, perhaps you don't want believe me

Line 4
ย่าม มี เมย **ยู่** **สวม** ซวม **ซ้อม** ต้อม สะเพ
jaan4 mii2 mia2 **juu1** **suam5** suan2 **sòòn4** tòòn4 sa2nêê3
you're afraid I have a wife, and that I'm seducing you

Line 1
พี่ ซิ อาง **บอก** **น้องๆ** ไข **ถอก** ถี ถัก
phii1 sii1 vang2 **bòòk5** **nòòng4** khaj3 **khòòk4** khùù2 khak1
I can tell you truthfully

Line 2
สอน อ่า เมย โสม สี **พี่** บ่ มี พ่อ ดี
suan1 vaa1 mia2 soom3 sii3 **phii1** bòò1 mii2 phòò2 dii6
that I, Som Sii have no wife

Example 7-19: Excerpt of a *lam kiaw* verse in *lam siphandon*, performed by Som Sii (Transcription 2, lines 2.57 to 2.60)

Bawdy Elements of Khap-Lam

Many writers have commented upon the bawdy elements of *khap-lam*. However, the nature of the humour when the topics become coarse has not been investigated to date. Bawdy humour was part of every performance I attended, regardless of the region. In *lam siphandon*, bawdy elements usually feature in the *lam kiaw* part of the performance, and are usually categorised as *kathuu* verses. Duang Phaeng noted that when using bawdy material, a *mohlam* had to present it using comparison and euphemisms:

> you curse, you compare them..., but you can't say it directly, you have to compare..., the listeners will work it out themselves. (Duang Phaeng Hanmani 22/11/1999)[32]

These comparison and euphemisms are used to allude to genitalia and sexual activities, as illustrated in the following examples and interview excerpts. The two examples are taken

from a performance by Duang Phaeng at Ban Niw, Muang Pakse, Champassak on 13/11/99. They were performed in a *kòòn fôòn* round, so are composed in *kòòn fûang*. Example 7-20 below, is a short opening verse composed in a form similar to *kòòn fûang*, except that the syllable spacing is less precise, varying from five to seven syllables. This verse signalled that the round would contain insults (*lam daa*) directed at Som Sii, the male *mohlam*.

ອອນ ຊວນ ອ້າຍ ແກ້ມ ອ້າຍ ອອນ **ຊວນ**
uan6 suan2 aaj4 kèèm4 aaj4 uan6 **suan2**
so soft, your cheeks are soft

ອີ່ງ ນັ້ນ ສາດ ເວ້ົາ **ມ່ວນ** ຈັ່ງ ແມ່ນ ສາດ ລຳ ມ່ວນ ແທ້ ນໍ ອ້າຍ ໂສມ **ສີ**
iing1 nan4 saat5 vaw4 **muan1**cang1 mèèn1 saat5 lam2 muan1 thèè4 nòò2 aaj4 soom3 **sii3**
So you can tease and have fun, you can lam really entertainingly, can't you Som Sii?

ເຫັ້ນ ປ່ຽບ ເຈົ້າ ໃສ່ ລົດ ແທກຊີ ກໍ່ ແລ່ນ ດີ ບໍ່ **ຢອກ**
hên3 piap1 caw4 saj1 lot1 thèèk4**sii2** kòò1 lèèn1 dii6 bòò1 **jòòk5**
If I compare you with a taxi, it appears that you run well, I'm not kidding

ແນ່ມ ເບິ່ງ ທ່າງ ຮູບ **ນອກ** ບໍ່ ທັນ ຕອນ ຮອດ **ສີ**
nèèm2 beeng1 thaang 2 huup4 **nòòk4** bòò1 than2 tòòn6 hòòt4 **sii3**
I look at the outside, we haven't yet made love

ຂ້ອຍ ວ່າ ຢ້ານ ທ່າງ ໃນ ຍິນ ດີ
khòòj5vaa1 jaan4 thaang naj2 ñin6 **dii6**
I'm afraid that inside might be welcoming

ຂ້ອຍ ຢ້ານ ຫົວ ໂປ **ຮູ** ບໍ່ ໄດ້ ລ້າງ ຈັກ ເທື່ອ
khòòj5jaan4 hua3 poo6 **sii4** bòò1 daj4 laang4 cak2 thùa1
I'm afraid that you may have never washed the pit viper

Example 7-20: Extemporised opening verse in *lam siphandon*, performed by Duang Phaeng (Ban Niw, Pakse, 13/11/99)

The next example contains verse constructed in *kaa têñ kòòn* form, featuring a combination of paired word rhyme, consonant rhyme (*kòòn khùa*), and separated consonant rhyme. As with Example 7-20 above, Duang Phaeng continues to use metaphors such as *hua paa hua ian* 'fish's head, eels head', and *maak khèèng maak khùa* 'tomatoes, eggplants', to refer to the penis and testicles of Som Sii, the male *mohlam*. It also jokes about men being unfaithful, using the image of a hollowed out length of bamboo, *kabang kabòòk*,[33] being poked into different holes.

ຂ້ອຍ ຊິ ຟ້ອນ ໄປ **ໃນ້** ຢ่າ ກະຫູດ ກະ**ຫາຍ**
khòòj5si1 fòòn4 paj6 **kaj4** jaa1 ka2huut5 ka2**haaj3**
I shall dance up close, don't get too amorous

ແນ່ນອນ ຂ້ອຍ ບໍ່ **ບາຍ** ດອກ ຫົວ ປາ ຫົວ **ອ່ຽນ**
nèè1nòòn2 khòòj5bòò1 **baaj6** dòòk5 hua3 paa6 hua3 **ian1**
I certainly won't touch the fish's head or the eel's head

ເຜິ່ນ ຢ້ານ ຂ້ອຍ ໄປ **ນ່ຽນ** ໝ່ອຍ ໝາກ ແຄ້ງ ໝາກ **ເຂືອ**
pheen1 jaan4 khòòj5paj6 **nian1** nuaj1 maak5 khèèng4 maak5 **khùa3**
are you afraid I'll grind your tomatoes and eggplants[34]

ຢ້ານ ຂ້ອຍ ຫລ້ອຍ ບ້ັ **ເກືອ** ກັບ ເມຶ ເມຍ **ດ່າ**
jaan4 khòòj5luaj5 bang4 **kùa6** kap2 mùa2 mia2 **daa1**
are you afraid I'll salt them, and you'll return to your scolding wife

ບໍ່ ຕ້ອງ ຢ້ານ ກະ **ຢ່າ** ຂ້ອຍ ບໍ່ ແມ່ນ ມື **ໄວ**
bòò1 tòòng4jaan4 ka2 **jaa1** khòòj5bòò1 mèèn1 mùù2 **vaj2**
you need not be afraid, however, I'm not quick-handed

ບໍ່ ແມ່ນ ຄົນ ຈັ່ງ **ໃຮ** ຄື ເຈົ້າ ຂີ້ ນ **ດອກ**
bòò1 mèèn1 khon2 cang6 **haj2** khùù2 caw4 han5 **dòòk5**
I'm not a wicked person like you

ເຫັ້ນ ກະບ້ັ ກະ**ບອກ** ກະແຫ ຍອກ ຊອກ ດູ
hên3 ka2bang4 ka2**bòòk5** ka2ñèè1 ñòòk4 sòòk4 **duu6**
I see bamboo cylinders, poking around

ວ່າ ແຕ່ ຫລ່ຽວ ເຫັ້ນ **ຮູ** ບໍ່ ຕິ ນ້ອຍ ຕິ ໃຫຍ່
vaa1 tèè1 liaw3 hên3 **huu2** bòò1 ti2 nòòj4 ti2 ñaj1
looking for holes, thinking if they're big or small

Example 7-21:Bawdy *kathuu* verse in *lam siphandon*, performed by Duang Phaeng

Many of the euphemisms for genitalia (such as eggplants, tomatoes, and fish heads) that Duang Phaeng uses in the above verse are used by *mohlam* in other regional *khap-lam* traditions and feature in the spoken language as well.

Finally, another bawdy scenario, favoured by Acaan Lin Kham, was related to me by Duang Phaeng:

> There's a verse [of Acaan Lin Kham's], that's really funny. It's about examining a person. The male sings saying, 'I'll examine you, examine your heart, examine your nervous system, your health'. Imagine it's me [he's talking to]. 'But I believe your health is weak, therefore you need an injection..., Come back to my house and you can be injected on my bed, I'll inject you, I have a big needle'...Well then I'd have to retort saying 'before you inject me, let me examine you first..., I want to know whether the needle is strong or weak (hard or soft), let me have a look...(Duang Phaeng Hanmani 22/11/1999)[35]

The Farewell: lam laa

As the sun rises and the performance draws to a close, the *mohlam* will sing a final round which farewells the audience and sponsor. As has been noted, the *mohlam* usually include their apology for any offence their words may have caused. The following example is an extract from a farewell verse by a female *khap ngeum* performer named Kong Kham. Note that this verse is composed using *kòòn aan* in a regular 1-2-3-4 line arrangement:

Line 1
ຄັນ ວ່າ ສວາຍ ມໆ ແລ້ວ **ແດດ** ຊິ **ຮ້ອນ** ຕາເວັນ **ແກ່** ໃສ ສີ
khan2 vaa1 sua3j maa2 lèèw4 **dèèt5** si1 **hòòn4** taa3vên2 **kèè1** saj3 sii3
the morning's here, it's getting hot, the sun is bright and clear

Line 2
ຊິ ໄດ້ ລາ ຈອມ ແພງ **ຕ່າວ** ຄືນ ເມືອ **ບ້ານ**
si1 daj4 laa2 còòm3phèèng2 **taaw1** khùùn2 mùa2 **baan4**
I farewell my sweetheart, and return home

Line 3
ຫຼານ ໄດ້ ມາ ຂັບ **ໃຫ້** ສົ້ມໃຈ ເຈົ້າ ແດ່ **ບໍ່**
laan3 daj4 maa2 khap2 **haj5** som3caj3 caw4 dèè1 **bòò1**
your relatives have come to take you,

Line 4
ຄັນ ຂັບ ໄປ **ບໍ່** **ຖືກ** **ຂໍ້** ຂໍ **ເຈົ້າ** **ຈົ່ງ** ອະໄພ ແດ່ ເນີ
khan2 khap2 paj3 **bòò1** **thùùk5** **khòò5** khòò3 **caw4** **cong1** a2phaj2 dèè1 nee2
if I have offended you, then I ask you for forgiveness

Line 1
ຊິ ໄດ້ ລາ ທັ້ງ ຕົ້ນ **ດອກ** **ໄມ້** ພວກ ເຈົ້າ **ແຕ່ງ** ແປງ ປະດັບ
si1 daj4 laa2 thang2ton4 **dòòk5** **maj4** phuak4 caw4 **tèèng1** pèèng3 pa2dap2
I farewell all these flowers which you have placed for decorations

Line 2
ລາ ທັ້ງ ໝອນ ຣອງ ຮັບ **ບ່າວ** ພີ ຊາຍ ຍິງ **ເທື້ອ**
laa2 thang2mòòn3hòòng2 hap1 **baaw1**phii1 saaj2 iing3 **theeng4**
I farewell the pillows which you young men lean upon

Line 3
ລາ ເດີ ຮັກ ມາ ລາ **ຕັ້ງ** ສັດທາ ວ່ານ **ຍ່ອນ**
laa2 dee3 khan3 maa2 laa2 **tang4** sat2thaa2 vaang2 saat5 **òòn1**
farewell! to the bowls and the soft mat the sponsor placed for us

Line 4
ສວາຍ ມໆ ແລ້ວ **ແດດ** ຊິ **ຮ້ອນ** ຊິ ລາ **ເຈົ້າ** **ຕ່າວ** ຄືນ
suaj3 maa2 lèèw4 **dèèt5** si1 **hòòn4** si1 laa2 **caw4** **taaw1** khùùn2
the morning's arrived, it's getting hot, farewell I'm going home

Example 7-22: Farewell in *khap ngeum* (Kavin 1997:25)

Alternative Themes: Politics and Development

In the section above, we discussed traditional themes which one would expect to hear performed during a typical all-night performance at a *bun* celebration. However, political themes have been a part of *khap-lam* performance since the mid-1950s, when the NLHS and the United States Information Service (USIS) began to utilise *khap-lam* as a means of disseminating their policies among the mostly illiterate peasant population (Brandon 1967; Recchi 1968). When the Lao PDR was declared in 1975, the new government continued to use *khap-lam* as a medium to transmit its revolutionary message to the general population. As we learned in chapter 5, the *saamakhom mòòlam taj*, which was established for this purpose, undertook extensive tours throughout Laos performing political themes. In the early stages of the revolution, political themes constituted the bulk of performances staged by the *saamakhom mòòlam taj*. According to Thongkham (1998:199) and Sunii (23/6/1999), eighty percent of the material they performed was of a political nature. Today, there are two broad themes which Lao performers refer to as *kaan mùang*, (ການເມືອງ) 'political': party political messages, and development issues. These themes are not used at traditional performances but are reserved for official functions and contract performances with development agencies.

Revolutionary Themes

Textual examples of the kind of material that was performed during the revolution are difficult to obtain. I have been unable to locate any archived performances from this time, but such material presumably does exist. A number of song lyrics from song competitions held in the late 1970s and early 1980s provide clues as to the possible content of *khap-lam* performances from the same time (MIC 1979; 1980). These songs, written and performed by amateur performing troupes of numerous government ministries and enterprises, formed part of the 'mass-culture' that the party attempted to develop after 1975. Common themes included exhortations to the people to rise up and build the new socialist society and to follow the party line and thinking.

Duang Phaeng has composed a number of political texts which appeared in Thongkham's 1998 book on *lam siphandon*. Although none of these texts are dated, their content places most of them as having been composed in the middle to late 1980s. There is less overt revolutionary rhetoric in these compositions than in the songs of the publications mentioned above. The titles of Duang Phaeng's compositions indicate their content: *lanùk*

bunkhun khòòng lung hoo cii min (ລະນຶກບຸນຄຸນຂອງລຸງໂຮ່ຈິມິນ) 'Remembering Uncle Ho Chi Minh's Merits'; *lam siphandon lùang kòòng thap kaa kèèn* (ລຳສີພັນດອນເລື່ອງກອງທັບກ້າແກ່ນ) 'A (*lam siphandon*) Story of Our Brave and Strong Army'; *lam siphandon lùang soaw num* (ລຳສີພັນດອນເລື່ອງຊາວໜຸ່ມ) 'A (*lam siphandon*) Tale of Our Youth'; and *lam siphandon lùang saam dii sòòng naathii khòòng mèè ñing laaw* (ລຳສີພັນດອນເລື່ອງສາມດີສອງໜ້າທີ່ ຂອງແມ່ຍິງລາວ) 'A (*lam siphandon*) Story of the Three Merits and Two Duties of Lao Women'. Below is a short excerpt from the last title, composed in *kòòn fùang* form:

ດີ ທີ່ ໜຶ່ງ ບໍ່ ໃຫ້ ໃຈ ບັ່ວ ບຽດ ລັ່ວ ກຽດ ສຽດ **ສີ**
dii6 thii1 nùng1 bòò1 haj5 caj6 bang6 biat5 lang2 kiat5 siat5 **sii3**
the first good; don't harass, loathe or criticise

ເປັນ ພົນ ລະເມືອງ **ດີ** ໃສ ສີ ລະອາດ
pên6 phon2 la1mùang2 **dii6** saj3 sii3 sa1 **aat5**
be a good citizen, nice and pure

ບໍລິສຸດ ຕໍ່ **ຊາດ** ສັດ ຊື່ ຈິ່ງ **ໃຈ**
bòò6li1sut2 tòò1 **saat4** sat2 sùù1 cing6 **caj6**
pure towards the nation, true and sincere

ອ້ອຍ ບໍ່ ໄດ້ ມີ **ໄອ** ປາກ ບອນ ໝອນ **ດັ້ນ**
khòòj5bòò1 daj4 mùù2 **vaj1** paak5 bòò6 nòòn3 **dan4**
I'm not a sleight-of-hand, or a gossip digging worm

ອ້ອຍ ເປັນ ຄົນ ດຸ**ໝັ່ນ** ເຮັດ ວຽກ ເຮັດ ການ
khòòj5pên6 khon2 du2**man1** hêt1 viak4 hêt1 kaan6
I am a diligent person in my work

Example 7-23: Political *lam siphandon* verse, composed by Duang Phaeng (Thongkham 1998:326)

Development Themes

Since the start of the 1990s Lao performing arts have been employed as a means to communicate the messages of a number of public health and safety campaigns to the general population. The most successful and longest-lasting partnership has been between UNICEF and the Bulgarian-trained Lao puppet theatre troupe, the *kòòng lakhòòn hun* (ກອງລະຄອນຫຸ່ນ), whose performances have been built around public health programs such as the treatment of dysentery, promotion of breast feeding, and immunisation. *Khap-lam* vocal music has also played a small role in these programs, mostly through performances recorded for broadcasting on LNR.

For example, in 1997 Acaan Sing and Paeng Thong were asked to perform a number of verses based upon public health issues, including breast feeding, HIV/AIDS education, and immunisation programs. The following excerpt is taken from transcription 6, lines 6.20 and 6.21, a performance for a UNICEF campaign to promote breastfeeding in Laos. Composed in *kòòn aan* form, these lines are 4 and 3 of Sila's pattern:

Line 4
ແມ່ນ ວ່າ ຍາມ ເມື່ອ ຄອດ **ລູກ** **ນ້ອງ** ໜໍ ກ່ອນ ມາບ ພຽນ ຖະໜອມ
mèèn1 vaa1 ñaam2 mùa1 khòòt4 **luuk4** **nòòng4** nòò3 kòòn1 maan2 phian2 tha2 nòòm3
Now, when you give birth, be diligent and take care

Line 3
ໃຫ້ ເອົາ ກິນ ນົມ **ຕູ້** ຂອງ ເທິ ສົ້ນ ຕະຫຼອດ
haj5 aw6 kin6 nom2 **tuu4** khòòng3 ton3 sin5 ta2lòòt5
feed your baby your own breast milk all the time

Example 7-24: *Khap ngeum* verse with development theme, performed by Acaan Sing (transcription 6, lines 6.20 and 6.21)

Conclusions

The discussion of poetic structures in this chapter has shown that creativity in Lao texts is judged by a set of standards which assess the performer's ability to manipulate the poetic medium to please an audience. This is a competency which covers not just the mastery of language but also mastery of musical performance skills I have dubbed 'the *muan* factor'. In his discussion of musical competencies, Brinner (1995:42) refers to two "clusters of knowledge": "language arts" and "dance, theatre, religious rituals and social occasions", as ones which may be directly pertinent to the ten domains of musical competence (as listed in chapter 1). The discussion of music, text, and performance in this and the previous two chapters has shown that texts and socio-religious ritual are intimately linked to a number of Brinner's domains; however, the boundaries between domains are not always clear. In the case of the regional *khap-lam* traditions, it may be appropriate to consider the knowledge of, and ability to compose, poetry as a separate aspect of competency, because it is usually the first domain to which *mohlam* always refer when assessing their own competencies and those of fellow *mohlam*.

Other domains of competency, such as sound patterning (the use of rhyming and tonal structures), interaction between all event participants (through explicit cues contained in the text), repertory (primarily conceived of in terms of text), orientation (relationship

between cadential points and certain lines of poetry), and performance context (which determines a number of textual themes) are based upon, and judged according to, the language skills of individual *mohlam*. The structures, composition, and themes of sung texts therefore occupy a prominent role in the poietic and esthesic processes, not only of *mohlam*, but of all the performance event participants.

Returning once again to the paradigm of the Lao *khap-lam* tradition which was set out in chapter 3, it is clear that the textual aspects of *khap-lam* are firmly rooted in the Lao cultural platform. Traditional Lao literature and the oral *phañaa* tradition have provided the framework upon which the texts of the regional *khap-lam* traditions have been built. Regional variations exist within textual domain. Different compositional methods have evolved in each of the two regions and there is some variation in indigenous terminology for the repartee mode in which the text is delivered. However, the similarities of underlying structures and themes coupled with the fact that texts are sung in mutually intelligible dialects of Lao shows that these two regional traditions belong to the broader tradition of the lowland Lao ethnic group.

Turning our attention to the Lao culture area and beyond, the texts of the broad Lao *khap-lam* tradition exhibit a number of elements in common with other vocal music traditions of Southeast Asia. Firstly, the utilisation of poetic forms taken from traditional literature or oral traditions for vocal music is ubiquitous throughout the region. Possibly the most similar to Lao *khap-lam* is the Khmer *ayai* tradition, which also uses verses based upon 28 syllable stanzas consisting of four lines with seven syllables (Sam-Ang Sam et al. 1998). It would be useful to discover whether this pattern is the one actually used in sung performances or if, like *kòòn aan* form in *khap-lam*, it is a literary ideal akin to Sila Viravong's model. Other mainland vocal music traditions that make extensive use of poetry include, Burmese *coù*, *bwé*, and *thahciñkañ* court songs (Keeler 1998), and Vietnamese *hát* (Nguyen 1998). The *pantun*-based traditions of the Malay peninsular and the islands of Indonesia such as Balinese *kidung* and *tembang* (Harnish 1998), Javanese *macapat* (Sutton et al. 1998; Kartomi 1973), Malaysian *dakir barat* (Matusky and Chopyak 1998), and Minangkabau *sijobang* (Phillips 1981), like the Lao *khap-lam* tradition, all feature poetic forms that have been adapted from literature written upon palm leaf manuscripts. Many of the above traditions are likewise similar in many thematic aspects, with love and courting themes being particularly widespread, as well as the recounting of epic stories taken from traditional literature (Sutton 2000:96). These textual features often

occur with one or more of the other parallel features summarised at the ends of chapters 5 and 6. Thus, we can see that the *khap-lam* tradition exhibits features that are not only found within adjacent vocal music traditions, but across the wider spectrum of Southeast Asian traditions.

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[1] Koret (2000:213) makes this observation in relation to the texts of Lao literature, noting that creativity in literary texts derives from "the skilful adaptation of conventions to fit the needs of a particular story's content".

[2] These are Sila's terms for sub-categories of *kòòn aan* and *kaap* forms that have been modified for *lam* through the addition of numerous pre- and post-syllables (Sila 1961:16).

[3] The interviews at which this information was obtained were as follows: Acaan Vanna (2/5/1999; 6/12/1999), Duang Phaeng (22/6/1999; 22/11/1999), Sunii (23/6/1999; 23/11/1999).

[4] The interview transcript reads: ມັນກໍ່ໄປຕາມພາສາ ໄປຕາມພາສາ ພາສາເວົ້າອອງເຜິ່ນຫັ້ນມັນມີບ່ອນກະສຽງຕ່ຳ ມັນມີບ່ອນກະສຽງສູງແລ້ວໄປ ເພາະຈະມັນແຈ້ງໃນນັ້ນ ໄປຕາມພາສາໄປຕາມເນື້ອໃນ

[5] Note that here a *füang* is a hemistich and not a pair of *kòòn aan* lines from Sila's model described in chapter 6.

[6] In this literary work, each line is split into two sections, or *füang*, the first of which has three syllables, and the second four syllables. In *lam siphandon*, this form has been extended, with each *füang* usually consisting of five and four syllables. However, this can vary.

[7] The term *kaang* 'middle' relates to the fact that none of the rhymed words are marked with an *êêk* or *thoo* tone marker. Different tones, however, are still produced, depending upon the word class of the initial consonant.

[8] The interview transcript reads: ມັນເລືອກໃດ ຜູ້ຝັ້ງ ຄັນຢາກໄປຈ້ອງຫວະກາງນີ້ມັນບໍ່ມ່ວນ ຊິຍັງມ່ວນປານໃດກະຢ່າ ມັນບໍ່ມີຈ້ອງຫວະ ມັນບໍ່ມີລູກ...ເອີ້ເອີ້ນວ່າບໍ່ມີລູກຫຸ້ມລູກມ່ອງ ເຕັ້ນວ່າຈ້ອງຫວະກາເຕັ້ນກ້ອນຈ້ອງຫວະຊ້າງຫ່ຽມແມ່ ມັນມີຈ້ຳຊັ້ນນີ້ ຈ້ອງຫວະກາເຕັ້ນກ້ອນນີ້ໝາຍຄວາມວ່າ ມັນສະຫຼັບມ່ວນສະຫຼັບບາດຂຶ້ນບາດລົງ

n.b. Duang Phaeng uses onomatopoetic terms to describe high and low pitched sounds. Low sounds are referred to as *thum* (ທຸ້ມ), and high sounds as *mòòng* (ມ່ອງ).

[9] The following interviews were conducted with *mohkhaen* Suun (22/6/1999-23/6/1999; 11/11/1999), Kham Sing (23/5/1999), Ki Kong (26/6/1999).

[10] The interview transcript reads: ເປ່ຳຟ້ອນໄວກ່ວາເກົ່າ ບໍ່ໄວບໍ່ຖືກນຳເຜິ່ນ ບາດໂຢ້ບາດຢ້ອນເດ ເປ່ຳນຳເຜິ່ນຕື

[11] The interview transcript reads: ອັນນີ້ແມ່ນກອນເຝືອງ ເອີ້ເອີ້ນວ່າເປັນກອນເຝືອງ ບໍ່ແມ່ນຈ້ອງຫວະສີພັນດອນ ມັນເປັນຈ້ອງຫວະຟ້ອນສະເພາະຂອງມັນແຕ່ໝໍ່ແຄນກໍເຝືອງໄປນຳຮີກັນ ຕ້ອງໄວກ່ວາລຳຫຳນະດາ ເອີ້ນວ່າຈ້ອງຫວະເຝືອງບໍ່ແມ່ນຕົ້ນຮູບສີພັນດອນ

[12] Thongkham's text reads: ນັບວ່າເປັນຈຸດເລີ່ມຕົ້ນຂອງການປັບປຸ່ງປ່ຽນແປ່ງ ໃນຕຳນອງສັ້ວວາເຂອງສິລະປະການແຕ່ງ
ເຊີ່ງເຮັດໃຫ້ເກີດຈ້ັງຫວະ ແລະຕຳນອງໄຕ່ເຕັ້ນເໝືອນກາຕົ້ນກ້ອນ, ຈ້ັງຫວະຝາດເໝືອນເຕ່ົາຕ້ອງເໝືອນຝອງຝາດຜົ້ງ
ຈ້ັງຫວະຝັດເໝືອນລ່ອງໄຫລເໝືອນນ້ຳຕ້ອງໄຄ ແລະ ອື່ນໆ ອັນເປັນບ່ໍ່ເກີດຂອງຕຳນອງສັ້ວວາດ ແລະ ຈ້ັງຫວະລຳສີພັນດອນ...

[13] The words *aaj* 'older brother' and *nòòng* 'younger sibling' are terms of address commonly used between people who are not necessarily related. In *khap-lam*, the male *mohlam* is always referred to as *aaj* and the female *mohlam* as *nòòng*.

[14] This fact was highlighted in an interview with Acaan Vanna (6/12/1999) in which he mentioned that technology had made it very easy for others to record his performances and then steal his poems in order to sell or use themselves.

[15] The Lao text reads: ລັກສະນະເນ້ືອໃນກ່ໍເລີ່ມມີການປ່ຽນແປ່ງມີກອນຕາມໜ້ັງສືພຸກ, ປະສົມກັບກອນສົມສະຄິດ ຫຼື
ລຳຕາມປະຫ໌ພານແບບສຳນ້ຶກໄດ້ແລ້ວ ລຳຢ້ືນກັນທ່ີ ແຕ່ພ້ົມນ້ິຄ່ອງແຄ້ວ ເກ່ົາກ່ອຍຕ່ໍ່ເນ່ືອງກັນເປັນກອນລຳ

[16] The interview transcript reads: ລຳໃສ່ໂລດເບາະ ເອ້ັນວ່ໍາບ່ໍ່ຄິດ ເປ່ົາສະພາຍແລ້ວລຳຕ່ົວຈ່ິງເລີຍ
ເອ້ົາເອ້ັນວ່ໍາດ້ືນ...ດ້ືນໄປເລີຍເວ້ົາຊ້ັນສາ ດ້ືນໝາຍວ່ໍາຄົນເປັນນ້ຳເປັນຫ້ອມເລີຍຄວາມລຳພ້ັນດ້ືນໄປເລີຍເອ້ັນວ່ໍາສົມບ່ໍ່ຄິດ
ຄືລາວບ່ໍ່ຄິດມ້ັນລຳໄປເລີຍອ້ັນນ້ີ້ແມ່ນສົມບ່ໍ່ຄິດ ພ່ໍ່ເຖ້ົາໂສມຫ້ັ້ນລຳ

[17] The transcript reads: ສົມບ່ໍ່ຄິດຫ້ັ້ນແມ່ນລຳໂລດຫາສະເພາະໜາ ແມ່ນບ່ໍ່ໄດ້ແຕ່ງ ຄືເຮົາລຳຊູ້ນ້ີ້ນ້ີ້ແຫຼ
ອ້ັນນ້ັ້ນເອ້ົາເອ້ັນວ່ໍາໂສມບ່ໍ່ຄິດແມ່ນລຸວໂສມລາວລຳບ່ໍ່ມ້ີກອນ ລາວລຳບ່ໍ່ມ້ີກອນ

[18] The interview transcript reads: ຫ້ົງຈາກຮຽນ ຮຽນໄດ້ບ່ໍ່ໄດ້ເທ່ົ່ງໃດ ສາມເດ່ືອນໄດ້ສາມເດ່ືອນຫ້ັ້ນໄດ້ຢູ່ 40 ກອນ
40ກອນຜ່ຍໝມຸ້ນແຈ້ງ ແຕ່ວ່ໍາເປັນປະເພດເຮົາກ່ໍລຳຕາມກອນໝູ່ເຮັດໃຫ້ ທ່ອງເອ້ົາລຳຕ້ານ ບາດຫ້ົງຈາກນ້ັ້ນເທ່ົ່ອໃດມ່ໍາແລ້ວ
ກ່ໍມີສະໝອງຢ້ືນເຮ້ັຍຫາລຳເອ້ົາເອງແນ ຄິດຮ່ອນ້ີ ບ່ໍ່ມ່ໍາກອນລຳນ້ີ້ແລ້ວຫາລຳໄປເລີຍ ນ້ັ້ນບ່ໍ່ໄດ້ກອນລຳຊຸດນ້ັ້ນ
ມີແຕ່ວ່ໍາຕ່ໍາເຫ້ັນໜູ້ໄດ້ຍ້ືນເອ້ົາໂລດລຳໂລດ

[19] The transcript reads: ເວລານ້ັ້ນ ລຳຕ່ໍາລາວນ້ັ້ນກ່ໍຄືສົມບ່ໍ່ຄິດ ຄືວ່ໍາອ້ອຍລຳກ່ໍຄືສົມບ່ໍ່ຄິດ ລາວກ່ໍບ່ໍ່ຮຽນນ່ໍາໃຜອ່ີກ
ເພ່ີນຮຽນຕ້ັ້ງແຕ່ອ້ີ້ບ່ໍ່ແມ່ນຄວາມລຳໃດອ້ີ້ນ້ີ້ຄືເວດໝ້ົນຄ່ໍາຕ່ໍາຖ່ໍາໜ່ໍາເພ່ີນຮຽນແຕ່ອ້ີ້ນ່ໍາໜ່ໍ້ລຳໜ່ໍ້ຕ່ໍາດຮຽນກ້ັບໜ່ໍ້ລຳສ່ໍາມຕ່ໍ່ານ
ນ້ັ້ນ....ຈ່ົ່ມໝ້ົນຫ້ັ້ນຄິດເອ້ົາບ້ັ້ດນ້ີ້ ຄິດໄປໄດ້ໄປຄິດໄປໄດ້ໄປ ພ່ໍ້ອ້ອຍລຳຈ່ົ່ງໃດຄິດ ຄິດເອ້ົາເອງໄດ້ນ້ີ້

[20] The interview transcript reads: ໜ່ຶ່ງປ່ີ ສອງປ່ີ ສ່ໍາມປ່ີຍ່ັງເດ່ົ້າຍ່ັງດ້ືນບ່ໍ່ຫ້ັນໄດ້ ຕ້ອງມ່ີພວກຫ້ົ້າປ່ີຢ້ືນເມ່ືອ
ພວກຫ້ົ້າປ່ີລ່ົງມ່ານ້ີ້ຕ້ອງໄດ້ຈ່ົ່ມຕ້ອງໄດ້ທ່ອງຈ່ົ່ມໄດ້ຕ່ີດປ່ໍາກຈ່ົ່ງໄປລຳ
ບ້ັດຄ້ັນຫ້ົ້າປ່ີຢ້ືນໄປແລ້ວຫ້ົ້າປ່ີຢ້ືນເມ່ືອເຖ່ິງສ່ໍາໝ່ໍາດບ່ໍ່ຄິດເລີຍເວ້ົ້າຈ່ົ່ງຊ້ັນສາ
ມີແຕ່ວ່ໍາຕ່ໍາເຫ້ັນໜູ້ໄດ້ຍ້ືນສ່ໍາໝ່ໍາດພະຫ້ຼຸດກ້ັບທ່ີ່ໄດ້ຮ່ຽໄດ້ຍ້ືນດອງແພງລຳ ມ່ີປະສົບການແລ້ວ ຫ່ືອ່ໍາສະໝອງທ່ີ່ໜ້ັ້ນມຸ່ນຫ້ັ້ນແລ້ວ
ເຮົ້ານ້ີ້ຄິດເຮົ້ານ້ີ້ຢ່ໍາກເວ້ົ້າໜ້ຍ່ັງກະພະຫ້ຼຸດກ້ັບທ່ີ່ໂລດ ອ້ັນນ້ີ້ເອ້ັ້ນວ່ໍາສົມບ່ໍ່ຄິດ ທ່ີ່ຈ່ິງແລ້ວລາວແກ່ງດ້ານນ້ີ້ ຄ້ັນຕ່ໍ່ໄປວ່ໍາເອ້ົ້ານ້ີ້ເອ້ັ້ນ
ອ້ັນນ່ໍາບ່ໍ່ຄິດ ດອງແພງບ່ໍ່ຄິດຄ່ົ້ງວ່ໍາໄປເລີຍໂລດເດ

[21] The interview transcript reads: ບ່ໍ່ແມ່ນໄດ້ໄອ່ໂຕ່ນ້ີ ຫ້ົ້າປ່ີຈ່ົ່ງໄດ້ ເວ້ົ້າສະເພາະອ້ອຍຫ້ົ້າປ່ີເຈ້ົ້າຈ່ົ່ງເວ້ົ້າສະພາບຕ່ໍ່ໜ້ົ້າໄດ້ໃດ
ປະສົມແລ້ວ...ເຮົ້ากໍ່ເວ້ົ້າໄປປ້ັ ບາດມ້ັນຄ່ໍາຈ້ັບເອ້ົ້າທ່ີ່ເຮົ້ານ້ຽນແລ້ວຕ່ໍ່ ສ້ັບສົນ ຖ້ໍ່າເຮົ້ານ້ຽນຈ້ົບແລ້ວໄດ້ຮ່ືອ່ໍາເຮົ້ານ
400ກອນຮ່ືອ້ອຍຈ່ົ່ງຢ້ໍ່ນ້ີ

[22] The interview transcript reads: ບ່ໍ່ນ້ັ້ນບ່ໍ່ໄດ້ແລ້ວ ມ້ັນເຮົ້ານ້ີ້ເວ້ົ້າເຮົ້ານ້ີ້ຊ່ີ້ບ່ໍ່ລຳກອນເກ່ົ່າຈ້ັກເທ່ົ່ອ ມ່ີແຕ່ລຳກອນໃໝ່ເລ່ືອຍໆ
ລຳແລ້ວກ່ໍເອ້ົ້າຖ້ິ້ມເລ່ືອ ສ້ັ້ວກອນໃໝ່ ຫ່ານ້ົ້ອງເອ້ົ້າເອງ ເວ້ົ້າຮູ້ແລ້ວອອກປ່ານ້ີ້ໂລດ ໄດ້ຍ້ືນພ່ານຍ່ິງເວ້ົ້າ ຮ້ືຜູ້ອ່ືນເວ້ົ້າ...

[23] The interview transcript reads: ສ່ອນຫ້ຼານກະທ່ີ່ຜູ້ຮຽນໃໝ່ເນາະ ຂະເຈ້ົ້າບ່ໍ່ຫ້ັນລ່ືງ ຂະເຈ້ົ້າກ່ໍຈ່ີ່ເອ້ົ້າສ່ອນຫ້ຼານ
ສົມມຸດວ່ໍາຮ່ືເປັນອ້ອຍນ້ີ້ແມ່ນບ່ໍ່ໄດ້ຈ່ີ ແນ່ບວ່ໍາຟ້ັງ...ໝ່ໍລຳຜູ້ຊ່ືຍຈະວ່ໍາມ່ໍາແນວໃດ ລະເຮົ້ານ້ີ້ຄິດຄ້ືນ້ັ້ນທ່ີ່ແລ້ວຕອບໄປຕ່ໍ່ານ້ັ້ນ

[24] The interview transcript reads: ຄ້ັນສົມມຸດວ່ໍາໄປລຳແຈ່ານ້ັ້ນກ່ໍຕ້ອງເວ້ົ້າເລ່ືອງງ່ານແຈ່ານເລ່ືອງຄົນຕ່ໍ່ານ
ໄປລຳຄົນຕ່ໍ່ານລຳເລ່ືອງຄົນຕ່ໍ່ານຄວ່ານຕ່ໍ່ານຄວ່ານເກ່ົ່ານ
ມ້ັນໄປຕ່ໍ່ານຮູ້ບກ່ໍ່ານຂອງເອ້ົ້ານ້ີ້ຕ້ອງກ່ໍ່ານ້ີ່ກະທ່ໍ່ານ່ໍ່ານເດ່ົ....ເປ້ັ້ອໃນຮ່ືກ້ັບແຕ່ລະຮູ້ບກ່ໍ່ານ ຮູ້ບກ່ໍ່ານສ່ິ່ງທ່ີ່ວ່ໍາ ຄ້ັນມະຫ່ໍ່ານຊ້ົ່ນ
ຕ້ອງກ່ໍ່ານຢ່ໍ່ານ້ີ່ໃຫ້ລຳນ້ີ້ແມ່ນອ້ັນດຽວກ້ັນ ລຳຫ້ຍ້ັ້ງກ່ໍຢ່ໍ່ານຊຸ້່ແມ່ນລຳຄູ່ລຳກອນຊຸ້່ແມ່ນລຳຄອນສະໜ້ັນອ່ີ່ຫ້ຍ້ັ້ງກະຢ່ໍ່ານ ແຕ່ວ່ໍາເອ້ົ້ານ
ຊ່ອກອ້ໍ່ໜ້ມມ່ໍາຫ່ານ້ີ້ໃຫ້ເຮົ້ານ ມ່ໍາໃຫ້ເຮົ້ານລຳ ມ່ໍາໃຫ້ເຮົ້ານເວ້ົ້ານ ເວ້ົ້ານ້ີ້ຈ່ົ່ງຊ້ັ້ນສາ ຕ້ອງໄດ້ເວ້ົ້ານເປັນປະເພດລຳຫ້ຍ້ັ້ງກ່ໍຢ່ໍ່ານ
ຕ້ອງໄດ້ເວ້ົ້ານຕ່ໍ່ານເຊ່ືອນໄອ່ທ່ີ່ເອ້ົ້ານສະເໜ່ີ

[25] There are three main variants of this genre, *teej thamadaa* (ເຕ້ີຍທ່ໍ່ານມ່ໍ່ານດ່ໍ່ານ), *teej khòòng* (ເຕ້ີຍຂ່ອງ), and *teej phamaa* (ເຕ້ີຍພ່ໍ່ານ່ໍ່ານ) (Miller 1985a:152).

[26] The interview transcript reads: ເປັນບ້ົ້ດໂສກໄດ້ ແຕ່ວ່ໍາເປັນ...ຄ້ັນຊ່ືເອ້ົ້ານ່ໍ່ານປ່ຽນເປັນເນ້ົ້ືອໃນ
ໂຕຕ່ໍ່ເປັນກະທູ້່ບ້ັນຫ່ານ້ີ້ມ້ັນກະບ່ໍ່ເອ້ົ້ານ້ີ້ກ້ັນ ບ່ໍ່ເອ້ົ້ານ້ີ້ກ້ັນ ເພ່ໍ້ອວ່ໍາລຳນ້ີ້ເປັນລຳອ່ອນເດ່ົ ຄ້ັນຊ່ືເອ້ົ້ານ່ໍ່ານ່ໍ່ານເປັນລຳກະທູ້່ກ້ັນ
ມ້ັນບ່ໍ່ເອ້ົ້ານ້ີ້ເລ່ືອງແລ້ວ ໂຕນ້ັ້ນຕ້ອງເອ້ົ້ານລຳສ້ີພ້ັນດອນ ແບບກະທູ້ ແບບຫ້ຳຫ່ານ ແບບດ່ຳກ້ັນ

[27] The interview transcript reads: ຕ້ອງເອ້ົ້ານ່ໍ່ານ່ໍ່ານເວ້ັນອອກເປັນແດດ ມ້ັນບ່ໍ່ມ່ີໂນ່ງເດ່ົ ເວລານ້ັ້ນໂນ່ງນ້ີ້ບ່ໍ່ມ່ີ
ມ່ີແຕ່ເບ່ິ່ງແຈ້ງອ່ານ່ໍ່ານ່ໍ່ານ ເອ້ົ້ານ້ີ້ເບ່ິ່ງກ້ອຍຮ່ືອ່ໍ່ານ່ໍ່ານ ເບ່ິ່ງກ້ອຍຮ່ືອ່ໍ່ານ່ໍ່ານອ່ານຊ່ືແຈ້ງເນ່ົ

[28] The interview transcript reads: ລຳຫ່ານ່ໍ່ານ ໃຕ້ບ່ໍ່ມ່ີນ້ັ້ນບ່ໍ່ມ່ີນອນບ່ໍ່ມ່ີສ້ັບອ່ອນສ້ັບຫ່ານ...ມ້ັນເວ້ົ້ານແບບລ້ັກສະນະສຸ່ນ
ບ່ໍ່ແບບລ້ັກສະນະໄອ່ໄຟ

[29] See Kerr (1992:918), Thongkham (1992:595), and Preecha (1989:609).

[30] This information was gained from a series of interviews with *mohlam* in the Pakse area (Vanna Keophilom 6/12/1999; Duang Phaeng Hanmani 22/6/1999; 22/11/1999; Sunii Kasoemlat 23/11/1999; Som Sii Kasoemlat 15/11/1999; Chindavan Sithavong 15/11/1999). The information from these interviews was supplemented by my own observations of actual performances and informal conversations I had with *mohlam*, *mohkhaen* and audience members.

[31] These are the Buddha, the Dharma (his teachings), and the Sangha (the monkhood).

[32] The interview transcript reads: ถ้าสิมหรุบปรุบ แบบอ่า...ซากแต่ยั่เอ้ำแจ้งแบบสิมหรุบ...แต่ยั่เอ้ำแจ้ง แต่ผู้ฟังเอิ้าแปเอิ้าเอง

[33] A *kabang* is a hollowed-out tube of bamboo in which sweetened sticky rice can be steamed. A *kabòòk*, which is similar, is also a classifier for long cylindrical objects, such as guns.

[34] The verb *nian* means 'to grind in a mortar'. It is also the name of a dish made with ground eggplant (Kerr 1992:707).

[35] The interview transcript reads: มีกอมหึ่งกอมกวดโตนั้นมีแรงโธใด๋ กอมอาจารมโตนั้น โตผู้ชายล่ำมันกวด มากวดหัวใจ กวดประสาด กวดสุภะพาบ เจ้าบ่ฮู้อ่าสุภะพาบเจ้าอ่อน สิมมุดแม่นอ่า เธิ้า เจ้าต้องสักยาเจ้าต้อง ใช้ยา สักยา เมื่อสักยู่เธื่อนอ้อย ภะสักยู่ต่องอ้อย อ้อยสักยาให้เจ้าเอ็มบักใหย่ๆ...แม่นเธิ้าภะต้องแก้ลืม จั่งว่า ก่อนเจ้าซิสักยาให้อ้อย กวดก่อน...อ้อยย้ามเอ็มเจ้ามันอ่อนหื้อแอ้ง กวดเบิ่งโลเสะแดว...

Chapter 8
CONCLUSIONS

Surface Similarities, Deeper Differences

Lao *khap-lam* vocal music belongs to a broad music culture area reaching across mainland and island Southeast Asia and into southern China, yet it retains a uniquely Lao identity. At the outset of this study it was noted that many vocal traditions of this area exhibit common features, including: all-night performance; simple musical accompaniment; male-female repartee often centred upon risque flirting, part of a phenomenon labelled as "erotic musical activity" (Yang Mu 1998); and the extemporisation of texts sourced from palm leaf manuscripts. However, these surface similarities belie the deeper complex relationships which give the region's individual music traditions their unique character.

In concluding her recent monograph on the Thai *wai khruu* ritual, Wong (2001:254) notes that the existence of similar performance-based rituals in neighbouring music traditions points to a regional emphasis on metaperformance for ritual efficacy, however, she insists "on the importance of local readings that work against any flattening, supraregional theory of performance and ritual". Furthering this argument, Wong goes on to say that "the *wai khruu* is a complex of behaviours and beliefs that are always local and always about more than the ritual itself" (2001:254). Kartomi (2001:309), writing about the classification of musical instruments, concludes with a similar argument, stating that "[o]nly by finding and studying each scheme in its own changing cultural setting can we understand it in its own right, let alone vigorously compare it with other known schemes". This study, through its detailed exploration of two regional *khap-lam* traditions, arrives at similar conclusions.

In their attempts to construct a Lao national culture Lao scholars, past and present, have relied upon surface similarities to postulate that the vocal music traditions/genres of different ethnic groups within Laos' borders all belong to a broad tradition which they call *khap-lam laaw*, 'Lao *khap-lam*' (see Houmphanh 1992a:196; Thongkham 1998:40-42). These assumptions have been driven by a nationalist agenda which uses ethnic Lao culture as the basis for comparison with minority ethnic group culture. Similarities are seen as proving the existence of an underlying common culture which binds Laos' diverse

ethnicities into a unified Lao nationality. Many Western ethnologists have used linguistic criteria in a similar way, often assuming that ethnic groups whose languages belong to a single family must share the same cultural knowledge and traditions. This has meant that important local readings are often overlooked in favour of less revealing regional ones. Deliberately avoiding this approach, I have shown how an appreciation of both differences and similarities allows us to understand the regional traditions of *khap-lam* on their own terms and how they relate to one another and the surrounding music cultures.

Previous studies have noted the existence of various regional Lao music genres and described some of their basic musical and textual structures. A number of their findings have been confirmed in this study. However, rather than accept the musical genre as the most useful unit of study, I have proposed and pursued the concept of the regional tradition which encompasses the performance practices, behaviours, intuitive knowledge and taxonomic concepts associated with the musical genre(s) and their texts. Underlying every regional *khap-lam* tradition are four primary components: music, text, performance practice and context, all of which emanate from a single Lao cultural platform that is rooted in a common language and social behaviours. In particular, common text and music structures as well as music-text relationships link the regional traditions with one another giving them their discrete Lao identity. At the same time each of the four components operates on a regional level, absorbing and reflecting localised concepts and behaviours. Thus, performers and audiences simultaneously access and utilise the musical competencies and compositional and interpretive processes at two discrete levels: the regional and ethnic. This enables Lao people to understand the principal features and behaviours of any *khap-lam* performance they might witness, however, their understanding and engagement is optimal when they are participants within their own regional tradition.

Musical Style and Extra Musical Associations

Regional traditions can be separated into two broad geographic groups, southern and northern, according to the style of vocal delivery and *khaen* playing used. The basic format of the performance is the same in all traditions: a single *khaen* accompanying alternating singing between a male and female *mohlam*. Two basic types of *khaen* are used. In southern regions *khaen* have seven or eight pairs of pipes, the latter featuring two higher pitches which are used as constant drones in many accompaniment styles. Northern traditions use *khaen* very similar in appearance to those in the south, however, they lack

several pitches and, in some cases, may have fewer than seven pairs of pipes. One consequence of this is that northern styles of *khaen* playing do not have the high drone pitches which typify southern styles. The *khap ngeum* tradition of Vientiane is an exception to the north-south distinction since it features the southern variant of the *khaen* played in a northern accompaniment style.

The genres of the *lam siphandon* tradition are characterised by a rhythmical *khaen* accompaniment, played in duple or quadruple time, accompanied by a vocal line whose rhythm rarely relates to the *khaen* pattern. In contrast, *khaen* playing in the northern tradition of *khap ngeum* is non-metrical, lacks constant drones and closely follows the sung melody. In *lam siphandon* the singing style is primarily syllabic and delivered in a rapid tempo, although the genre of *lam som* is always slower than *lam siphandon*. Female *mohlam siphandon* tend to adopt a more melismatic approach to their sung delivery (for the musical genres of *lam siphandon* and *lam som*), favouring ornamentation much more than males. In contrast, there is little to differentiate male and female singing styles in the *khap ngeum* tradition, both favouring a slow melismatic delivery throughout with frequent ornamentations.

Performers and audiences of the *lam siphandon* and *khap ngeum* traditions share common ways of speaking about performance contexts, practices, and thematic content. Their texts are primarily based upon the *kòòn aan* poetic structure and themes which derive from Lao Buddhist literature and the oral tradition of *phañaa* poetry. Musical structures are based upon pentatonic modes played on the *khaen*. All of these point to a direct relationship between the various regional *khap-lam* traditions. However, a number of important differences exist in performance practices, which concern the number of musical genres performed, the use of dance movements, audience-performer interaction, and taxonomic concepts.

An initial impression of Lao performers is that they do not engage in explicit theorising over the musical and textual aspects of *khap-lam*. However, indigenous theories do exist, and these exhibit variations from one regional tradition to another. Indigenous ways of thinking about textual composition structures and techniques have also been revealed in this project, indicating that future scholarship should continue to move away from Sili Viravong's observer-imposed taxonomies towards culture-emerging ones. The regionalism of text and music theories reinforces the importance of identifying areas of difference in order to discover the core concepts and meanings of a music tradition.

Lexical tone and music pitch relationships are a prominent, and problematic, feature of *khap-lam* singing. While the precise techniques involved remain elusive, we do know that melodies are generated by combining several elements: the musical scale provided by the *khaen* accompaniment (matched to the *mohlam*'s range), generic melodic motifs, and the placement of particular lexical tones at predetermined syllables in the poetic structure. *Mohlam* from both the *lam siphandon* and *khap ngeum* traditions demonstrate a remarkable consistency in their placement of particular tones, however, this knowledge is intuitive and they have no explicit theory explaining how the melody is generated.

Traditional performances of *khap-lam* are closely aligned with, and temporally and spatially bounded by, the Buddhist rituals that motivate and encompass them. Performers and audiences connect to the physical and spiritual world, both imagined and real, via the verses sung by the *mohlam*. Extra musical associations abound, however, these are not always linked to individual musical pieces or genres, but frequently to specific time periods and/or themes within the performance. The choice of particular themes and the duration for which they are performed is negotiated between the participants and varies from one performance to another.

Khap-lam as a Gendered System

For the most part, traditional *khap-lam* performances reflect the relative complementarity of gender relations found within the private sphere of Lao social life. Female *mohlam* enjoy the same status as their male counterparts, sharing equally in singing duties, payment and the accolades they receive from audiences and sponsors for their verbal and singing skills. Textual content also reflects gender complementarity in a number of ways. For example, Lao women's right to choose their partner is strongly reinforced through the courting texts of *lam kiaw* in which the female *mohlam* may refuse or accept the advances of the male and make fun of him using sexually charged language. Female *mohlam* also engage their male counterparts in debates on Buddhist morality, an aspect of performance which appears to contradict women's significantly lower status in Lao Buddhism. These complementary aspects appear to have developed in tandem with the evolution of *khap-lam* from its ancestor, the *aan nangsùù* tradition, which was originally restricted to males. As the performance tradition moved away from public readings of written texts towards extemporised texts women, who lacked the required education and literary skills to perform *aan nangsùù*, were able to become performing participants.

A number of elements reinforcing gender hierarchy are also expressed through *khap-lam* performance. Cultural ideas of women as the weaker sex and their subservient role in public life are reinforced through the use of the older sibling/younger sibling (*aaj/nòòng*) pronouns which explicitly mark hierarchy in a relationship and the expectation that they dress in traditional attire. This dress standard is propagated through government policies which require its female employees to wear the traditional woven skirt, the *sin*. Although female *mohlam* are treated as equals in their religious debates with men, women's primary religious role as a merit maker and alms-giver is perpetuated and reinforced via the *bun* context in which they act as sponsors and are responsible for food preparation. Occasionally marriage may end the career of a female *mohlam* if her husband refuses to let her perform. However, this is less likely in the case of highly skilled *mohlam* such as Duang Phaeng and Paeng Thong since audience/peer demands and the substantial contribution performance income makes to the household are difficult to refuse. In contrast, it is unlikely that a newly married woman would have the authority to make her *mohlam* husband cease performing.

The Thai Past As Lao Future?

Over the past forty years Lao *khap-lam* has demonstrated an extraordinary ability to adapt to social, political, and technological change. It has survived war, a socialist revolution, and the significant loss of population that accompanied these events. Since the 1970s the *khap-lam* traditions of northeast Thailand have suffered a severe decline which eventually resulted in their replacement by a completely new genre called *lam sing*. The rapid modernisation and economic development that precipitated this decline in northeast Thailand did not reach into Laos due to the Lao government's isolationist policies and strict cultural controls. However, over the past decade Laos has embarked on a program of economic development and opened up to the region; policies which will make it increasingly difficult to resist the encroachment of those external cultural influences which do not fit the government's vision of Lao culture.

Whether or not the regional traditions of Lao *khap-lam* will suffer the same fate as those in northeastern Thailand remains to be seen. Poverty, the strong rural base of the population, and government cultural policies remain as significant forces for conservatism in the face of increased pressure from popular 'global' and Thai culture with its modern electrified sounds. To the casual observer *khap-lam* appears to be losing ground to newer,

more fashionable, and louder, forms of entertainment (including pop music arrangements of *khap-lam*), particularly in the larger urban centres. However, the continued enthusiasm of the Lao people for holding *bun* celebrations coupled with the recent growth of sponsorship by visiting former refugees has enabled traditional *khap-lam* performances to enjoy relative prosperity in the current climate of change and uncertainty. At the beginning of the 21st century *khap-lam* remains relevant to a broad section of the Lao community but to ensure its survival into the next decade *khap-lam* must retain its position as the main form of *bun* entertainment and recruit a new generation of performers and audiences.

Appendix 1

THE LAO LANGUAGE

The Lao Language and its Dialects

Lao is the official language of the Lao PDR and is closely related to Central Thai, the official language of the Kingdom of Thailand. Both languages are members of the south-western group of Tai languages (Li 1960:953), a classification based more upon the distribution of lexical items and phonetic characteristics than the geographic locations in which they occur. A large number of Lao regional dialects are found in both Laos and Thailand, which are descendants of the Lan Xang (ancient Lao) language that subsequently split into three main branches: Vientiane, Luang Phrabang, and Sakon Nakon (Brown 1967:144). From these three branches came the many dialects that are spoken in Laos and northeast Thailand today. The dialect spoken in and around Vientiane is the one upon which the official language of Laos is based. However, there are noticeable differences in lexical items and tonal phonology between the dialects from the north and south of Laos, as well as those in northeast Thailand. Since this study deals with poetic verse from the Vientiane region and the southern province of Champassak only these dialectal differences in phonology will be detailed here.

Lao is generally categorised as a mono-syllabic, analytic, isolating language, quite typical for languages of the mainland Southeast Asia region. These labels usually indicate that there is a large phoneme inventory (in particular vowels) with tones, and ubiquitous verb serialisation. Although affixes do not attach to lexical items to indicate subject/object agreement, tense, aspect, plural, or possessives, Lao is not totally bereft of morpho-phonological processes, so the label mono-syllabic is somewhat misleading. Matisoff (1973) has referred to languages like Lao as sesquisyllabic because they feature a large number of forms which have a prefix-like syllable. For example, there are a number of frequently occurring initial consonant/vowel combinations (e.g. /pha-, pa-, ka-, kha-/), which may be remnants of an earlier prefix system, now fossilised. Words such as *pathêêt* 'nation', and *kacaaj* 'to distribute' exemplify these forms. Furthermore, multi-syllabic words do occur in Lao, many of which are borrowed from other languages. During the 20th century Lao, like Thai, borrowed heavily from Sanskrit and Pali for religious and scientific

vocabulary (Enfield 1999:259). English loanwords are now becoming increasingly common, and a number of words with French origins are still in everyday use.

Phonology

The sound system of Lao is virtually identical to Central Thai with the main differences being in phonological processes, particularly tones. Lao has twenty consonant phonemes, set out below in Table I. A major difference between phonological features of Lao and Central Thai is the lack of any consonant clusters and the palatal plosive /ch/. Lao has an additional nasal phoneme /ñ/ and the labio-dental glide /w/ has a predictable variation, being realised as labio-dental fricative /v/ in initial position. Lao has no consonant clusters, although the Lao writing system retains the consonant clusters /khw-/ (ຄວ, ຂວ) and /kw-/ (ກວ), however, they are not articulated. Where these clusters are followed by a long /a/ vowel (e.g. /khwaa, kwaa/) an /ua/ diphthong is produced to give /khua-/ and /kua-/.

In the Champassak dialect, the consonants /d/ and /l/ are in free variation in the initial position, thus the word /daj/ 'to get' can be realised as /daj/ or /laj/ (Compton 1979:186; Enfield 1999:261-262). This variation can be heard in the recordings of the southern *khap-lam* genres examined in this study, however, my transcriptions follow the orthographic form. Another Champassak variation of an initial position consonant, occurs with /ph/, which is occasionally realised as /f/, however, this phenomenon was less apparent among the participants with whom I worked.

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Voiced Plosive	b		d			
Voiceless Unaspirated Plosive	p		t	c	k	q
Voiceless Aspirated Plosive	ph		th		kh	
Nasal	m		n	ñ	ng	
Fricative		f	s			h
Lateral			l			
Glide		v/w		j		

Table I: Lao consonant phonemes

There are nine vowels in Lao, shown in Table II below, all of which exhibit contrastive length. In addition, Lao has three diphthongs /ia/, /ua/ and /ùa/ which also have contrastive length. However, the short diphthong phonemes are uncommon. Where two symbols are shown in the table below, the first is the symbol used in transcriptions in this thesis, the second is the IPA symbol.

	Front	Central	Back (unround)	Back (round)
High	i		ù	u
Mid	ê / e	e / ə		o
Low	è / ɛ	a		ò / ɔ

Table II: Lao vowel phonemes

Consonant Classes

Lao consonants are divided into three classes: mid, *kaang* (ກາງ); low, *tam* (ຕ່ຳ); and high, *suung* (ສູງ). The class of a word's initial consonant (in combination with a number of other parameters) determines the lexical tone that a particular word will take. The three consonant classes and their members are listed below.

Mid (8 consonants)

ກ	ຈ	ດ	ຕ	ບ	ປ	ອ	ຢ
/k/	/c/	/d/	/t/	/b/	/p/	/q/	/j/

Low (13 consonants)

ຄ	ງ	ຊ	ຍ	ທ	ນ	ພ	ຟ	ມ	ຣ	ລ	ວ	ຮ
/kh/	/ng/	/s/	/ñ/	/th/	/n/	/ph/	/f/	/m/	/r/	/l/	/v/	/h/

High (6 consonants)

ຂ	ສ	ຖ	ຜ	ຝ	ຫ
/kh/	/s/	/th/	/ph/	/f/	/h/

A number of combination forms exist which convert low class consonants into high class consonants. This is achieved through the addition of the consonant ຫ /h/ before ງ /ng/, ຍ /ñ/, ນ /n/, ມ /m/, ລ /l/, and ວ /v/ which are low class consonants without a corresponding high class form.

Tones

Different Lao dialects have slightly different tone systems which are determined by a number of phonological factors within the syllable such as vowel length and whether the

syllable is smooth or checked ('live' or 'dead'). For a full explanation of how tones in Tai languages are determined, the reader should consult William Gedney's *Checklist for Determining Tones in Tai Dialects* (1972). The tones of the Vientiane and Champassak dialects of Lao are explained in chapter 6.

In addition to the five standard tones, there are several non-standard tones which are employed to indicate illocutionary force such as emphatics, contradiction etc (see Crisfield 1974; 1978). A new tonal category, proposed by Enfield (2001), is the unstressed tone (marked as 0), which occurs on any word not fulfilling a major semantic function in any given utterance. For example, the phrase /man2 si0 paj0 lin5/ (ມັນຊິໄປຫຼິ້ນ) 'he'll go to play' contains two unstressed words that nominally take tones 1 and 3. However, in relation to sung utterances it is difficult to detect occurrences of non-standard tones and unstressed tones. Furthermore, as song texts are a marked form of communication it may be that some or all of these non-standard tones, common to everyday speech, do not occur in sung texts at all (see chapter 6).

Main Features of Lao Grammar

Lao is a highly pragmatic language in terms of its syntactic behaviour, with much of the interpretation of utterances determined by discourse and situational context. This means that word orders other than the often cited Subject-Verb-Object order, occur frequently in normal everyday speech. The texts of *khap-lam* also tend to exhibit these pragmatic characteristics, however, grammatical aspects of sung texts are not explored in this thesis. Noun phrases are constructed with the head noun at the front of the utterances, as follows:

Noun + (modifer) + (number) + (classifier) + (determiner)

Other salient features of Lao include, ubiquitous use of serial verbs, a classifier system for counting, modifiers follow the nouns they modify and, extensive use of ellipsis when the omitted constituent is recoverable through context (although ambiguity is still common). Extensive use of noun/noun, verb/verb, verb/noun compounding occurs, making the language highly productive. Some examples of this process are given in the following section on elaboration. However, a detailed account of the intricacies of Lao syntax is beyond the scope and intent of this study. Readers seeking a better understanding of

grammatical features may consult works by Enfield (1994; 2000), Chapman (1996) and Wright (1994).

Elaboration in Lao[1]

One broad grammatical/semantic feature that deserves further explanation here is elaboration. This encompasses a number of strategies, which are employed by Lao speakers in everyday communication events to add impact and particular semantic nuances to their speech. Elaboration as it applies to forms found in Malay, Burmese, Khmer, and Thai (and thus by extension, Lao) has been defined as follows;

> ...a set of processes of expression in which essentially simple ideas are expressed by strings of words which, while supporting each other, convey more or less the same notion. The effect of this style of expression is, depending upon the requirements of the context, to give emphasis, to introduce a certain subtlety of meaning, or to embellish. We may also encounter various florid styles making much use of reduplications and compounded synonyms. In other words, several modes of expansion are operative in these languages by which base forms can be 'inflated' without altering their lexical meaning. (Nacaskul 1976:873)

Elaboration is ubiquitous in spoken Lao. A number of elaboration types are listed below with examples, some of which are taken from Koret (1994:Ch 2).

Paired elaboration is when two words are combined to expand the meaning of the two individual elements. The most frequently used forms are listed below.

(a) without rhyme, alliteration, or assonance	ຄັກແນ່	*khak nèè*	'certainly'
(b) with alliteration	ເກັບກຳ	*kép kam*	'to collect'
(c) with assonance	ຈັດຕັ້ງ	*cat tang*	'to establish, organise'
(d) with rhyme	ແຂງແຮງ	*khèèng hèèng*	'to be strong'
(e) two words of different meaning combine to give a new meaning.	ຕິດຕໍ່	*tit tòò* *tit* 'to stick' *tòò* 'to connect'	'to communicate'
(f) pairs of contrasting meaning	ເງິນຄຳ	*ngen kham* *ngen* 'silver' *kham* 'gold'	'wealth'

(g) Reduplicated syllable (the first syllable usually has an altered tone) ງາມງາມ *ngaam ngaam* 'very beautiful'

Another common method of elaboration involves compounding of verbs with verbs, or verbs with nouns to create four syllable expressions (Roffe 1975; Hass 1964:xvii). One construction is when one element is reduplicated with the two related syllables occurring in either the first and third position, or the second and fourth position, as example (h) below illustrates;

(h) huam2 maj4 huam2 mùù2
unite wood unite hand
'to cooperate'

This example also exhibits another feature, whereby the syllable /maj4/ 'wood', has no direct semantic relation to the overall meaning of the expression. Its role is largely euphonic. In fact, a Lao speaker would only need to say the last two syllables to give the meaning 'to cooperate', but the language's tendency for elaboration results in four syllables being used to communicate the same idea. This example illustrates Nacaskul's observation that elaborate expressions convey essentially simple ideas, but that native speakers choose elaborate forms for stylistic reasons. A second variation of the four syllable expression, involves a rhyme between the second and third syllables without any repetition of syllables. However, as in example (h) above, one syllable may be nonsensical or semantically unrelated. Although many four syllable expressions are conventionalised, for example (i) below, the productive processes available in Lao enables conventionalised compounds to be run together by skilful speakers and writers, as in (j) below;

(i) tham2 maa2 haa3 kin3
do come seek eat
'to go out and make a living'

(j) hèèng5 ka2dèèng3 paj3 duaj4 sèèng3 dèèt5 phèèt4 phaw3
dry dried out go with light sunshine n.s.[2] *burn*
'...dried out by the savagely burning sun'

A third type of elaboration in Lao is a process called expansive reduplication. In this elaboration type, a lexical item is reduplicated but a sound change is incorporated into the second, reduplicated syllable, rendering it nonsensical. Roffe (1975) has detailed a number of these forms as they appeared in the Luang Phrabang dialect in the 1960s and 1970s, one of which appears in example (k) below (from Roffe 1975:287). These reduplicative forms are highly productive, allowing individual speakers to make up their

own on the spot. However, a number of forms, such as that shown in (l), have become conventionalised and are widely used among Lao speakers.

(k) tak2 nam4 tak2 naj2
scoop water scoop n.s.
'to scoop up water'

(l) mòò3 long2mòò3 lam2
expert n.s. expert lam
'mohlam (and other such people)'

The final and most complex form of elaboration in Lao is a large open word class known as expressives. These forms occur in numerous languages of the world, including Lao. Although not every Lao speaker makes extensive use of expressives, they are understood by all native speakers. Several examinations of expressives in Lao have been undertaken to date (Crisfield 1978; Chapman 1996; Wayland 1996) which explore the complexities of the syntactic behaviour and sematic role of these forms. The outline presented here is intended as a brief overview only. The reader is advised to consult the above works for further detail on expressives.

In general terms, expressives may be described as words that "describe the sensory perceptions" of the speaker (Diffloth 1976:255). Two additional descriptions set out below further illustrate this point:

> They attempt to be a vivid re-presentation or re-creation of an event in sound. Always they try to capture the freshness of an event and express it of themselves with nothing to dull or cloud the evocation. (Fortune 1962)

> A vivid representation of an idea in sound. A word, often onomatopoeic, which describes a predicate, qualificative or adverb in respect to manner, colour, small, action, state or intensity. (Doke 1935:118)

In Lao, a speaker making frequent use of these forms is likely to have a reputation as a skilled conversationalist. Conversation is a highly valued skill in Lao society, as people like to spend their leisure time engaged in conversation with others. Therefore, it is not surprising that, from time to time, these expressive forms occur in the *khap-lam* poetry composed by *mohlam*, people who are especially skilled in the manipulation of language. Yet, perhaps due to the restrictions of the poetic structure in which *khap-lam* texts are composed, expressives are not overly abundant in *khap-lam*. Two examples of expressives as they occur in spoken Lao are set out in (m) and (n) below.

(m) phu2phet1 kòò1 mit1 sòòj4 mòòj4
Phu Phet LINK quiet EXP.
'Phu Phet was silent (motionless)'

(n) thòòng1 naa2 pèèn3 caang1paang1
plain field vacant EXP
'clear and wide open fields'

[1] This section is a summary of my earlier work which appeared in Chapman (Chapman 1996:20-23).

[2] n.s. non-sensical element

Appendix 2

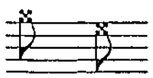
MUSICAL TRANSCRIPTIONS

This appendix contains six musical transcriptions: two performances (one male and one female) for each of the three genres, *lam siphandon*, *lam som* and *khap ngeum*. The discussion of typical generic musical structures and individual performer's styles in chapter 6 is based upon analysis of these six transcriptions. The reader should bear in mind that these transcriptions portray the overall style of each genre, and are not intended to be a completely accurate representation of the pitch and rhythm values in these performances. There is little point in attempting complete accuracy of the vocal line, because Lao *mohlam* do not overly concern themselves with issues of preciseness in pitch and rhythm.

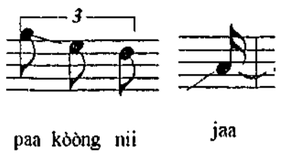
The relative dynamics of the vocal delivery is marked by using four words which operate as two pairs of opposites. The first pair, 'loudly' and 'softly' are used when a vocal phrase begins a round or after a break in the singing. The second pair, 'louder' and 'softer', are used to describe a relative change of loudness intensity once a vocal phrase has been commenced. These words appear in the space between the two staffs at the syllable where the change occurs. Of course, these terms are subjective, and not all listeners will agree with my judgments, but this is the nature of transcription.

The markings that are used in the transcriptions to depict various nuances in the music are described below.

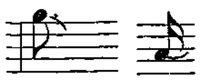
Explanation of Symbols Used in the Musical Transcriptions



Cross note heads indicate approximate pitch only. This is used in instances where the vocal is delivered in spoken tones or where the pitch is not clear.

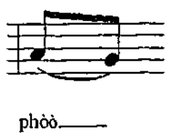


Straight lines between two pitches indicate a glide from one pitch to the other. Straight lines leading to or away from a pitch indicates that the singer glides to or away from the pitch from an indistinct pitch.



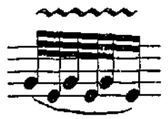
naang phua

Curved lines placed after a pitch indicate that the singer either ascends (upward curve) or descends (downward curve) in pitch from the transcribed pitch. The pitch change is more gradual than that indicated by the straight lines above.



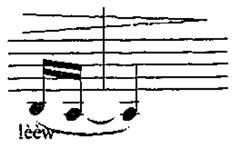
phòò

Slurs indicate that the pitches belong to a melismatic syllable (i.e. a single syllable sung to more than one pitch)



laaj

The wavy line above a note or series of notes indicates a tremolo-like articulation in the vocal line. These usually appear over a series of rapidly alternating pitches, however, where different pitches could not be determined the tremolo symbol is placed over the most distinct pitch.



lèèw

Indicates when the vocal melody drops to a level that is barely discernible.

Transcription 1: Lam Siphandon

(female vocal)

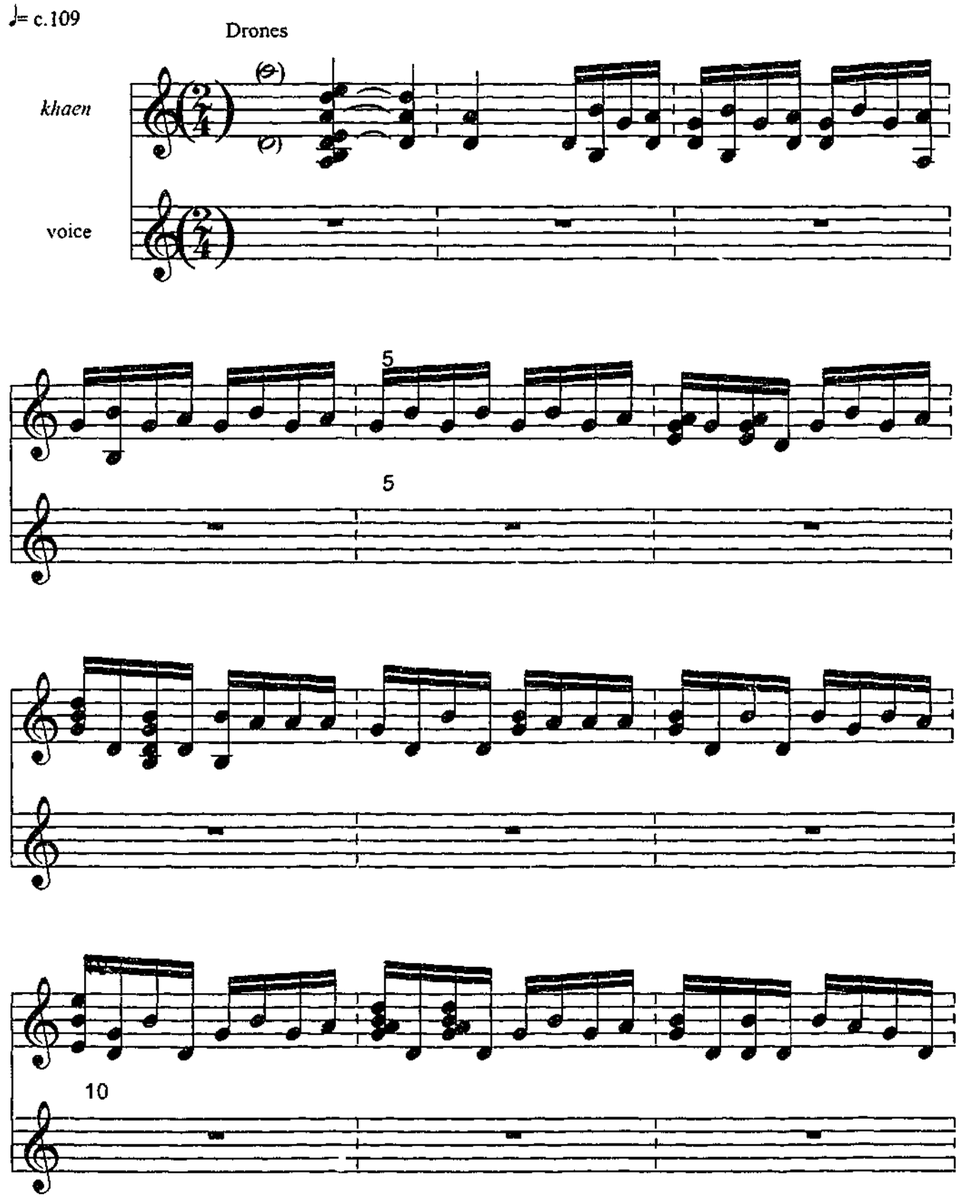
Performed by Duang Phaeng 25/1/99 at Pakse

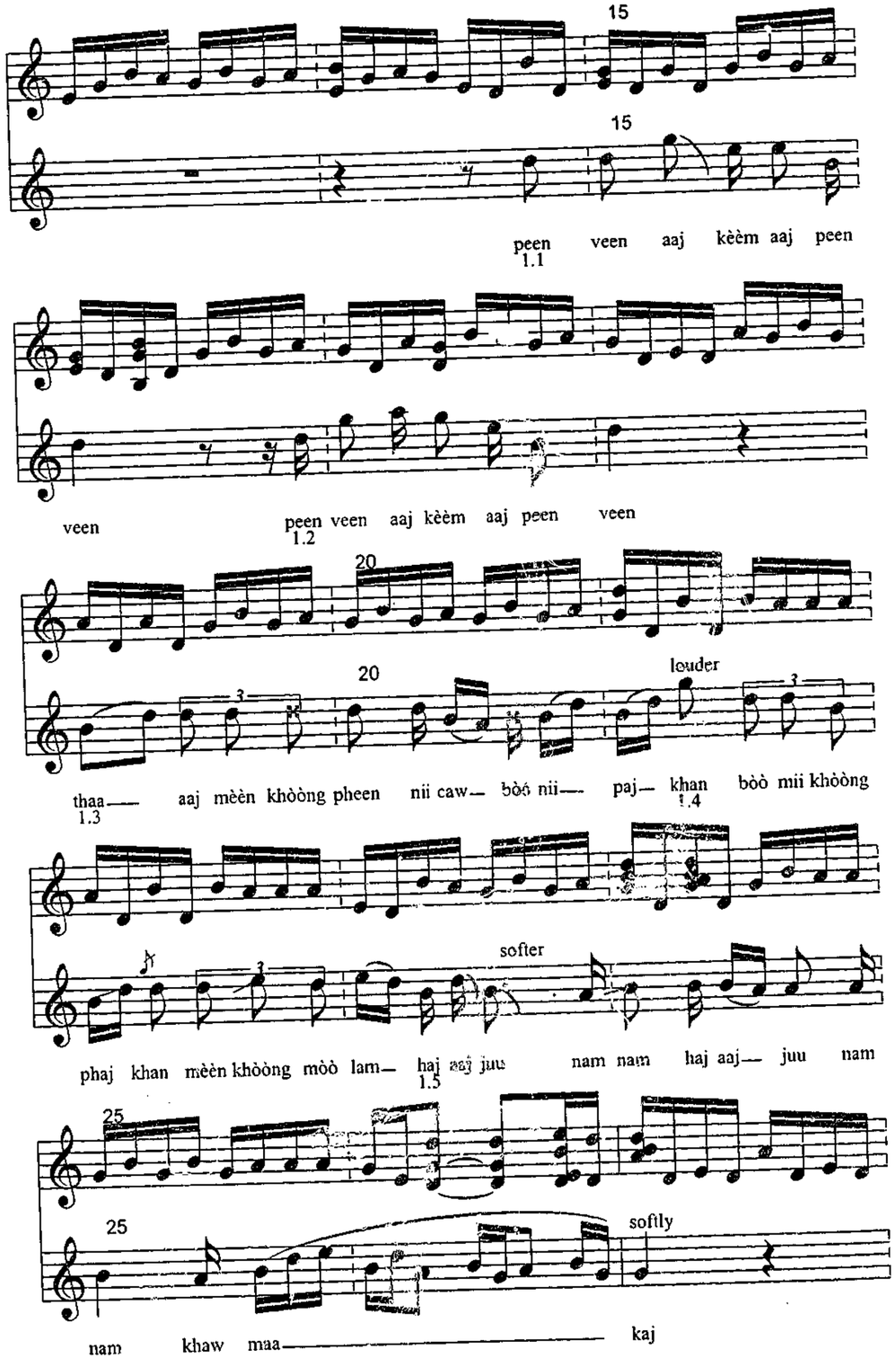
Recorded and transcribed by Adam Chapman

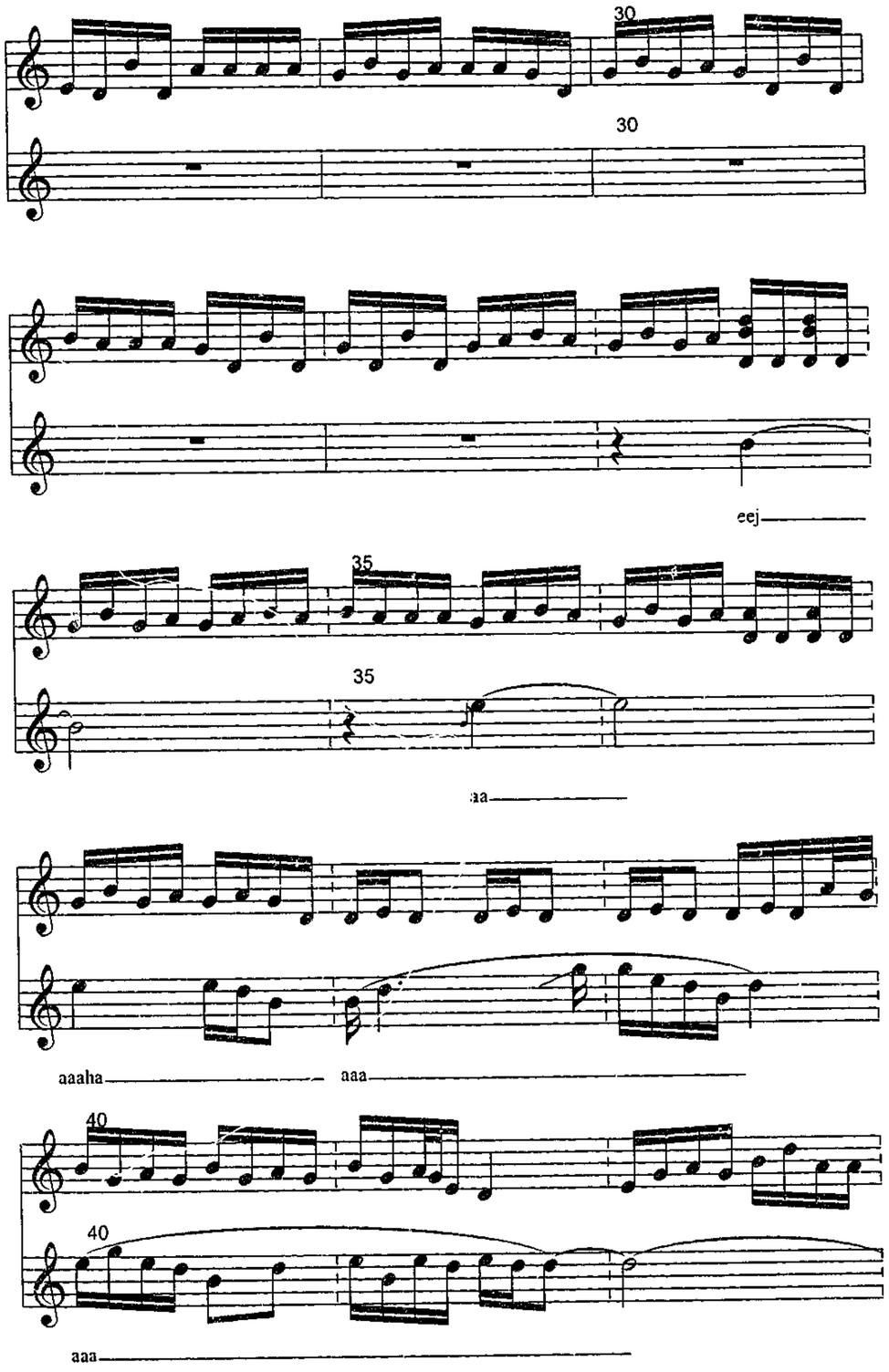
khaen accompaniment in *sòòj* mode (d, e, g, a, b)

d plays c (-11 cents)

♩= c.109




15
15
peen veen aaj kèèm aaj peen
1.1
veen
peen veen aaj kèèm aaj peen veen
1.2
20
20
louder
thaa— aaj mèèn khòòng pheen nii caw— bòó nii— paj— khan bòò mii khòòng
1.3
1.4
softer
phaj khan mèèn khòòng mòò lam— haj aaj juu nam nam haj aaj— juu nam
1.5
25
25
softly
nam khaw maa— kaj


30
30
eej
35
35
aa
aaaha aaa
40
40
aaa

45

aaa

loudly

cang vaa — naang daj ñin siang
1.6

50

50 softer

yaw pên taa caw ñoon saj hua caj naang hèèng hòòn dii lèèw daj huang
1.7

louder

theeng — mùù nii thòòn pha dêêt hee long beeng bòò sia
1.8

55

55 softer

sii — sa vat đii nòò lung — phuu sung sa mòòng kaa —
1.9

60

khaen continues with this pattern until measure 168

60 louder

ot — saa naang daj hên naa — mòò lam ka khii du sòòng faaj haw tòò
1.10 1.11

softer

suu si huam huu bòòk sam daj — mùa — nùng aaj nang
1.12

65

65 louder

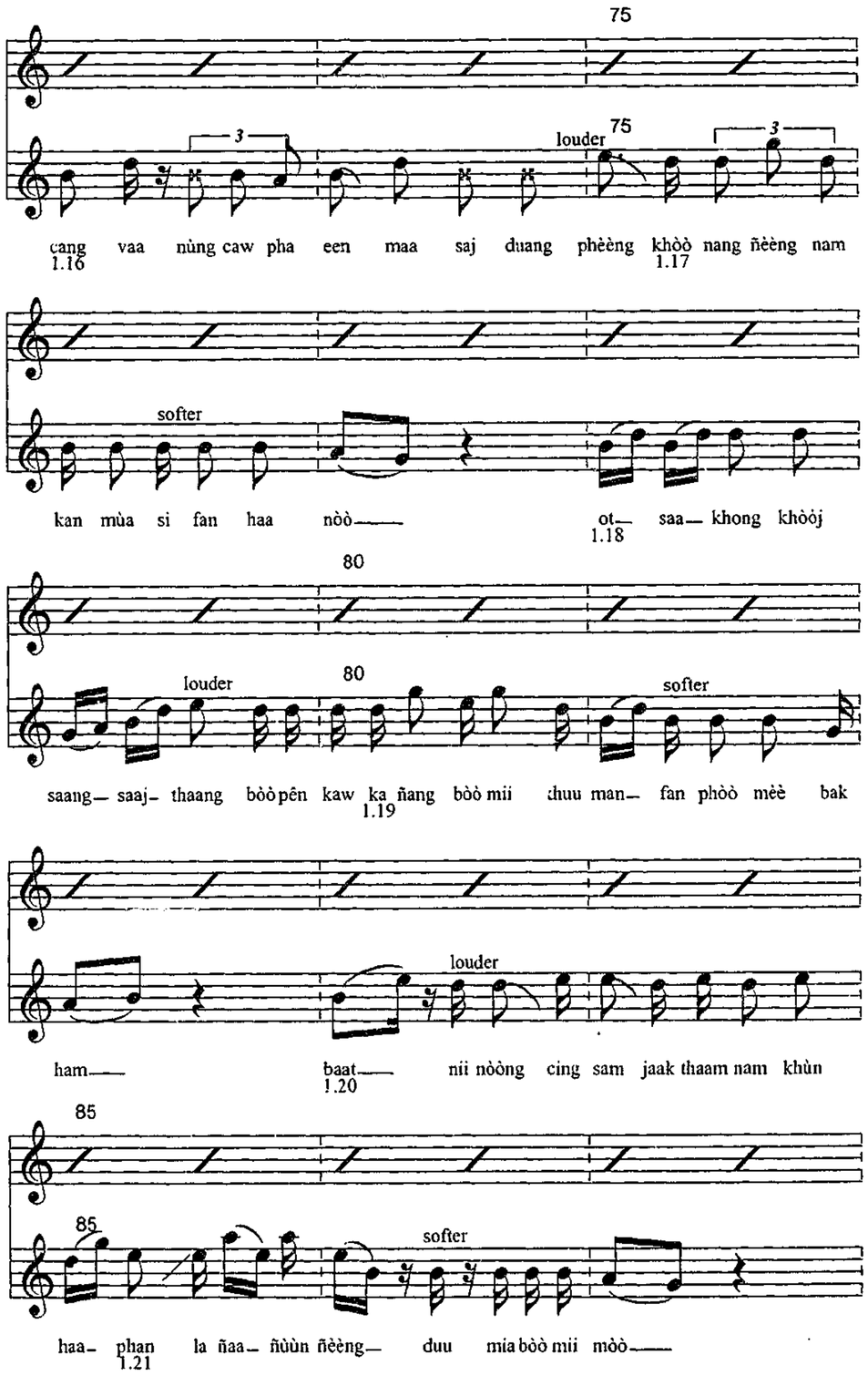
kaj caj đii — cang maaj — saaj kòò maa nam kan — mùa fan jaak hên
1.13

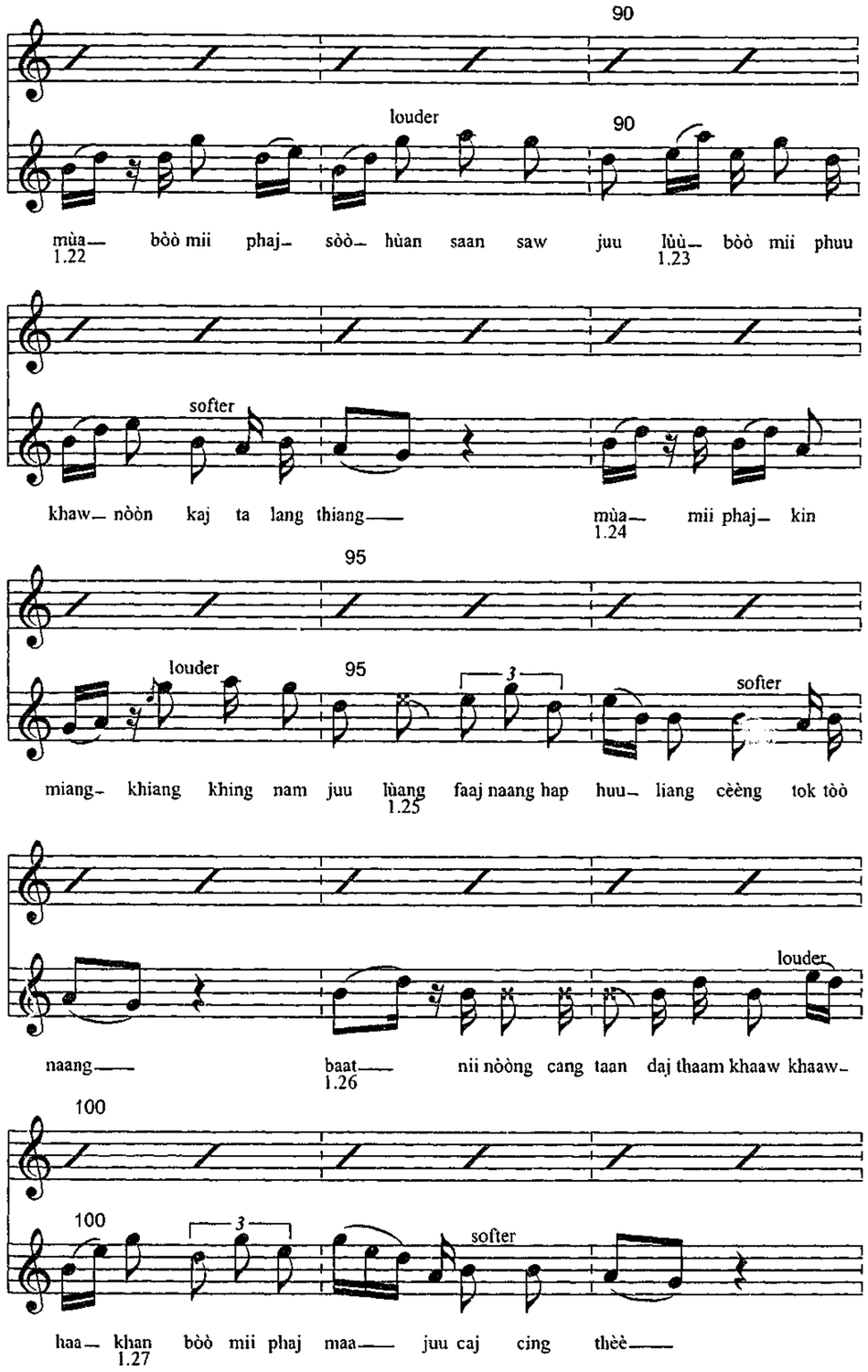
caw — cang vaa nùng saaj lam vaw — ee aw juu kap
1.14

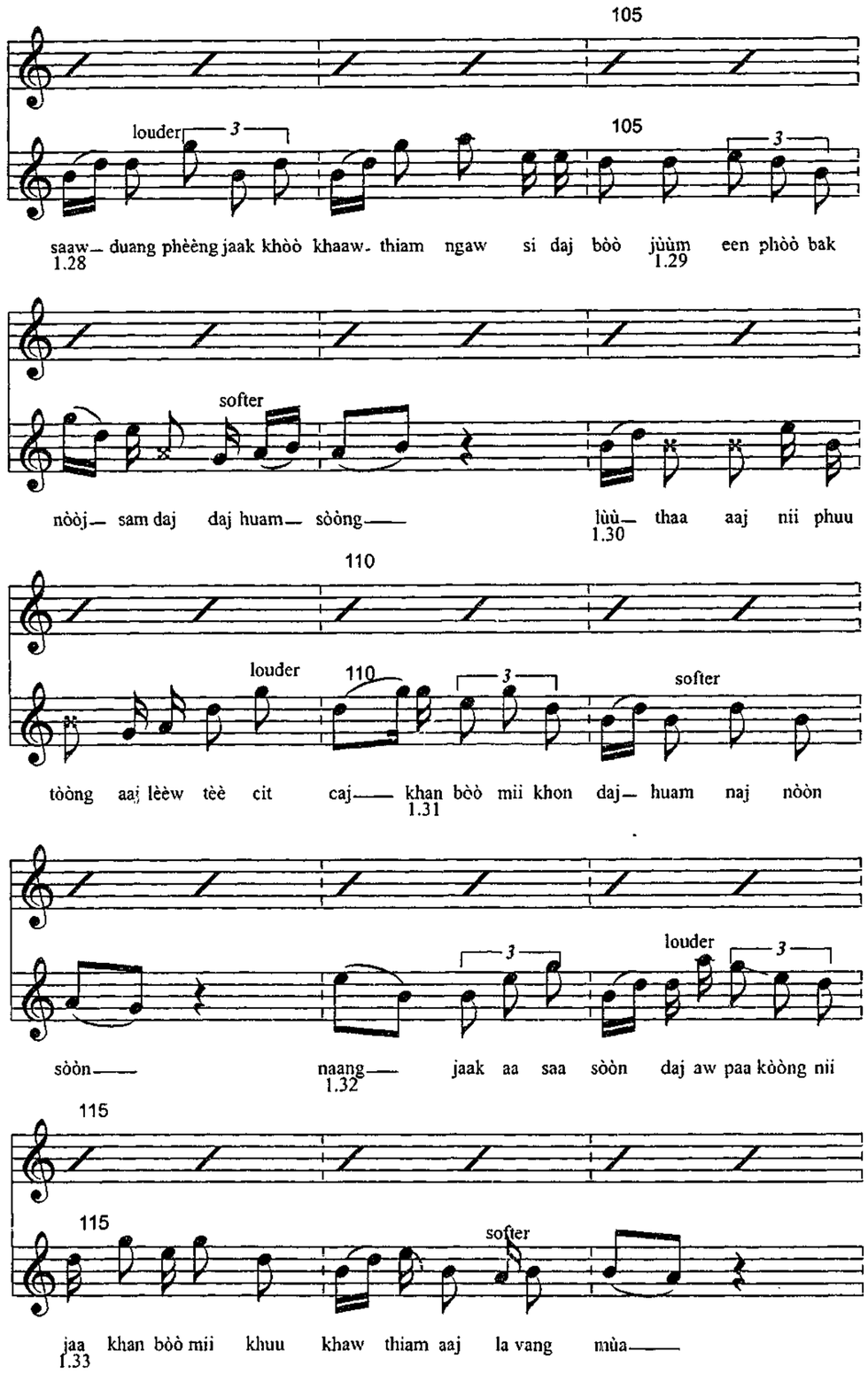
70

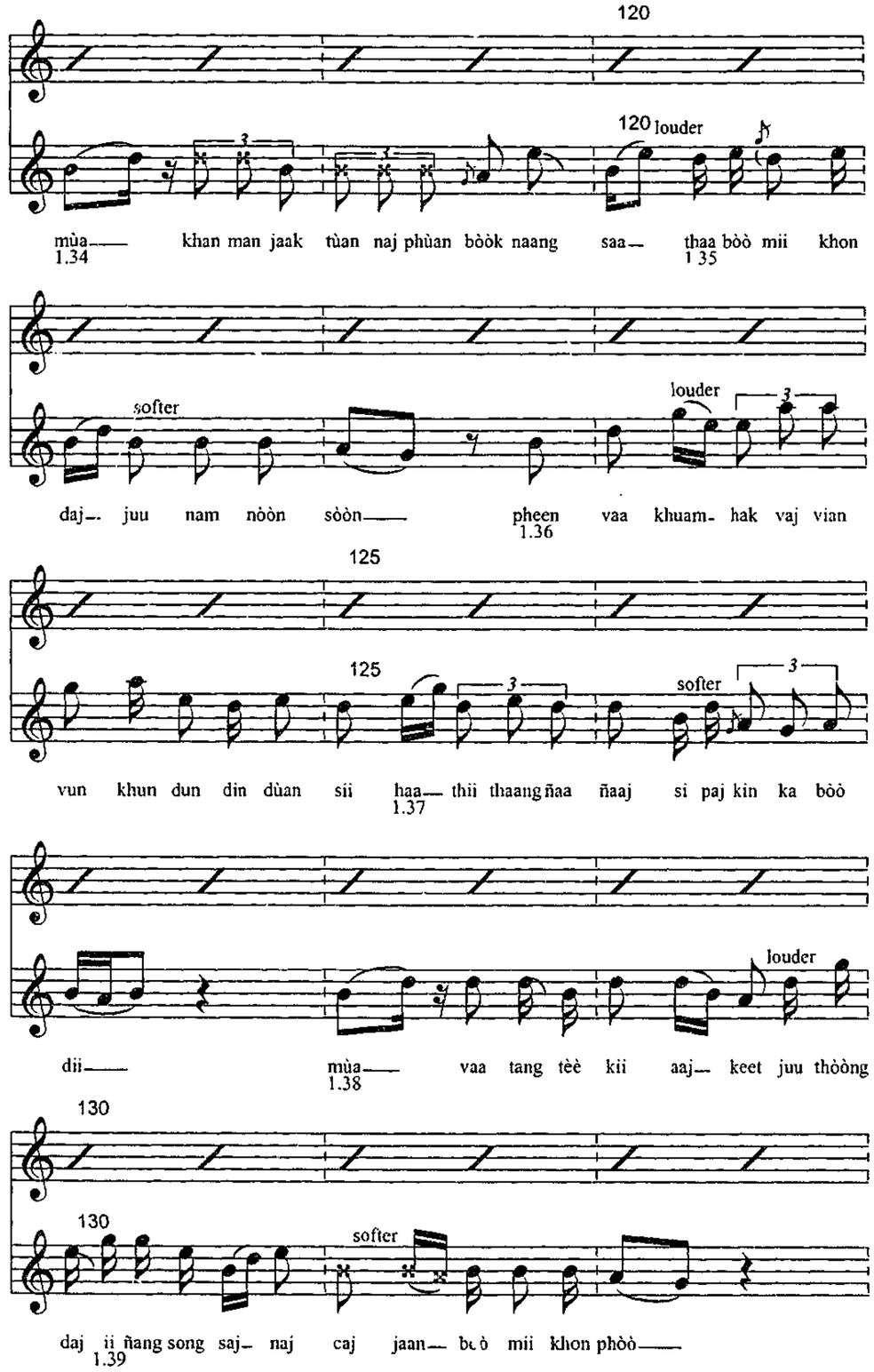
70 louder softer

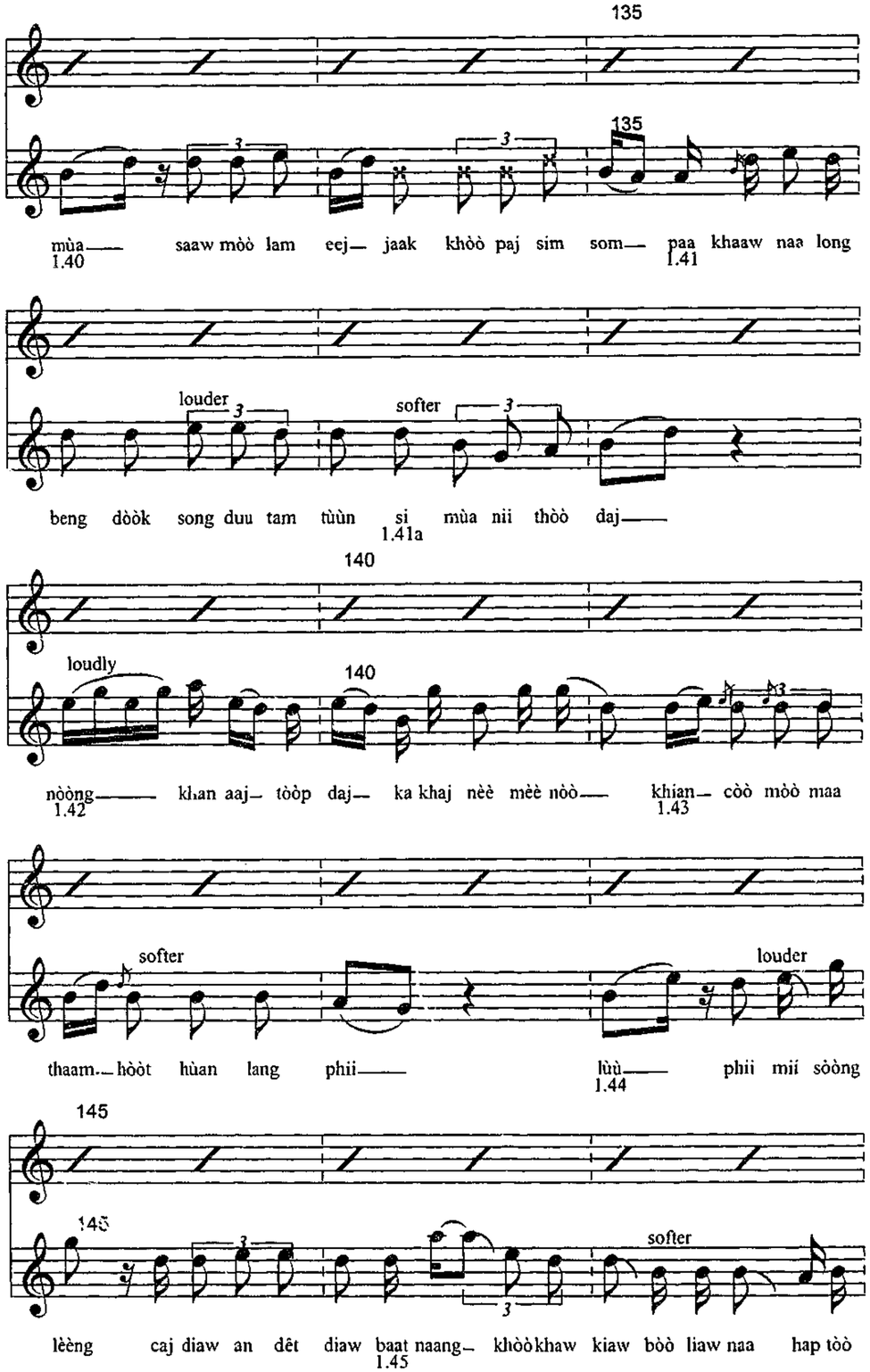
bòòn vaa — bòò mii khuu sòòn caj — khaang khaat kheen —
1.15

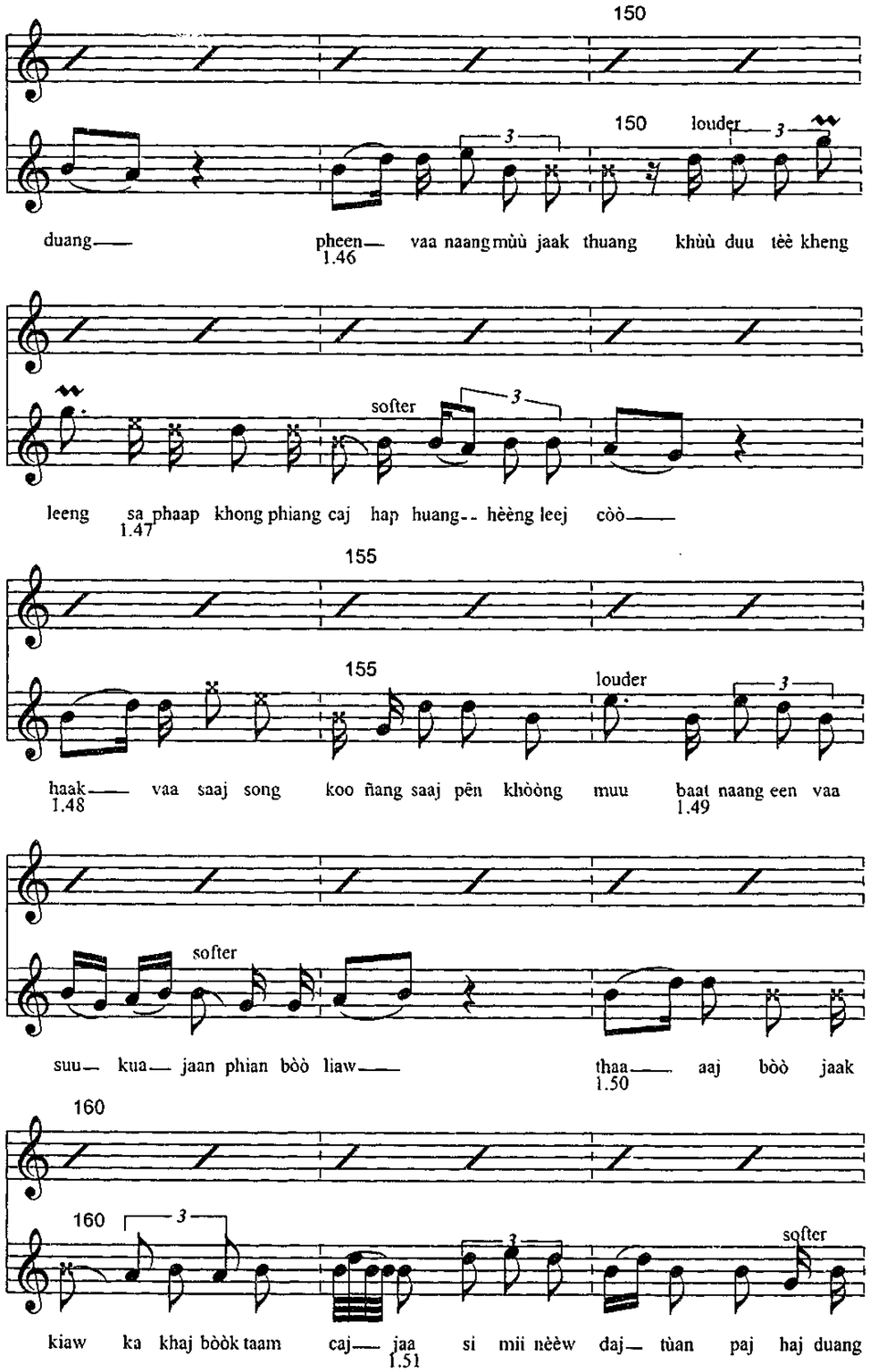

75
3
louder
75
3
cang vaa nùng caw pha een maa saj duang phèèng khòò nang ñèèng nam
1.16
1.17
softer
kan mùa si fan haa nòò—
ot—
saa— khong khòòj
1.18
80
louder
80
softer
saang— saaj— thaang bòò pên kaw ka ñang bòò mii dhuu man— fan phòò mèè bak
1.19
louder
ham—
baat—
nii nòòng cing sam jaak thaam nam khùn
1.20
85
85
softer
haa— phan
la ñaa— ñùùn ñèèng—
duu mia bòò mii mòò—
1.21

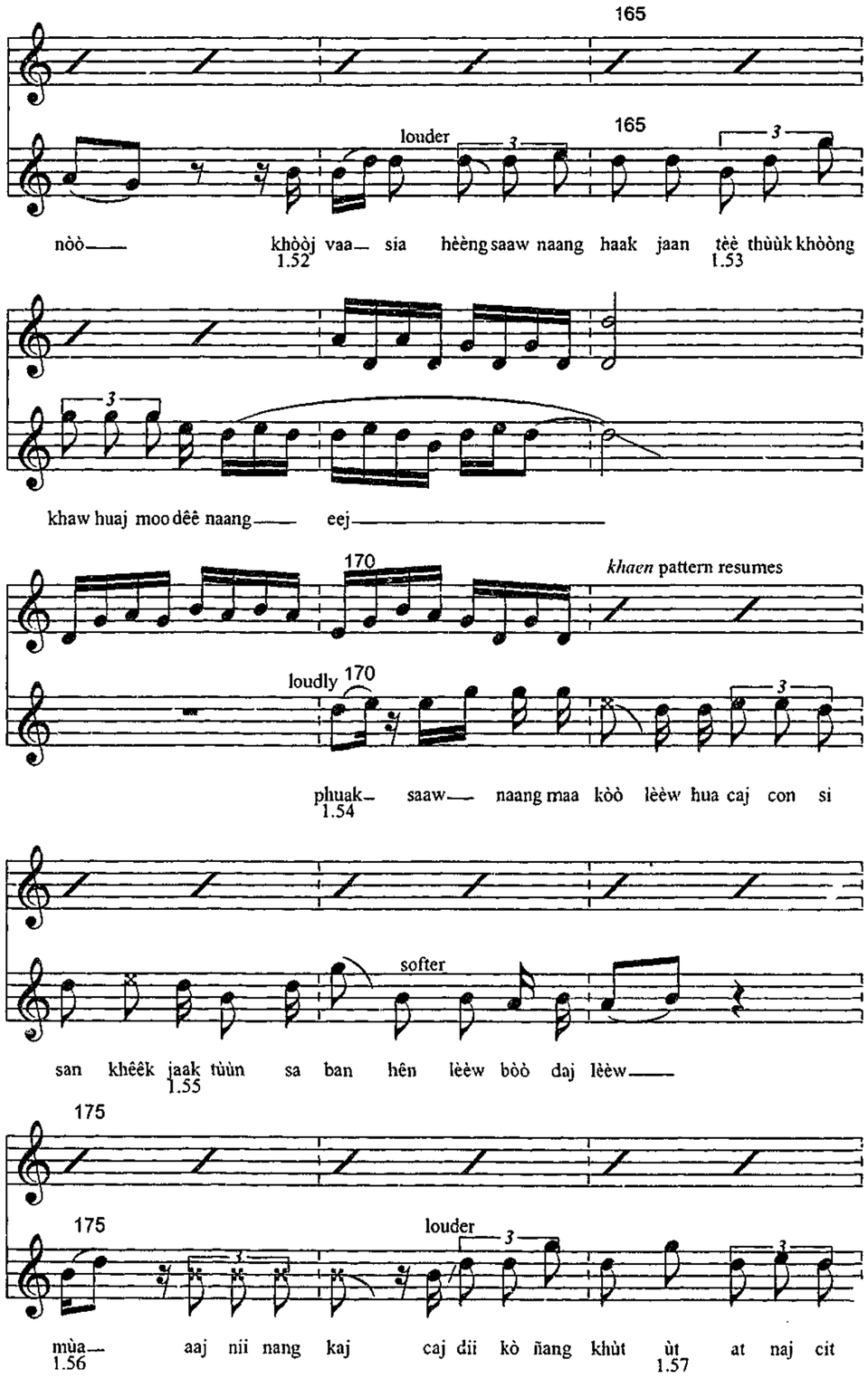

90
louder
90
mùa—
bòò mii phaj— sòò— hùan saan saw juu lùù— bòò mii phuu
1.22
1.23
softer
khaw— nòòn kaj ta lang thiang——
mùa—
mii phaj— kin
1.24
95
louder
95
3
softer
miang— khiang khing nam juu lùang faaj naang hap huu— liang cèèng tok tòò
1.25
louder
naang——
baat——
nii nòòng cang taan daj thaam khaaw khaaw—
1.26
100
100
3
softer
haa— khan
bòò mii phaj maa—— juu caj cing thèè——
1.27

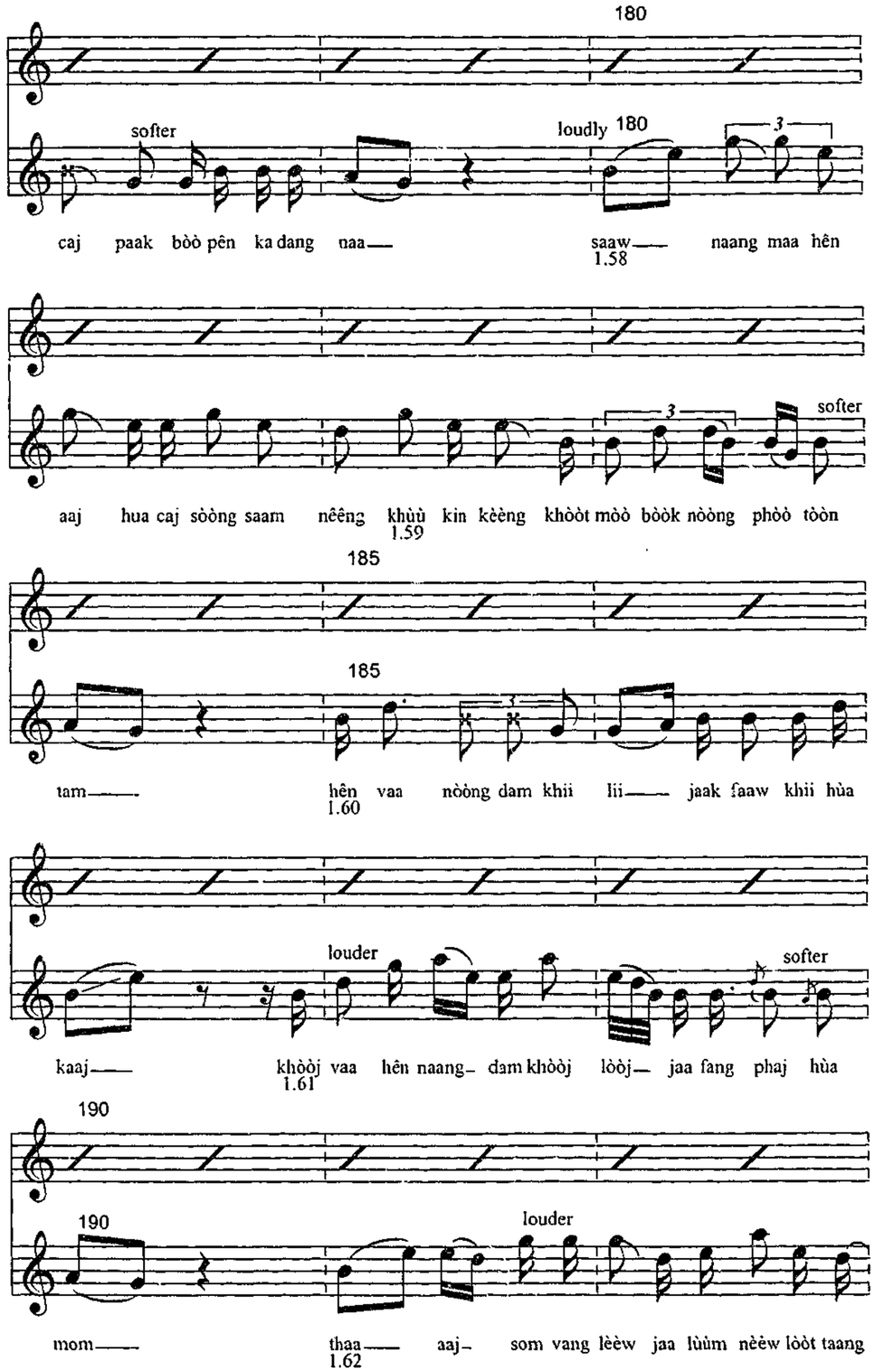

105
louder
3
105
3
saaw— duang phèèng jaak khòò khaaw- thiam ngaw si daj bòò jùùm een phòò bak
1.28
1.29
softer
nòòj— sam daj daj huam— sòòng——
lùù— thaa aaj nii phuu
1.30
110
louder
110
3
softer
tòòng aaj lèèw tèè cit caj—— khan bòò mii khon daj— huam naj nòòn
1.31
3
louder
3
sòòn—— naang—— jaak aa saa sòòn daj aw paa kòòng nii
1.32
115
115
softer
jaa khan bòò mii khuu khaw thiam aaj la vang mùa——
1.33

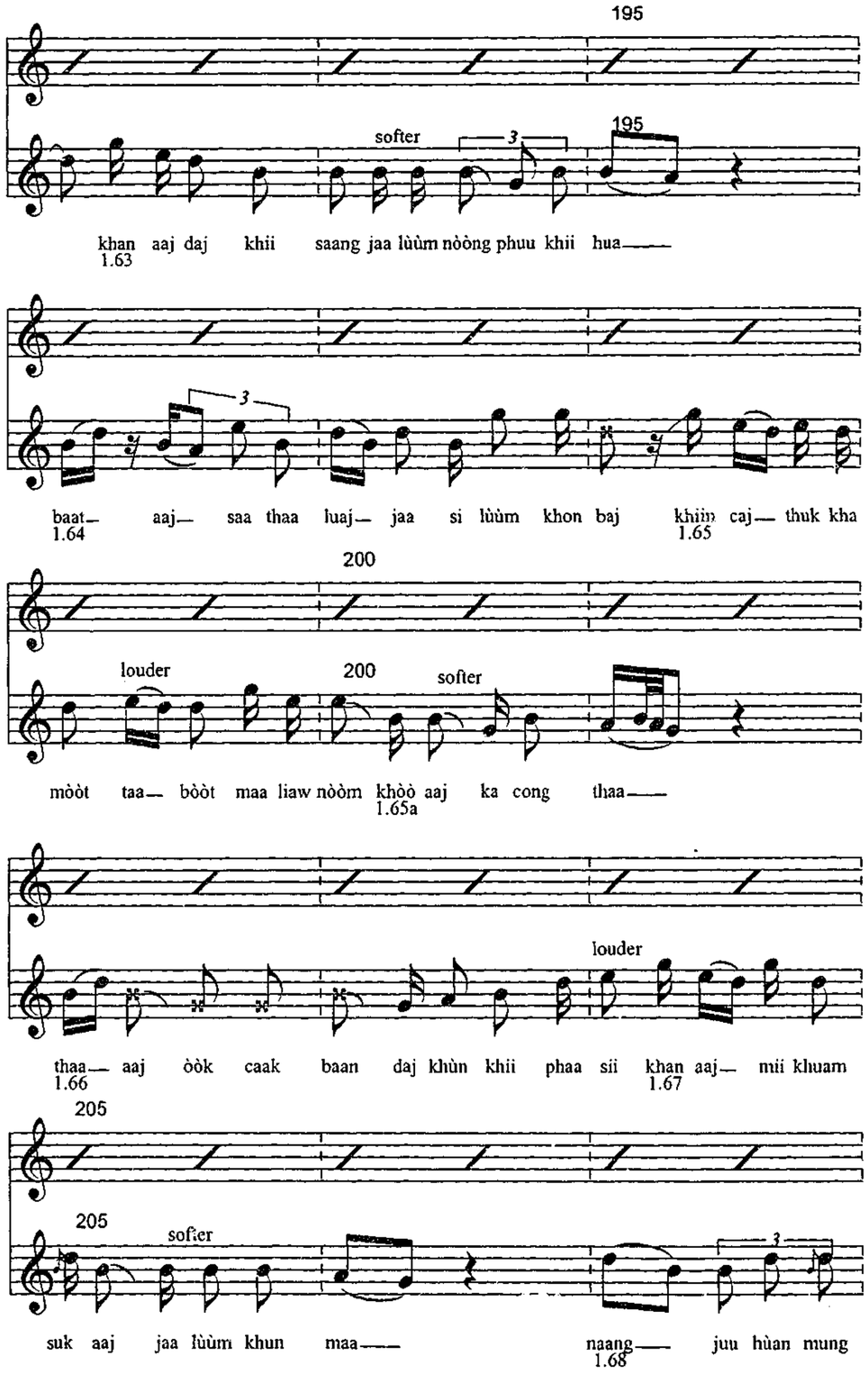

120
120
louder
3
mùa——
khan man jaak tùan naj phùan bòòk naang saa— thaa bòò mii khon
1.34
1.35
softer
louder
3
daj— juu nam nòòn sòòn—— pheen vaa khuam- hak vaj vian
1.36
125
125
3
softer
3
vun khun dun din dùan sii haa— thii thaang ñaa ñaaj si paj kin ka bòò
1.37
louder
dii—— mùa—— vaa tang tèè kii aaj— keet juu thòòng
1.38
130
130
softer
daj ii ñang song saj— naj caj jaan— bòò mii khon phòò——
1.39

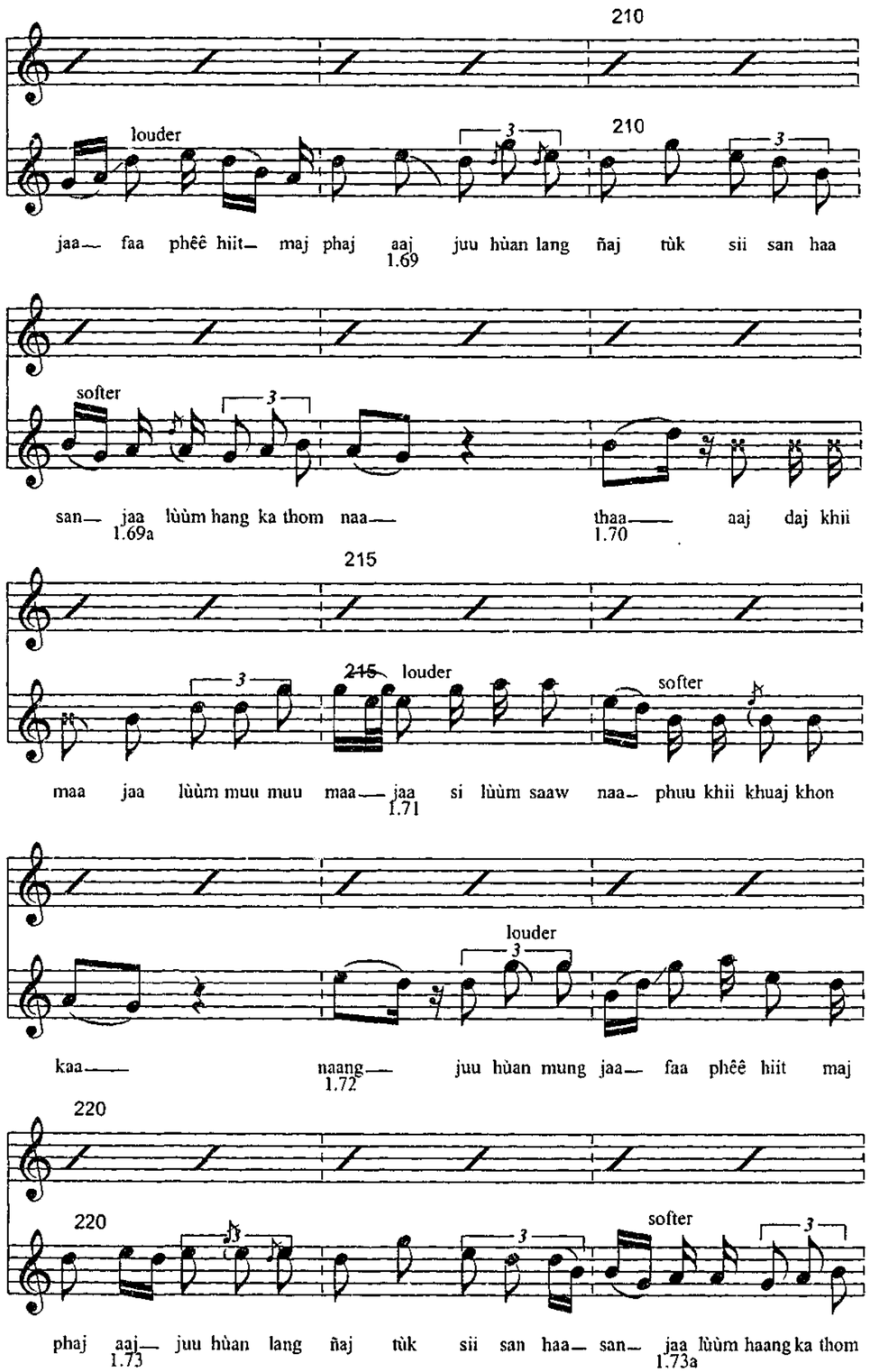

135
135
mùa— saaw mòò lam eej— jaak khòò paj sim som— paa khaaw naa long
1.40
1.41
louder
softer
beng dòòk song duu tam tùùn si mùa nii thòò daj—
1.41a
140
loudly
140
nòòng— khan aaj— tòòp daj— ka khaj nèè mèè nòò— khian— còò mòò maa
1.42
1.43
softer
louder
thaam— hòòt hùan lang phii— lùù— phii mii sòòng
1.44
145
145
softer
lèèng caj diaw an dêt diaw baat naang— khòòkhaw kiaw bòò liaw naa hap tòò
1.45

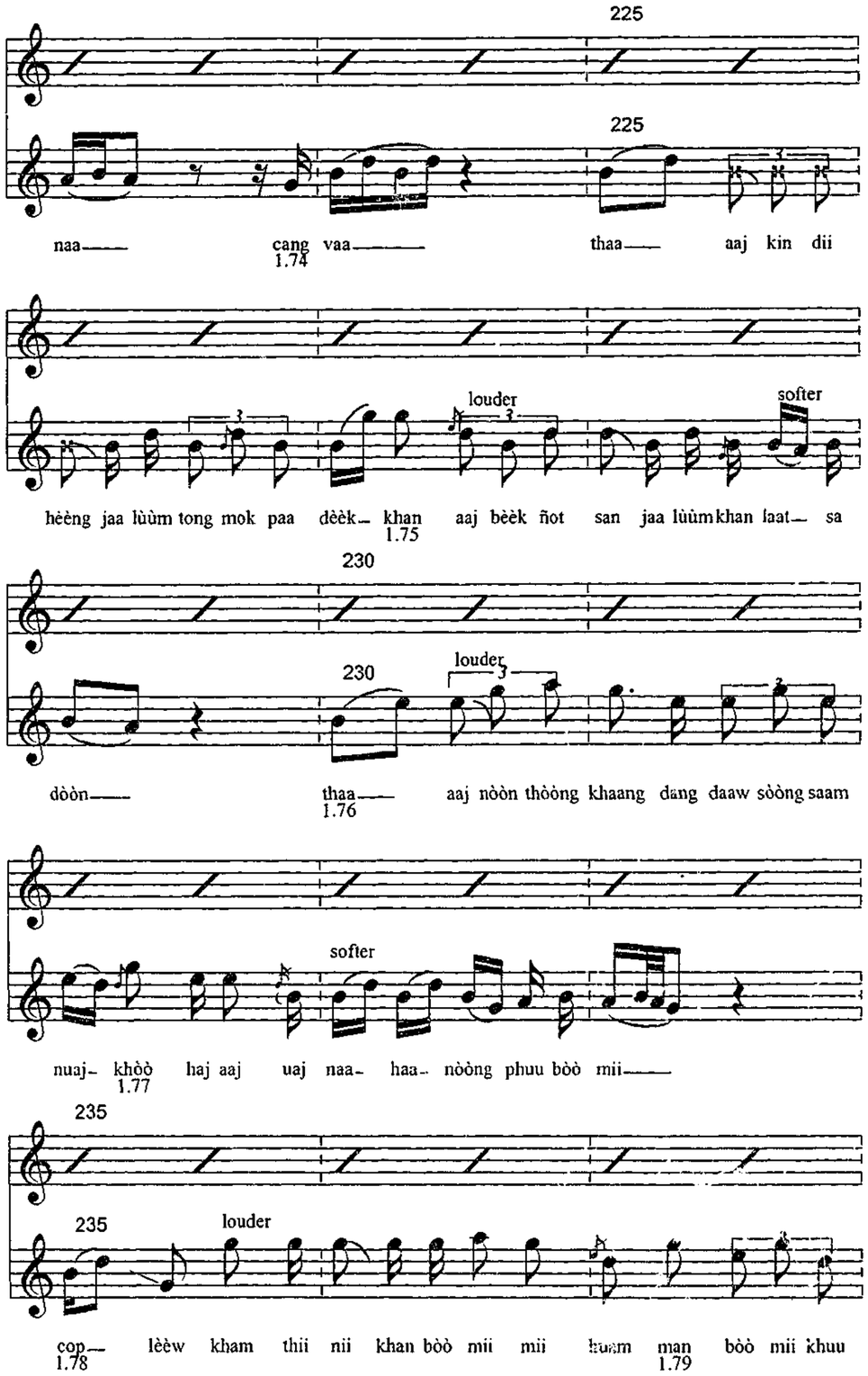

150
150
louder
duang— pheen— vaa naang mùù jaak thuang khùù duu tèè kheng
1.46
softer
leeng sa phaap khong phiang caj hap huang-- hèèng leej còò—
1.47
155
155
louder
haak— vaa saaj song koo ñang saaj pên khòòng muu baat naang een vaa
1.48
1.49
softer
suu— kua— jaan phian bòò liaw— thaa— aaj bòò jaak
1.50
160
160
softer
kiaw ka khaj bòòk taam caj— jaa si mii nèèw daj— tùan paj haj duang
1.51

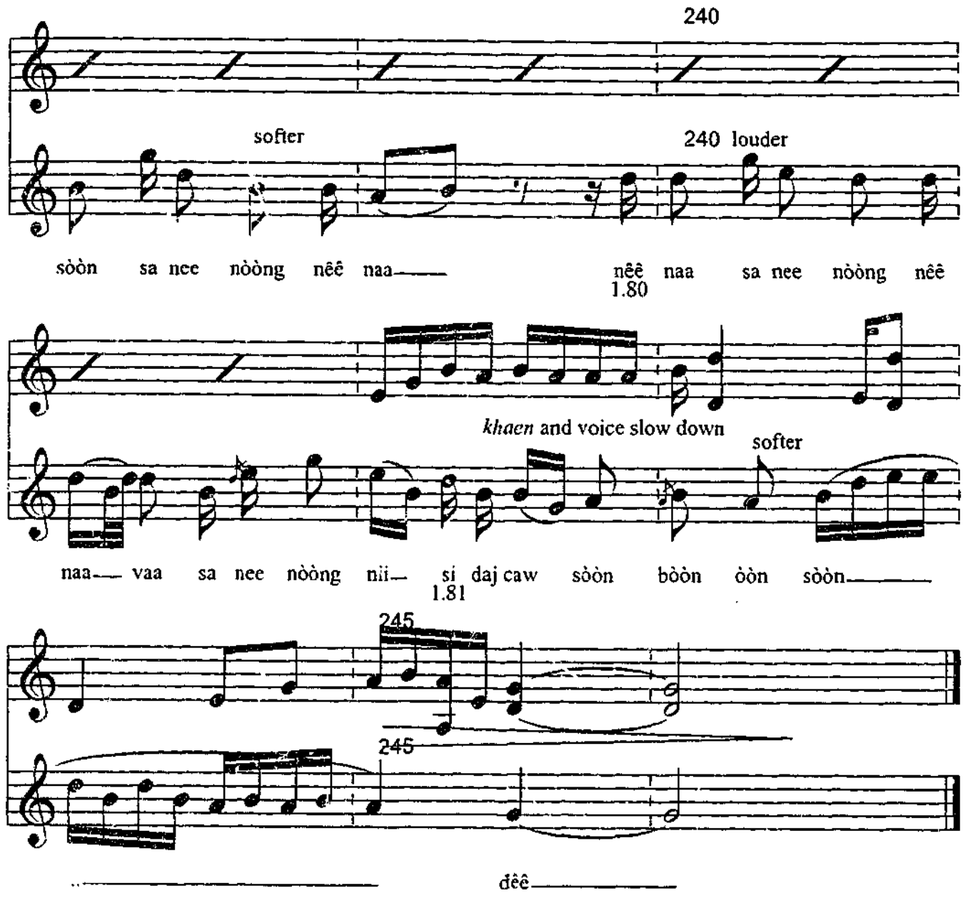

165
165
louder
3
3
nòò—
khòòj vaa— sia hèèng saaw naang haak jaan tèè thùùk khòòng
1.52
1.53
3
khaw huaj moo dêê naang—— eej——
170
khaen pattern resumes
loudly 170
3
phuak— saaw—— naang maa kòò lèèw hua caj con si
1.54
softer
san khêêk jaak tùùn sa ban hên lèèw bòò daj lèèw——
1.55
175
175
louder
3
3
mùa—
aaj nii nang kaj caj dii kò ñang khùt ùt at naj cit
1.56
1.57


180
softer
loudly 180
3
caj paak bòò pên ka dang naa—
saaw——
1.58
naang maa hên
3
softer
aaj hua caj sòòng saam nêêng khùù kin kèèng khòòt mòò bòòk nòòng phòò tòòn
1.59
185
185
3
tam——
hên vaa nòòng dam khii lii—— jaak ɬaaw khii hùa
1.60
louder
softer
kaaj——
khòòj vaa hên naang— dam khòòj lòòj— jaa fang phaj hùa
1.61
190
190
louder
mom——
thaa—— aaj— som vang lèèw jaa lùùm nèèw lòòt taang
1.62


195
195
softer
3
khan aaj daj khii saang jaa lùùm nòòng phuu khii hua——
1.63
baat— aaj— saa thaa luaj— jaa si lùùm khon baj khiin caj— thuk kha
1.64
1.65
200
200
louder
softer
mòòt taa— bòòt maa liaw nòòm khòò aaj ka cong thaa——
1.65a
louder
thaa— aaj òòk caak baan daj khùn khii phaa sii khan aaj— mii khuam
1.66
1.67
205
205
softer
3
suk aaj jaa lùùm khun maa—— naang—— juu hùan mung
1.68


210
210
louder
3
3
jaa— faa phêê hiit— maj phaj aaj juu hùan lang ñaj tùk sii san haa
1.69
softer
3
san— jaa lùùm hang ka thom naa— thaa—— aaj daj khii
1.69a
1.70
215
215
215 louder
3
softer
maa jaa lùùm muu muu maa— jaa si lùùm saaw naa— phuu khii khuaj khon
1.71
louder
3
kaa—— naang—— juu hùan mung jaa— faa phêê hiit maj
1.72
220
220
softer
3
3
phaj aaj— juu hùan lang ñaj tùk sii san haa— san— jaa lùùm haang ka thom
1.73
1.73a

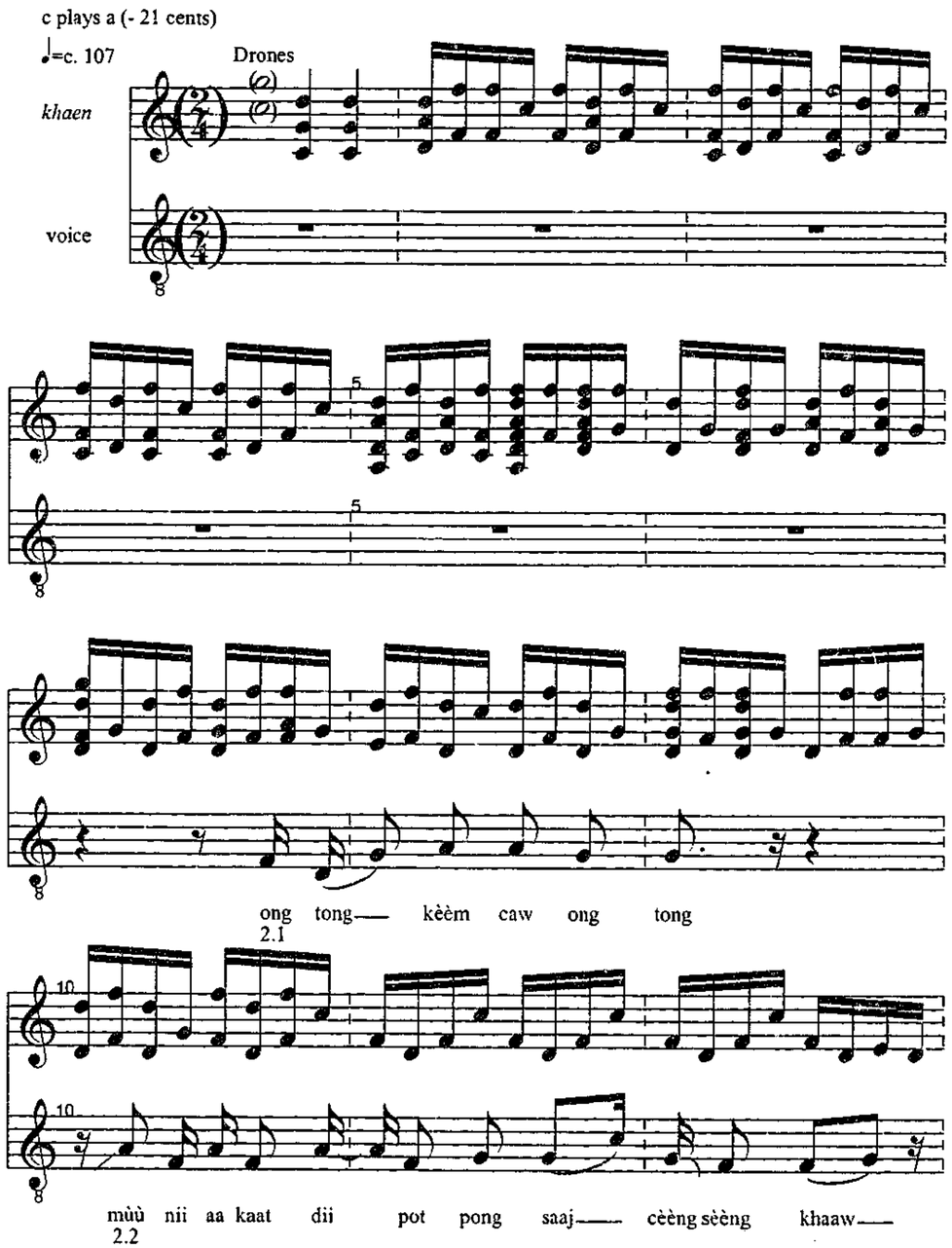

225
225
naa—— cang vaa—— thaa—— aaj kin dii
1.74
louder
softer
hèèng jaa lùùm tong mok paa dèèk— khan aaj bèèk ñot san jaa lùùmkhan laat— sa
1.75
230
230
louder
dòòn—— thaa—— aaj nòòn thòòng khaang dang daaw sòòng saam
1.76
softer
nuaj- khòò haj aaj uaj naa- haa- nòòng phuu bòò mii——
1.77
235
235
louder
cop— lèèw kham thii nii khan bòò mii mii kham man bòò mii khuu
1.78
1.79

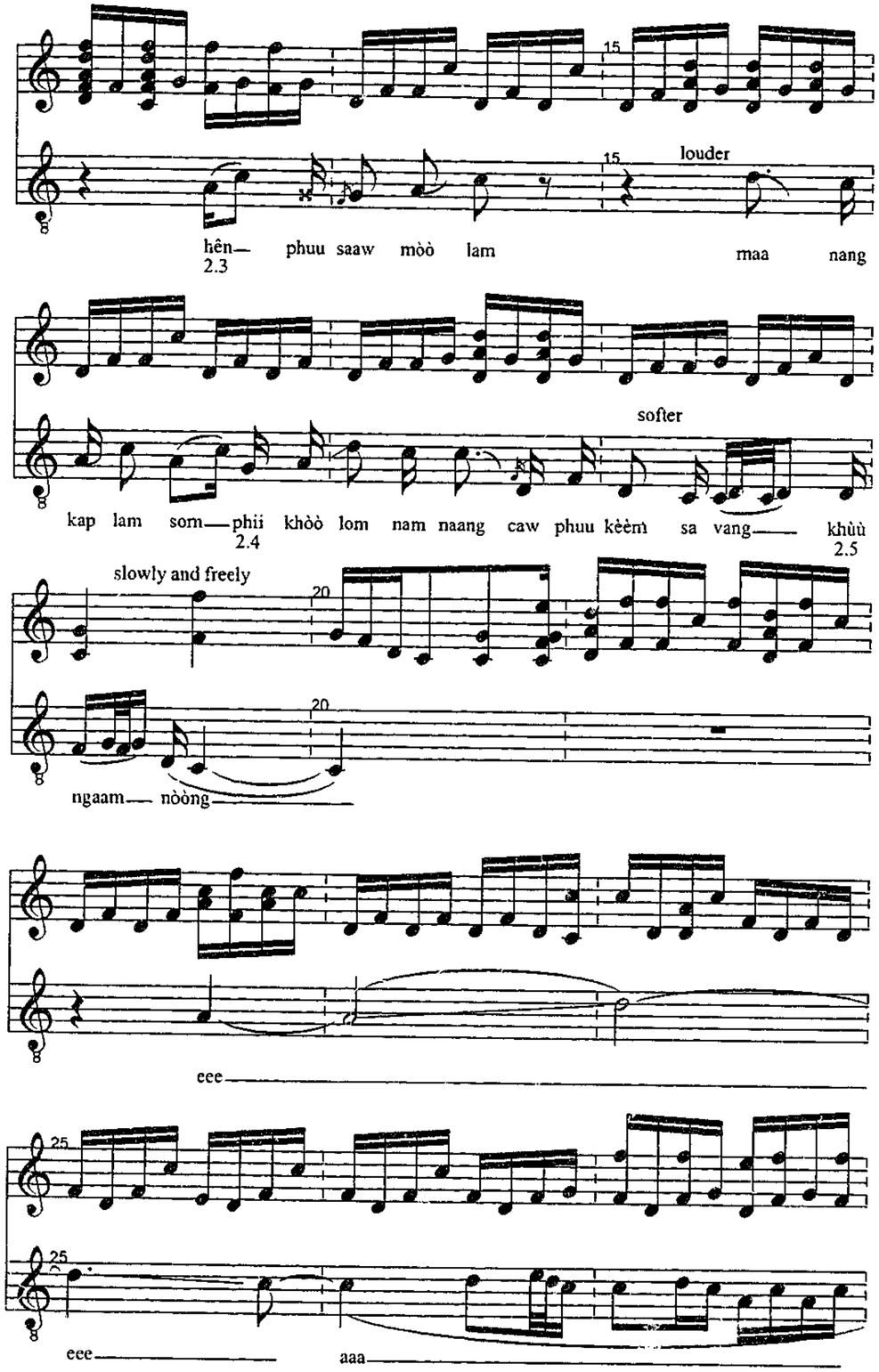

240
softer
240 louder
sòòn sa nee nòòng nêê naa—— nêê naa sa nee nòòng nêê
1.80
khaen and voice slow down
softer
naa— vaa sa nee nòòng nii— si daj caw sòòn bòòn òòn sòòn——
1.81
245
245
đêê——

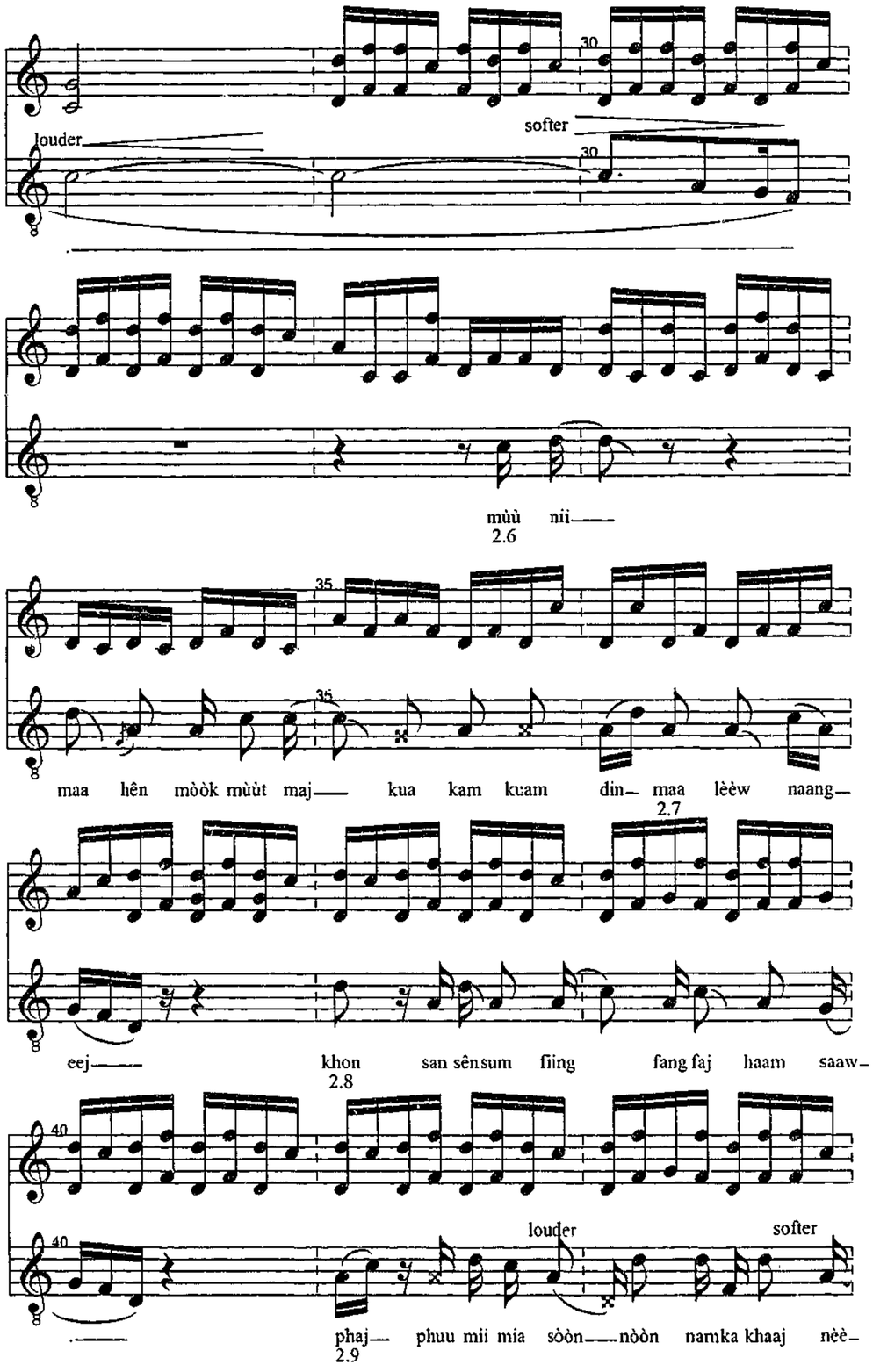
Transcription 2: Lam Siphandon

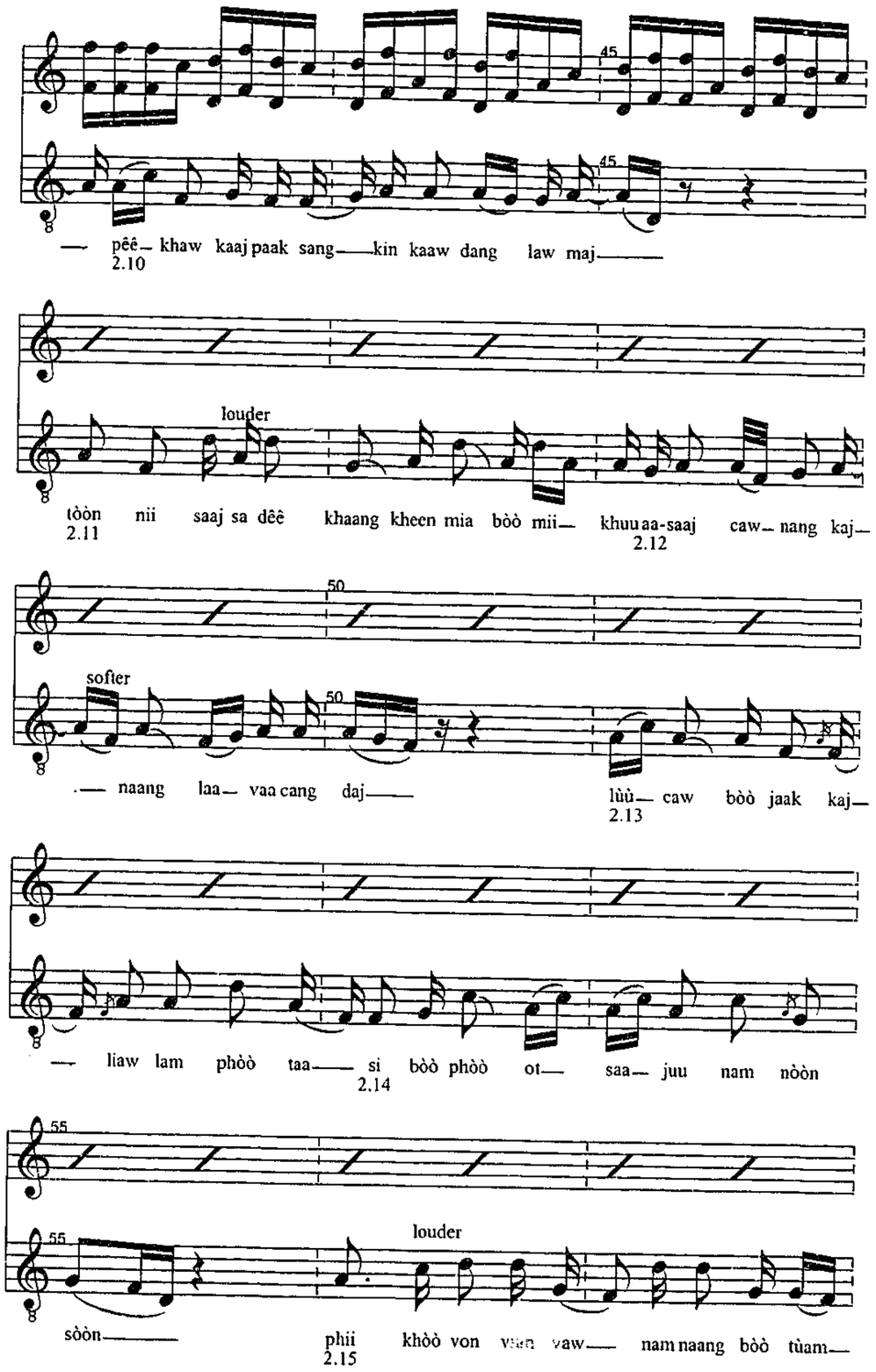
(male vocal)

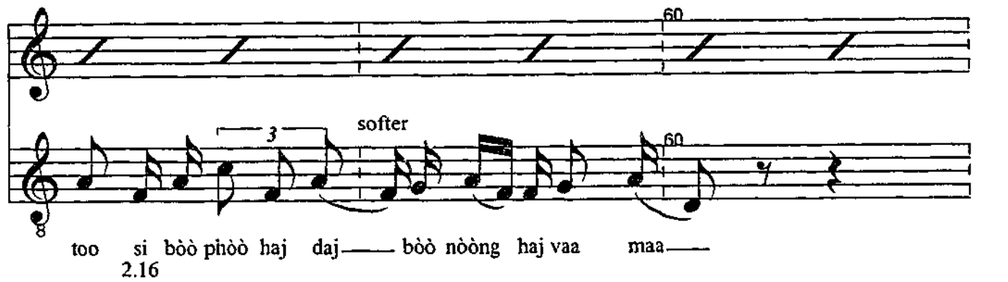
Performed by Som Sii at Pakse 25/1/1999
Recorded and transcribed by Adam Chapman
khaen accompaniment in *poo saaj* mode (c, d, f, g, a)

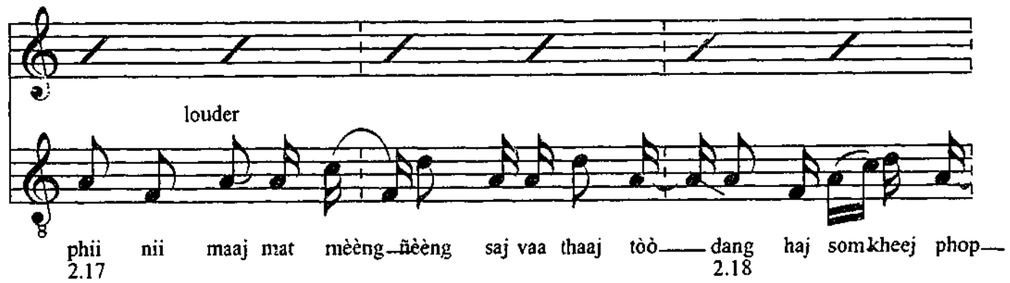


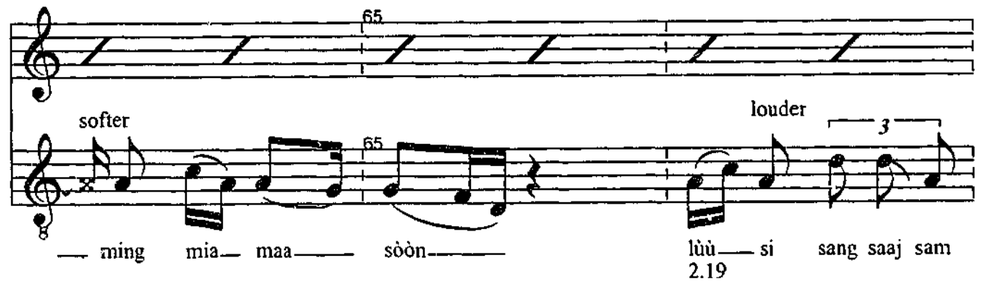


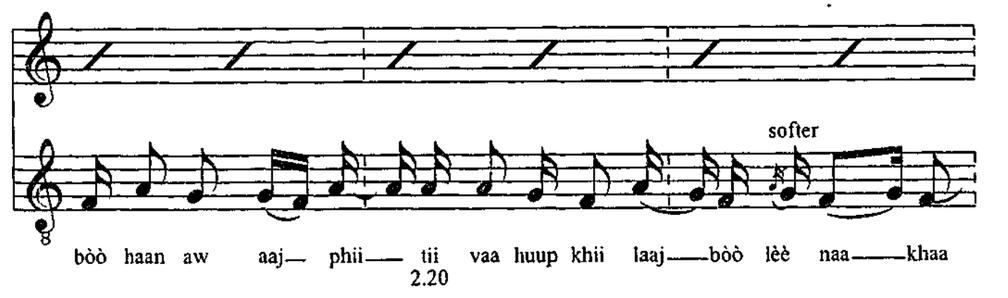

30
louder
softer
30
mùù nii
2.6
35
35
maa hên mòòk mùùt maj kua kam kuam din maa lèèw naang
2.7
eej khon san sênsum fiing fang faj haam saaw
2.8
40
40
louder
softer
phaj phuu mii mia sòòn nòòn namka khaaj nèè
2.9

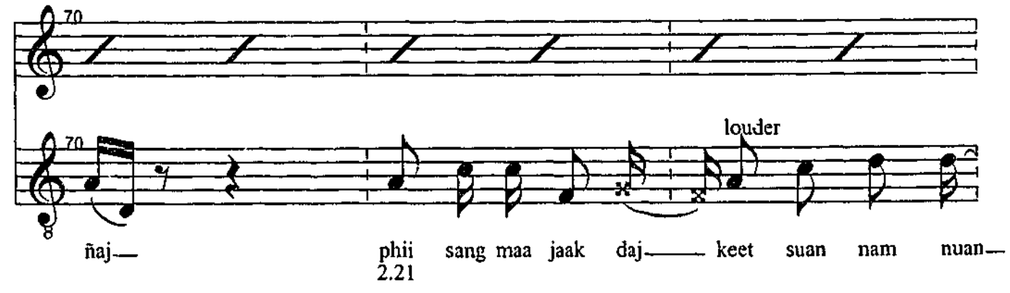

45
45
pêê khaw kaaj paak sang kin kaaw dang law maj
2.10
louder
tòòn nii saaj sa dêê khaang kheen mia bòò mii khuu aa-saaj caw nang kaj
2.11
2.12
50
softer
50
naang laa vaa cang daj
lùù caw bòò jaak kaj
2.13
liaw lam phòò taa si bòò phòò ot saa juu nam nòòn
2.14
55
55
louder
sòòn
phii khòò von vaw nam naang bòò tùam
2.15

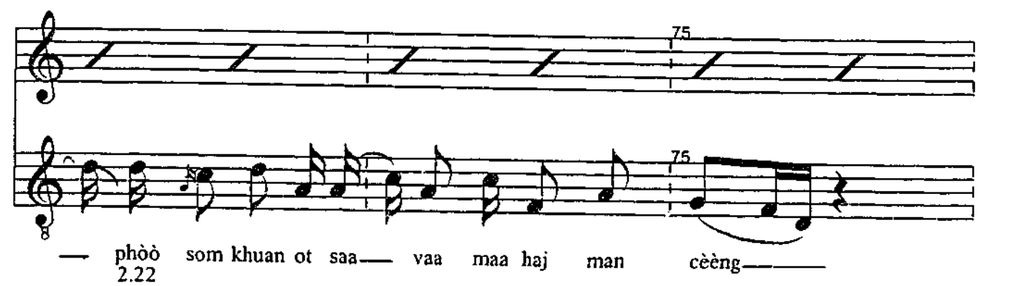

60
softer
too si bòò phòò haj daj bòò nòòng haj vaa maa
2.16

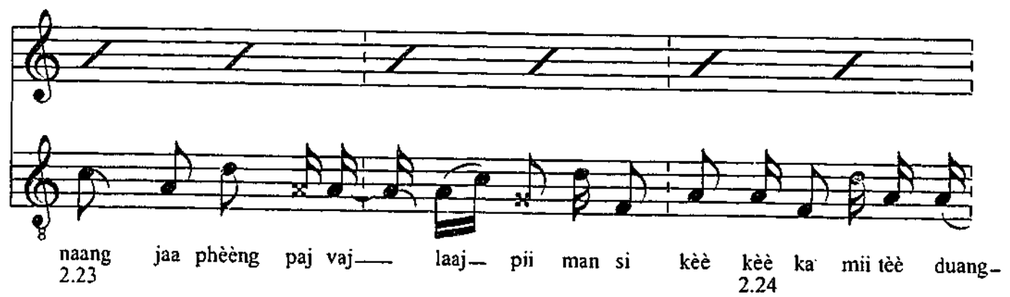

louder
phii nii maaj mat mèèng ñèèng saj vaa thaaj tòò dang haj som kheej phop
2.17
2.18

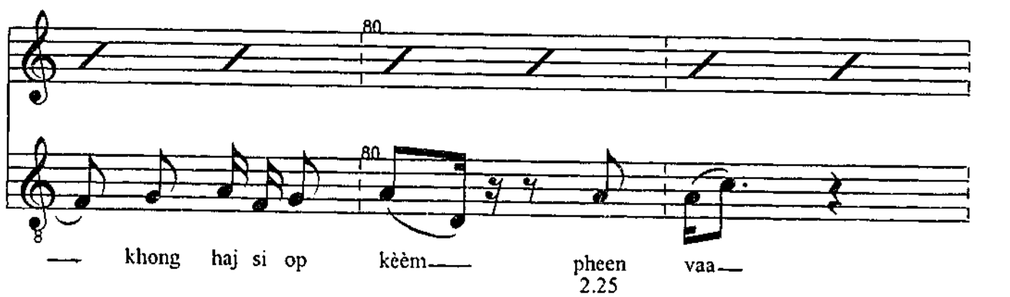

65
softer
louder
ming mia maa sòòn lùù si sang saaj sam
2.19

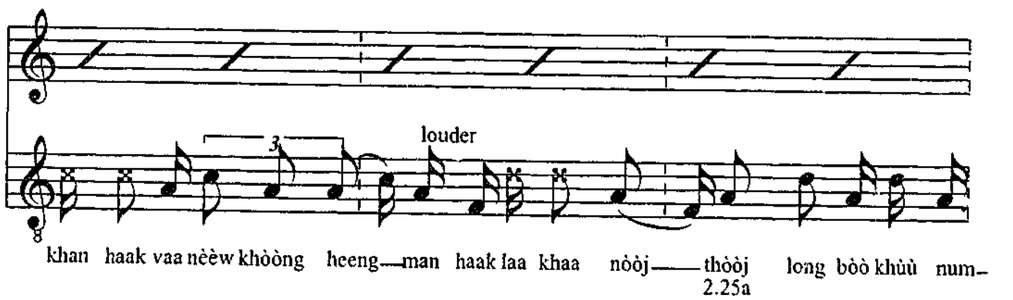

softer
bòò haan aw aaj phii tii vaa huup khii laaj bòò lèè naa khaa
2.20

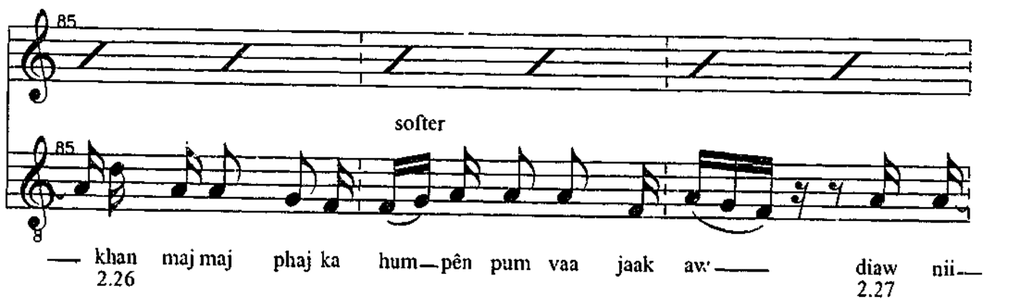

70
louder
ñaj phii sang maa jaak daj keet suan nam nuan
2.21


75
phòò som khuan ot saa vaa maa haj man cèèng
2.22


naang jaa phèèng paj vaj laaj pii man si kèè kèè ka mii tèè duang
2.23
2.24


80
khong haj si op kèèm pheen vaa
2.25


louder
khan haak vaa nèèw khòòng heeng man haak laa khaa nòòj thòòj long bòò khùù num
2.25a


85
softer
khan maj maj phaj ka hum pên pum vaa jaak aw diaw nii
2.26
2.27

90

— caw jaa vaa khòòj vaw— khit beeng khòòng tòò— thùùk baat sook mèè hak—
2.28

louder

— si khaat thùn thaang caw——— phaj— bòò mii maa sùù—
2.29

95

softer

— khaa mùù bòò mii duut— mên buut haj kua hèèng—kaaj kaj mèèng si taaj—
2.30

— đaj aaj— nii naang— eej—— saaw naang
2.30a 2.31

100

louder

caw si aaj saaw baan—bua ñeej phuu saaw kèè— keet sam phòò sam mèè—
2.32

105

softer

— phat bòò than đaj suu— phèèng ñuu si bòò kheej— mòò
2.32a 2.33

louder

lam taaj jaak pên kheej nèè— khan duu liang mèè— laaw nan thaw kèè lèèw
2.34

110

3

si maaj— thiang theeng vaj— lùù— caw bòò jaak kaj—
2.35

louder

softer

— aw khau thiam sòòng—naang si bòò pên sii bòò peet saaj saaw sòòn—
2.36

115

louder

nap tèè maa hên— naa— dii caj— nam un—
2.37

120

louder

— kèèm cun vun nòòng laa pên taa mian bòò jaak nii——
2.38

vang kòòn kii— mèèn nòòng—kiaw thaaj som— sii—— caw ñin dii nam eej—
2.39 2.40

125

— bòò daj diaw liaw— niaw——— kòò— kiaw kom kan nèèm—
2.41

louder

— saaj–nèèm mèènman khong—mung pên sang naang eej—— lùù caw bòò kiaw khòòng–
2.41a 2.42

130

softer

— lom aaj— phii thaw som— phii saaj som–khòò lom—
2.43

135

— nam naang–laaj law phii maa hên–suu kaw—
2.44

— mak juu met caj lùù si bòò aa laj— mùa nam pên khuu—
2.45

140

louder

3

— khan haak mèèn bun saaj suu—— som suu— sòòn sùa—
2.46

softer

— lùa caj lùang van nii— hên naa— bòò jaak nii——
2.47

145

louder

keen— phuu lom dii nòòng—naang phong bun laaj—— pên taa khit jaak daj—
2.48 2.49

150

softer

— mùa vaj ca lam ñèèng— caw phuu phèèng si sòòj—
2.50

louder 3 softer

— ñòòj kha lon don tam— som mòò lam hak nòòng bòò mii mùù naaj nèèng—
2.51

155

— vaa—cang daj duang phèèng— khon suaj—sa aat—
2.52

— caw si bòò tua khòòj—khùù phii som sii
2.53

160

khan si aw ii lii— duang phèèng vaw maj—
2.54

165

louder

vang naang kheej khaan khuan—suan saaj aaj phii— caw ñin dii uat aaj—
2.55 2.56

— maaj— man—vaajaak som— tèè vaa son caj aaj—
2.57

170

louder

— saaw duang phèèng bòò jaak sùa jaan— mii mia juu suam—
2.58

softer

— suan sòòn tòòn sa nêê— phii sii vang bòòk nòòng—
2.59

175

— khaaj—khòòp khùùn khak son vaa mia som sii— phii bòò mii phòò
2.60

180

louder

dii—— phii kòò daj sia lèèw—— nèèw mia bòò pên
2.61

softer

thaa mia bòò lam bòò fòòn aw lèèw ka bòò dii———
2.62

185

khan daj aw thii nii—— daj khùù saaw mòò lam—— nèè kòò ñang khòòj nèè—
2.63 2.63a

— phòò si daj ñèè ñèè—— lam ñèè— saj kan——
2.64

190

khan daj aw khùù nòòng—hòòj pii ka bòò thim—— phan pii ka bòò naaj—
2.65 2.65a

195

— taaj keet maa saat naa—— sèèn san mèèn bòo daj——
2.66

louder

nap tèè paj hên phaj—— ñang bòò khùù hên caw——
2.67

200

louder

khuam— hak maa pên law—— pên pum pên ngòòn—haj ii ton nòòng laa—
2.68 2.69

softer

louder

— aw aaj— nèè daj— lùù— hua caj khòòng nòòng
2.70

softer

bòò pong lom kap phii tii vaa khon kèè thaw bòò aw sòòn— laa bòò——
2.71

phii— daj phòò phop nòòng keen còòt— caj maaj—
2.72

louder softer

saaj som sii— khòò— thaam—mòòm duang phèèng nòòng—
2.73

louder

phii kha ning nam caw— duang phèèng suu kaw maa hên
2.74 2.75

softer

sii— kèèm caw— diaw—nii bòò jaak nii— khan haak
2.76

mèèn thaw som sii— maa— hên— si caak phaj—khòò aw khon faak man—
2.77

— hak man phèèng— baat— som sii— si ñèèng—
2.78

softer

laa naang vaj kòòn si laa— sii kam kòòn tòòn nii haang seej—
2.79

haang seej khan tòòn nii—haang seej— mòò lam long— leej— ot
2.80 2.81

softly

haj ñeej— maa tòò— nòò nòò— nòòng—

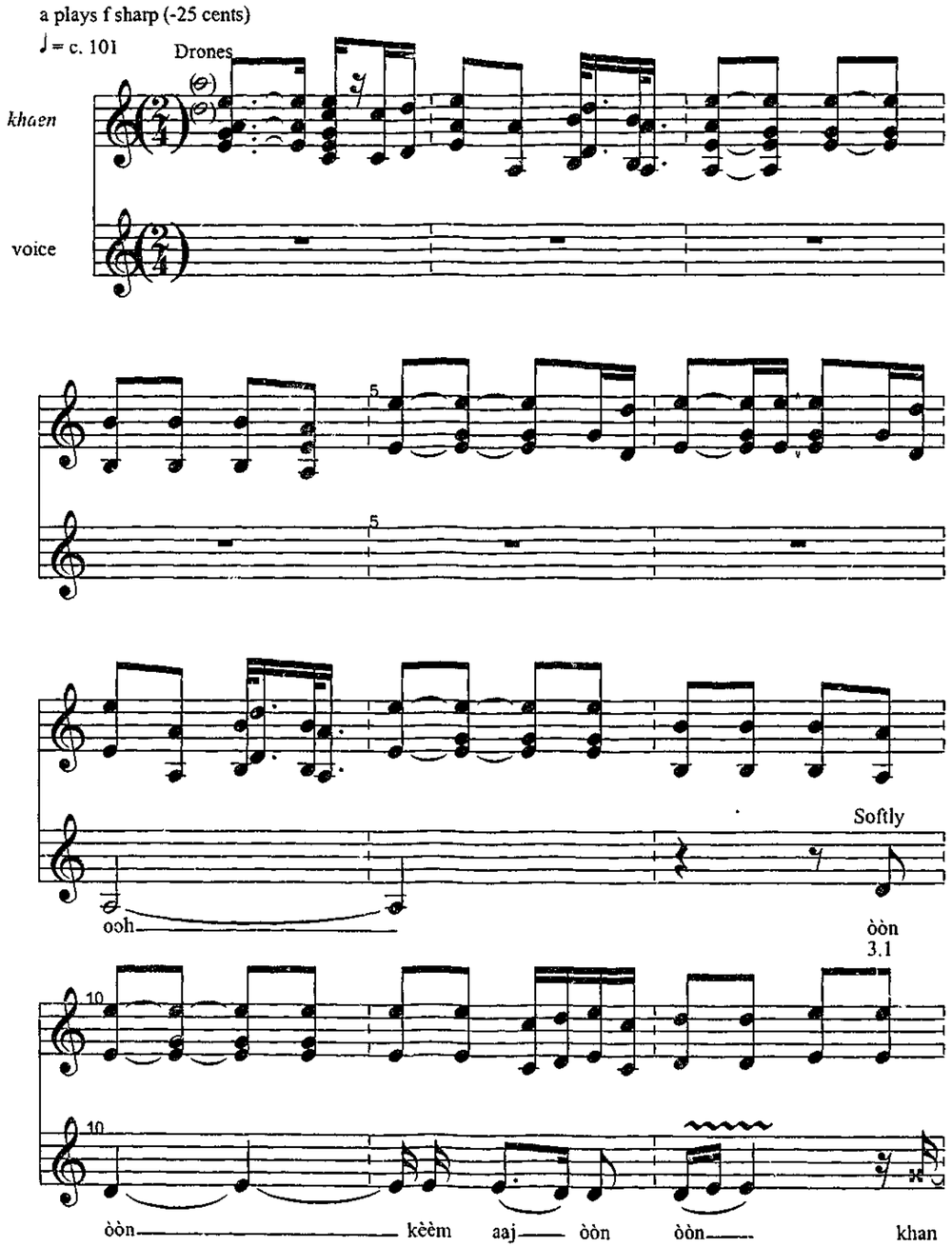
Transcription 3: Lam Som

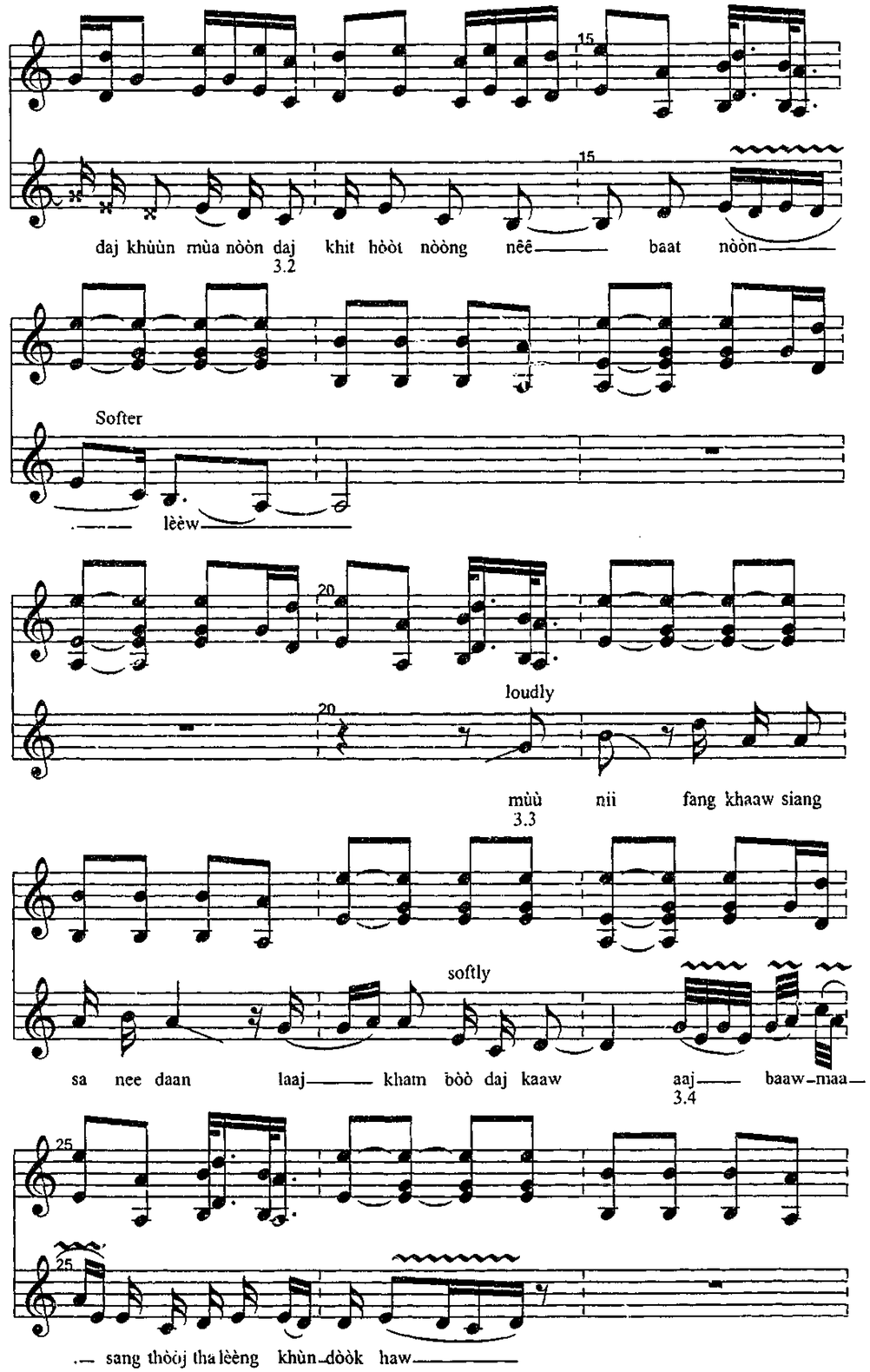
(female vocal)

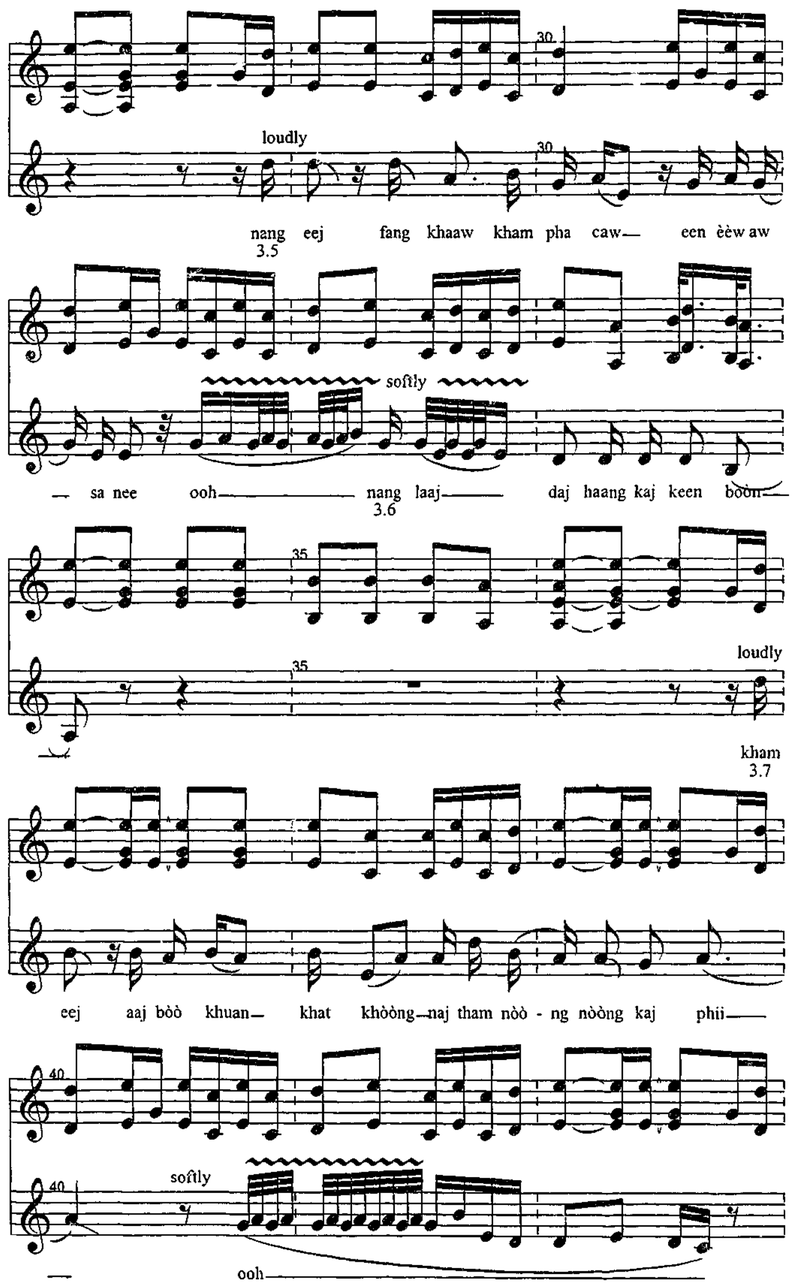
Performed by Duang Phaeng 25/1/99 at Pakse

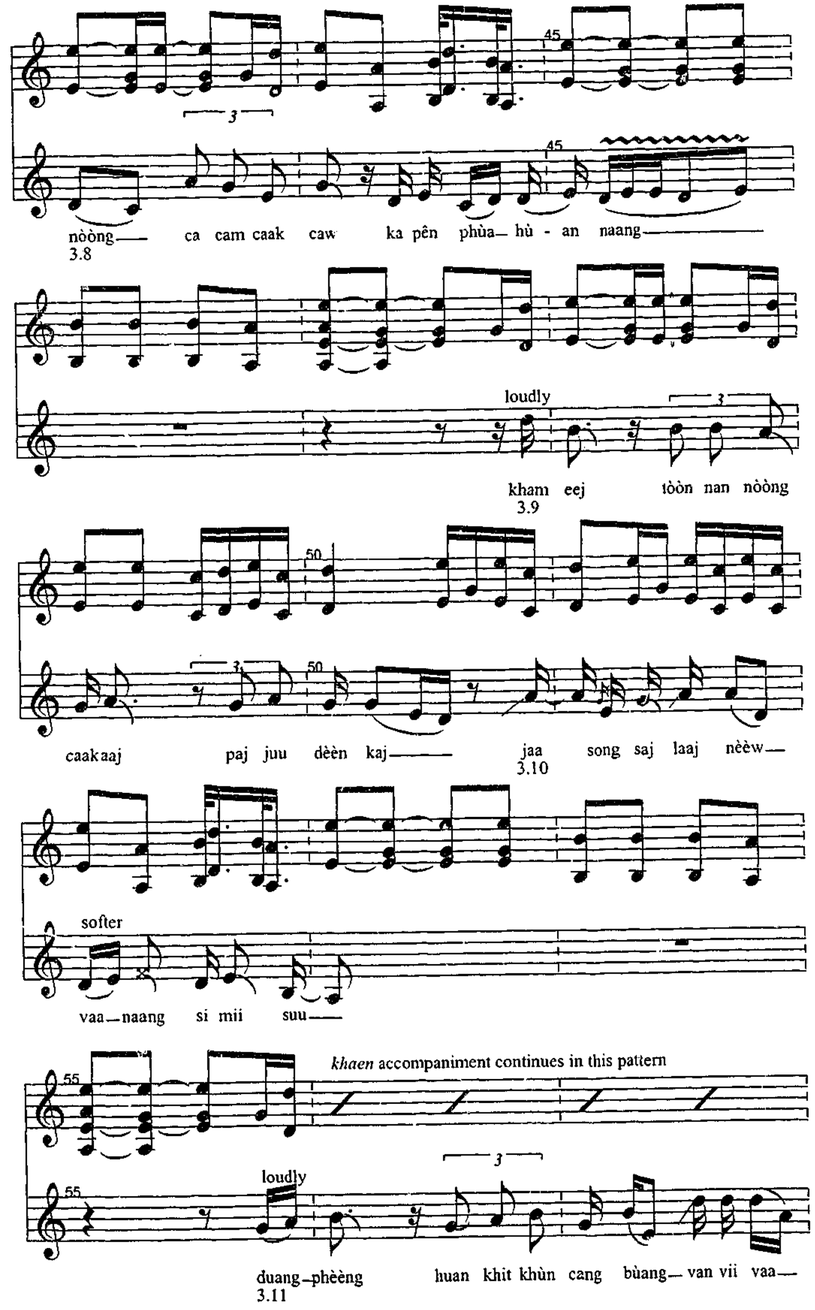
Recorded and Transcribed by Adam Chapman

khaen accompaniment uses a variation of the *ñaaw* scale (a, b, c, d, e, g)






30
loudly
nang eej fang khaaw kham pha caw— een èèw aw
3.5
softly
— sa nee ooh— nang laaj— daj haang kaj keen boòn—
3.6
35
loudly
kham
3.7
eej aaj bòò khuan— khat khòòng—naj tham nòò - ng nòòng kaj phii—
40
softly
— ooh—


45
3
nòòng— ca cam caak caw ka pên phùa— hù - an naang—
3.8
loudly
kham eej tòòn nan nòòng
3.9
50
caakaaj paj juu dèèn kaj— jaa song saj laaj nèèw—
3.10
softer
vaa—naang si mii suu—
khaen accompaniment continues in this pattern
55
loudly
duang—phèèng huan khit khùn cang bùang— van vii vaa—
3.11

60

softly

lè tok tèèng hmm maa lèèw

phòò mèè bèèng tòò tang ka vang haj huam kan
3.12

65

loudly

tèè kham nùk naa mùùn san san ñaa vaa
3.13

softer

bòò kaj kan saaj phua phan daj hu - am hèèng phèèng nòòng
3.14

70

loudly

kham
3.15

75

eej caj ñang khong khòòj sang van khùùn maa juu baan kaw

softer

ooh

80

softer

tèè nòòng ñang khit hòòt caw kin khaw kòò bòò long
3.16

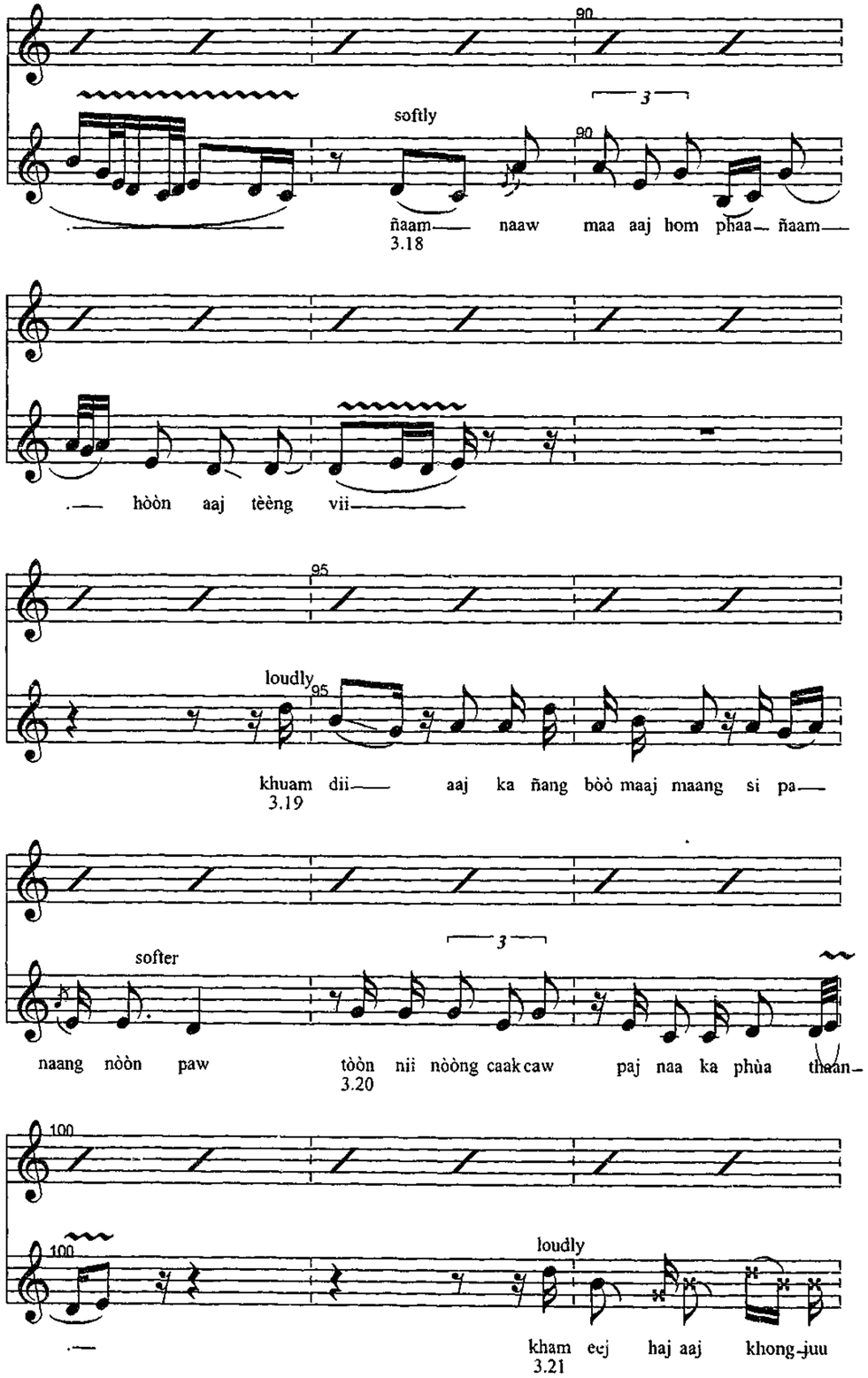
loudly

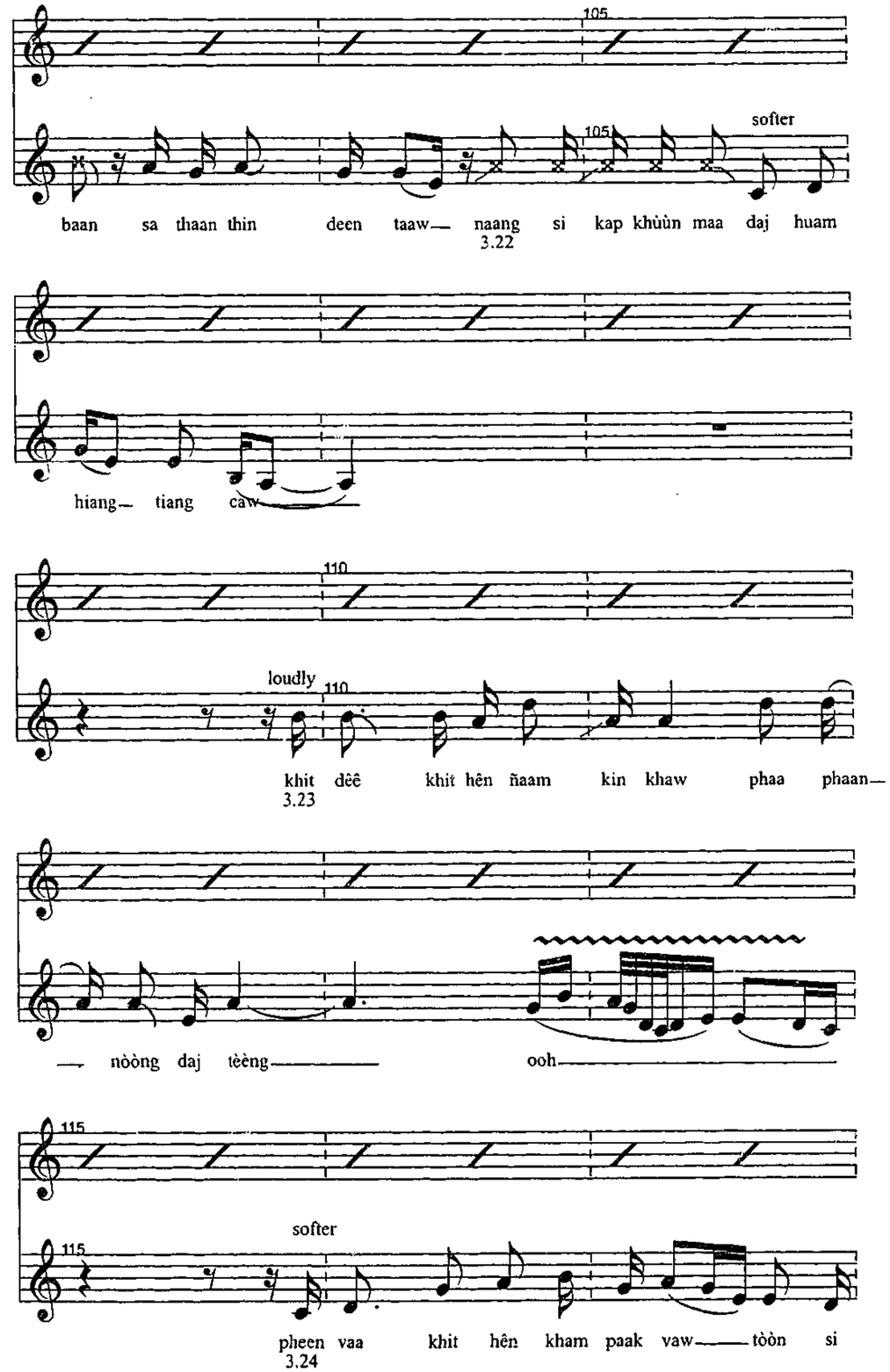
khit dêê khit hên ñaam haw
3.17

85

softer

khaw naj van nòòn sòòn juu sùa hmm


90
softly
3
90
ñaam— naaw maa aaj hom phaa— ñaam—
3.18
hòòn aaj tèèng vii—
95
loudly
95
khuam dii— aaj ka ñang bòò maaj maang si pa—
3.19
softer
3
naang nòòn paw tòòn nii nòòng caak caw paj naa ka phùa thaan—
3.20
100
100
loudly
kham eej haj aaj khong juu
3.21


105
105
softer
baan sa thaan thin deen taaw— naang si kap khùùn maa daj huam
3.22
hiang— tiang caw—
110
loudly
110
khit dêê khit hên ñaam kin khaw phaa phaan—
3.23
nòòng daj tèèng— ooh—
115
115
softer
pheen vaa khit hên kham paak vaw— tòòn si
3.24

120

softly

3

khaw- bòòn nòòn——— iik ñaam nòòng juu

3.25

sòòn—aaj ooj òòk saa dèèng haa vaa caa cing——— tòò ñing bòò lùùm—

3.26

125

loudly

daj khit

3.27

dêê tòòn thii phan pha nang kiaw liaw-khùùn aaj vaw ooj

130

softer

kham vaan- khùù nam ooj—— aaj ooj nòòng ka bòò nòòn———

3.28

135

loudly

diaw nii naang daj cam caak

3.29

softer

caw—— caj ka ngaaw—— khùù—fon ooh———— thon

3.30

140

thang thuk daj huam kan—— maa— lèèw———

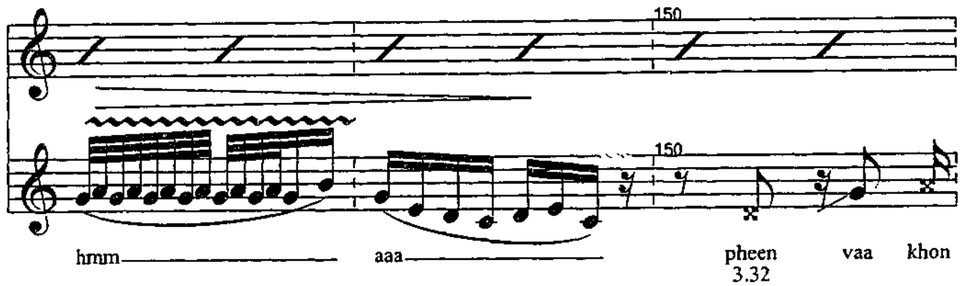
loudly

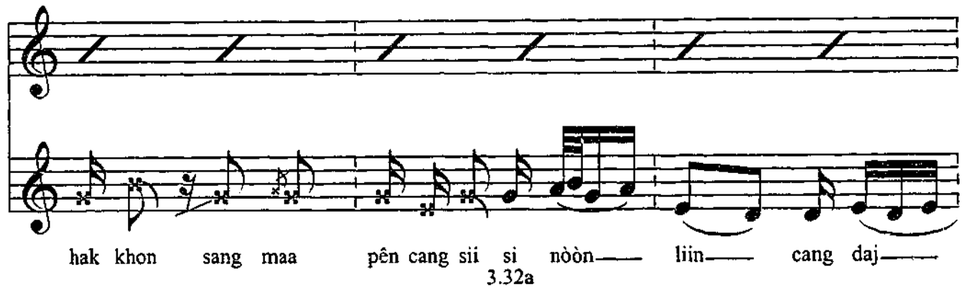
phèèng eej ot naa

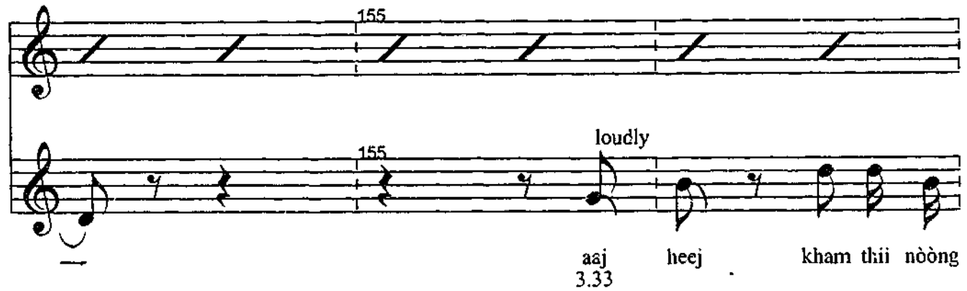
3.31

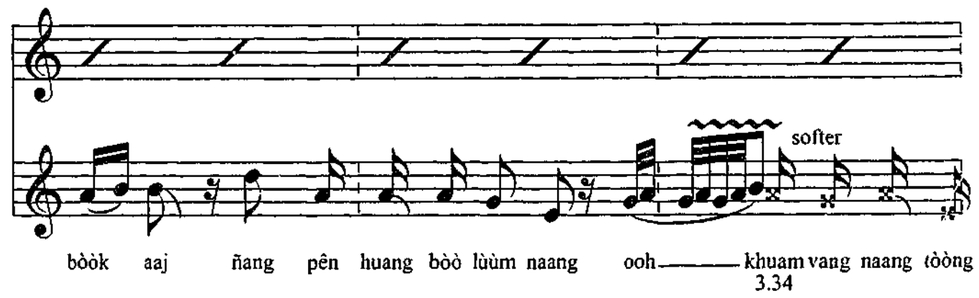
145

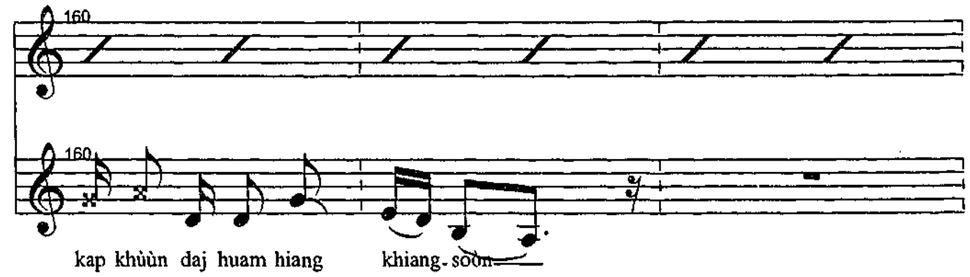
taa— jaa suu haj ot dee caj— jaa— suu lon——

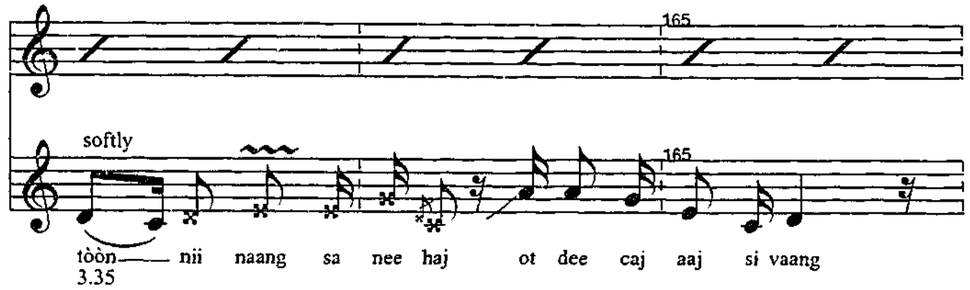

150
150
hmm aaa pheen vaa khon
3.32

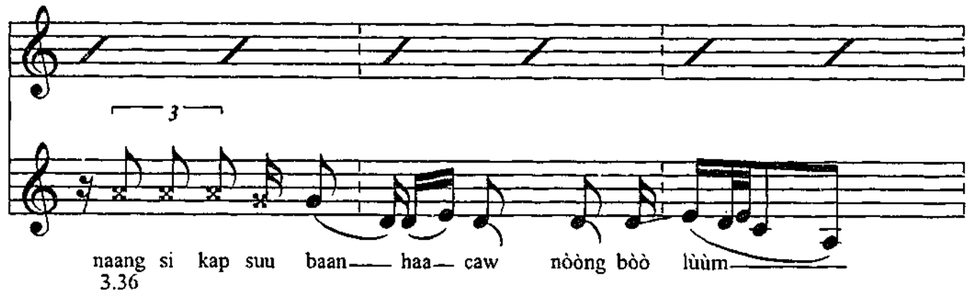

hak khon sang maa pên cang sii si nòòn liin cang daj
3.32a

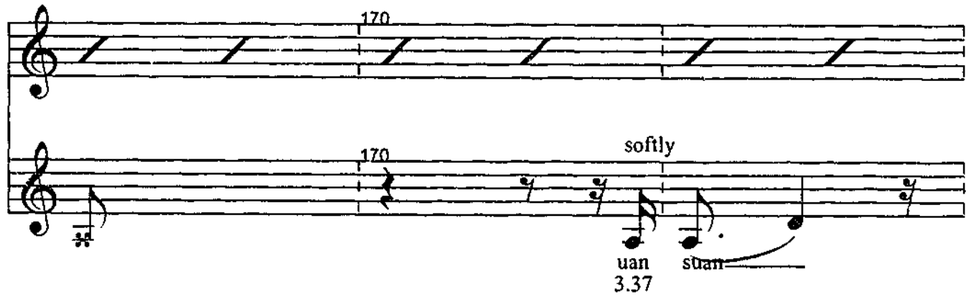

155
155
loudly
aaj heej kham thii nòòng
3.33

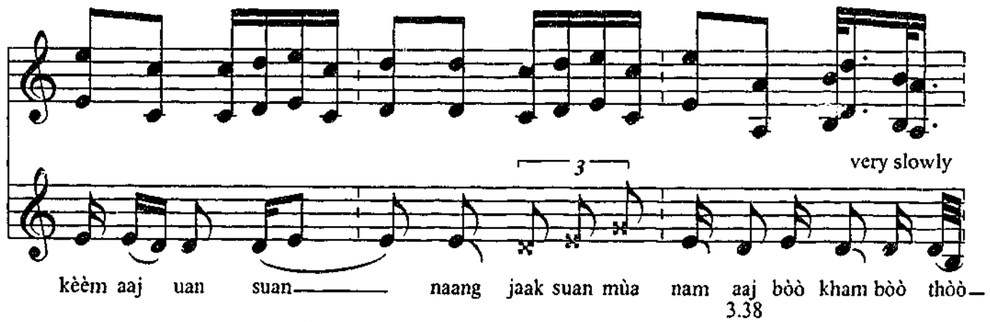

softer
bòòk aaj ñang pên huang bòò lùùm naang ooh khuam vang naang tòòng
3.34

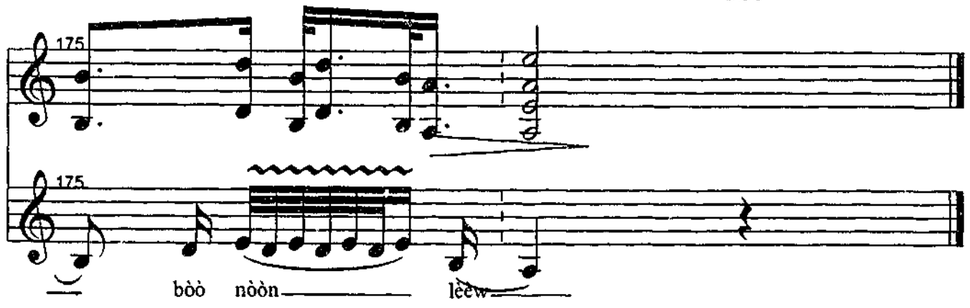

160
160
kap khùùn daj huam hiang khiang-soon


165
softly
165
tòòn nii naang sa nee haj ot dee caj aaj si vaang
3.35


3
naang si kap suu baan haa caw nòòng bòò lùùm
3.36


170
170
softly
uan suan
3.37


3
very slowly
kèèm aaj uan suan naang jaak suan mùa nam aaj bòò kham bòò thòò
3.38


175
175
bòò nòòn lèèw

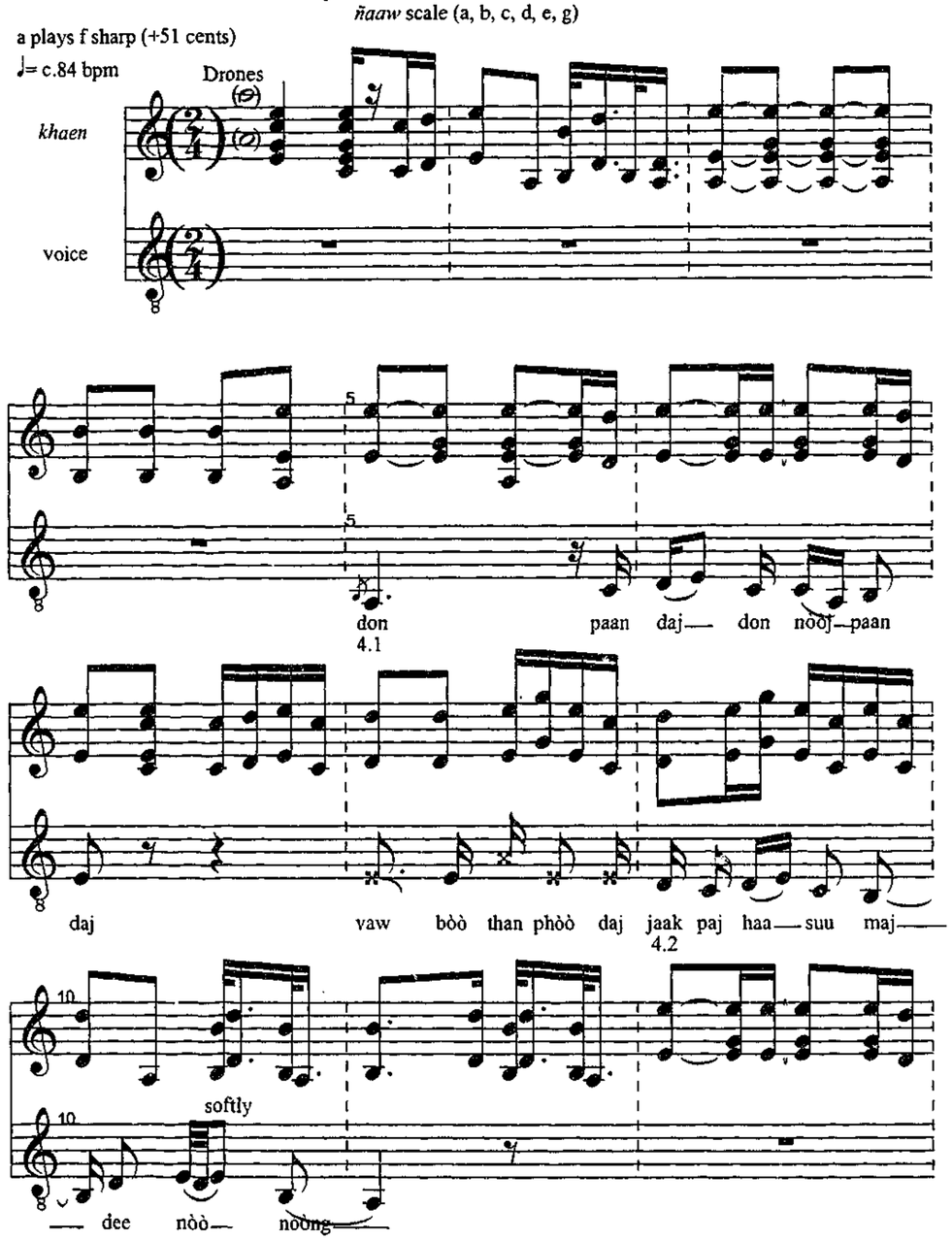
Transcription 4: Lam Som

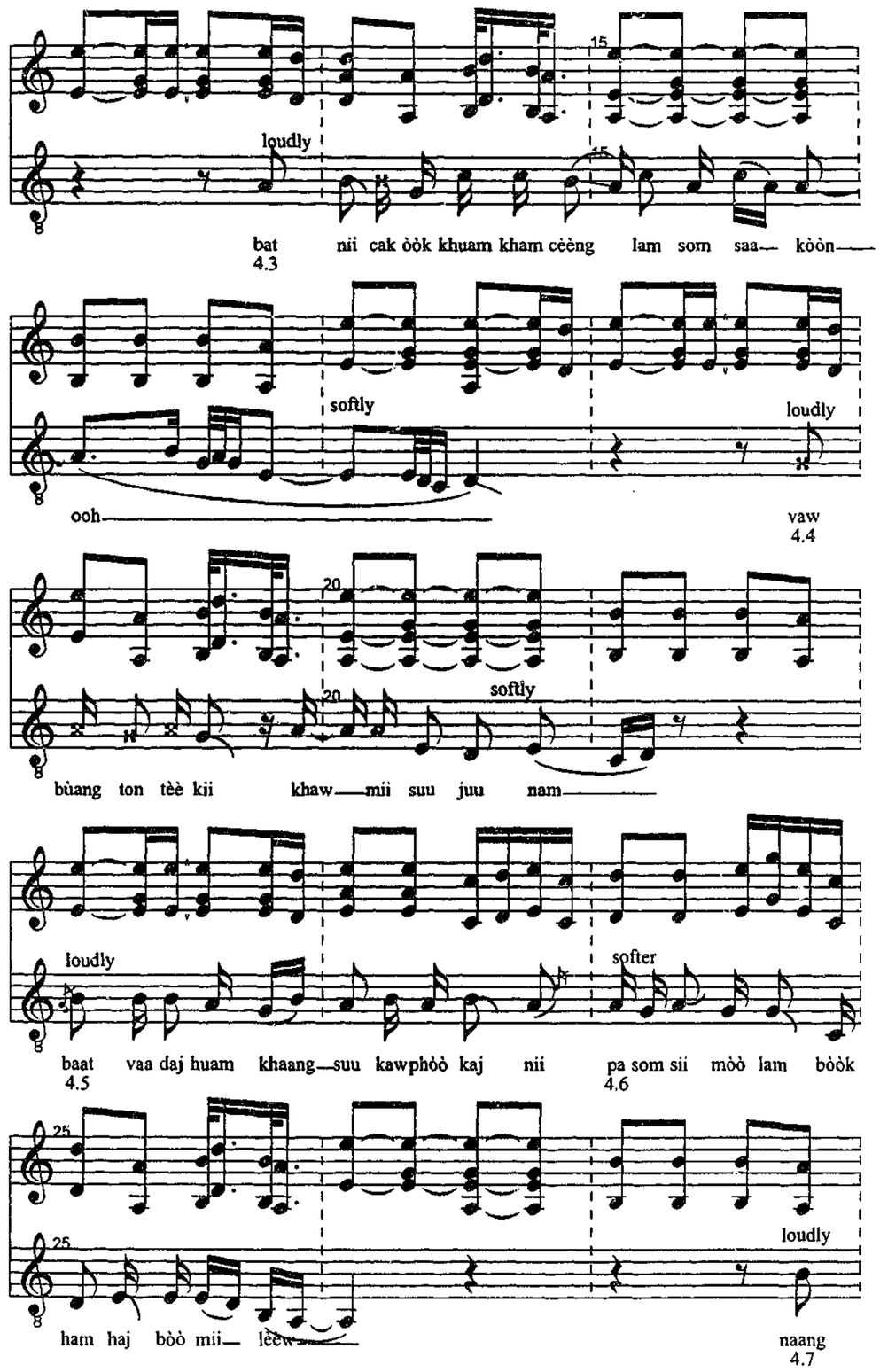
(male vocal)

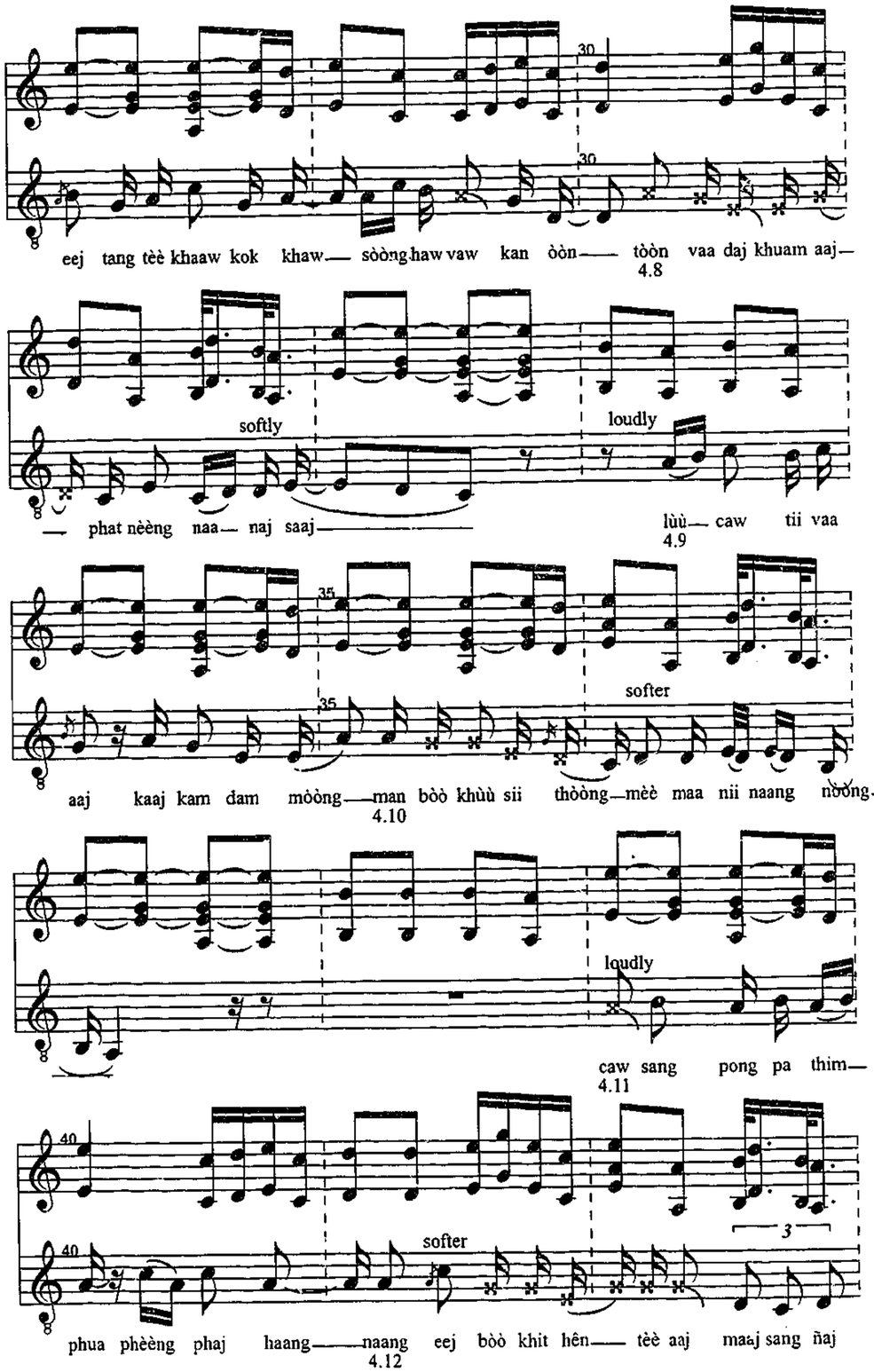
Performed by Som Sii 25/1/99 at Pakse

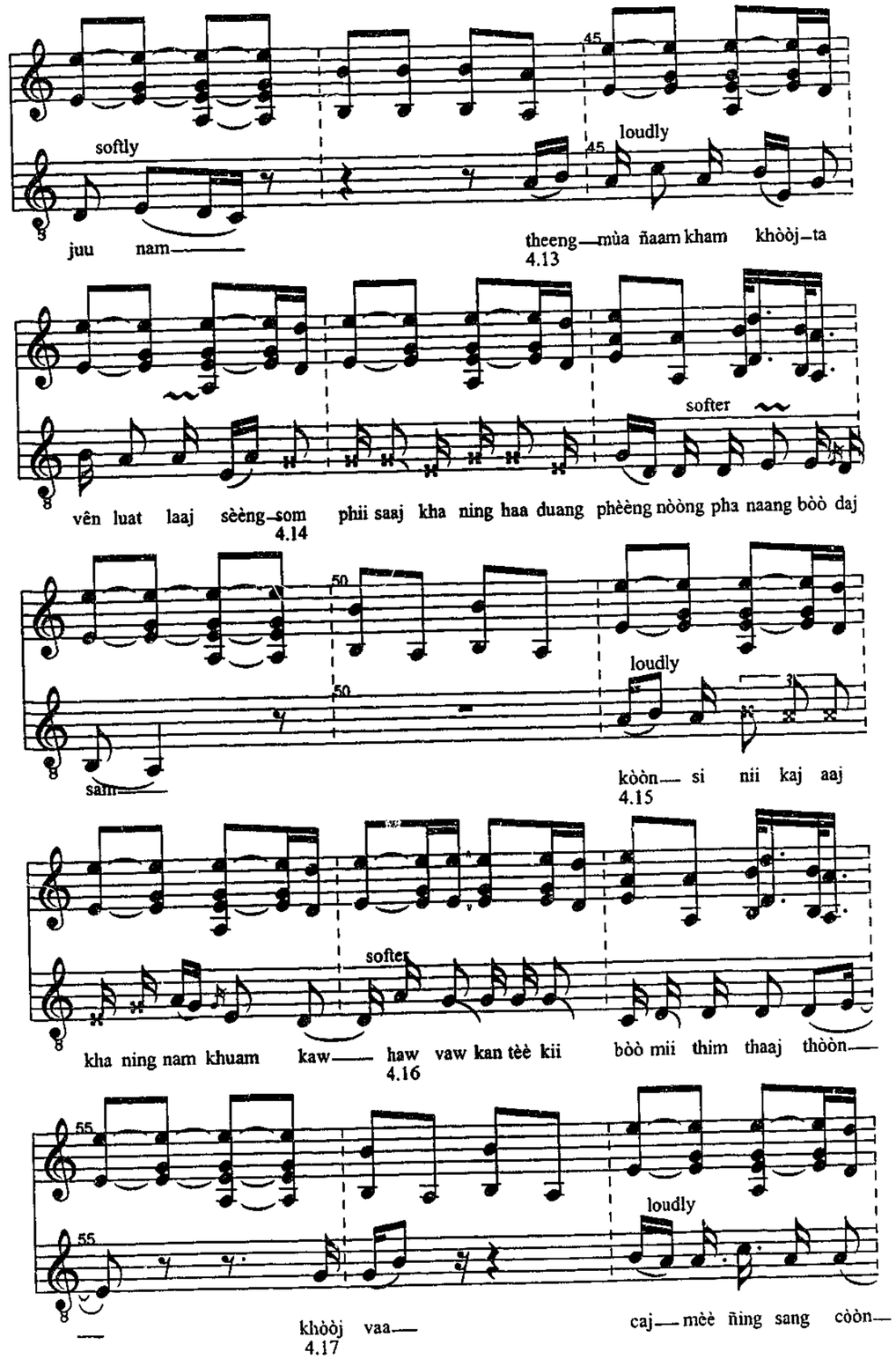
Recorded and transcribed by Adam Chapman

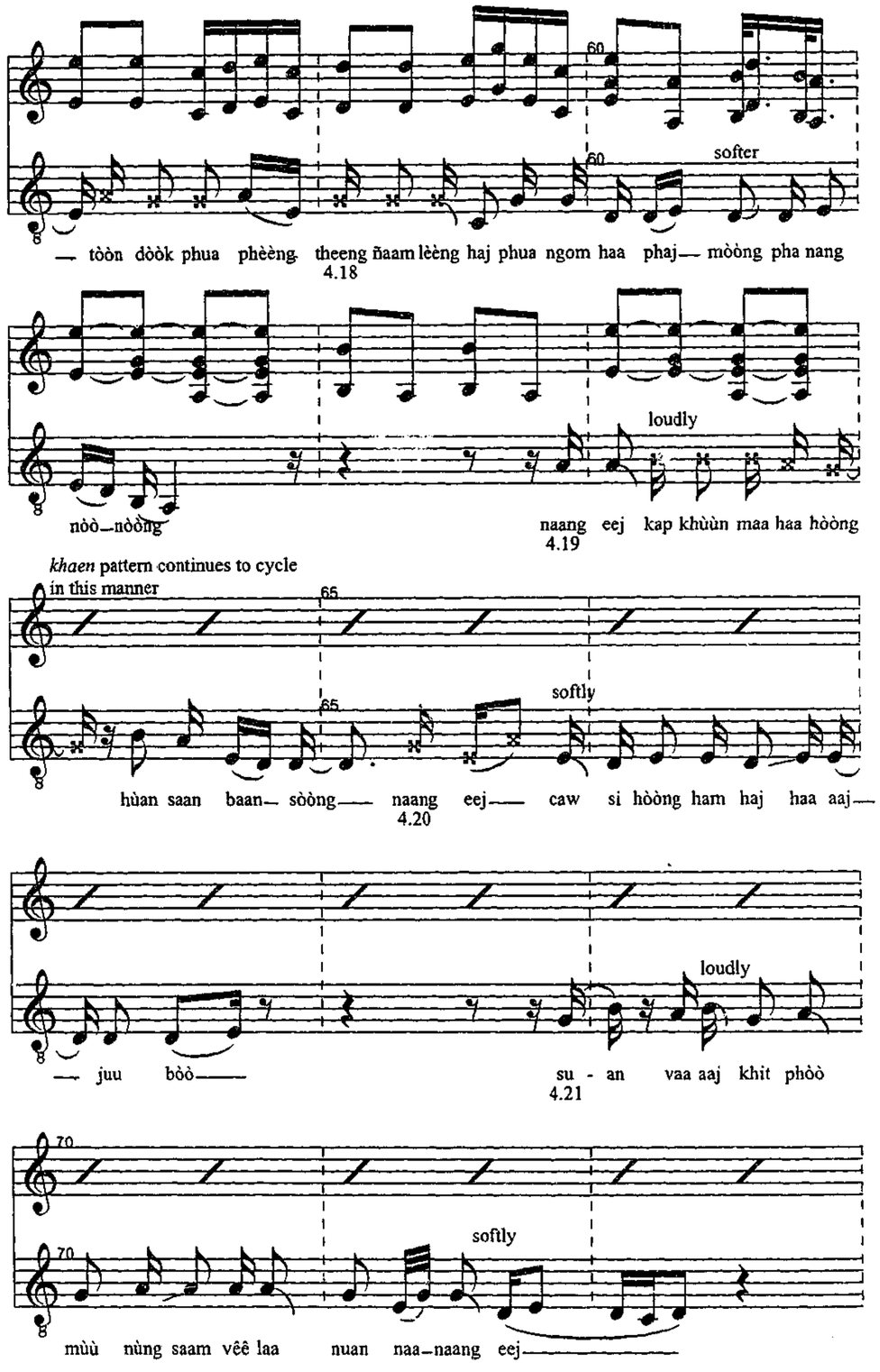
khaen accompaniment uses a mode based on a variant of the *ñaaw* scale (a, b, c, d, e, g)

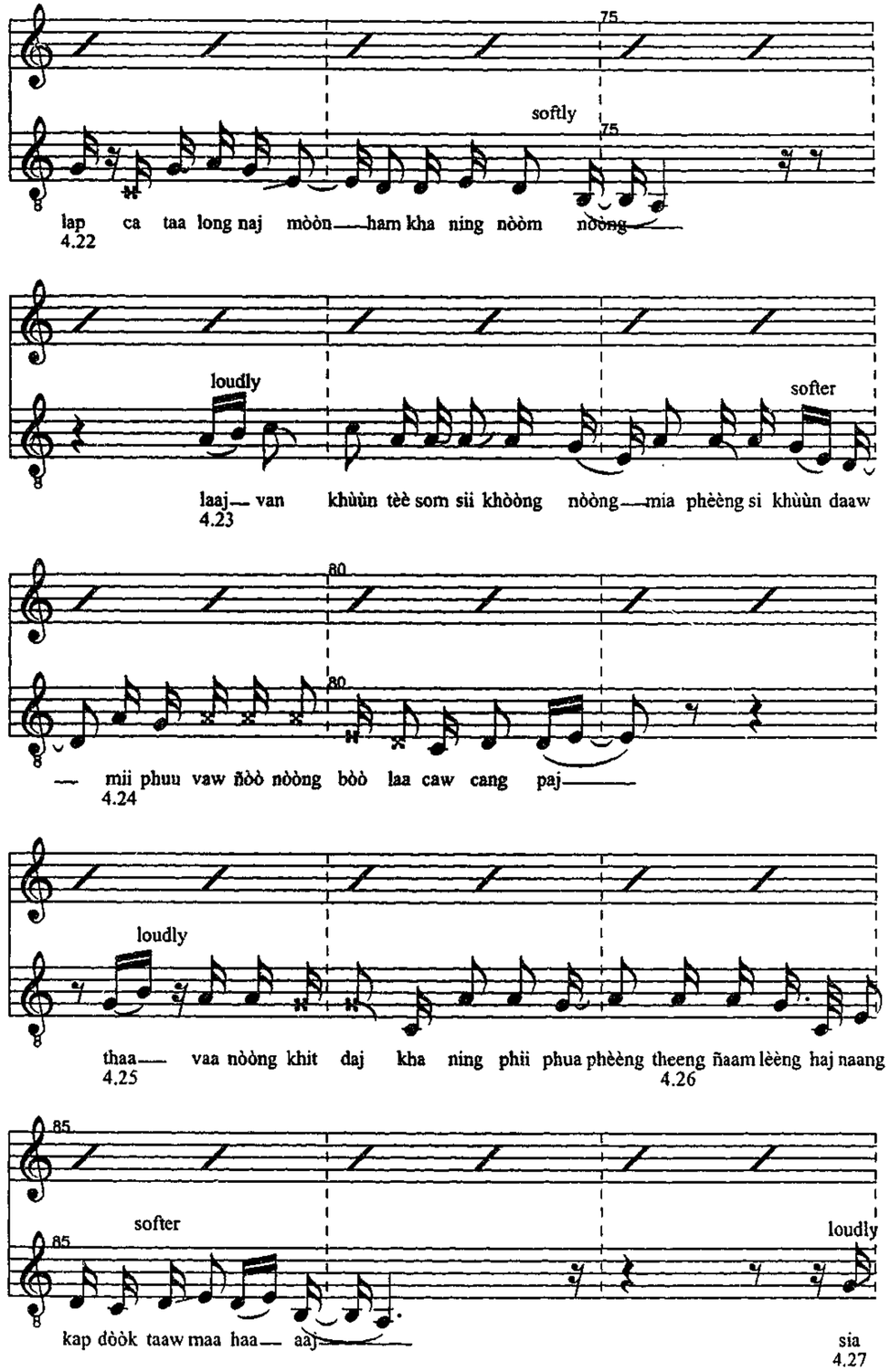


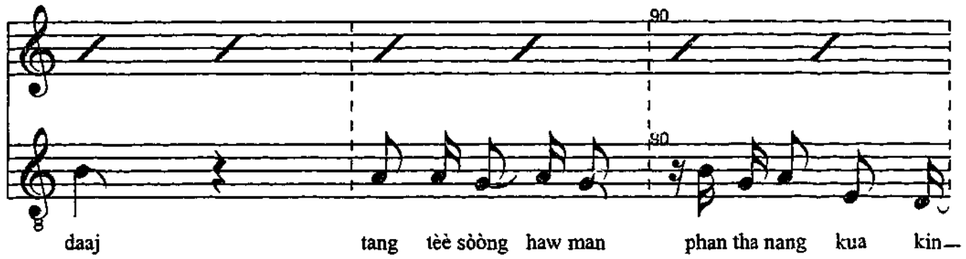


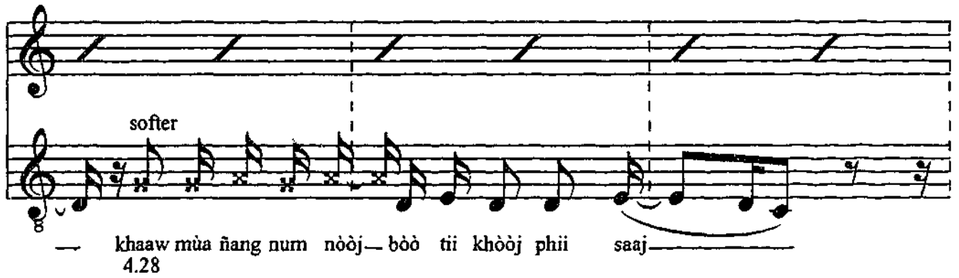

30
eej tang tèè khaaw kok khaw— sòòng haw vaw kan òòn— tòòn vaa daj khuam aaj—
4.8
softly
loudly
— phat nèèng naa— naj saaj—
lùù— caw tii vaa
4.9
35
softer
aaj kaaj kam dam mòòng—man bòò khùù sii thòòng—mèè maa nii naang nòòng-
4.10
loudly
caw sang pong pa thim—
4.11
40
softer
phua phèèng phaj haang—naang eej bòò khit hên— tèè aaj maaj sang ñaj
4.12

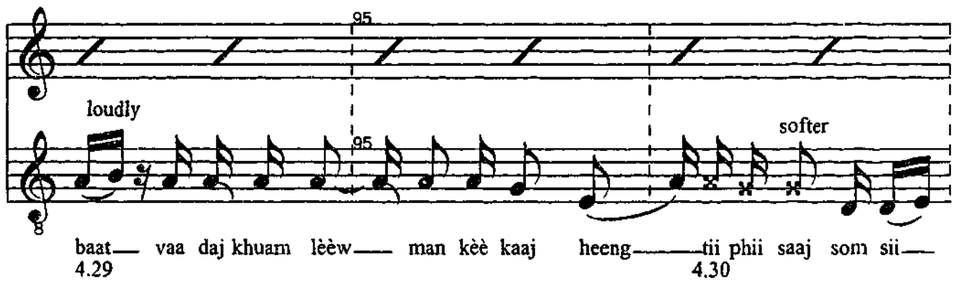

45
softly
loudly
juu nam—
theeng—mùa ñaam kham khòòj—ta
4.13
softer
vên luat laaj sèèng-som phii saaj kha ning haa duang phèèng nòòng pha naang bòò daj
4.14
50
loudly
sam—
kòòn— si nii kaj aaj
4.15
softer
kha ning nam khuam kaw— haw vaw kan tèè kii bòò mii thim thaaj thòòn—
4.16
55
loudly
— khòòj vaa—
caj—mèè ñing sang còòn—
4.17

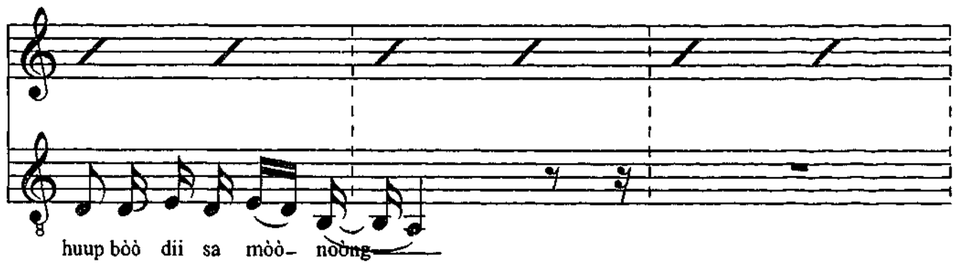

60
softer
— tòòn dòòk phua phèèng theeng ñaam lèèng haj phua ngom haa phaj— mòòng pha nang
4.18
loudly
nòò—nòòng
naang eej kap khùùn maa haa hòòng
4.19
khaen pattern continues to cycle in this manner
65
softly
hùan saan baan— sòòng— naang eej— caw si hòòng ham haj haa aaj—
4.20
loudly
— juu bòò—
su - an vaa aaj khit phòò
4.21
70
softly
mùù nùng saam vêê laa nuan naa—naang eej—

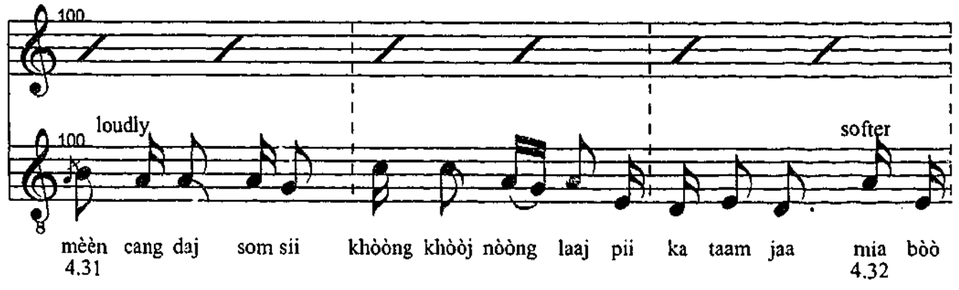

75
softly
lap ca taa long naj mòòn—ham kha ning nòòm nòòng—
4.22
loudly
softer
laaj— van khùùn tèè som sii khòòng nòòng—mia phèèng si khùùn daaw
4.23
80
— mii phuu vaw ñòò nòòng bòò laa caw cang paj—
4.24
loudly
thaa— vaa nòòng khit daj kha ning phii phua phèèng theeng ñaam lèèng haj naang
4.25
4.26
85
softer
loudly
kap dòòk taaw maa haa— aaj—
sia
4.27

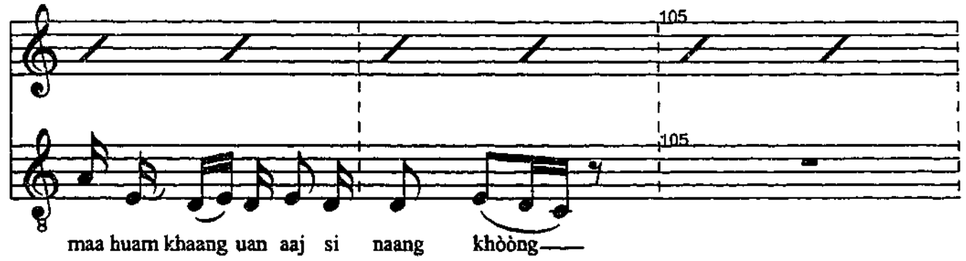

90
daaj tang tèè sòòng haw man phan tha nang kua kin—

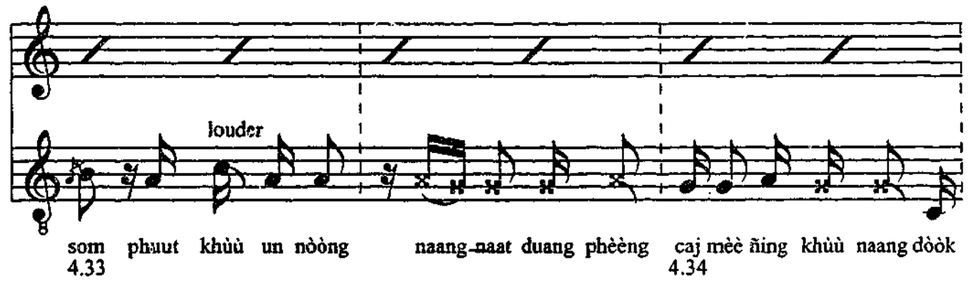

softer
— khaaw mùa ñang num nòòj— bòò tii khòòj phii saaj——
4.28

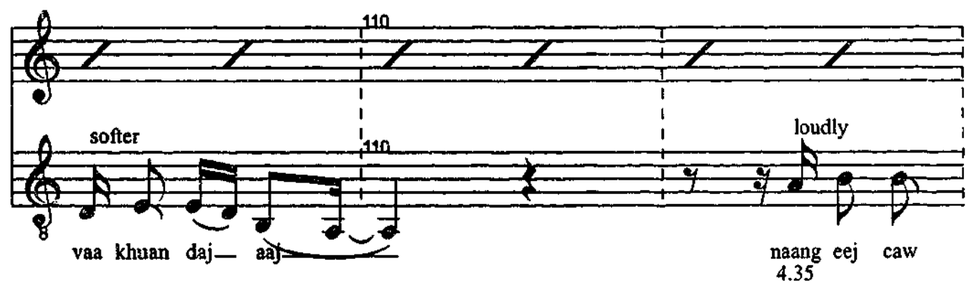

95
loudly
softer
baat— vaa daj khuam lèèw— man kèè kaaj heeng——tii phii saaj som sii—
4.29
4.30

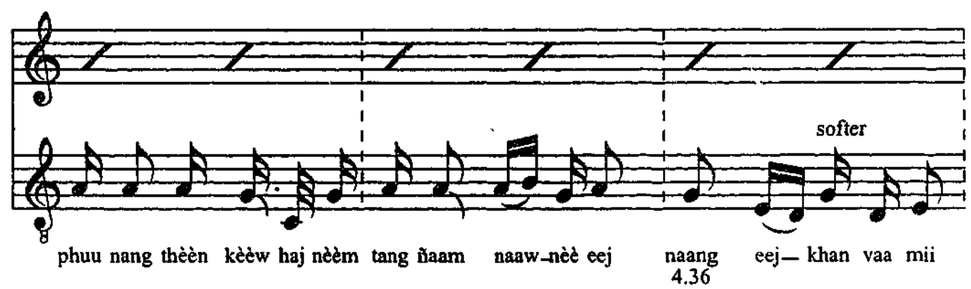

huup bòò dii sa mòò- nòòng——

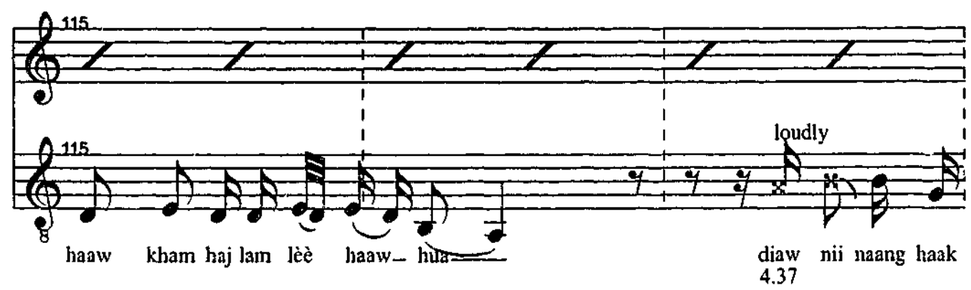

100
loudly
softer
mèèn cang daj som sii khòòng khòòj nòòng laaj pii ka taam jaa mia bòò
4.31
4.32


105
maa huam khaang uan aaj si naang khòòng——


louder
som phuut khùù un nòòng naang-naat duang phèèng caj mèè ñing khùù naang dòòk
4.33
4.34


110
softer
loudly
vaa khuan daj— aaj——
naang eej caw
4.35


softer
phuu nang thèèn kèèw haj nèèm tang ñaam naaw-nèè eej naang eej— khan vaa mii
4.36


115
loudly
haaw kham haj lam lèè haaw— hùa——
diaw nii naang haak
4.37

120

softer

120

mii phua lèèw si haa—sòòn khon—maj baat vaa luuk caw haj– phaj lèèw si sòòj

4.38

loudly

ooj—— suan— vaa van kham khòòj aaj ham

3.39

125

softer

125

kha ning haa– vaa mia–phèèng si kap maa dòòk huang ham bòò mii— lèèw——

4.40

loudly

mèèn caw paj saj lèèw haj ngoo khùùn–

4.41

130

softer

130

haa— phii aaj ñin dii tòò nòòng khat khòòng puaj sòò——

4.42

135

135

tang tèè num hòòt thaw— haw vaw vaa mang mang caw kheej fang—

4.43 4.44

softly

— khuam phaj–ka sang daj—— lùùm— aaj——

140

loudly

140

lùù—— ii saaj khon kèè kèè lèè huup bòò khòòng mia leej bòò jaak

4.45 4.46

softer

loudly

sang– som sòòn tòòng sa nêê—— suan vaa thaang haaj

4.47

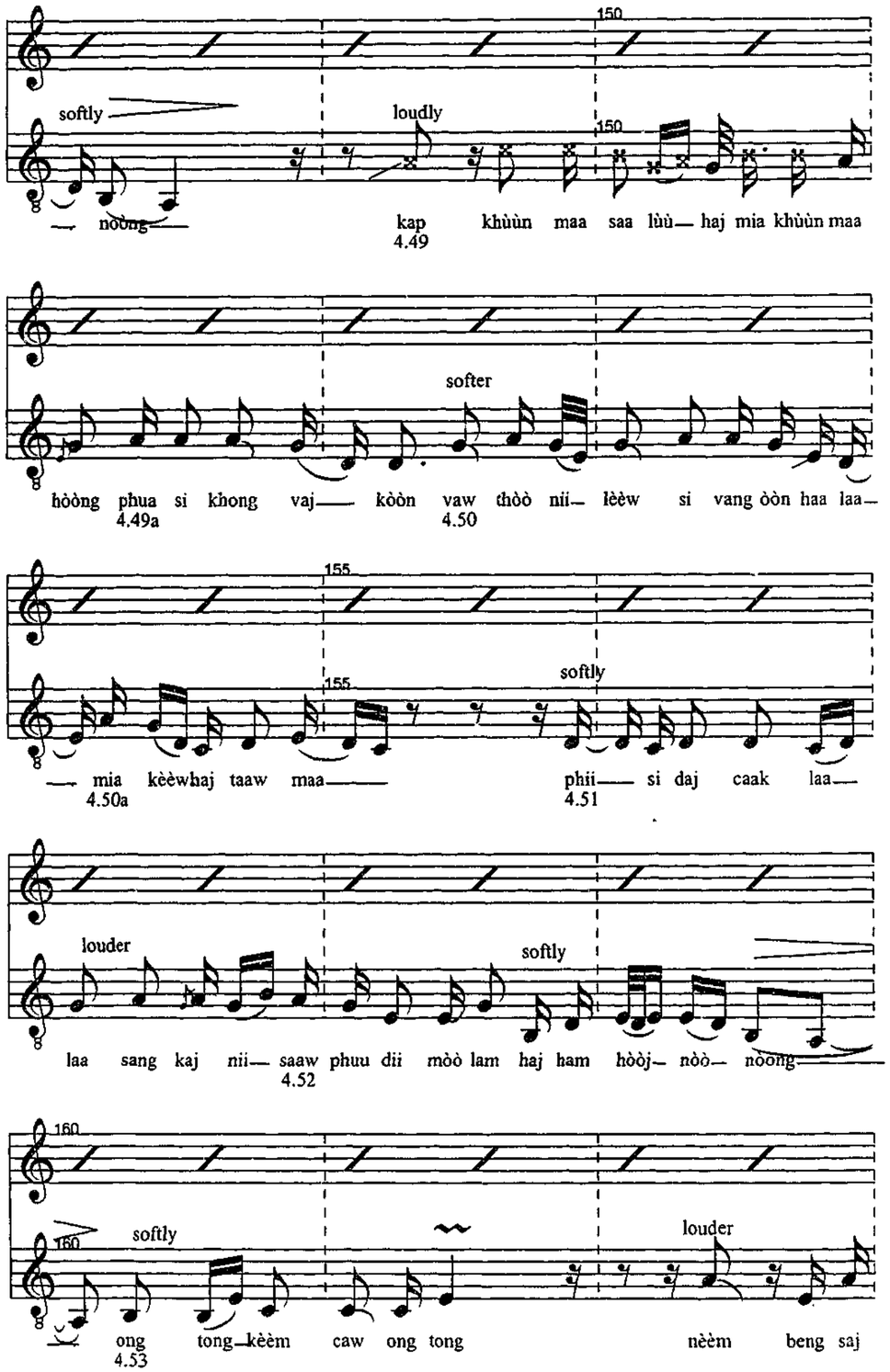
145

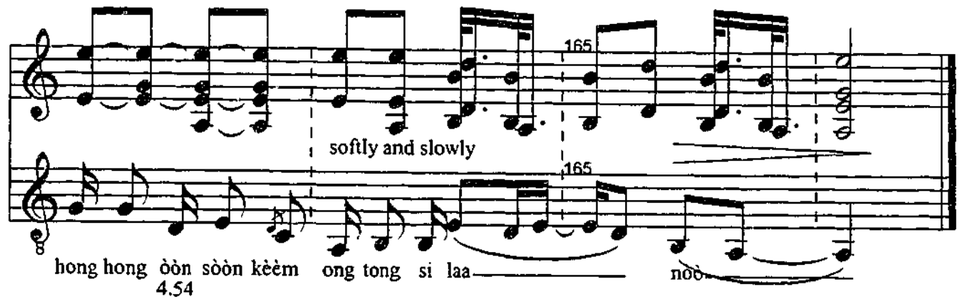
145

softer

nii— ka ñang huang– nam haa— kha ning theeng am khaa phii bòò daj laa——

4.48


150
softly
loudly
150
nòòng
kap khùùn maa saa lùù haj mia khùùn maa
4.49
softer
hòòng phua si khong vaj kòòn vaw thòò nii lèèw si vang òòn haa laa
4.49a
4.50
155
155
softly
mia kèèwhaj taaw maa
phii si daj caak laa
4.50a
4.51
louder
softly
laa sang kaj nii saaw phuu dii mòò lam haj ham hòòj nòò nòòng
4.52
160
160
softly
louder
ong tong kèèm caw ong tong
nèèm beng saj
4.53

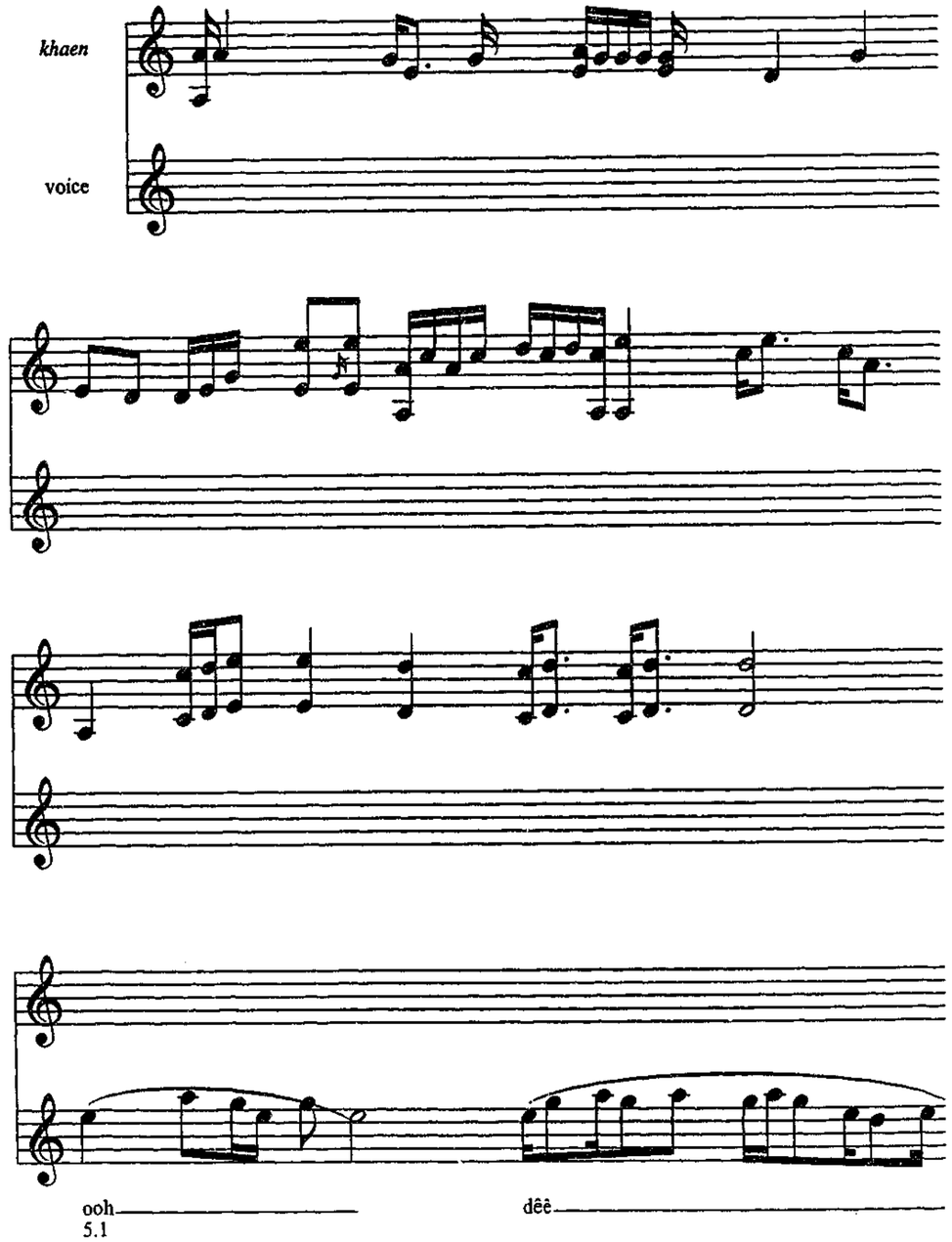

165
softly and slowly
165
hong hong òòn sòòn kèèm ong tong si laa
4.54
nòò

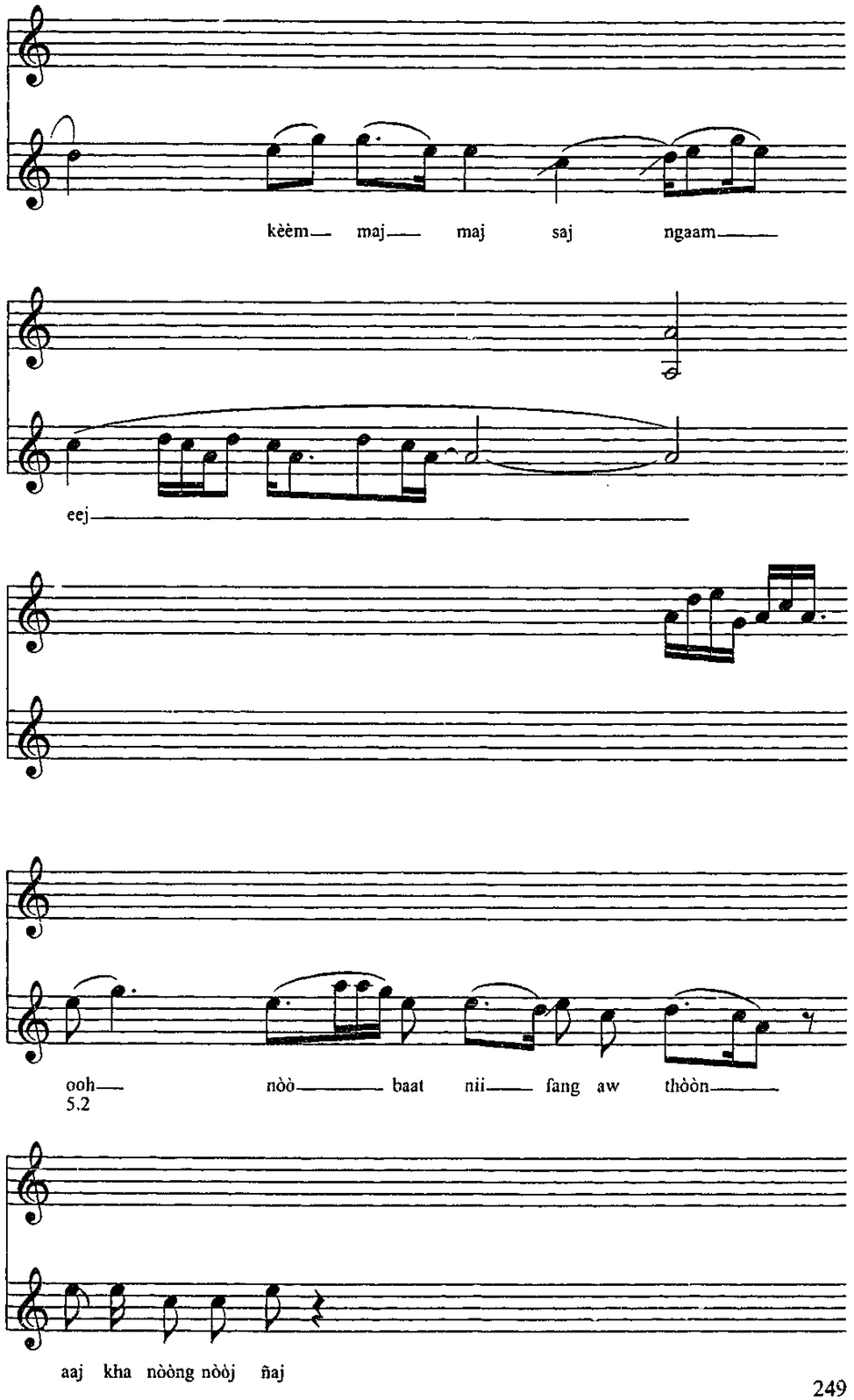
Transcription 5: Khap Ngeum

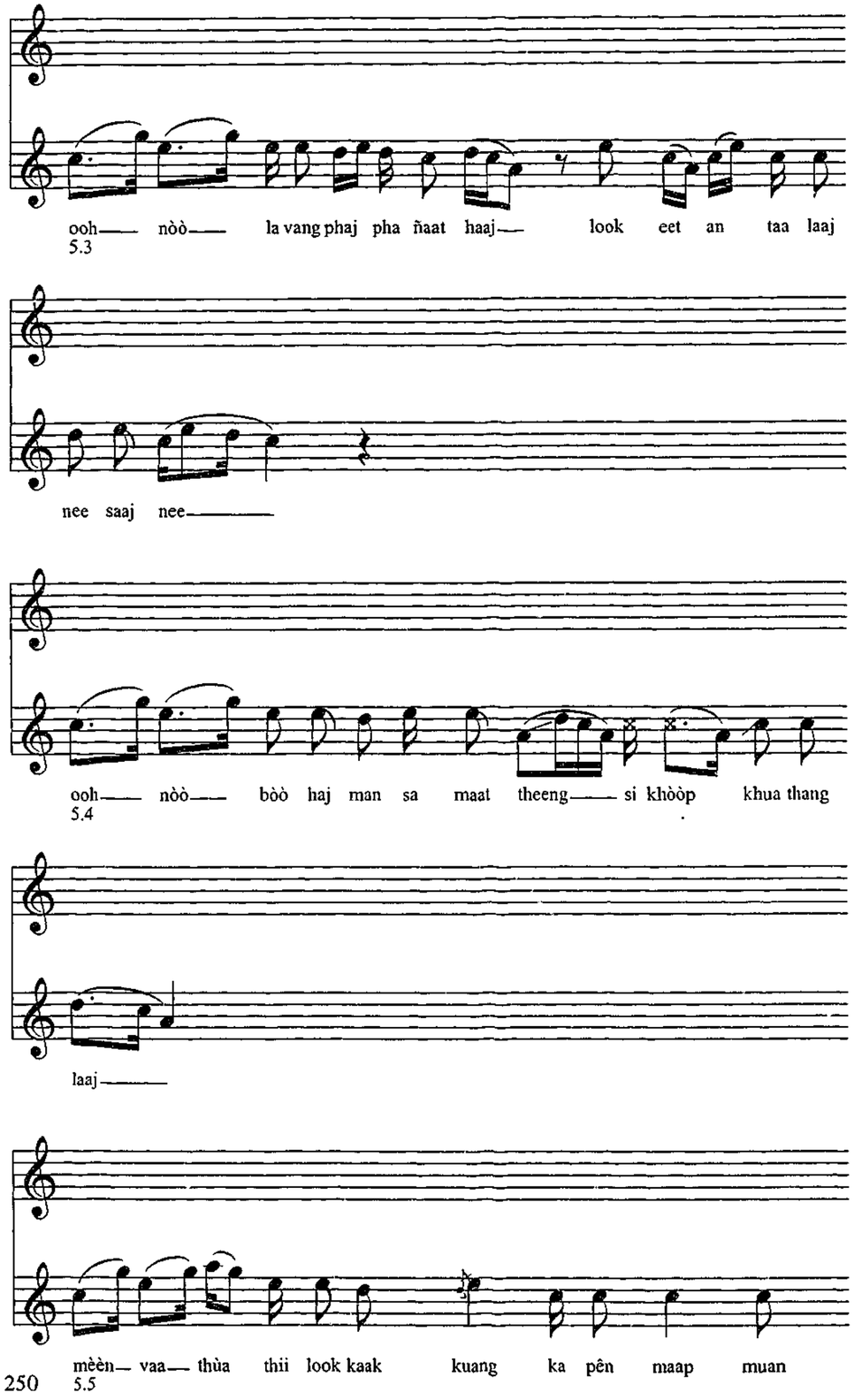
(female vocal)

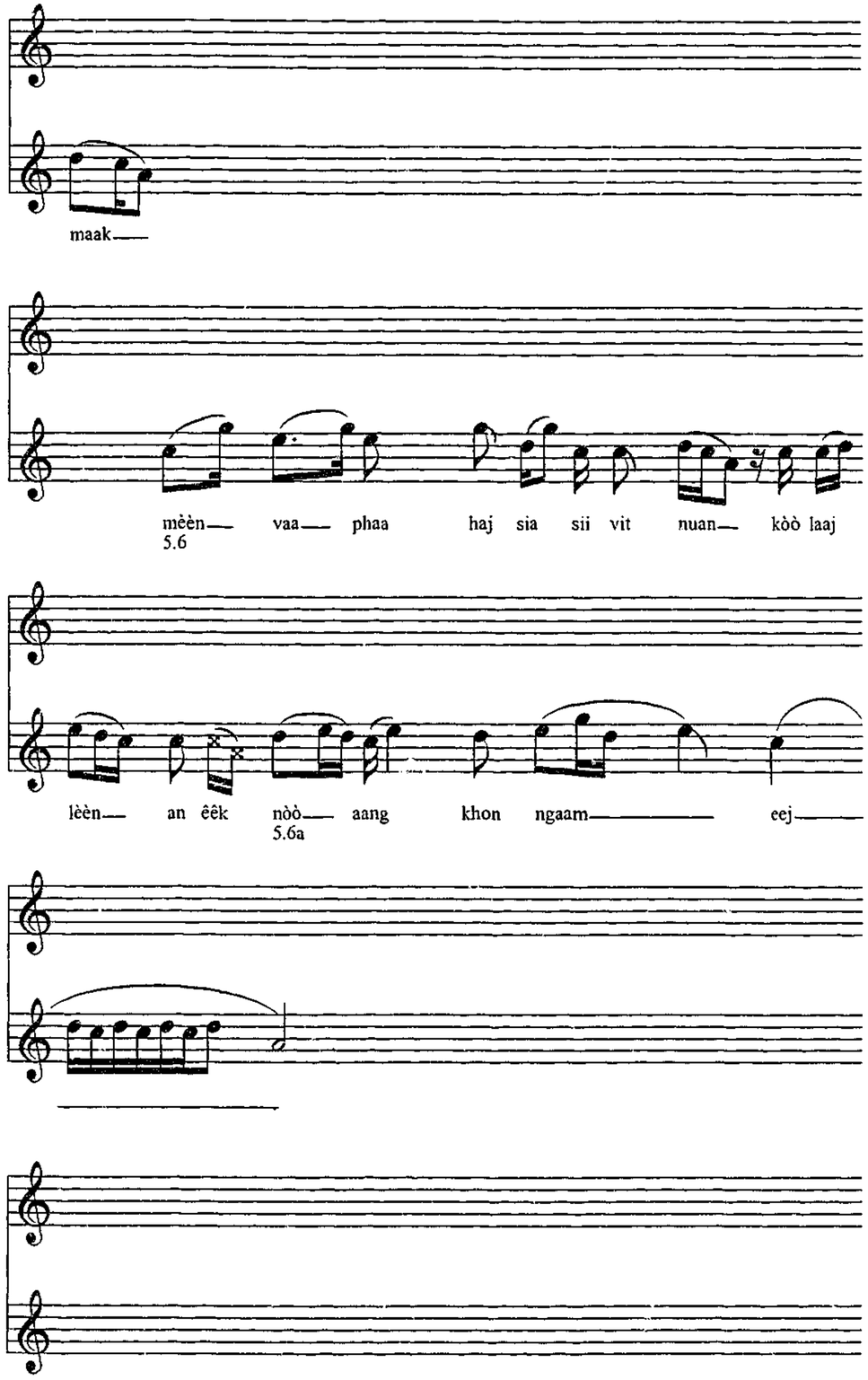
Performed by Paeng Thong Sisutham
Recorded at Lao National Radio, Vientiane 1997
Transcribed by Adam Chapman
khaen accompaniment uses a mode based on the *ñaj* scale (a, c, d, e, g)

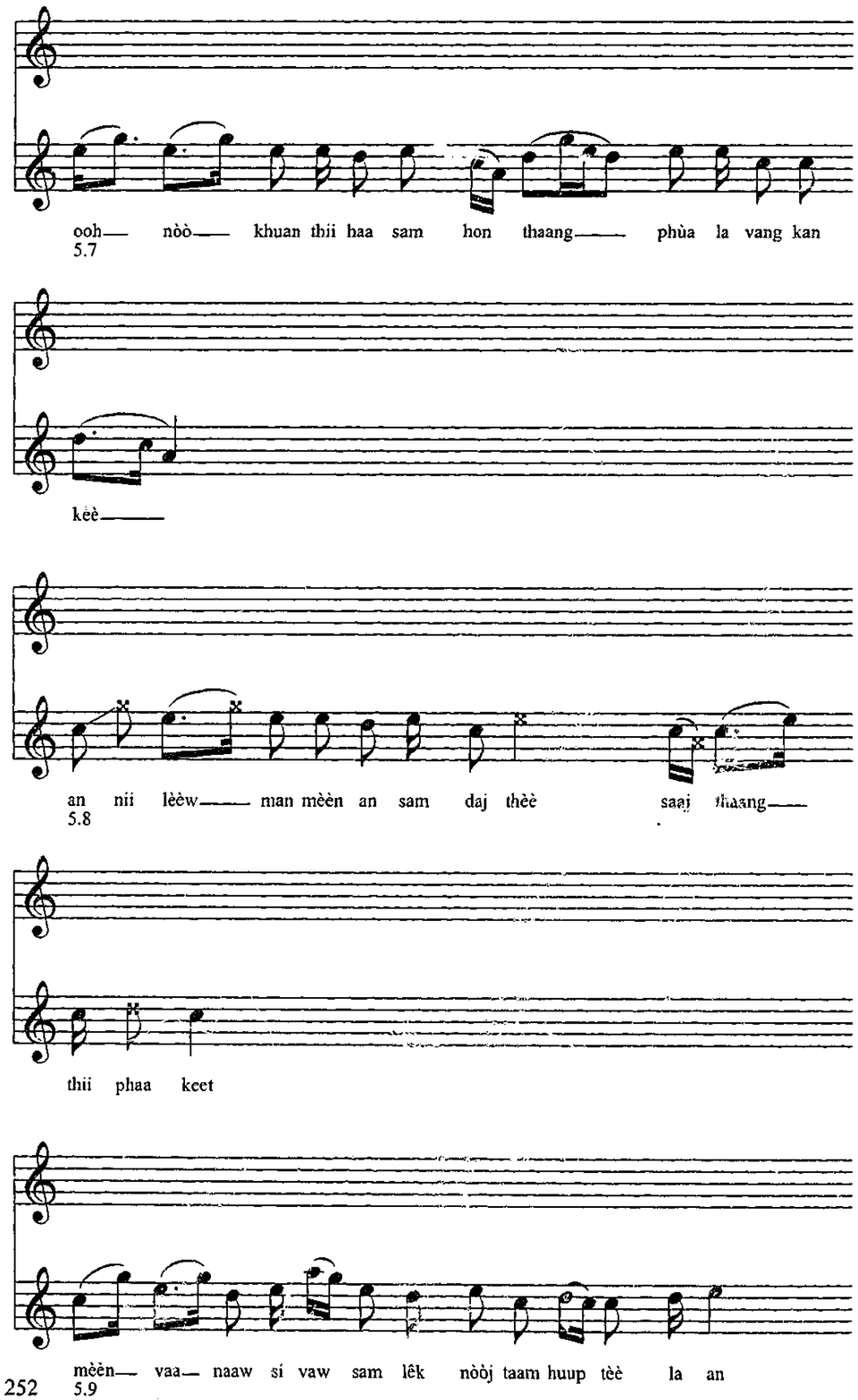
a plays g sharp (-20 cents)

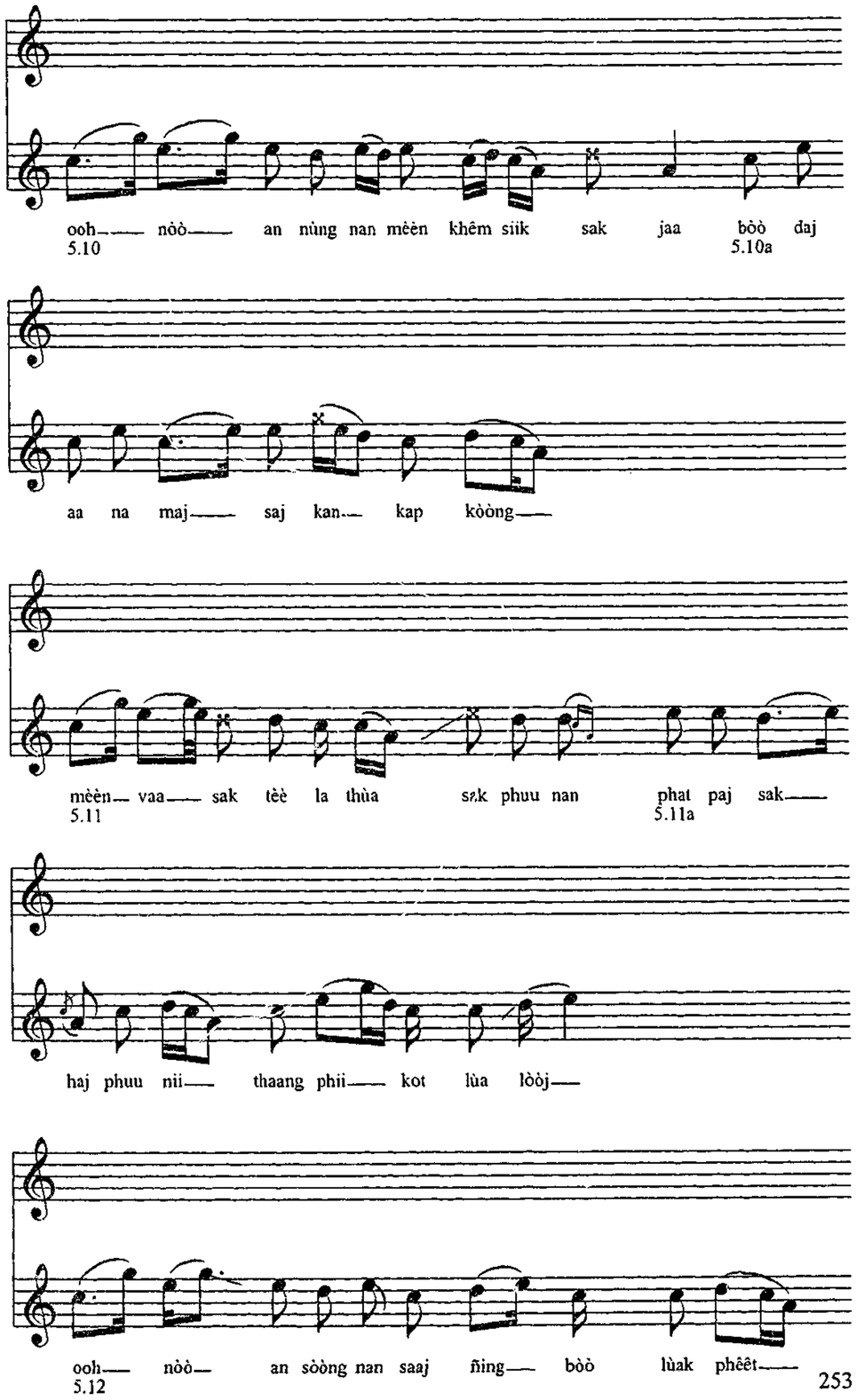


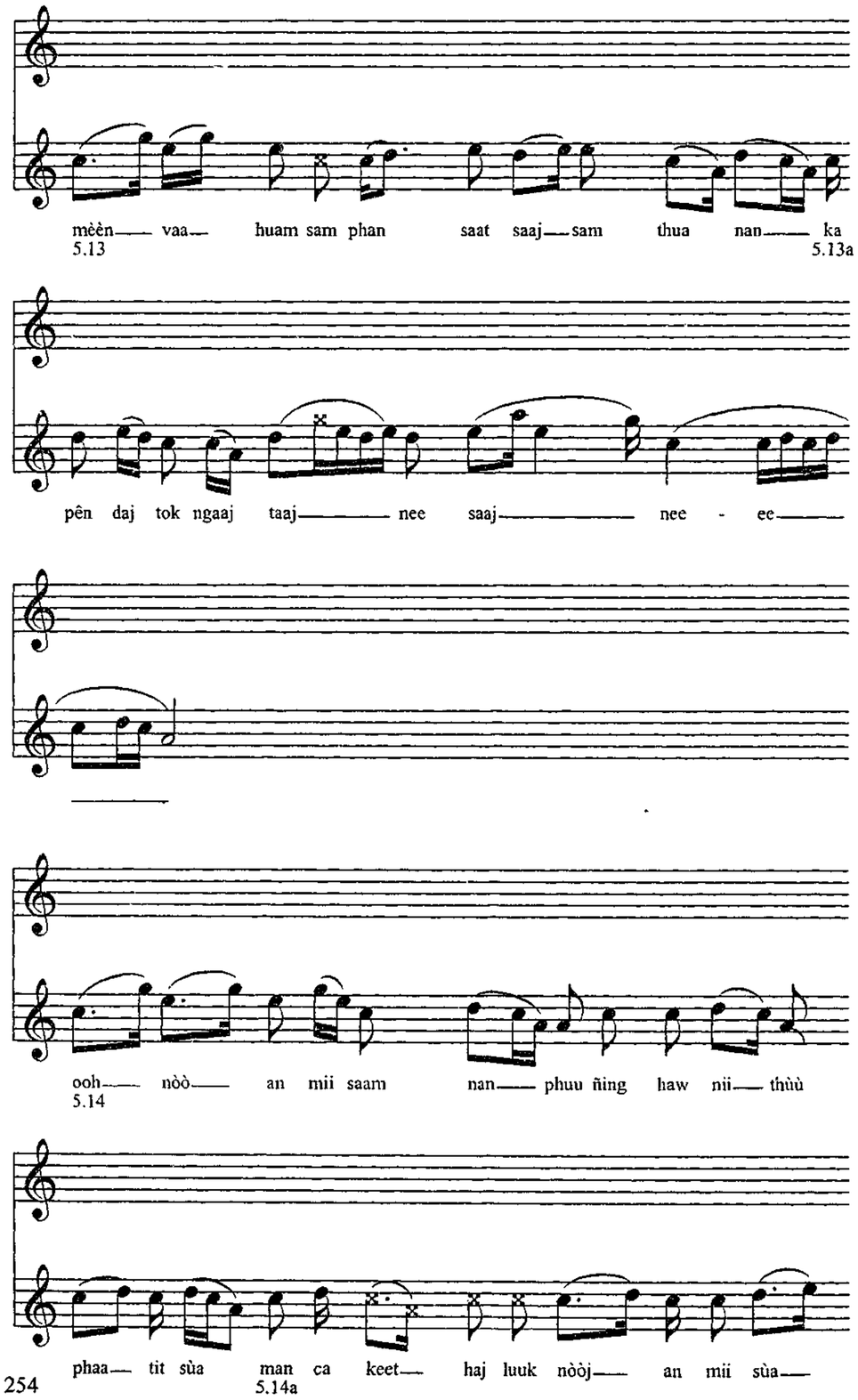


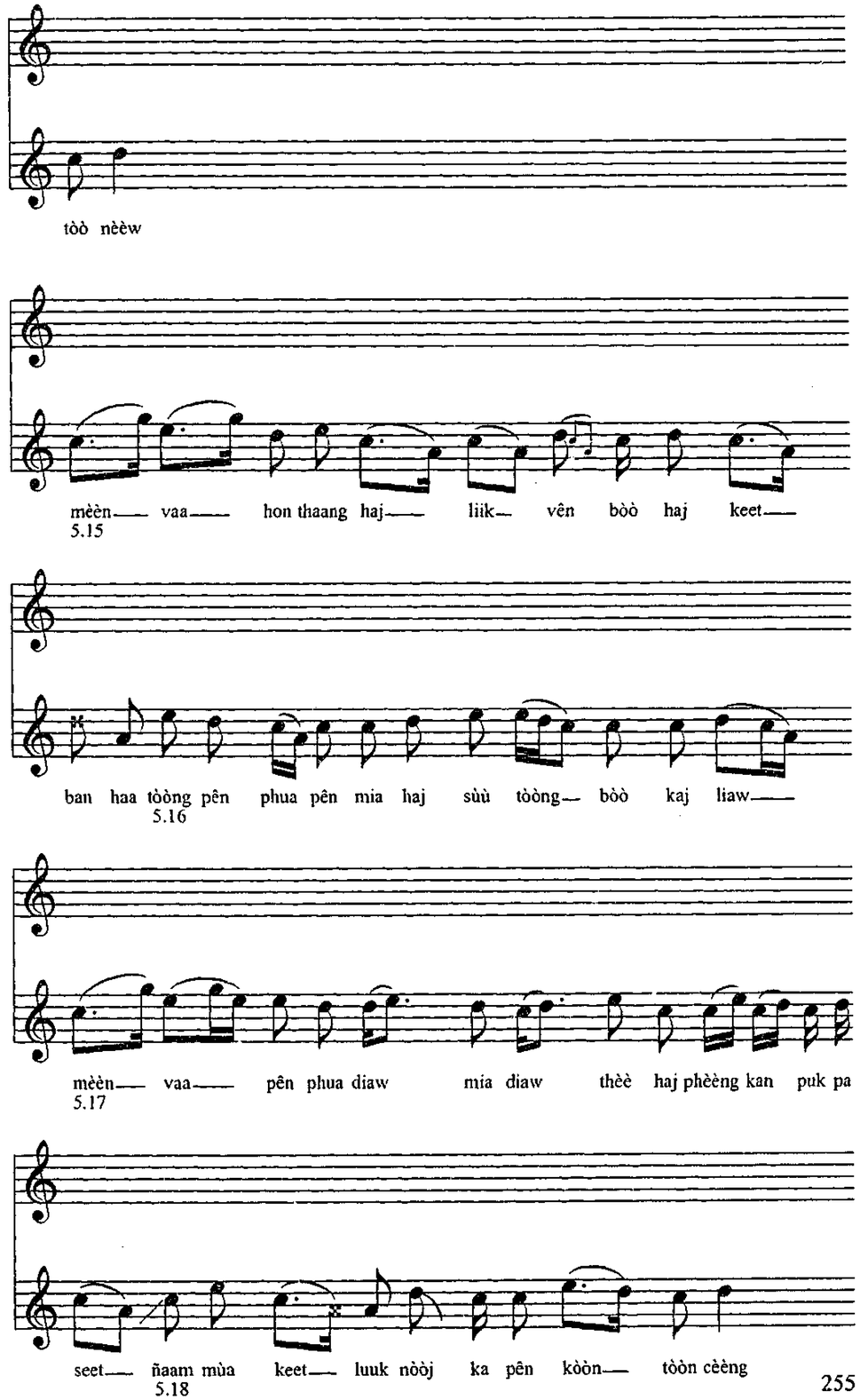

ooh— nòò— la vang phaj pha ñaat haaj— look eet an taa laaj
5.3
nee saaj nee———
ooh— nòò— bòò haj man sa maat theeng— si khòòp khua thang
5.4
laaj———
mèèn— vaa— thùa thii look kaak kuang ka pên maap muan
5.5

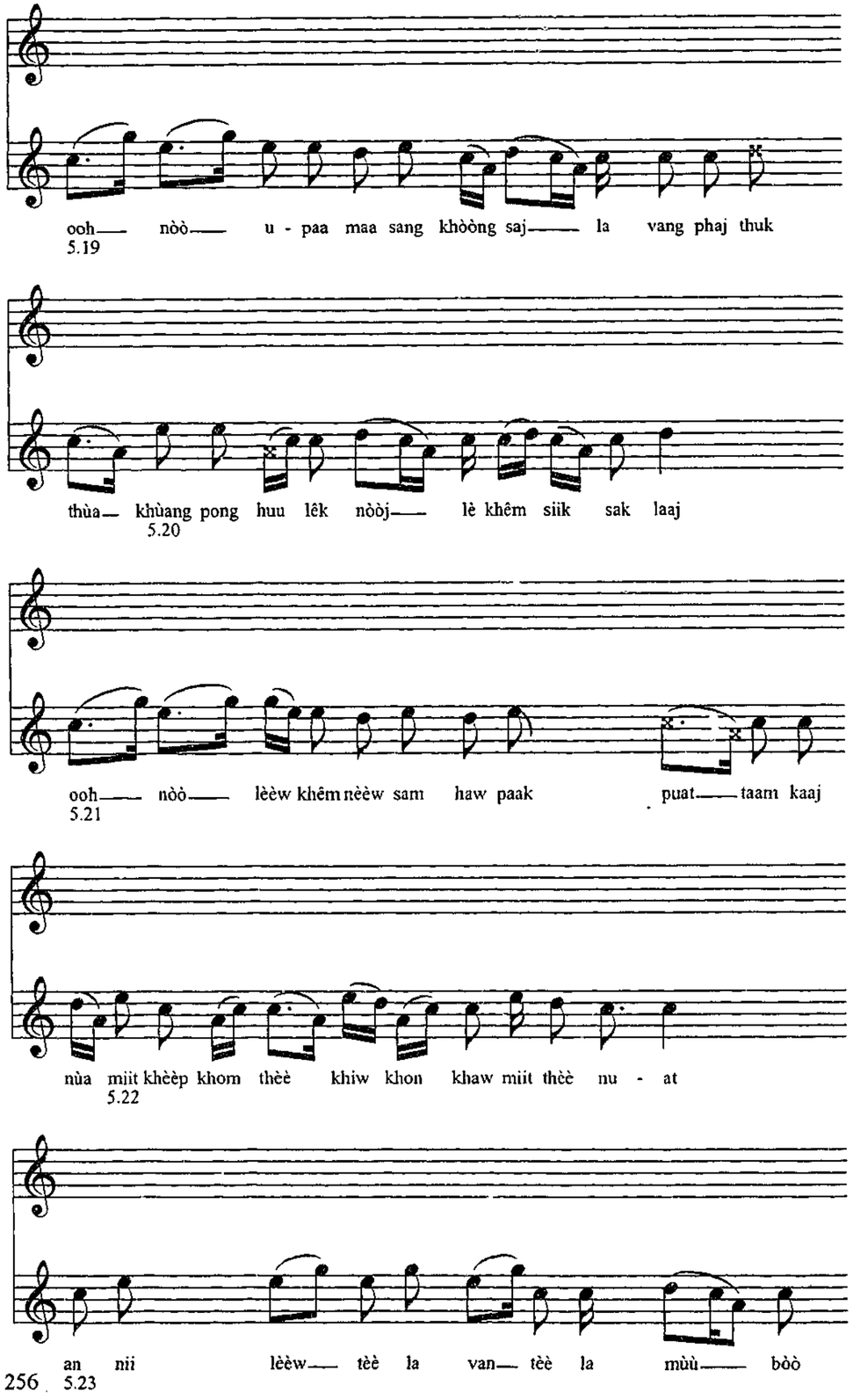

maak—
mèèn— vaa— phaa haj sia sii vit nuan— kòò laaj
5.6
lèèn— an êêk nòò— aang khon ngaam——— eej———
5.6a

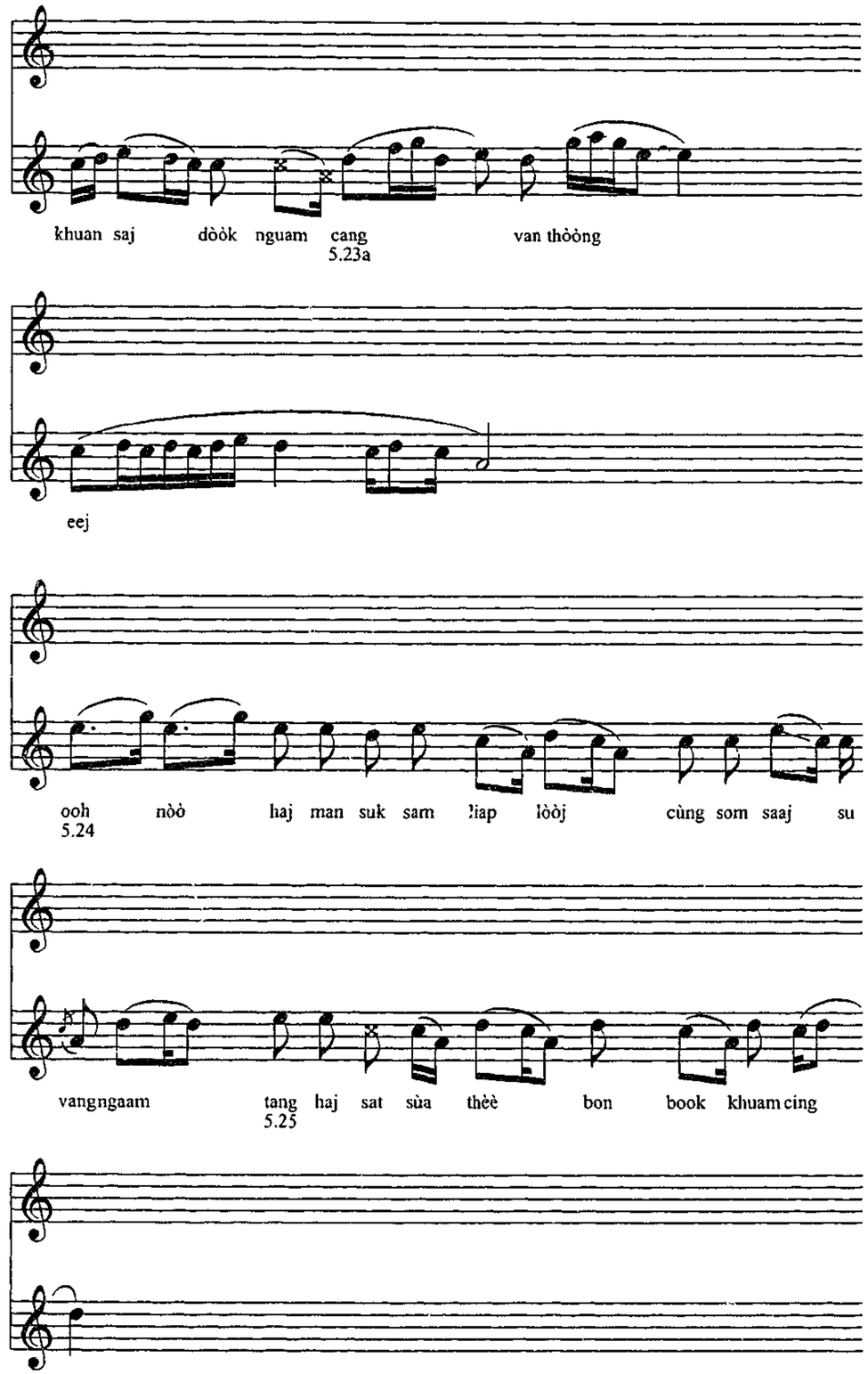

ooh— nòò— khuan thii haa sam hon thaang— phùa la vang kan
5.7
kèè—
an nii lèèw— man mèèn an sam daj thèè saaj thaang—
5.8
thii phaa keet
mèèn— vaa— naaw sí vaw sam lêk nòòj taam huup tèè la an
5.9


ooh— nòò— an nùng nan mèèn khêm siik sak jaa bòò daj
5.10
5.10a
aa na maj— saj kan— kap kòòng—
mèèn— vaa— sak tèè la thùa sɨk phuu nan phat paj sak—
5.11
5.11a
haj phuu nii— thaang phii— kot lùa lòòj—
ooh— nòò— an sòòng nan saaj ñing— bòò lùak phêêt—
5.12


mèèn— vaa— huam sam phan saat saaj—sam thua nan— ka
5.13
5.13a
pên daj tok ngaaj taaj— nee saaj— nee - ee—
ooh— nòò— an mii saam nan— phuu ñing haw nii— thùù
5.14
phaa— tit sùa man ca keet— haj luuk nòòj— an mii sùa—
5.14a


tòò nèèw
mèèn— vaa— hon thaang haj— liik— vên bòò haj keet—
5.15
ban haa tòòng pên phua pên mia haj sùù tòòng— bòò kaj liaw—
5.16
mèèn— vaa— pên phua diaw mia diaw thèè haj phèèng kan puk pa
5.17
seet— ñaam mùa keet— luuk nòòj ka pên kòòn— tòòn cèèng
5.18


ooh— nòò— u - paa maa sang khòòng saj— la vang phaj thuk
5.19
thùa— khùang pong huu lêk nòòj— lè khêm siik sak laaj
5.20
ooh— nòò— lèèw khêm nèèw sam haw paak puat— taam kaaj
5.21
nùa miit khèèp khom thèè khiw khon khaw miit thèè nu - at
5.22
an nii lèèw— tèè la van— tèè la mùù— bòò
5.23


khuan saj dòòk nguam cang van thòòng
5.23a
eej
ooh nòò haj man suk sam !iap lòòj cùng som saaj su
5.24
vangngaam tang haj sat sùa thèè bon book khuam cing
5.25

an nii lèèw bòò vaa phua samee mia muu fung lung paa
5.26

khuan hên caj phuu tit sùa phòòm soo too còòj
5.26

ooh nòò khan cêp puat khhuan haj liik vên artaam
5.28 5.28a

khòò pheen vaa maa sa thaa

nee

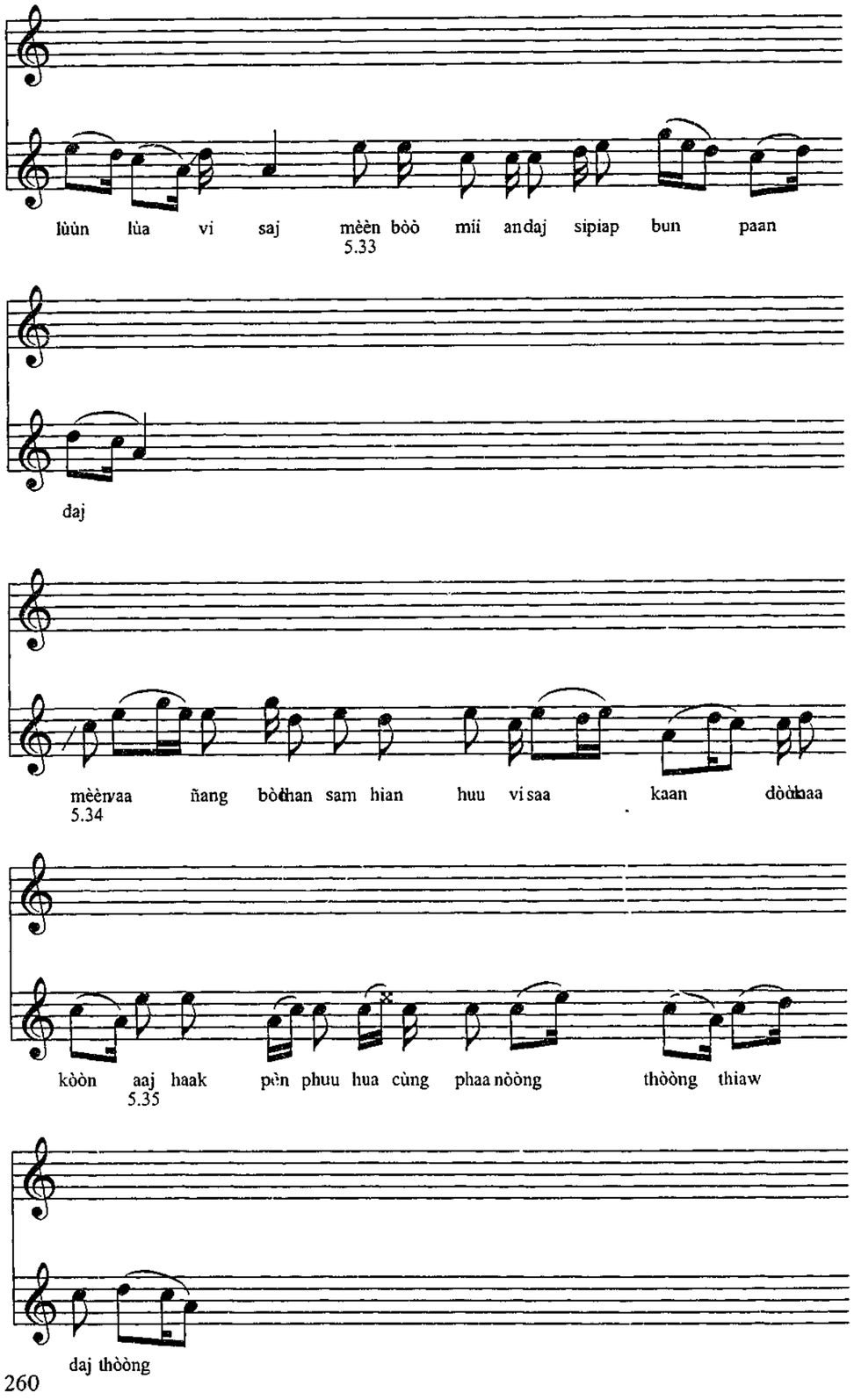
ooh nòò juu huam kan sam kin nòòn suu van ka
5.29

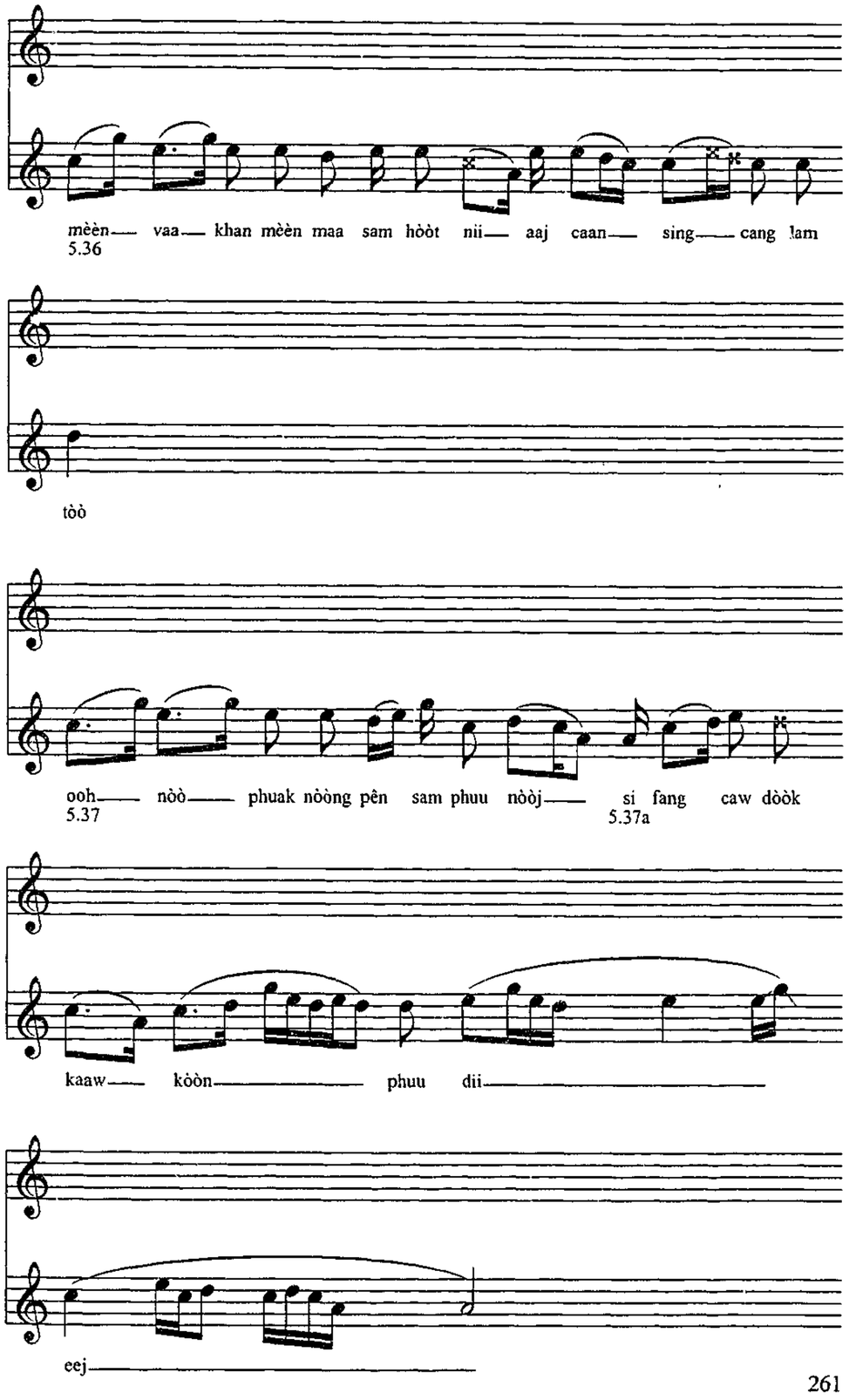
ñang daj

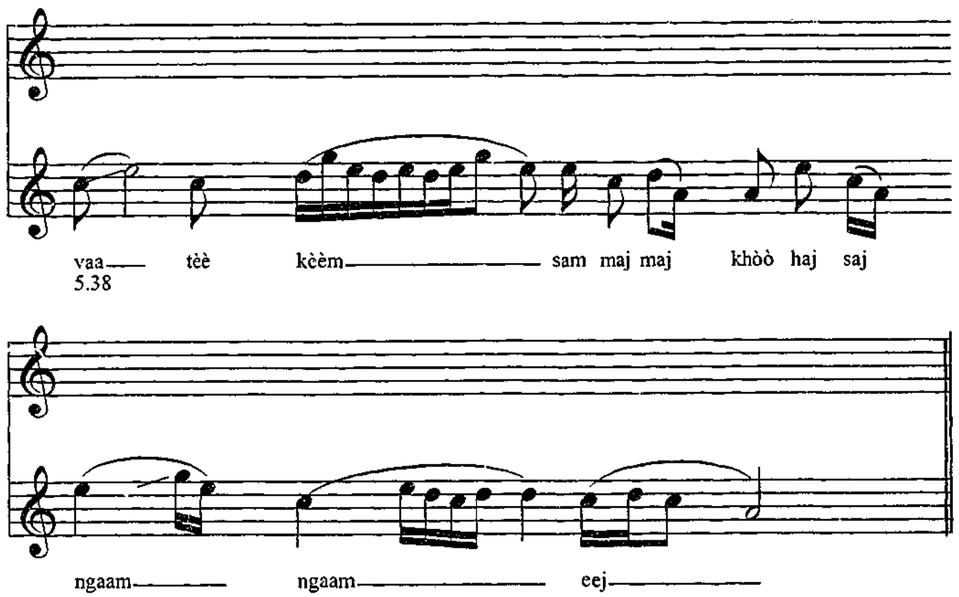
an nii lèèw mot sukhhon khhuan haj hên caj daj pa ñoot mii kam
5.30 5.31

lang tòò suu khon haaj ta lòòt ñang

ooh nòò nòòng nii suut tèè jaan lùùn lon lon
5.32


lùùn lùa vi saj mèèn bòò mii andaj sipiap bun paan
5.33
daj
mèènvaa ñang bòòhan sam hian huu visaa kaan dòòhaa
5.34
kòòn aaj haak pèn phuu hua cùng phaa nòòng thòòng thiaw
5.35
daj thòòng


mèèn— vaa— khan mèèn maa sam hòòt nii— aaj caan— sing— cang lam
5.36
tòò
ooh— nòò— phuak nòòng pên sam phuu nòòj— si fang caw dòòk
5.37
5.37a
kaaw— kòòn— phuu dii—
eej—

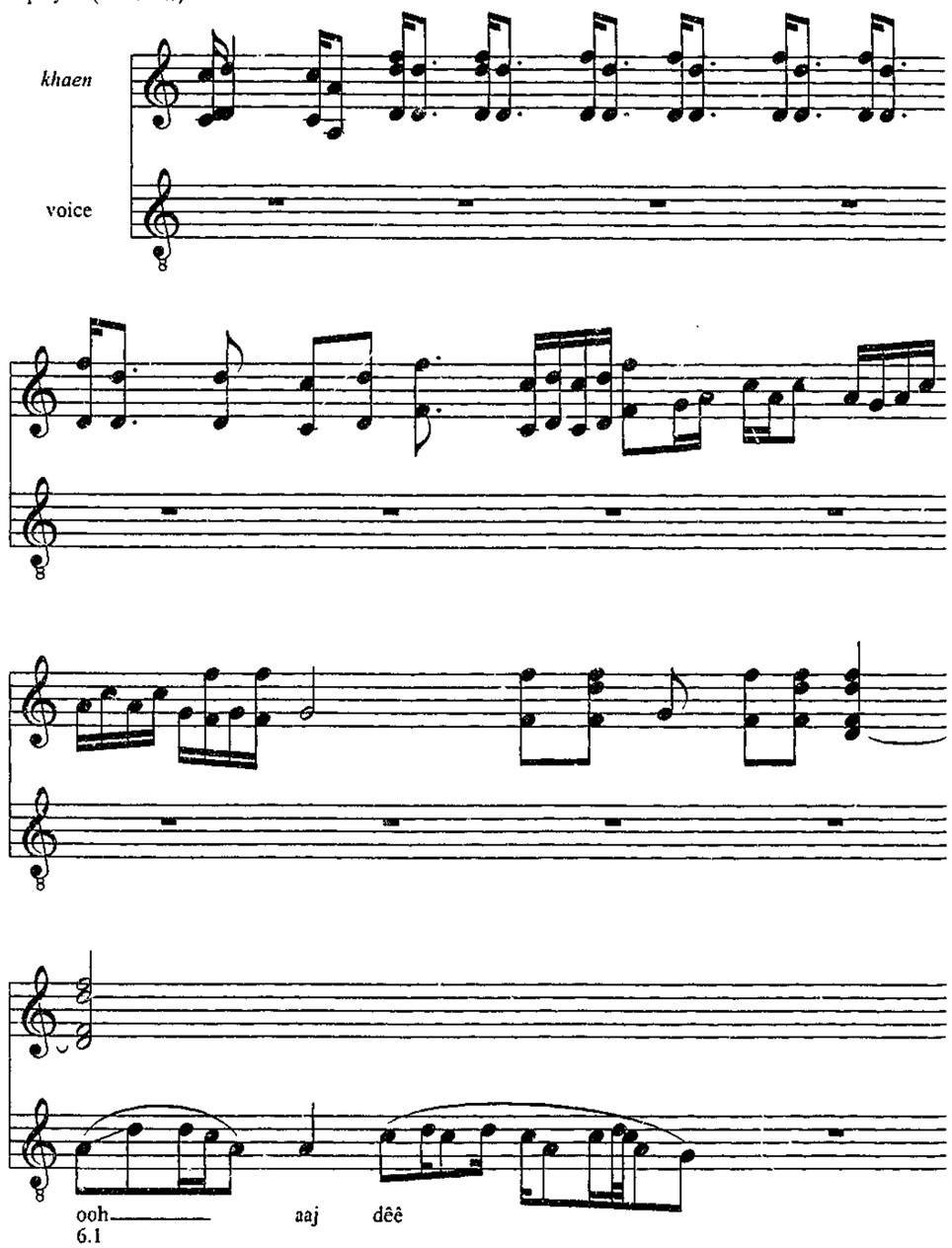


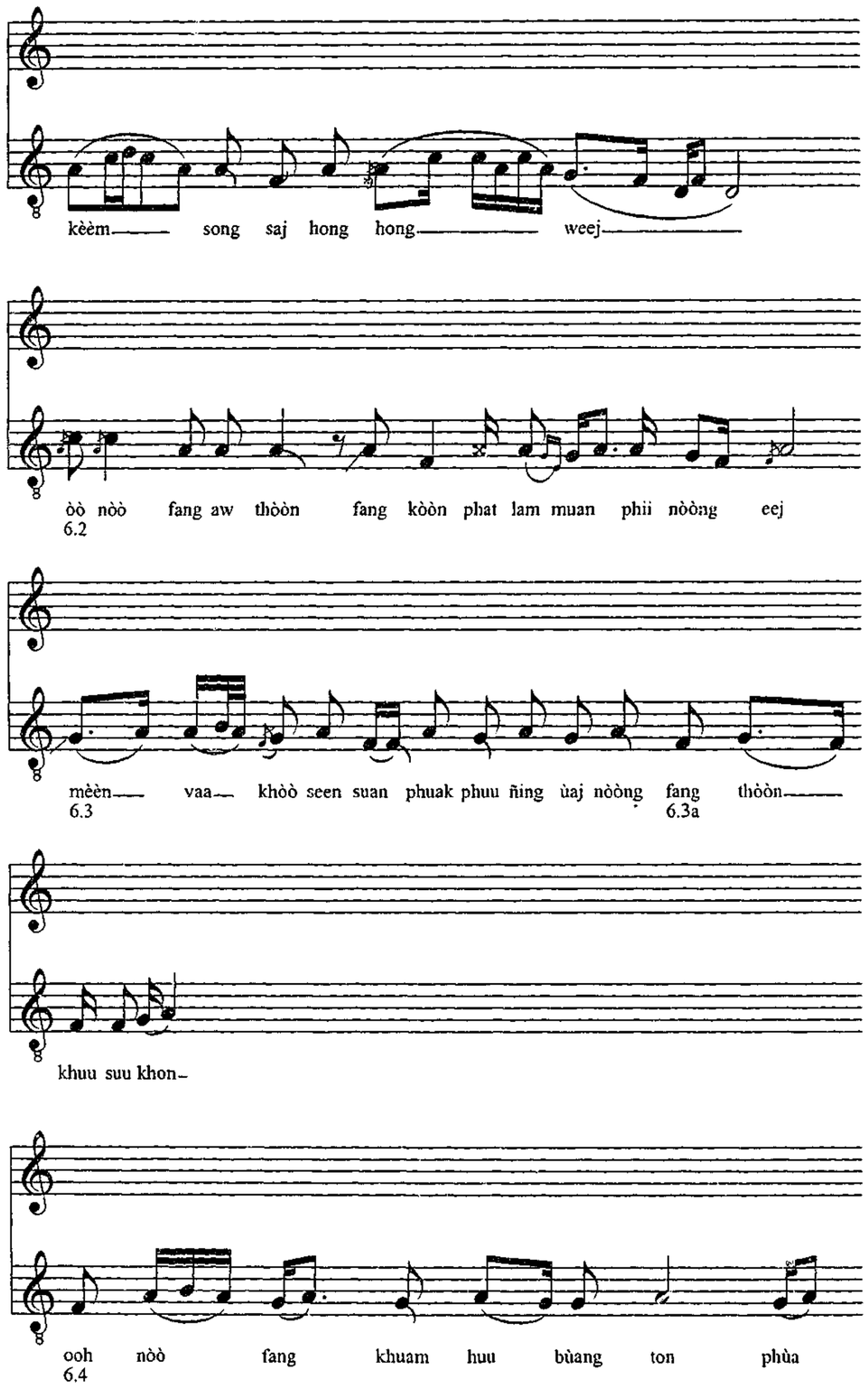
Transcription 6: Khap Ngeum

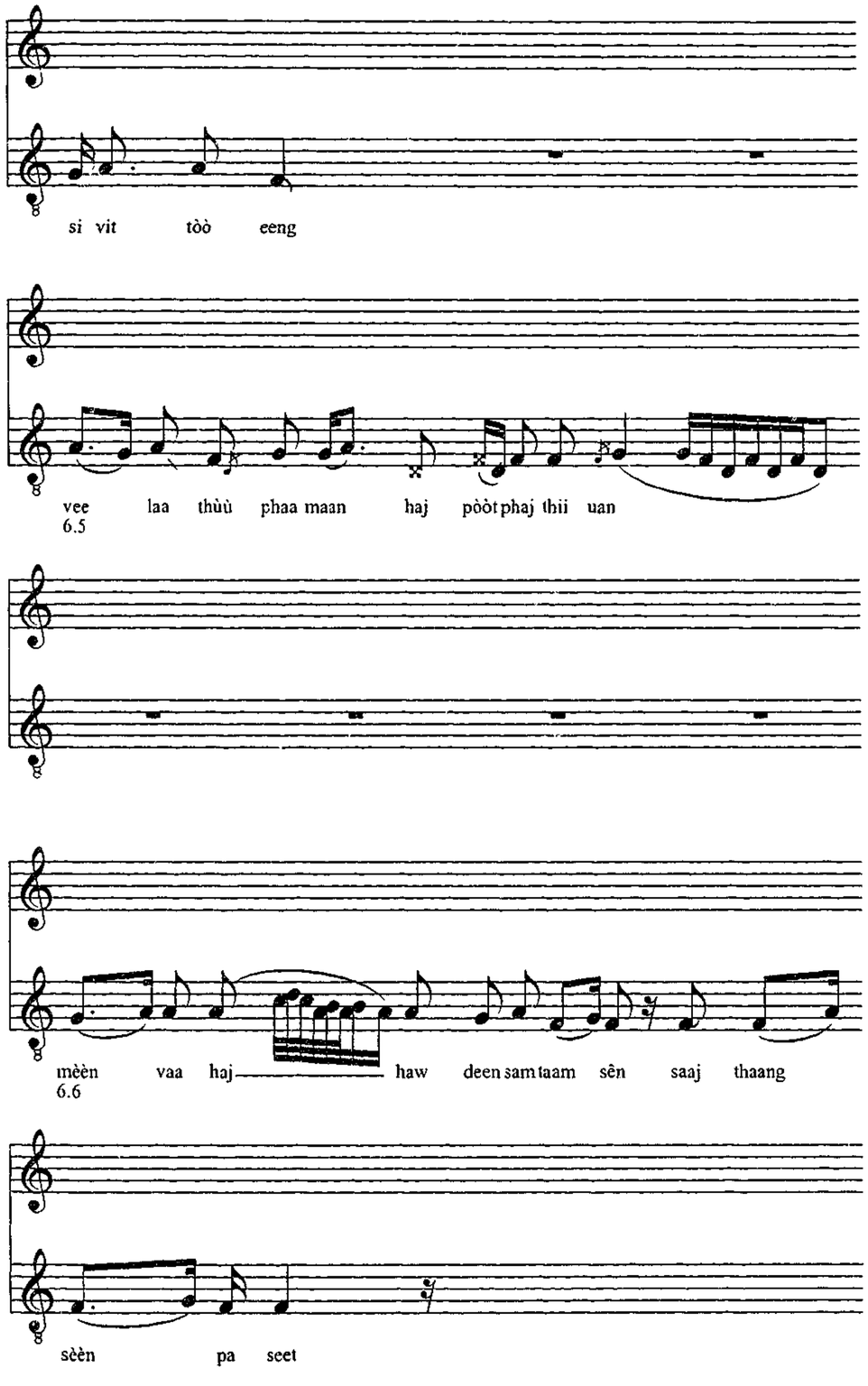
(male vocal)

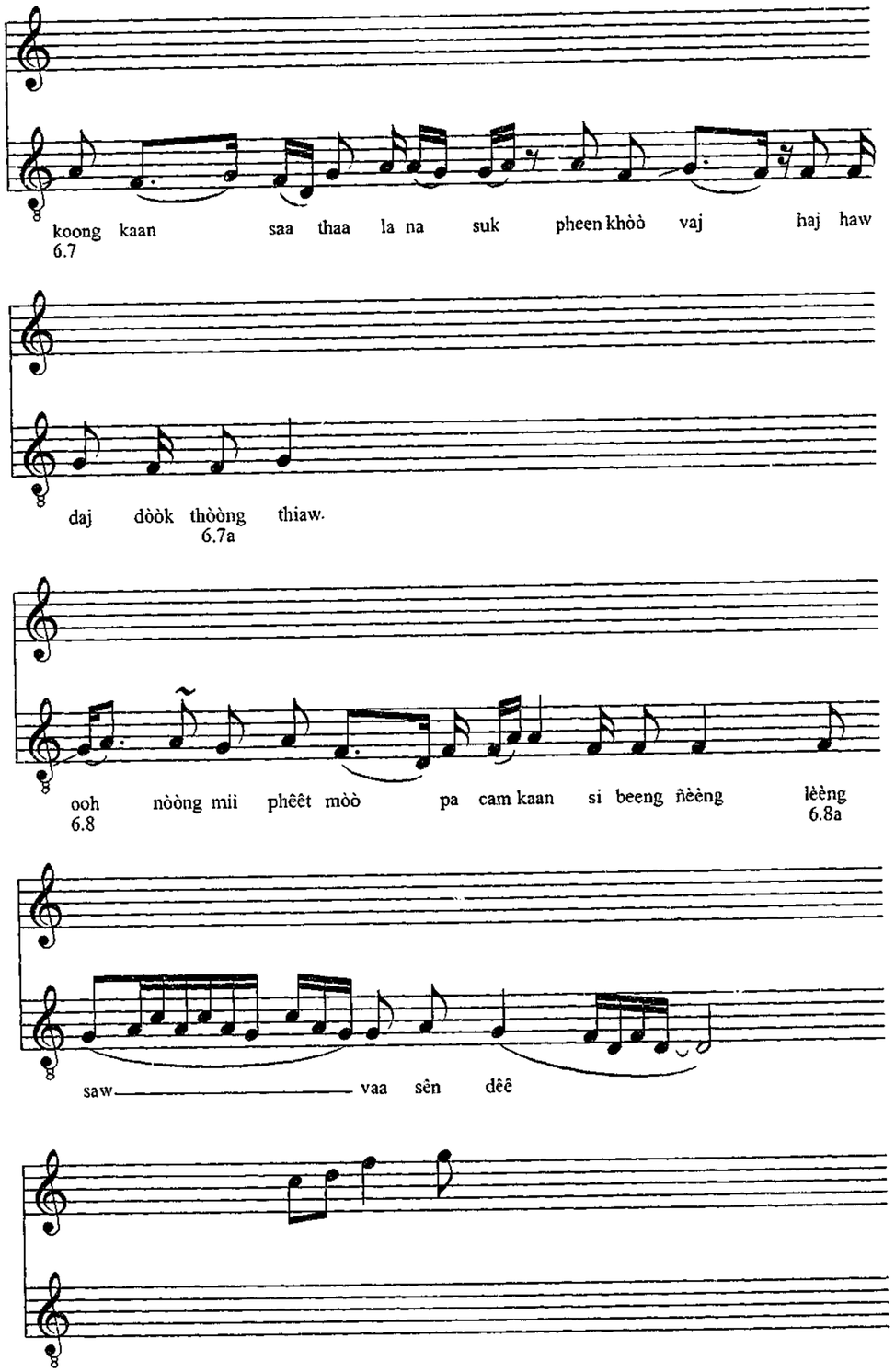
Performed by Acaan Sing.
Recorded at Lao National Radio, Vientiane 1997
Transcribed by Adam Chapman
khaen accompaniment plays a *nòòj*derived mode (d, f, g, a, c)

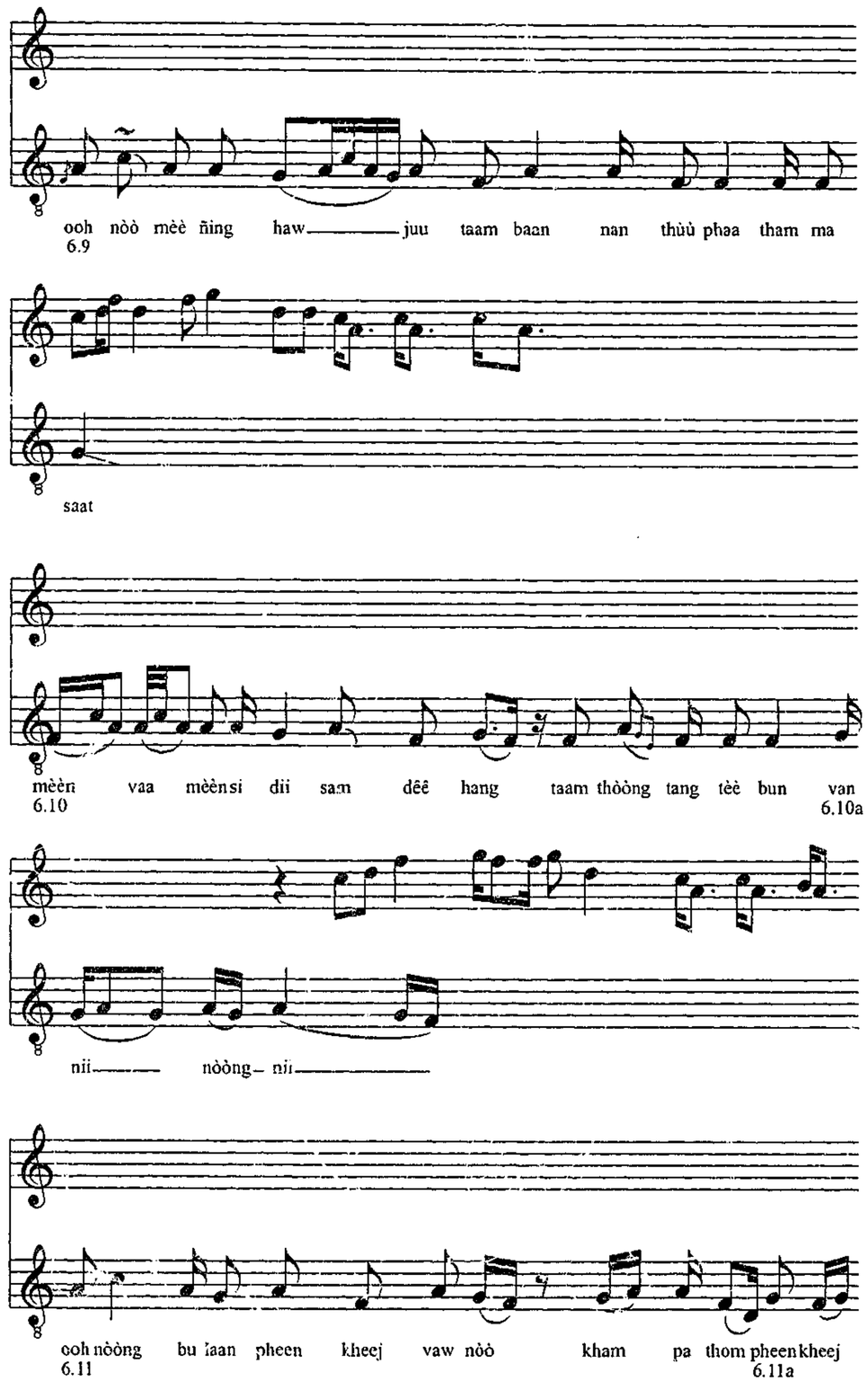
d plays c (-21 cents)




kèèm song saj hong hong weej
òò nòò fang aw thòòn fang kòòn phat lam muan phii nòòng eej
6.2
mèèn vaa khòò seen suan phuak phuu ñing ùaj nòòng fang thòòn
6.3
6.3a
khuu suu khon
ooh nòò fang khuam huu bùang ton phùa
6.4


si vit tòò eeng
vee laa thùù phaa maan haj pòòt phaj thii uan
6.5
mèèn vaa haj haw deen sam taam sên saaj thaang
6.6
sèèn pa seet


koong kaan saa thaa la na suk pheen khòò vaj haj haw
6.7
daj dòòk thòòng thiaw.
6.7a
ooh nòòng mii phêêt mòò pa cam kaan si beeng ñèèng lèèng
6.8
6.8a
saw vaa sên dêê


ooh nòò mèè ñing haw juu taam baan nan thùù phaa tham ma
6.9
saat
mèèn vaa mèènsi dii sam dêê hang taam thòòng tang tèè bun van
6.10
6.10a
nii nòòng nii
ooh nòòng bu laan pheen kheej vaw nòò kham pa thom pheen kheej
6.11
6.11a

com— luuk khaw thòòng—— khong– thaa tèè mùù— taaj—— vaa sên
6.12

bòò

mèèn vaa khuam— cing ìèèw bòò khùù-khampheen vaa mèè ñing
6.13 6.14

thuk thùa naa ka hian huu suu pa kaan

ooh nòòng vêê laa thùù— pha maan———haj caw paj sam faak
6.15

thòòng nam phêêt nam mòò——pheen daj beeng ñèèng haw suu pa kaan con
6.15a 6.16

s:ang

ooh nòòng——— mèèn vaa dii łùù— haaj—— phaj naj——
6.17

pheen daj beeng

mèèn— vaa— suk ka phaap mèè lè dêk pheen daj pòòng pa kan
6.18

vaj—— pòòt phaj———— cang si dêê———
6.18a

ooh nòò– iik— an nùng kòò la nii dii haaj—— than— kaan pheen
6.19

daj sòòj

mèèn vaa—— ñaam mùa khòòt luuk nòòng nòò— kòòn maan phian tha
6.20

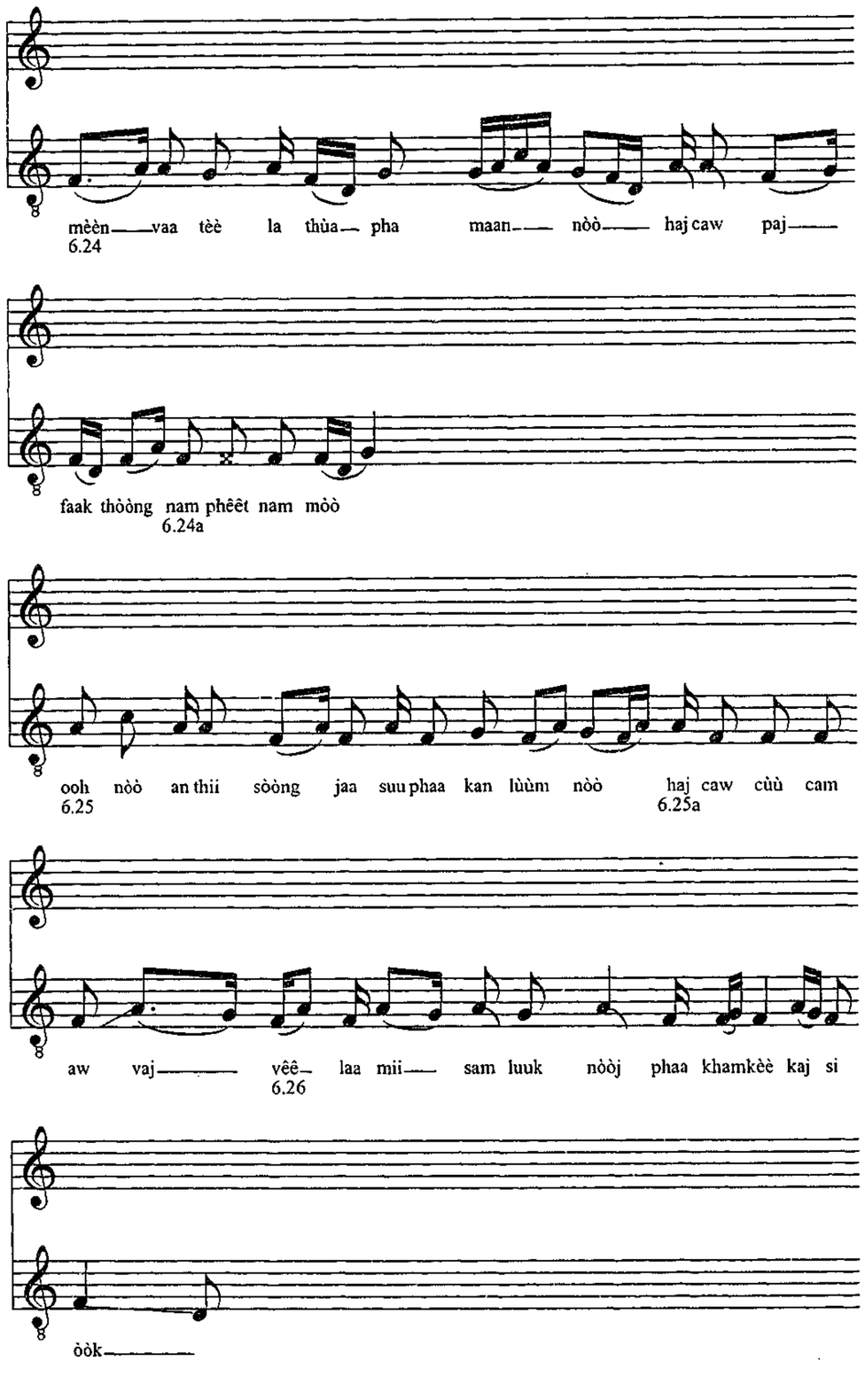
nòòm—— haj aw kin nom—— tuu khòòng ton sin ta lòòt
6.21

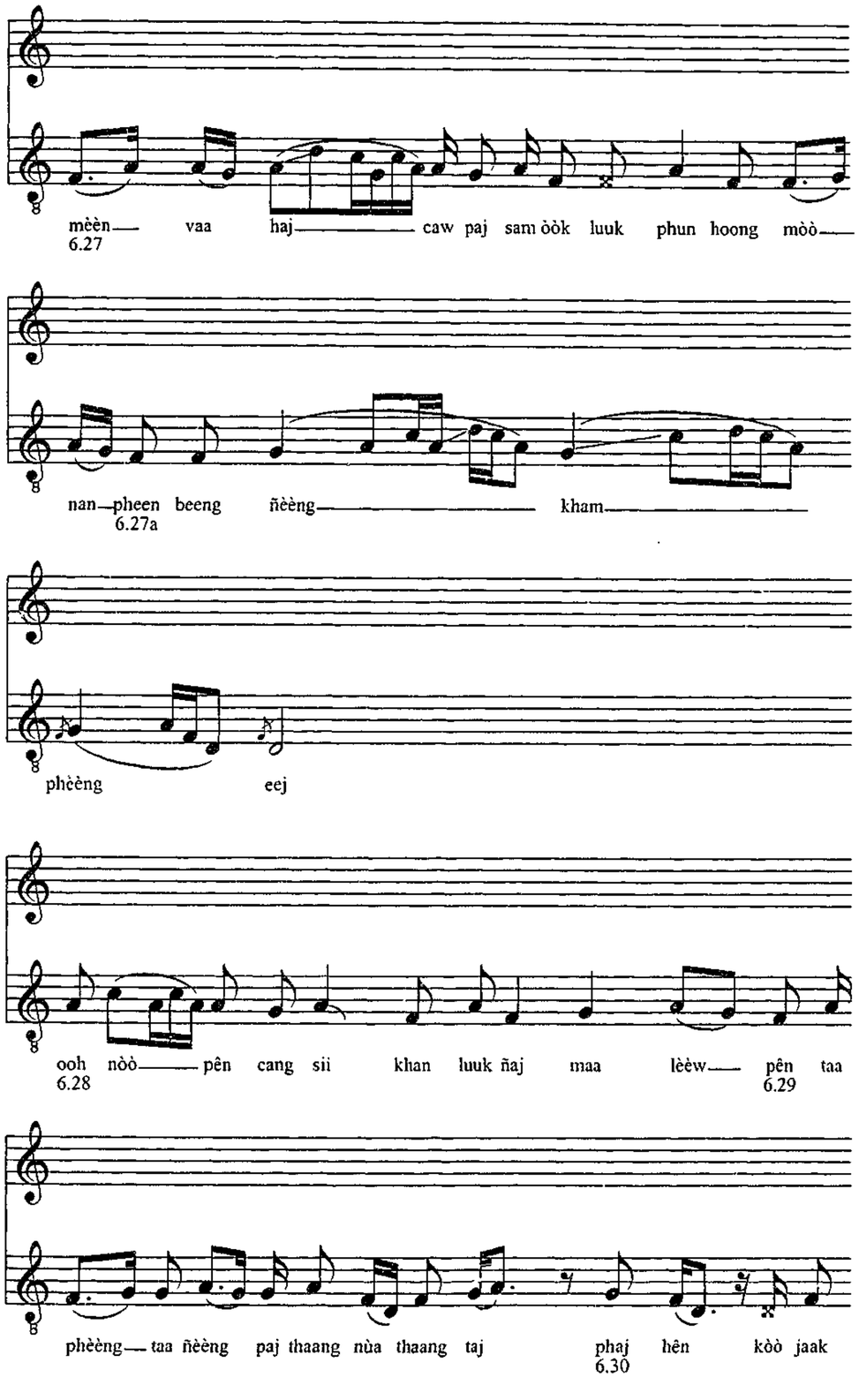
ooh nòò pheen ka hòòt pii hok dùan thiangman cang aw khawpian taang
6.22 6.22a

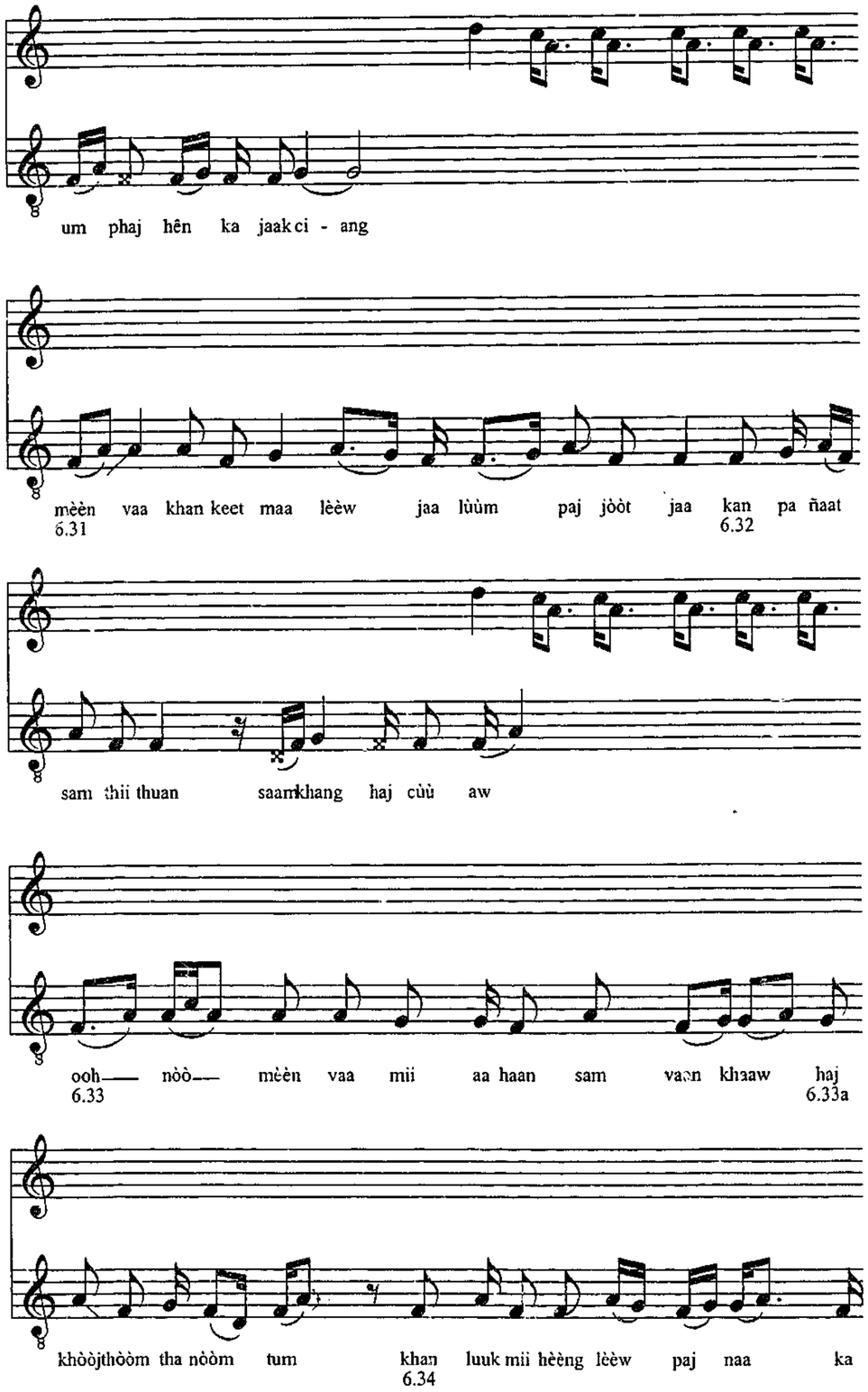
naang—— ngaam—— eej—

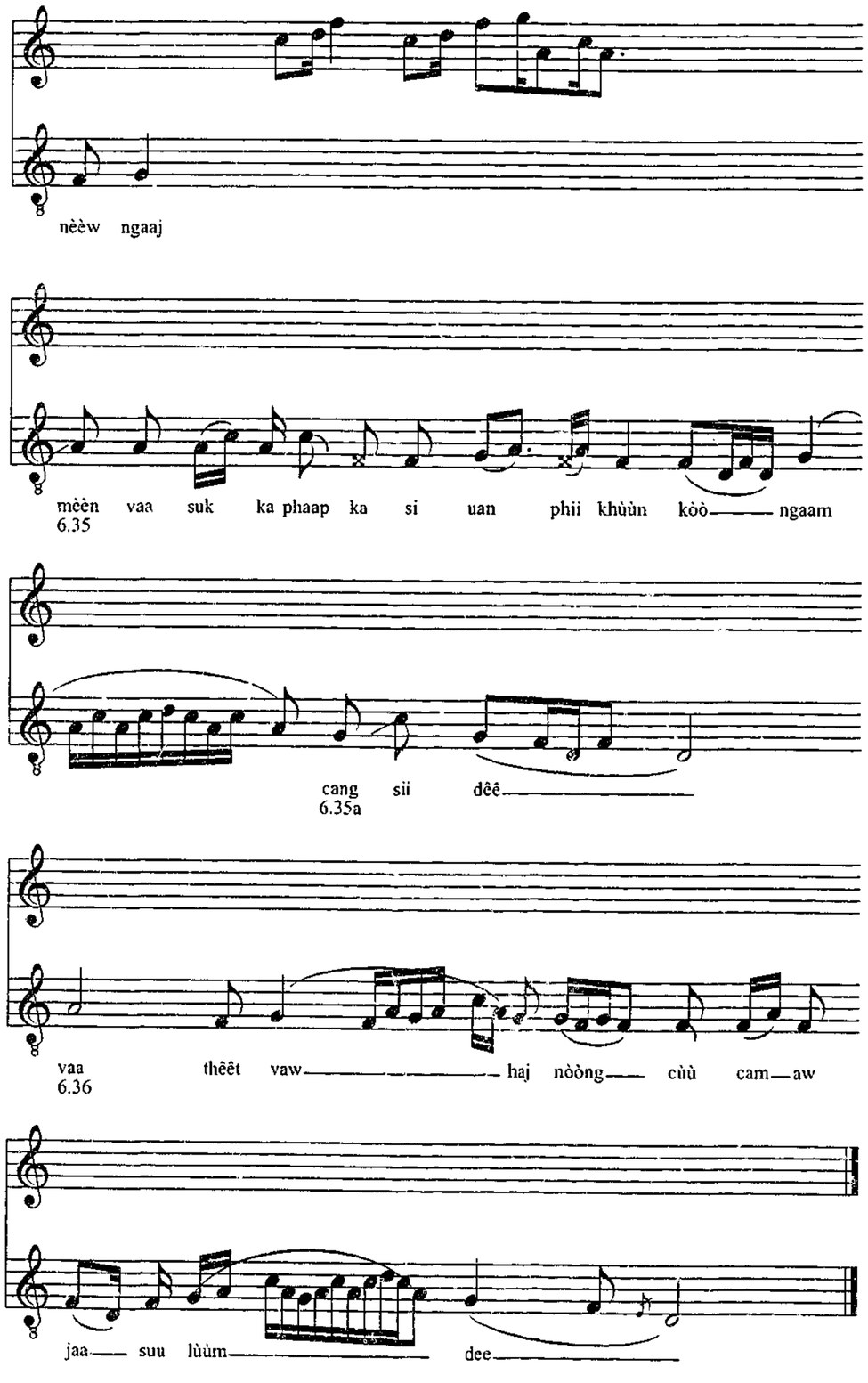
ooh nòò an phi sêêt sam thèè thèè haj caw cùù cam aw nee
6.23

phuu ñing laaw haw nee
6.23a


mèèn—vaa tèè la thùa— pha maan— nòò— haj caw paj—
6.24
faak thòòng nam phêêt nam mòò
6.24a
ooh nòò an thii sòòng jaa suu phaa kan lùùm nòò haj caw cùù cam
6.25
6.25a
aw vaj— vêê— laa mii— sam luuk nòòj phaa khamkèè kaj si
6.26
òòk—


mèèn— vaa haj— caw paj sam òòk luuk phun hoong mòò—
6.27
nan—pheen beeng ñèèng— kham—
6.27a
phèèng eej
ooh nòò— pên cang sii khan luuk ñaj maa lèèw— pên taa
6.28
6.29
phèèng— taa ñèèng paj thaang nùa thaang taj phaj hên kòò jaak
6.30


um phaj hên ka jaak ci - ang
mèèn vaa khan keet maa lèèw jaa lùùm paj jòòt jaa kan pa ñaat
6.31
6.32
sam thii thuan saamkhang haj cùù aw
ooh— nòò— mèèn vaa mii aa haan sam vaan khaaw haj
6.33
6.33a
khòòjthòòm tha nòòm tum khan luuk mii hèèng lèèw paj naa ka
6.34


nèèw ngaaj
mèèn vaa suk ka phaap ka si uan phii khùùn kòò—— ngaam
6.35
cang sii dêê
6.35a
vaa thêêt vaw—— haj nòòng—— cùù cam—aw
6.36
jaa—— suu lùùm—— dee——

Appendix 3

TEXT TRANSCRIPTIONS

This appendix contains complete textual transcriptions of the six performances which are transcribed musically in appendix 2. Each text is set out in an expanded format to present several pieces of information at once. Each poetic line is identified by two numbers; the first refers to the transcription, and the second refers to the line number within that transcription. Long text lines are separated into two sections with the second part taking the letter (a). These numbers also appear in the lyric lines of the musical transcriptions in appendix 2, and throughout the main body of the thesis to facilitate cross-referencing.

Each poetic line of these expanded transcriptions consists of four lines of data: the first line gives the pitch at which each syllable is sung; the second line has each syllable in Lao script; the third line has a phonemic transcription using the system used throughout this thesis (including the tone contour number); and the final line contains an English translation. All pitch names coincide with the ones used in the music transcriptions.

Dotted and unbroken lines beneath certain lines of the transcription are used to separate the texts according to the musical structures. A dotted line indicates the completion of a musical unit, an unbroken line indicates a main finalis cadence. The symbols that are used throughout these texts transcriptions are explained further below.

<A	Main pitch is arrived at by a glide up from an undetermined lower pitch.
B<	Main pitch is followed by an ascending glide to an indefinite higher pitch.
A>	Main pitch is released to an undetermined lower pitch.
>B	Main pitch is arrived at by a glide down from an undetermined higher pitch.
A>F	Indicates a descending glide from the first pitch to the second pitch.
F<A	Indicates an ascending glide from the first pitch to the second pitch.
A-C	When two pitches are separated by a hyphen it indicates that the two pitches are sung as a discreet interval.
A...C	Extended melismas are not transcribed note by note in these text transcriptions; only the initial and final pitch, separated by three periods, are noted.
eG	A pitch name in lower case indicates that this pitch is written as a grace note in the musical transcription.

Transcription 1: Lam Siphandon performed by Duang Paeng at Pakse 25/1/99

Performed to *khaen* accompaniment in *sòòj ñaj* (D, E, G, A, B)

(1.1)

D'	D'	G'>	E	E	B	D'
ເປີ່ນ	ເວີ່ນ	ອ້າຍ	ແກ້ມ	ອ້າຍ	ເປີ້ນ	ເວີ່ນ
peen1	veen1	aaj4	kèèm4	aaj4	peen1	veen1

So sofi, your cheeks are so soft

(1.2)

D'	G'	A'	G'	E'	B	D'
ເປີ່ນ	ເວີ່ນ	ອ້າຍ	ແກ້ມ	ອ້າຍ	ເປີ່ນ	ເວີ່ນ
peen1	veen1	aaj4	kèèm4	aaj4	peen1	veen1

So soft, your cheeks are so soft

(1.3)

A<D'	D'	D'	D'	D'		B-A	B	B<D'	B-D'
ຖ້າ	ອ້າຍ	ແມ່ນ	ຂອງ	ເພິ່ນ	ນີ້		ເຈົ້າ	ບໍ່	ໜີ	ໄປ
thaa5	aaj4	mèèn1	khòòng3	pheen1	nii4		caw4	bòò1	nii3	paj6

if you were mine, you wouldn't run away

(1.4)

G'	D'	D'	B	B<D'	g'D'	D'	<E'	D'	E'-D'
ຄັນ	ບໍ່	ມີ	ຂອງ	ໃຜ	ຄັນ	ແມ່ນ	ຂອງ	ໜໍ	ລ່ໍາ
khan2	bòò1	mii2	khòòng3	phaj3	khan2	mèèn1	khòòng3	mòò3	lam2

if you don't belong to anyone else, then perhaps you belong to me

(1.5)

B	D'>	B>	A	<B	B	B-A	A	A	B	A	B...G	G
ໃຫ້	ອ້າຍ	ຢู่	ນໍາ	ນໍາ	ໃຫ້	ອ້າຍ	ຢู่	ນໍາ	ນໍາ	ເອີ້	ມາ	ໃກ້
haj5	aaj4	juu1	nam2	nam2	haj5	aaj4	juu1	nam2	nam2	khaw5	maa2	kaj4

Won't you sit with me, won't you sit with me, come up close

(1.6) Line 3

B	E'...G'	G'>	G'	A'	G'	G'	E'	D	E'	E'	D'
ຈັ່ງ	ວ່າ	ນາງ	ໄດ້	ຍິນ	ສຽງ	**ເວົ້າ**	ເປັນ	ຕະ	ເຈົ້າ	ຍອນ	**ໃສ່**
cang1	vaa1	nang2	daj4	ñin2	siang3	**vaw4**	pên6	ta2	caw4	ñòòn2	**saj1**

I heard your voice say things to me,

(1.7) Line 4

D'-E'	D'	G'>	D'	D'	B	B	G	A	A-B
ຫົວ	ໃຈ	ນາງ	**ແຮ່ງ**	**ຮ້ອນ**	ດີ	ແລ້ວ	**ໄດ້**	**ໜ່ວງ**	ເຖິງ
hua3	caj6	nang2	**hèèng1**	**hòòn4**	dii6	lèèw4	**daj4**	**huang1**	theng3

my heart is hot and I feel anxious for you

(1.8) Line 1

D'	B	B	B	B	A	D'	B	B	B	B<D'
ມື	ບີ	ທ້ອນ	ພະເດດ	ເຮີງ		ລອງ	**ເປ່ງ**	ປ່	ເສຍ	ສີ
mùù2	nii4	thòòn4	pha2**dêêt5**	heeng4		lòòng2	**beeng1**	bòò1	sia3	sii3

today is auspicious, give it a try you won't fail

(1.9) Line 2

D'-G'	E'>	A'	G'-D'-B		A	B	B	B	A-G
ສະວັດ	ດີ	ນໍ	ລຸງ		**ຜູ**	ສູງ	ສະໝອງ		**ກ້ າ**
sa2vat1	dii6	nòò2	lung2		**phuu1**	suung3	sa2mòòng3		**kaa4**

you are virtuous, my tall clever man

(1.10) Line 3

B-D'	D'	E'>	A	B	G-A	A	D'	A	B	D'
ອົດ	ສາ	ນາງ	ໄດ້	ເຫັນ	**ໜ້ າ**	ໝໍ	ລໍ ຳ	ກະ	ຮ ີ	ດຸ
òt2	ѕaa3	naang2	daj4	hên3	**ոaa5**	mòò3	lam2	ka2	khii5	**du2**

I must refrain when I see your face. A mohlam must be diligent

(1.11) Line 4

E'	E'	D'	D'	B	B	B	B	A	B	A-G
ສອງ	ຝ່ າຍ	ເຮົ າ	ຕ່ ໍ	**ສ ູ**	ຊ ິ	ຮ ວມ	**ຮ ู**	ດອກ	ສ່ ຳ	ໃດ
sòòng3	faaj1	haw2	**tòò1**	**suu5**	si1	huam1	**huu4**	**dòòk4**	sam1	daj6

the two of us fight, how will we get together?

(1.12) Line 1

B-D'	B	B	B	B>	B	A<B	A	B<D'	
ເມື ່ ອ	ໜ ຶ ່ ງ	ອ ้ ายย	**ນ ี ่ ง**	**ใ ก ้**	ใ จ	ด ี	**จ ั ่ ง**	ม ่ ายย	
mùa1	nùng1	aaj4	**nang1**	**kaj2**	caj6	dii6	**cang1**	maaj1	

That one time you sat near, my heart skipped

(1.13) Line 2

D'	E'	E'	D'	B>A		B	D'	D'	B	A-G
ຊ ายย	ก ่	ม า	น ำ	ก ับ		**เ ม ื ่ อ**	ฝ ั น	ย า ก	เ ห ็ น	**เ จ ้ า**
saaj2	kòò1	maa2	nam2	kan6		**mùa1**	fan3	jaak5	hên3	**caw4**

you came along with me, when I dream I see you

(1.14) Line 3

B<	D'	D'	D'	E'	D'>A	A	B	A	D'	D'
ຈ ั ่ ง	ວ ่ า	ໜ ึ ่ ง	ຊ ายย	ล ำ	**เ ว ้ า**	เ ธ ิ	เ อ ็ า	ย ู ่	ภ ับ	**ย ่ อ ม**
cang1	vaa1	nùng1	saaj2	lam2	**vaw4**	ee6	aw6	juu1	kap2	**bòòn1**

so you say to me right here

(1.15) Line 4

D'<G'	D'	D'>	B	B<		B-A	G	G	A-B
ว ่ า	บ ่	ม ี	**ค ู ่**	**ข ้ อ ม**		ใ จ	**ค ำ ง**	**ข า ด**	เ ข ี ย ม
vaa1	bòò1	mii2	**khuu1**	**sòòn4**		caj6	**khaang4**	**khaat5**	kheen3

that you have no lover and that your heart is full of longing

(1.16) Line 1

B	D'	B	B>	A	B>		D'	B	B	E'>
จ ั ่ ง	ว ่ า	ໜ ึ ่ ง	เ จ ้ า	**ผ ะ**	**เ อ ็ น**		ม า	**ใ ส ่**	ด ว ง	แ ผ ง
cang1	vaa1	nùng1	caw4	**pha1**	**een4**		maa2	**saj1**	duang6	phèèng2

So you come calling to me, Duang Phaeng

(1.17) Line 2

D'	D'	G'	D'	B		B	B	B	B	A-G
อ ่ ม	น ั ่ ง	แ ย ง	น ำ	ก ับ		**เ ม ื ่ อ**	ช ิ	ฝ ั น	ห า	**น ้ อ ง**
khòò3	nang1	ñèèng2	nam2	kan6		**mùa1**	si1	fan3	haa3	**nòòng4**

asking to sit with me, and saying that you see me in your dreams

(1.18) Line 3

B-D'	B-D'	D'	D'	G-A		B<D'	E'	D'	D'	D'
ອ ด	ส า	ถ อ ย	ถ อ ย	**ส ้ า ง**		ส า ย	ท า ง	บ ่	เ ป ็ น	**เ ก ่ า**
ot2	saa3	khòòng2	khòòj2	**saang5**		saaj3	thaang2	bòò1	pên6	**kaw1**

Be patient and wait, this is not the old path

(1.19) Line 4

D'	G'	E'	G'	D'	B-D'		B	B	B	G	A-B
ก ะ	ย ั ง	บ ่	ม ี	**ค ู ่**	**ห ม ั น**		ฝ ั น	**ผ ั **	**แ ม ่**	ย ั ก	ห ำ
ka3	ñang2	bòò1	mii2	**khuu1**	**man5**		fan3	**phòò4**	**mèè1**	bak2	ham3

you still have no partner, but dream you'll meet your son's mother

(1.20) Line 1

B-E'	D'	D'>	E'	E'>		D'	E'	D'	E'	D'<G'
บ า ด	น ี ้	น ้ อ ง	จ ิ ง	**ข ้ ำ**		ย า ก	ท ำ ม	น ำ	ถ ึ ม	ห า
baat5	nii4	nòòng4	cing6	**sam4**		jaak5	thaam3	nam2	khùùn2	haa3

Now, I really want to ask you the same in return

(1.21) Line 2

E'	E'	A'-E'	A'	E'-B		B	B	B	B	A-G
พ ั น	ล ะ	ย า	ย ื ่ น	แ ย ง		(ด ู	ม ย	บ ่	ม ี	**ห ื ้ ?**
phan2	la1	ñaa2	jùùn1	ñèèng2		(duu6)	mia2	bòò1	mii2	**mòò5?**

your wife stands watching (second part of line unclear)

(1.22) Line 3

B-D'	D'	G'	D'-E'	B-D'		G'	A'	G'	D'	
เ ม ื อ	บ ่	ม ี	ใ ผ	**ส ั **		เ ร ื อ ม	ช า ม	เ ช ิ า	**ย ู ่**	
mùa1	bòò1	mii2	phaj3	**sòò5**		hùan2	saan2	saw2	**juu1**	

when no one stops to inquire at the house

(1.23) Line 4

E'<A'	E'	G'	D'	B-D'	E'		B	A	B	A-G
ห ื ้	บ ่	ม ี	**ค ู ่**	**เ ข ้ า**	น อ น		**ไ ก ้**	ต ะ ล า ง		ถ ว ง
lùù3	bòò1	mii2	**khuu1**	**khaw5**	nòòn2		**kaj4**	ta2**laang1**		thiang3

or when you've no partner to lie close to in the field hut

(1.24) Line 3

B-D'	D'	B-D'	A	G-A		e'G'	A'	G'	D'
ເມື່ອ	ມີ	ໃຜ	ກິນ	**ໝ້ຽງ**		ຄຽງ	ຄີງ	ນ຋ໍ	**ຢູ່**
mùa1	mii2	phaj3kin6		**miang5**		khiang2	khing2	nam2	**juu1**

when you can share a meal with someone

(1.25) Line 4

E'>	E'	G'>	D'	E'-B		B	B	A	B	A-G
ເລື່ອງ	ฝ่าย	ນາງ	**ຮັບ**	**ຮู**		ລຽນ	**ແจ้ง**	**ตึก**	ต่	ນາງ
lùang4	faaj1	naang2	**hap1**	**huu4**		lian1	**cèèng4**	**tok5**	tòò1	naang2

I'll recognise the story, well and truly

(1.26) Line 1

B-D'	B'	B	B	B'>		B	D'	B	E'-D'	B<E'
บาด	มื้	น้อง	**จั่ง**	**ตาม**		ไถ้	ถาม	**ฮาว**	ลาว	ฮา
baat5	nii4	nòòng4	**cang1**	**taan4**		daj4	thaam3	**khaaw1**	khaaw2	haa3

So now I reply, and I ask for news

(1.27) Line 2

G'	D'	G'	E'	G'-E'-D'		A	B	B	A-G
ลับ	บ่	มี	ใผ	มา		**ยู่**	ใจ	จิง	**แท้**
khan2	bòò1	mii2	phaj3maa2			**juu1**	caj6	cing6	**thèè4**

but no one comes who is true of heart

(1.28) Line 3

B-D'	D'	G'	B	D'	B-D'	G'	A'	E'	E'	D'
สาว	ดวง	แผง	ย่าา	๋	**เฮ้ำ**	หฺยม	เง้า	ซุ	ไถ้	บ่
saaw3	duang6	phèèng2	jaak5	khòò3	**khaw5**	thiam2	ngaw2	si1	daj4	**bòò1**

I want to ask to sit in the shede with you, may I?

(1.29) Line 4

D'	E'	D'	B	G'-D'		E'	A	G	A-B	A-B
ยืม	เอิ้น	ผ่	**บัก**	**น้อย**		สาม	ใด	**ไถ้**	**ฮอม**	สอง
jùùm6	een4	phòò1	**bak2**	**nòòj4**		saam5	daj6	**daj4**	**huam1**	sòòng3

I stand calling for the father of my baby boy to come and be with me

(1.30) Line 1

B-D'	B	B	E'	B	B	G	A	D'	G'	E'-G'
หิ	ถ้า	อ้าย	มี	ผู	**ต้อง**	อ้าย	แล้ว	**แต่**	จิด	ใจ
lùù3	thaa6	aaj4	mii2	phuu5	**tòòng4**	aaj4	lèèw4	**tèè1**	cit2	caj6

maybe you have someone already, it's up to your heart

(1.31) Line 2

G'	E'	G'	E'	B-D'		B	D'	B	A-G
ลับ	บ่	มี	ลิ้น	ใด		**ฮอม**	ใม	บอม	**ฮอม**
khan2	bòò1	mii2	khon2	daj3		**huam1**	naj2	nòòn2	**sòòn4**

perhaps you already have someone to share your bed

(1.32) Line 3

E'>B	B	E'	G'	B-D'		E'	A'	G'>	E'	D'
นาง	ย่าา	อาสา		**ฮอม**		ไถ้	เอ๊า	บา	ภอง	**มี้**
naang2	jaak6	aa6saa3		**sòòn4**		daj4	aw6	baa6	kòòng6	**nii4**

I wish to live with you, to take this handsome man

(1.33) Line 4

D'	G'	E'	G'	D'	B-D'		E'>	B	A	B	B-A	
ย่า	ลัน	บ่	มี	**ลู**	**เฮ้ำ**		หฺยม	**อ้าย**	ละ	**หว่าง**	หา	
jaa1	khan2	bòò1	mii2	**khuu1**	**khaw5**		thiam2	**aaj4**	la2	**vaang1**	haa3	

there should be no one else to come between us

(1.34) Line 1

B-D'	D'	D'	B	B		B	B	gA	E'>	B<E'
หิ	ลับ	มัม	**ย่าา**	เถือบ		ใม	เผื่อบ	**บอก**	บาง	สา
mùa1	khan2	man2	**jaak5**	tùan6		naj2	phùan1	**bòòk5**	naang2	saa3

your friends have told you to take care

(1.35) Line 2

D'	E'	g'D'	E'	B-D'		B	B	B	A-G
ถ้า	บ่	มี	ลิ้น	ใด		**ยู่**	น้ำ	มอม	**ฮอม**
thaa5	bòò1	mii2	khon2	daj6		**juu1**	nam2	nòòn2	**sòòn4**

If you have no one to share your bed

(1.36) Line 3

B	D'	G'>E'	E'	A'	A'	G'	A'	E'	D'	E'	D'	
เผิ่น	อ่า	ถอาม	ธัก	ไอ	อฐม	อุ่น	อุ่น	ฎุ	ดิม	เดือน	**มี้**	
pheen1	vaa1	khuam2	hak1	vaj2	vian2	vun1	khun1	dun6	din6	dùan6	**sii1**	

They say love is vexed and anxious like the fourth month

(1.37) Line 4

E<G'	D'	E'	D'	D'	B	D'	gA	G	A	B-A-B		
หา	ที่	หาง	ยา	**ใหย่**	ซุ	**แพ้**	กิน	กะ	บ่	ดี		
haa3	thii1	thaang2	ñaa2	**ñaj1**	si1	**phèè4**	kin6	ka2	bòò1	dii6		

look for the path of power, if you can't eat it's no good

(1.38) Line 1

B-D'	D'	D'	B	D'		D'>B	A	D'	G'	E'>
หิ	อ่า	ตั๋งแต่		**ที่**		อ้าย	**เกิด**	อู่	ท้อง	ใด
mùa1	vaa1	tang4tèè1		**kii4**		aaj4	**keet5**	juu1	thòòng4	daj6

A long time ago, wherever you were born

(1.39) Line 2

G'	G'	E'	B-E'	E'	B	B-A	B	B	B	A-G
อีหยัง		สิงไส		ใม	ใจ	ย้าม	บ่	มี	ลิ้น	**ผั้**
ii1ñang3		song3saj3		naj2	caj6	jaan4	bòò1	mii2	khon2	**phòò4**

did you wonder in your heart that you'd never find anyone?

(1.40) Line 2

B-D'	D'	D'	E'	B-D'	B	B	B	D'	B-A
ເມື່ອ	ສາວ	ໝໍ	ລຳ	ເອີ	**ຢາກ**	ອໍ	ໄປ	ຊີ	**ສົ້ມ**
mùa1	saaw3	mòò3	lam2	eej6	**jaak5**	khòò3	paj6	sim2	**som5**

This lady mohlam wants to ask for a taste

(1.41) Line ?

A	bD'	E'	D'	D'	D'	E'	E'	D'	D'
ປາ	ຂາວ	ໜ້າ	ລອງ	ເບິ່ງ	ດອກ	ຊ່ອງ	ດູ	ຕ່ຳ	**ຕື່ນ**
paa6	khaaw3	naa5	lòòng2	beeng1	dòòk5	sòòng1	duu6	tam1	**tùùn1**

of the white fish, look at them in the shallows

(1.41a)

D'	B	G	A	B-D'
ຊິ	ເຫຍື່ອ	ນີ	ທ່ໍ	ໃດ
si1	ñùa1	nii4	thòò1	daj6

how can we catch them?

(1.42) Line 1

E…G'	A'	E'>D'	D'	E'>D'	B	G'	D'	G'	G'>D'
ນ້ອງ	ຄົນ	ອ້າຍ	**ຕອບ**	**ໄດ້**	ກະ	ໃຊ	**ແນ່**	ແມ້	ບໍ
nòòng4	khan2	aaj4	**tòòp5**	**daj4**	ka2	khaj2	**nèè1**	mèè4	nòò2

If you can answer me, I will surely feel better

(1.43) Line 2

D'-E'	e'D'	e'D'	D'	B-D'	d'B	B	B	A-G
ຂຽນ	ຈໍ	ໝໍ	ມາ	ຖາມ	**ຂອດ**	ເຮືອນ	ຫຼັງ	**ນີ້**
khian3	còò6	mòò3	maa2	thaam3	**hòòt4**	hùan2	lang3	**phii4**

write a letter asking me, send it to me here

(1.44) Line 3

B-E'	D'	E'>	G'	G'>	D'	D'	E'	E'	D'
ຫຼື	ພໍ	ມີ	ຊອງ	**ແລ້ວ**	ໃຈ	ດຽວ	ອັນ	ເດັດ	ດຽວ
lùù3	phii1	mii2	sòòng2	**lèèng4**	caj6	diaw6	an2	dêt6	diaw6

maybe your bed is empty, you are true hearted and resolute

(1.45) Line 4

D'	A'>	E'	D'	D'>	B	B	B>	A	B	B-A
ບາດ	ນາງ	ອໍ	**ຂ່າວ**	**ກ້ຽວ**	ບໍ	ຫຼຽວ	**ໜ້າ**	**ຣັບ**	ຕໍ	ດວງ
baat5	naang2	khòò3	**khaaw1**	**kiaw4**	bòò1	liaw3	**naa5**	**hap1**	tòò1	duang6

when I ask after you, you don't turn your face towards me

(1.46) Line 1

B-D'	D'	E'	B	B	B	D'	D'	D'	G'	G'
ຫຼື	ວ່າ	ນາງ	ມີ	**ຢາກ**	**ຫ້ວງ**	ຄື	ດູ	**ແຕ**	ເຄິ່ງ	ເຄິ່ງ
lùù3	vaa1	naang2	mùù4	**jaak5**	**thuang4**	khùù2	duu6	**tèè1**	kheng2	leng2

and when I want to tell you things, you just look blankly

(1.47) Line 2

E'	D'	D'	D'	B>	B	B-A	B	B	A-G
ສະພາບ	ຂອງ	ພຽງ	ໃຈ	**ຮັບ**	ຫວ່	ແຮງ	ເລີຍ	**ຈ໋ໍ**	
sa1phaap2	khòòng3	phiang2	caj6	**hap1**	huang1	hèèng2	leej2	**còò4**	

my heart gets anxious every time you are near

(1.48) Line 3

A-D'	D'	G'	E'	B	G	D'	D'	B	E'
ຫາກ	ວ່າ	ຊາຍ	ຊົ່ວ	**ໂກ**	ຍັງ	ຊາຍ	ເປັນ	ຂອງ	**ໝູ**
haak5	vaa1	saaj2	song2	**kòò4**	ñang2	saaj2	pên6	khòòng3	**muu1**

A handsome man, is still a man

(1.49) Line 4

B	E'	D'	B	A-G	A-B	B>	G	G	A-B
ບາດ	ນາງ	ເອີ້ນ	**ວ່າ**	**ຢູ**	ກົວ	**ຢ່ານ**	ພຽງ	ບໍ່	ຫຼຽວ
baat5	naang2	een4	**vaa1**	**suu4**	kua6	**jaan4**	phiang2	bòò1	liaw3

When I call you my lover, I'm afraid you won't turn around

(1.50) Line 1

B-D'	D'	B	B	B>	A	B	A	B	B..D'..B
ຖ້ຳ	ອ້າຍ	ບໍ	**ຢາກ**	**ກ້ຽວ**	ກະ	ໄຊ	**ບອກ**	ຕາມ	ໃຈ
thaa5	aaj4	bòò1	**jaak5**	**kiaw4**	ka2	khaj3	**bòòk5**	taam6	caj6

if you don't want to court me, then tell me what's in your heart

(1.51) Line ?

B	D'	E'	D'	B-D'	B	B	G	B	A-G
ຢ່າ	ສິ	ມີ	ແມວ	ໃດ	ເທື່ອນ	ໄປ	ໃຫ້	ດວງ	ນໍ
jaa1	si1	mii2	nèèw2	daj6	tùan6	paj6	haj5	duang6	nòò2

don't say anything, please warn me

(1.52) Line ?

B	B-D'	D'	D'>	D'	E'	D'	D'>	
ຂ້ອຍ	ວ່າ	ເສຍ	ແຮງ	ສາວ	ນາງ	ຫາກ	**ຢ້ານ**	
khòòj5	vaa1	sia3	hèèng2	saaw3	naang2	haak5	**jaan4**	

I say, I'm losing strength and I'm afraid

(1.53) Line ?

B	D'	G'	G'	G'	G'	E'	E'…D'	E'...D'
ແຕ່	ຖ	ຂອງ	ເອົ້າ	ກ໋ວຍ ?	ໂມ ?	ເດ	ນາງ	ເອີຍ
tèè1	thùù3	khòòng3	khaw3	huaj5 ?	moo2?	dêê6	naang2	eej6

but I believe

(1.54) Line 3

D'-E'	E'<G'	G'	G'	E'>	D'	D'<	E'	E'	D'	D'	E'>
ພວກ	ສາວ	ນາງ	ມາ	**ภั้**	ແລ້ວ	ຫົວ	ໃຈ	ຈົ່ນ	ຊິ	ສັ່ນ	**ເຂກ**
phuak4	saaw3	naang2	maa2	**kòò4**	lèèw4	hua3	caj6	con6	si1	san1	**khêêk5**

I come to make a beginning, my heart shakes and trembles

(1.55) Line 4

D'	B	D'G'>		B	B	A	B	A-B	
ຢາກ	ຫີ້ນ	ສະບັ້ນ		ເຫັ້ນ	**ແລ້ວ**	ບ່	ໄດ້	ແລ້ວ	
jaak5	**tùùn1**	sa2**ban4**		hên3	**lèèw4**	**bòò1**	daj4	lèèw4	

I'm likely to stir, I see you but can't have you

(1.56) Line 3

B-D'	B	B	B	B>		B	<D'	D'	G'	D'
ເມື່ອ	ອ້າຍ	ນີ້	ນັ່ງ	**ໃກ້**		ໃຈ	ດີ	ກໍ	ຍັງ	**ຄືດ**
mùa1	aaj4	nii4	nang1	**kaj4**		caj6	dii6	kòò6	ñang2	**khùt1**

Whenyou sit close by, my happy heart still thinks

(1.57) Line 4?

G'	D'	E'	D'B>		G	G	B	B B	A-G
ອຶດ	ອັດ	ໃນ	ຈິດໃຈ		ຢາກ	ບ່	ເປັ	ກะຕັ	ນາງ
ùt3	at3	naj2	cit2caj6		paak5	bòò1	pên6	ka2tan6	naang2

my mind is troubled, but I cannot speak

(1.58) Line 3

B-E'	G'>	G'	E'	G'>		E' E'	G'	E'	D'
ສາວ	ນາງ	ນາ	ເຫັ	**ອ້າຍ**		ຫົວໃຈ	ສອງ	ສາມ	**ເໜ້ງ**
saaw3	naang2	maa2	hên3	**aaj4**		hua3caj6	sòòng3	saam3	**nêng3**

When I come and see you, my heart jumps two or three times

(1.59) Line 4

G'	E'	E'>	B	B		D'	D'>B	B-A	B	A-G
ຄື	ກິນ	ແກງ	**ຂອດ**	**ໝໍ້**		ບໍ່	ຄອງ	ຜໍ	ກອນ	ກໍ
khùù3	kin6	kèèng6	**khòòt5**	**mòò5**		bòò5	khòòng4	phòò2	kòòn6	kam1

like eating soup from an empty pot,

(1.60) Line 1

B	D'	B	B	G	G-A	B	B>	B	D'	B-E'
ເຫັ	ວ່າ	ນ້ອງ	ດໍ	ຂີ	**ຫຼີ**	ຢ່າ	ຟ້າ	**ຮີ**	ເຮືอ	ກາย
hên3	vaa1	nòòng4	dam6	khii5	lii5	jaa5	faaw4	khii1	hùa2	kaaj6

If you see me black as charcoal, don't hurry past in your boat

(1.61) Line 2

B	D'	E'	A'>E'	E'	A'	E'-D'-B	B	B	e'B'	aB	A-G
ຂ້ອย	ວ່າ	ເຫັ	ນາງ	ດໍ	ຄอย	ลอย	**ຢາກ**	ฝ่	ผาย	เรือ	**ม้ม**
khòòj5	vaa1	hên3	naang2	dam6	khòòj2	lòòj2	**jaak5**	fang1	phaaj2	hùa2	**mom4**

I say, if you see me black as the night, don't rush to paddle your boat past

(1.62) Line 3

B-E'	E'-D'G'	G'	G'>		D'	E'	A'	E'	D'
ຖ້າ	ອ້าย	ส้ม	ขอ้ง	**แล้ว**		ย่า	ล้ม	แมอ	ล้ด	**ตาง**
thaa5	aaj4	som3	vang3	**lèèw4**		jaa1	lùùm2	nèèw2	lot1	**taang1**

if you get your desires, don't forget the others

(1.63) Line 4

G'	E'	D'	B	B		B	B	B>	G	B	B-A
ຄัน	อ้าย	ไก้	**ฮี่**	**ฃ้าง**		ย่า	ล้ม	**น้อง**	**ผู่**	ฮี้	ขือ
khan2	aaj4	daj4	**khii1**	**saang4**		jaa1	lùùm2	**nòòng4**	**phuu1**	khii5	hua3

if you get to ride an elephant, don't forget me with the dandruff

(1.64) Line 2

B-D'	B-A	E'	B	E'-B		D'	B	G'	G'	D'
บาด	อ้าย	อุะ	ตา	ล้อย		**ย่า**	ฮี้	ล้ม	ลัน	**ใบ้**
baat5	aaj4	sa1	taa6	luaj4		**jaa1**	si1	lùùm2	khon2	**baj4**

If you get rich, don't forget this mute person

(1.65) Line 2?

<G'	E'-D'E'	D'D'		E'-D'D'		G'	E'	E'>	
ฮึน	ใจ	ทุก	อะมอด	ตา	บอด	มา	ฆูอ	น้อม	
khiin3	caj6	thuk1	kha2mòòt4	taa6	bòòt5	maa2	liaw3	nòòm4	

unhappy, suffering and blind who comes with a bowed head

(1.65a)

B	B>	G	B	A...G
ขอ	อ้าย	กะ	จิง	ถ้า
khòò3	aaj4	ka2	cong6	thaa5

will you wait for me?

(1.66) Line 1

B<D'B>		G	G	B>		G	A	B	D' E'
ถ้า	อ้าย	ออก	**จาก**	**บ้าน**		ไก้	ฮั้น	**ฮี่**	ผาฮุ
thaa5	aaj4	òòk5	**caak5**	**baan4**		daj4	khùn5	**khii1**	phaa2sii2

should leave your house, getting astride a horse

(1.67) Line 2

G'	E'>D'	G'	D'	bD'		B>	B	B	B	A-G
ลัน	อ้าย	มี	ถอาม	สุก		อ้าย	**ย่า**	ล้ม	ลุน	**ม้า**
khan2	aaj4	mii2	khuam2	suk2		aaj4	**jaa1**	lùùm2	khun2	**maa4**

if you are happy, don't forget the merit of the horse

(1.68) Line 3

D'>b	B	D'	bD'	G-A		<D'	E'	D'-B	A	D
นาง	ยู่	เรือน	มุง	**ขย้า**		ฝา	แผ่	ธิด	ไม้	**ใผ่**
naang2	juu1	hùan2	mung2	**ñaa5**		faa3	phèè1	hiit4	maj4	**phaj1**

I live in a thatched roofed house, with walls of flattened bamboo

(1.69) Line 4

E'>	D'	d'G'	d'E'	D'		G'	E'	D'	B>	B-G
อ้าย	ยู่	เรือน	ขลัง	**ใหย่**		ดีก	สี่	ฮั้น	ฮ้า	ฮั้น
aaj4	juu1	hùan2	lang3	**ñaj1**		tùk2	sii1	san4	haa5	san4

you live in a big house, four or five stories high

(1.69a)

A	d'A	G	A B	A-G
ຢ່າ	ລືມ	**ຫ້ອງ**	ກະທ່ອມ	ນາ
jaa1	lùùm2	**hang5**	ka2**thòòm1**	naa2

don't forget my little hut in the fields

(1.70) Line 1

B-D'	B	B	B	B>	B	D'	D'	G'	G'-E'-G'
ຖ້າ	ອ້າຍ	ໄດ້	**ຂີ່**	**ມ້າ**	ຢ່າ	ລືມ	**ໝູ**	ໝູ	ໝາ
thaa5	aaj4	daj4	**khii1**	**maa4**	jaa1	lùùm2	**muu1**	muu3	maa3

if you ride upon a horse, don't forget the pigs and dogs

(1.71) Line 2

E'	G'	A'	A'	E'-D'	B	B	e'D'	B	A-G
ຢ່າ	ຊິ	ລືມ	ຊາວ	ນາ	**ພູ່**	ຂີ່	ຄວາຍ	ອີ່ນ	**ກ້ຳ**
jaa1	si1	lùùm2	saaw2	naa2	**phuu1**	khii1	khuaj2	khon1	**kaa4**

don't forget the farmers, those who ride the buffalo which cart the rice seedlings

(1.72) Line 3

E'-D'	D'	G'>	G'	B-D'	<G'	A'	E'	D'	D'
ນາງ	ຢູ່	ເຮືອນ	ມຸງ	**ໜ້ຳ**	ຝາ	ແຜ່	ຮີດ	ໄມ້	**ໃผ่**
naang2	jaa1	hùan2	mung2	**ñaa5**	faa3	phèè1	hiit4	maj4	**phaj1**

I live in a thatched roofed house, with walls of flattened bamboo

(1.73) Line 4

E'-D'	E'	g'E'	d'E'	D'	G'	E'	D'	D'-B	B-G
ອ້າຍ	ຢູ່	ເຮືອນ	ຫລັງ	**ໃหญ่**	ຕຶກ	ສີ່	ຊັ້ນ	ຫ້ຳ	ຊັ້ນ
aaj4	juu1	hùan2	lang3	**ñaj1**	tùk2	sii1	san4	haa4	san4

you live in a big house, four or five stories high

(1.73a)

A	A	G	A B	A-B-A
ຢ່າ	ລືມ	**ຫ້ອງ**	ກະທ່ອມ	ນາ
jaa1	lùùm2	**hang5**	ka2**thòòm1**	naa2

don't forget my little hut in the fields

(1.74) Line 3

G	B..D	B-D'	B	B	B	B>	B	D'	B'	bD'	B'	B<G'
ຈັ່ງ	ວ່າ	ຖ້າ	ອ້າຍ	ກິນ	ດີ	ແຮງ	ຢ່າ	ລືມ	ຕອງ	ໝົກ	ປາ	**ແดก**
cang1	vaa1	thaa5	aaj4	kin3	dii6	hèèng2	jaa1	lùùm2	tòòng6	mok2	paa6	**dèèk5**

Now if you eat well and grow strong, don't forget fermented fish steamed in a banana leaf

(1.75) Line 4

G'	e'D'	B	D'	D'>	B	D'	gB	B-A	B	B-A
ຄັນ	ອ້າຍ	ແบก	**ยึด**	**ขั้น**	ຢ่າ	ລືມ	**ຂ້ຳ**	**ลาด**	ຊາถอม	
khan2	aaj4	bèèk5	**ñot1**	**san4**	jaa1	lùùm3	**khan5**	**laat4**	saa2dòòn6	

if you gain a title, don't forget the peasants

(1.76) Line 3

B-E'	E'>	G'	A'	G'	E'	E'	G'	E'	E'-D'
ຖ້າ	ອ້າຍ	ນອນ	ທ້ອງ	ຄາງ	ດັ່ງ	ເถ้ำ	สอง	สาม	**ໜ่ວย**
thaa5	aaj4	nòòn2	thòòng4	khaang2	dang1	taw4	sòòng3	saam3	**nuaj1**

if you lie with a big fat belly, like two or three gourds

(1.77) Line 4

d'G'	E'	E'	d'B	B-D'	B-D'	B-G	A	B	A-B-A-G
ຂໍ	ໃຫ้	ອ້າย	**ອวย**	**พ้ำ**	ทา	**ม้อง**	**ผู้**	ບໍ່	ມີ
khòò3	haj5	aaj4	**uaj1**	**naa5**	haa3	**nòòng4**	**phuu1**	bòò1	mii2

please turn your face towards me who has nothing

(1.78) Line 3

B-D'	>G	G'	G'	G'>	G'	G'	A'	G'	e'D'
ຈົบ	**แล้ว**	ຄ่ำ	ที่	**นี้**	ຄัน	บໍ่	ມີ	ມີ	**ຮ่วม**
cop2	lèèw4	kham2	thii1	**nii4**	khan2	bòò1	mii2	mii2	**huam1**

Now I've finished, if we can't be together

(1.79) Line 4

G'	E'	G'	D'	B	G'	D'	B	B	A-B
ມັน	ບໍ่	ມี	**ผู้**	**ช้อม**	สะเพ้	**ม้อง**		เม	ໜา
man2	bòò1	mii2	**khuu1**	**sòòn4**	sa2nee3	**nòòng4**		nêê2	naa3

I have no partner, that's it

(1.80)

D'	D'	G'	E'	D'>	D'	D'..D'	D'	B	d'E'	G	E'-B
แม่	ໜา	สะเพ้		**ม้อง**	แม่	ໜา	ว่า	สะเพ้		มาง	**นี้**
nèè1	naa3	sa2nee3		nòòng4	nèè1	naa3	vaa1	sa2nee3		naang2	nii4

I've said it all, I've said it all

(1.81)

D'	B	B-G	A	aB	A	B...A	G
ຊิ	ไก้	เจ็ำ	**ช้อม**	**บ่อม**	ออม	ช้อม	**นี้**
si1	daj4	caw4	sòòn4	bòòn1	òòn6	sòòn2	nii4

I'd like you to be with me

Transcription 2: Lam Siphandon performed by Som Sii: Pakse 25/1/1999

Sung using *san* scale (C, D, F, G, A)

(2.1)
F dG A A G G
ອ່ຶ ຕ່ຶ ແມ້ນ ເຈ້ົ້າ ອ່ຶ ຕ່ຶ
ong1 tong1 kèèm4 caw4 ong1 tong1
So large and red, your cheeks are so large and red

(2.2)
<A F A F A F G G-C' G> F F-G
ມ້ ມ້ ອາກາດ ດ ປ່ອດປ່ອ ໃສ ແຈ້ ແສ ຂາວ
mùù4nii4 aa6kaat5 dii6 pòòt1pòng1 saj3 cèèng4 sèèng3 khaaw3
Today the weather is good, bright and clear

(2.3)
a-C' G aG A C' D'> C' A< C A-C'
ເຫ້ັນ ຜ ສາວ ໝ ລໍາ ມາ ນ້ ກ້ັບ ລໍາ ໂສ
hên3 phuu5 saaw3 mòò3lam2 maa2 nang1 kap2 lam2 soom3
I see the lady mohlam, come to sit and sing lam som

(2.4)
G A <D' C' C'> f-D F D C C...D
ພ ອ ລົມ ນໍາ ນາ ເຈ້ົ້າ ຜ ແກ້ມ ສະຫວາ
phii1 khòò3 lom2 nam2 naang2 caw2 phuu5 kèèm4 sa2vaang1
May I talk with you? you with the bright cheeks?

(2.5)
D F...G DC
ຄ ງາມ ນ
khùù2ngaam2 nòòng4
so beautiful

(2.6) Line 1
C' D'> D' f-A A C' C'> G< A A AD'
ມ້ ມ້ ມາ ເຫ້ັນ ມອກ **ມ້ດ** **ໄ** ກ້ົ ກໍາ ກວມ ດິນ
mùù4nii4 maa2 hên3 mòòk4 **mùùt4** **maj4** kua4 kam6 kuam6 din6
Today, I see the thick fog has come and covered the earth and trees

(2.7)
A A> C'-A GFD
ມາ ແລ້ວ ນາງ ເອ
maa3 lèèw4 naang2 eej6
my dear

(2.8) Line 2
D' A D'> A A-C' A C' A G-F-C
ຄົນ ສ່ັນ ເຊ້ັນ ສຸ ພ ຝ່ ໄຟ ຮາ **ເຊ້ົ**
khon2 san1 sên2 sum3 fiing3 **fang1** faj2 haam2 **saw4**
people shiver and shake and spend the morning warming themselves by the fire

(2.9) Line 3
A-C' A D' C' A-d D' D' F D' A
ໃ ຜ ມ ເມ **ຊ້ອ** ນອ ນ ກ ໄ **ແ**
phaj3 phuu5 mii2 mia2 **sòòn4** nòòn2 nam2 kòò1 khaj3 **nèè1**
Anyone who has a wife to sleep with will be better off

(2.10) Line 4
A-C' F G F F-G A A A-G G A-D
ແ ເ້ົ ໃ ປາ ສາ ຍ ຕ ລາ ລາ ໃ
pè6 khaw5 kaj4 paak5 saang3 ñin6 ta2lang2 laaw2 maj1
they'll be close and the cold will not get to them

(2.11) Line 3
A F D' A-D' G> A D' A D' A
ໂ ມ ຊາ ສ **ຂ້ າ** ເ ເ ມ ຄ
too6 nii4 saaj2 sa2lêê2 **khaang5** kheen3 mia2 òò1 mii2 **khuu1**
As for me, I'm a single man with no wife

(2.12) Line 4
G A A>F G A-F A> F-G A A A-G-F
ອາ ເ້ົ **ນ** **ໃ** ນາ ລ **ວ** ຈ່ ໃ
aa6saj3 caw4 **nang1** **kaj4** naang2 laa2 **vaa1** cang1daj6
I want to be close to you, my dear lady what do you say?

(2.13) Line 1
A-C' A> A F a>F f>A A D' A>F
ຫ ເ້ົ ບ່ **ຢ** **ໃ** ຫ ອ ລໍ **ພ** ຕ
lùù3 caw4 bòò1 **jaak5kaj4** liaw3 lam2 **phòò4** taa6
or don't you want to be close or turn to look at me?

(2.14) Line 2
F A C'> A-C' A-C' A C' aG G-F-D
ຊ ບ່ ຜ ອ ສ **ຢ** ນ ນ **ຊ**
si1 bòò1 phòò2 ot2 saa3 **juu1** nam2 nòòn2 **sòòn4**
you can't bear to sleep with me

(2.15) Line 3
A C' D' D'> G-F D' D' G G>F A
ພ ອ ອ ອ **ເ** ນ ນ ບ່ ເ ຕ
phii1 khòò3 vòòn2 vian2 **vaw4** nam2 naang2 bòò1 tùang4 **tòò1**
I ask you if you are not interested

(2.16) Line 4

F	A	C'	F	A-G	G	A-F	F	G	A-D
ຊີ	ບໍ່	ພໍ	ໃຫ້	ໄດ້	ບໍ່	ນ້ອງ	**ໃຫ້**	**ວ່າ**	ມາ
si1	bòò1	phòò2	haj5	**daj4**	bòò1	nòòng4	**haj5**	**vaa1**	maa2

am I enough for you, please let me know

(2.17) Line 1

A	F	A<	A	C'>f	D'	A	A	D'	A
ພີ	ນ້	ໝາຍ	**ມາດ**	**ແມ້ງ**	ແຍງ	**ໃສ່**	ວ່າ	ທາຍ	ຕໍ່
phii1	nii4	maaj3	**maat4**	**mèèng4**	ñèèng2	**saj1**	vaa1	thaaj2	tòò1

I think I know you well enough

(2.18) Line 2

G	F	A<C'D'	A	A	C'-A	A-G	G-F-D
ດັ່ງ	ໃຫ້	ສົມ ເຄີຍ	ພົບ	**ມີ໋ງ**	ເມຍ	ມາ	**ຊ້ອນ**
dang1	haj5	som3 kheej2	phop1	**ming1**	mia2	maa2	**sòòn4**

for me to feel I have just met my precious wife

(2.19) Line 3

A-C'	A	D'>	D'>	A>F	F	A	G	G-F	A
ຫຼີ	ຊີ	ຊັ່ງ	ຊາຍ	**ຊ້ຳ**	ບໍ່	ຫານ	ເອົາ	ອ້າຍ	**ພີ່**
lùù3	si1	sang2	saaj2	**sam4**	bòò1	haan3	aw6	aaj4	**phii1**

or do you detest me, and not want to have me?

(2.20) Line 4

A	A	G	F	A>G	F	aG	F-G	F<	A-D
ຕີ	ວ່າ	**ຊຸບ**	**ຮ**	ຮ້າຍ	ບໍ່	ແລ	**ໜ້າ**	ຄາ	ຍ້ານ
tii6	vaa1	**huup4**	**khii5**	laaj4	bòò1	lèè2	**naa5**	khaa2	ñaaj4

do you think I'm ugly and don't want to look at me?

(2.21) Line 1

A	C'	C'	F	G>F	A	>C'	D'	D'>
ພີ	ສັ່ງ	ມາ	**ຢາກ**	**ໄດ້**	ເກີນ	**ຊ່ວນ**	ນ້ຳ	ນວນ
phii1	sang1	maa2	**jaak5daj4**		keen3	**suan1**	nam2	nuan2

I really want you more than anything

(2.22) Line 2

D'	aC'	D'>	C'	A-C'	A	C'	F	A	G-F-D
ພໍ	ສົ່ມ	ຄວນ	ອົດສາ		**ວ່າ**	ມາ	ໃຫ້	ມັນ	**ແຈ້ງ**
phòò2	som3	khuan2	ot2saa3		**vaa1**	maa2	haj5	man2	**cèèng4**

it's almost too much to bear, please tell me straight

(2.23) Line 3

C'>	A	D'	A	A>	A-C'	G	D'	F	A
ບາງ	ຢ່າ	ແພງ	ໄປ	**ໄວ້**	ຫຼາຍ	ປີ	ມັນ	ຊີ	**ແກ່**
naang2	jaa1	phèèng2	paj6	**vaj4**	laaj3	pii6	man2	si1	**kèè1**

My dear, don't wait for too long, in many years you'll be old

(2.24) Line 4

A	F	D'	A	A-F	G	A	F	G	A-D
ແກ່	ກັບ	ມີ	**ແຕ່**	ດວງ	ຂອງ	**ໃຫ້**	ຊີ	**ອ້ຍ**	ແຄມ
kèè1	kap2	mii2	**tèè1**	duang6	khòòng3	**haj5**	si1	**op2**	khèèm2

When you are old no one will think you are pretty

(2.25) Line 3

A	A-C'	C'	C'	A	C'>	A	A-C'	A	F	D'>D'>	A>F
ເພິ່ນ	ວ່າ	ຄັນ	ຫາກ	ວ່າ	ແນວ	ຂອງ	ເຫີງ	ມັນ	ຫາກ	ລາຄາ	**ນ້ອຍ**
pheen1	vaa1	khan2	haak5	vaa1	nèèw2	khòòng3	heng3	man2	haak5	laa2khaa2	**nòòj4**

They say that valuable things lose value over time

(2.25a)

A	D'	A	D'	A
ຖອຍ	ລົງ	ບໍ່	ຄື	**ໝຸ່ມ**
thòòj3	long2	bòò1	khùù2	**num1**

because they're not like new

(2.26) Line 4

D'	A	A	G	F	F-G	A	A	A	F	A-G-F
ຄັນ	ໃໝ່	ໃໝ່	ໃຜ	ກະ	ຫຸ້ມ	ເປັນ	**ປຸ້ມ**	**ວ່າ**	ຢາກ	ເອົາ
khan2	maj1	maj1	phaj3	ka2	hum3	pên6	**pum4**	**vaa1**	jaak5	aw6

Everyone covets and wants things that are shiny and new

(2.27) Line 1

A	A>	F	A	A	F	G-D	A	A	aC'	A
ດຽວ	ນີ້	ເຈົ້າ	ຢ່າ	**ວ່າ**	**ຍ້ອຍ**	ເວົ້າ	ຄິດ	**ເບິ່ງ**	ຂອງ	ໂຕ
diaw6	nii4	caw4	jaa1	**vaa1**	**khòòj5**	vaw4	khit1	**beeng1**	khòòng3	too6

Now, you think about what I say, take a look at yourself

(2.28) Line 2

F	F	C'	C'	A<C'	F	F	C'	A	G-F-D
ຖືກ	ບາດ	ໂຊກ	ແພ້	ໜ້າ	ຊີ	**ຂາດ**	ທຶນ	ທາງ	**ເຈົ້າ**
thùùk5	baat5	sook4	phèè4	hak2	si1	**khaat5**	thùùn2	thaang2	**caw4**

when you have bad luck, you'll lose your valuables

(2.29) Line 3

A-C'	A	D'>	D'>	A-F	D'>	D'>	A	D'	F
ໃຜ	ບໍ່	ມີ	ມາ	**ຊື້**	ຄ່າ	ມີ	ບໍ່	ມີ	ດູດ
phaj3	bòò1	mii2	maa2	**sùù4**	khaa1	mùù2	bòò1	mii2	**duut5**

No one will come to buy them, they'll be worthless

(2.30) Line 4

A	F	A	A	A-F	A	A	A	F	A-F
ເໝັ່ນ	ບູດ	ຮ້າຍ	**ກວ່າ**	ແຮງ	ກ່າຍ	**ໃກ້**	ແມງ	ຊີ	ຕາຍ
mên5	buut5	haaj4	**kua1**	hèèng2	kaaj1	**kaj4**	mèèng2	si1	taaj6

rotten and rancid, worse than dead insects

(2.30a)

F	A>G	A<	C'-A	G-F-D
ໄດ້	ດ໋າຍ	ນີ	ນາງ	ເອີຍ
daj4	aaj4	nii4	naang2	eej6

my dear

(2.31) Line 3

A	C'>	A>	F	G	C'	A>F	C'	D'	F	gA	A
ສາວ	ນາງ	ເຈົ້າ	ຊີ	ອາຍ	ຊາວ	**ບ້ານ**	ຫົວ	ເຍ້ີ້ຍ	ຜູ້	ສາວ	**ແກ່**
saaw3	naang2	caw4	si1	aaj6	saaw2	**baan4**	hua3	ñeej4	phuu5	saaw3	**kèè1**

My lady, you'll be ashamed of the villagers who will tease the old woman

(2.32) Line 4

F	A	A	A	A	F	A	C'	F	A-F
ເກີນ	ສໍ່າ	ພໍ່	ສໍ່າ	ແມ່	ພັດ	ບໍ່	ຫັນ	**ໄດ້**	**ຊູ**
keen5	sam1	phòò1	sam1	mèè1	phat1	bòò1	than2	**daj4**	suu4

older than your parents are now and unmarried

(2.32a)

D'>	aF	F	G	A-D
ແພງ	**ຢູ່**	ຊີ	ບໍ່	ເຄີຍ
phèèng2	**juu1**	si1	bòò1	kheej2

never having been treasured

(2.33) Line 3

A	C'	A	F	A	A<	A-C'	C'	C'>	A<	D'
ໝໍ	ລໍາ	ຕາ	ຢາກ	ເປັນ	ເອີຍ	ແໝ	ຄັນ	ດູ	ລ໋ຽງ	**ແມ**
mòò3	lam2	taa6	jaak5	pên6	kheej3	nèè1	khan2	duu6	liang4	**mèè1**

I'd like to be a son-in-law, taking care of your mother

(2.34) Line 4

F'>	G	A	C'	C'>	F	F-G	A	A	A-C'
ລາວ	ນັ້ນ	ເຖົ້າ	**ແກ**	**ແລ້ວ**	ຊີ	ໝາຍ	**ເຕ**ີ**ຍ**	**ເຜິ**ີ**ງ**	ໄວ້
laaw2	nan4	thaw5	**kèè1**	**lèèw4**	si1	maaj3	**tùang4**	**pheeng1**	vaj4

she is already old, who else will look after her?

(2.35) Line 1

A-C'	A>	A	F	A>G	G	A	D'>	A-C'
ຫຼື	ເຈົ້າ	ບໍ່	**ຢາກ**	**ໄດ້**	ເອົາ	**ຄູ່**	ຫລຸ	ສຍງ
lùù3	caw4	bòò1	**jaak5**	**daj4**	aw6	**khuu1**	thiam2	sòòng3

or perhaps you don't want to take a partner

(2.36) Line 2

C'>	F	A	A	C'>F	G	F	c'A	A	G-F-D
ນາງ	ຊີ	ປົ່ງ	ເປັນ	ຊີ	ບໍ່	**ເກີດ**	ຊາຍ	ສາວ	**ຊ**ອ**ນ**
naang2	si1	pong3	pên6	sii2	bòò1	**keet5**	saaj2	saaw3	**sòòn4**

will you become a nun and take no man?

(2.37) Line 3

A	A	D'	A-C'	F-G	A	G-F	D'	C'>A
ນັບ	ແຕ່	ນາ	ເຫັນ	**ໜ້ໆ**	ດີ	ໃຈ	ນໍາ	**ອຸ່ນ**
nap1	tèè1	maa2	hên3	**naa5**	dii6	caj6	nam2	**un1**

Ever since I saw your face I have been happy

(2.38) Line 4

C'	A	A	A	F	G	A	A	G	G	A-C'
ແກ້ມ	ຈຸ**ນ**ອຸ**ນ**		**ນ**ອງ	ຫຼາ	ເປັນ	ຕາ	**ມ**ຽ**ນ**	ບໍ່	ຢາກ	ໜີ
kèèm4	cun1	**vun1**	**nòòng4**	laa5	pên6	taa6	**mian4**	**bòò1**	jaak5	nii3

your rosy cheeks are so lovable, I can't leave

(2.39) Line 1

A>	A	A-F	A	A>f	A>	G	A-C'	A-C'
ວາງ	ກ່ອນ	ກີ	**ແ**ມ**ນ**	**ນ**ອງ	ກ**ຽ**ວ	ກາຍ	ໂສມ	ສີ
vaang2	kòòn1	kii4	**mèèn1**	**nòòng4**	kiaw4	kaaj6	soom3	sii3

beforehand you used to speak to me

(2.40) Line 2

A	C'	A	A	G-F	F	G	gA	A-G	G-F-D
ເຈົ້າ	ຍິນ	ດີ	ນໍາ	ເອີ	**ບໍ່**	ໄດ້	ດ**ຽ**ວ	ໜ**ຽ**ວ	**ລ**ຽ**ວ**
caw2	ñin2	dii6	nam2	ee6	**bòò1**	daj4	diaw6	niaw1	**liaw4**

you always welcomed me, and didn't turn away

(2.41) Line 3

A-C'	A	F	A	F<A	A-C'	D'	C'	D'	A<	A
ກໍ	ກ**ຽ**ວ	ກົ້ນ	ກັນ	ແໜງ	ສາຍ	ແ**ໜ**ັ**ນ**	ໃຫ້	ໝັ້ນ	ຄົງ	**ມຸ**ງ
kòò6	kiaw6	kom6	kan6	nèèng3	saaj3	nèèn5	haj5	man5	khong2	**mung1**

We were always close and got along

(2.41a)

A	A	D'>	A<D'
ເປັນ	ສາງ	ນາງ	ເອີຍ
pên6	saang3	naang2	eej6

my dear

(2.42) Line 4

C'	F	A	A	F-G	A	A-F	A	F	A-C'
ຫຼື	ເຈົ້າ	ບໍ່	**ກ**ຽ**ວ**	**ຂ**ອ**ງ**	ລົມ	**ອ**ຳ**ຍ**	**ພີ**	ທ້າວ	ໂສມ
lùù3	caw4	bòò1	**kiaw1**	**khòòng5**	lom2	**aaj4**	**phii1**	thaaw4	soom3

but now you won't even talk with me, Mr. Som

(2.43) Line 3

G	D'>	A<C'	A	C'	C'	C'>A	A	G
ພີ	ຊາຍ	ໂສມ	ຂໍ	ລົມ	ນໍາ	ນາງ	ລາຍ	**ເ**ລ**ີ**ຳ
phii1	saaj2	soom3	khòò3	lom2	nam2	naang2	laaj2	**law1**

I, Som Sii, have asked many times to speak with you

(2.44) Line 1

A	D'>	A<C'	aF	A	A	A	C'	A
ພີ່	ມາ	ເຫັນ	**ຊູ**	**ເກົ່າ**	ມັກ	**ຢູ່**	ໝົດ	ໃຈ
phii1	maa2	hên3	**suu4**	**kaw1**	mak1	**juu1**	mot2	caj6

I come to see my old love, who I love with all my heart

(2.45) Line 3

C'	F	A	F<C'>A		G	A	F	G
ຫຼື	ຊິ	ບໍ່	ອາໄລ		ເມືອ	ນຳ	ເປັນ	**ຄູ່**
lùù3	si1	bòò1	aa6laj2		mùa2	nam2	pên6	**khuu1**

perhaps you don't want to come and be my partner

(2.46) Line 3

C'	C'>	A	A	C'	F	A	D'-A	A	A
ຄັນ	ຫາກ	ແມ່ນ	ບຸນ	ສາຍ	**ຊູ**	ສົມ	ຊູ	ຊ້ອນ	**ເຊື່ອ**
khan2	haak5	mèèn1	bun6	saaj3	**suu5**	som3	suu2	sòòn4	**sùa1**

If I have enough merit I will have you

(2.47) Line 4

D'	A	C'	F	A-F		gA	A-D	F	F	G-A
ເຫຼືອ	ໃຈ	**ແວ**	ມາ	**ນີ້**		ເຫັນ	**ໜ້າ**	**ບໍ່**	ຢາກ	ໜີ
lùa3	caj6	vèè5	maa2	**nii4**		hên3	**naa5**	**bòò1**	jaak5	nii3

I'm unhappy, today I pass by and see your face, I don't want to leave

(2.48) Line 3

A-F	A	A	A	A>F	A	D'>	C'	A<C'
ເກີນ	ຜູ	ລົມ	ດີ	**ນ້ອງ**	ນາງ	ພົງ	ບຸນ	ຫຼາຍ
keen6	phuu5	lom2	dii6	**nòòng4**	naang2	phong2	bun6	laaj3

I want to speak with you, most meritous woman

(2.49) Line 4

A	A	G	F	G>		A	A	F	G	A-D
ເປັນ	ຕາ	ຄິດ	**ຢາກ**	**ໄດ້**		ເມືອ	**ໄວ້**	ຈະ	ລຳ	ແຍ້ງ
pên6	taa6	khit1	**jaak5**	**daj4**		mùa2	**vaj4**	ca2	lam2	ñèèng4

I want to have you, to take you home and look after you

(2.50) Line 3

A>	A	D'	A	G<A	D'	A	C'>	C'	C'
ເຈົ້າ	ຜູ	ແພງ	ສີ	**ສ້ອຍ**	ຍອຍ	ກະດັ່ນ		ຕໍ່	**ຕໍ່ໆ**
caw4	phuu5	phèèng2	sii3	**sòòj5**	ñòòj2	ka2dan4		tòò1	**tam1**

Miss Phaeng my love

(2.51) Line 4

D'	D'	F'	A	G-F		F	G	G	C'	A-C'
ໂສມ	ໝໍ	ລຳ	**ຮັກ**	**ນ້ອງ**		ບໍ່	ມີ	**ມື**	**ໜາຍ**	ແໜງ
soom3	mòò3	lam2	**hak1**	**nòòng4**		bòò1	mii2	**mùù4**	**naaj1**	nèèng3

mohlam Som Sii loves you, I can never tire of you

(2.52) Line 3

A-C'	C'	D'>	C'	D'>G		D'	F-A	A G
ວ່າ	ຈັ່ງ	ໃດ	ດວງ	ແພງ		ຄົນ	ສວຍ	**ສະຫງາດ**
vaa1	cang1	daj6	duang6	phèèng2		khon2	suaj3	sa2**aat5**

What do you say Duang Phaeng, you beautiful woman

(2.53) Line 3?

C'>	F	A	A	F		C'	A	A	<C'
ເຈົ້າ	ຊິ	ບໍ່	ຕົວ	**ຂ້ອຍ**		ສີ	ພີ່	ໂສມ	ສີ
caw4	si1	bòò1	tua6	**khòòj5**		khùù2	phii1	soom3	sii3

don't lie to me

(2.54) Line 4

C'	F	G	A	A-C'		G	A	G	G
ຄັນ	ຊິ	ເອົາ	ອີ	ຫຼື		ດວງ	ແພງ	ເວົ້າ	ໃໝ່
khan2	si1	aw6	ii1	lii3		duang6	phèèng2	vaw4	maj1

If you really want me Duang Phaeng, then say so

(2.55) Line 3

A-D'	D'>	A	A>	F	D'	D'>	G	A
ຫວັງ	ນາງ	ໄອ	ຂາມ	ຄວນ	ຊວນ	ຊາຍ	**ອ້າຍ**	**ຜີ**
vang3	naang2	khaj3	khaan3	khuan2	suan2	saaj2	aaj4	**phii1**

I hope that you will want me

(2.56) Line 4

F	C'	A	A	A>F		G<A	F<G	G	F	A-D
ເຈົ້າ	ຍິນ	ດີ	**ອວດ**	**ອ້າຍ**		ໜາຍ	**ໝັ້ນ**	**ວ່າ**	ຢາກ	ໂສມ
caw4	ñin2	dii6	**uat5**	**aaj4**		maaj3	**man5**	**vaa1**	jaak5	soom3

Do you agree, please confirm that you want me

(2.57) Line 3

A	G	A	A	G>F		C'	A	C'	A	F	A
ແຕ່	ວ່າ	ສົນ	ໃຈ	**ອ້າຍ**		ສາວ	ດວງ	ແພງ	ບໍ່	ຢາກ	**ເຊື່ອ**
tèè1	vaa1	son3	caj6	**aaj4**		saaw3	duang6	phèèng2	bòò1	jaak5	**sùa1**

Although you're interested, perhaps you don't want to believe me

(2.58) Line 4

A>g>F	D'	D'	A	F<G		G	A	F	F	G-A
ຢ້ານ	ມີ	ເມຍ	**ຢູ່**	**ສ້ວມ**		ຊວນ	**ຊ້ອນ**	ຕ້ອນ		ສະເໝ
jaan4	mii2	mia2	**juu1**	**suam5**		suan2	**sòòn4**	tòòn4		sa2nêê3

you're afraid I have a wife, and that I'm seducing you

(2.59) Line 1

A	F	A	F	G>F		A<C'	A	D'	A
ພີ	ຊິ	ວາງ	**ບອກ**	**ນ້ອງ**		ໄອ	**ຄອກ**	ຄີ	ຄັກ
phii1	si1	vang2	**bòòk5**	**nòòng4**		khaj3	**khòòk4**	khùù2	khak1

I can tell you truthfully

(2.60) Line 2

A	A	C'	A	A-C'	A	G	A	A	G-F-D
ສ່ວນ	ວ່າ	ເມຍ	ໂສມ	ສີ	**ພີ່**	ບ່	ມີ	ພໍ	ດີ
suan1	vaa1	mia2	soom3	sii3	**phii1**	bòò1	mii2	phòò2	dii6

that I have no wife

(2.61) Line 3

A	A	D'	C'	C'>G	D'>	D'	A	A
ພີ	ກໍ	ໄດ້	ເສຍ	**ແລ້ວ**	ແນວ	ເມຍ	ບ່	ເປັນ
phii1	kòò6	daj4	sia3	**lèèw4**	nèèw2	mia2	bòò1	pên6

I've missed out already, I cannot have a wife

(2.62) Line 4

A	D'	A	C'	A	A>	F<	G	F	A	A-G-F
ຖ້າ	ເມຍ	ບ່	ລຳ	ບ່	**ฟ้อม**	ເອົາ	**ແລ້ວ**	ກะ	ບ่	ดี
thaa5	mia2	bòò1	lam2	**bòò1**	**fòòn4**	aw6	**lèèw4**ka2		**bòò1**	dii6

if my wife won't sing and dance, that's no good

(2.63) Line 3

C'	F	A	D'	A>F	F	A	A<C'	C'	C'>F	F
ຂັນ	ໄດ້	ເອົາ	ທີ່	**ปี้**	ได้	ลี	สาว	ໝໍ	ลำ	ปี้
khan2	daj4	aw6	thii1	**nii4**	daj4	khùù2	saaw3	mòò3	lam2	nii4

If I can have someone just like you, my lady mohlam

(2.63a)

F	A	A	G
ກໍ	ຍັງ	ໄຄ	**ແນ่**
kòò6	ñang2	khaj2	**nèè1**

things will be better

(2.64) Line 4

C'>	F	A>	G	G-F	C'>	F-G	A	A-G-F
ພໍ	ຊິ	ได้	แหย่	แหย่	ลำ	**แย้**	**ใส่**	กับ
phòò2	si1	daj4	ñèè1	ñèè1	lam2	**ñèè4**	**saj1**	kan6

we can joke and sing together

(2.65) Line 3

C'	F	A	C'	G>F	A>	A	F	A	F
ຂັນ	ได้	เอົา	ลี	**ม้อง**	ฮ้อย	ปี	ภะ	บ่	ถึ้ม
khan2	daj4	aw6	khùù2	**nòòng4**	hòòj4pii6		ka2	bòò1	thim5

if I can have someone like you, I could leave you in one hundred years

(2.65a)

D'	A	F	G	A
ผัน	ปี	ภ์	บ่	**ม่าย**
phan2	pii6	kòò6	bòò1	**naaj1**

in a thousand years I wouldn't be bored

(2.66) Line 4

gA	F	D'>	C'>	F-G	G	A>	G	G	A-D
ตาย	เกิด	มา	**ซาด**	**พ้า**	แสม	**ซั้บ**	**แม่น**	บ่	ได้
taaj6	keet5	maa2	**saat4**	**naa5**	sèèn3	**san4**	**mèèn1**	bòò1	daj4

when I die and am reborn I won't forget you in a hundred thousand lifetimes

(2.67) Line 2

A	A	A<	C'<	D'	D'	C'	D'	C'	C'>A
บ่	แต่	ไป	เห็น	ใผ	ยัง	บ่	ดี	เห็น	**เจ้า**
nap1	tèè1	paj6	hên3	phaj3	ñang2	**bòò1**	khùù2	hên3	**caw4**

No matter who else I see, I won't find anyone like you

(2.68) Line 3

D'>A	G	D'>	A	D'>F	A	G	A	F<A
ถอาม	มัก	มา	เป็น	**เหล้า**	เห็น	ปุ้ม	เป็น	**ง่วน**
khuam2	mak1	maa2	pên6	**law5**	hên3	pum4	pên6	**nguan1**

Love arrives like alcohol and makes me drunk

(2.69) Line 4

F>	G	A	A	F-G	G	A>F	F	F-A
ใต้	ฮี	ติ้น	**น้องๆ**	ช้า	เอ็า	**อ้าย**	**แบ่**	ได้
haj5	ii6	ton6	**nòòng4**	laa5	aw6	**aaj4**	**nèè1**	daj4

take pity on me, and accept me as yours

(2.70) Line 3

A-C'	C'	A	C'	C'>	F	A	A	C'	A
ลื	หัว	ใจ	ของ	**น้องๆ**	บ่	ปองๆ	ลิม	กับ	พี่
lùù3	hua3	caj6	khòòng3	**nòòng4**	bòò1	pòòng6	lom2	kap2	**phii1**

perhaps your heart isn't certain of me

(2.71) Line 4

C'	A	D'	A	F	F	G	A-F	F	G-A
ที	อ่า	ลิ้น	**แก่**	**เถ้า**	บ่	เอ็า	**ซ้อม**	ล้า	บ่
tii6	vaa1	khon2	**kèè1**	**thaw5**	bòò1	aw6	**sòòn4**	laa4	bòò1

you think I'm old and don't want me

(2.72) Line 1

A	F	A>	A	A>	A	G>F	A	A-C'
พี่	ได้	พ้	**พิบ**	**น้องๆ**	เกิบ	**จอด**	ใจ	ฒาย
phii1	daj4	phòò4	**phop1**	**nòòng4**	keen6	**còòt5**	caj6	maaj3

When I met you I was very excited

(2.73) Line 2

C'>	A	A<C'	A<C'	A<C'	A	gA	A>	G-F-D
ซาย	โสม	สี	อ๋	ถาม	**ม่อม**	ดอๆ	แผๆ	**น้องๆ**
saaj2	soom3	sii3	khòò3	thaam3	**mòòm1**	duang6	phèèng2	**nòòng4**

and I asked after you, my dear Duang Phaeng.

(2.74) Line 3

A	A	D'	D'	A>F		A	D'>	A	D'
ພີ	ລະ	ນິ	ນໍາ	**ເຈົ້າ**		ດວ	ແພ	ຊູ	**ເກົ່າ**
phii1	kha1	ning2	nam2	**caw4**		duang6	phèèng2	suu4	**kaw1**

Now I think of you my old lover

(2.75) Line 4

F'>	<C'	A-C'	A	A>F		A-G	A	A	G	A-C'
ມາ	ເຫັ	ສີ	ແ	**ເຈົ້າ**		ດຮ	**ນີ**	**ບໍ່**	ຢາ	ໜີ
maa2	hên3	sii3	kèèm4	**caw4**		diaw6	**nii4**	**bòò1**	jaak5	nii3

I see the colour of you cheeks and don't want to leave

(2.76) Line 3

D'	C'	A	A	A	C'<D'		D'>	A-C'	F	F
ຄັ	ຫາ	ແ	ທ້າ	ໂ	ສີ		ມາ	ເຫັ	ຊິ	**ຈາ**
khan2	haak5	mèèn1	thaaw4	soom3	sii3		maa2	hên3	si1	**caak5**

If Mr. Som Sii comes to see you

(2.77) Line ?

F	C'	A	C'	F		C'	A	C'	A-C'-A-G
ໃ	ອໍ	ເອົ	ຂອ	ຝ		ມັ	ຮັ	ມັ	ແພ
phaj3	khòò3	aw6	khòòng3	faak5		man2	hak1	man2	phèèng3

bearing gifts of love

(2.78) Line 3

C'-D'A		A<C'	C'	D'>A		C'	C'>	C'	C'
ບາ	ໂ	ສີ	ຊິ	ແ		ລ	ນ	ໄ	**ກ**
baat5	soom3	sii3	si1	ñèèng6		laa2	naang2	vaj4	**kòòn1**

Now it's time for Som Sii to wave goodbye

(2.79)

D'	F'	A	A	A>		F	A>	A	A-C'
ຊິ	ລ	ຊິ	ກໍ	ກ		ຕ	**ນີ**	ຫ	ເ
si1	laa2	si1	kam6	kòòn5		tòòn6	nii4	haang1	seej2

farewell, I'm going now, now it's time to go

(2.80)

A		C'	D'	A	A>F	A	G-A
ຫ		ເ	ອັ	ຕ	**ນີ**	ຫ	ເ
haang1		seej2	khan5	tòòn6	nii4	haang1	seej2

that's long enough, now it's long enough

(2.81)

C'	D'	C'-G	C'-G	A	F	F>C	C	D-f-d	D<	G-f-g	D-C
ໝ	ລໍ	ລ	ເ	ອ	ໃ	ເ	ມ	ຕ	ນ	ນ	ນ
mòò3	lam2	long2	leej2	ot2	haj5	ñeej4	maa2	tòò1	nòò2	nòò2	nòòng4

I shall end here, cease singing and come again later

Transcription 3: Lam Som performed by Duang Phaeng 25/1/99 at Pakse

Sung to *ñaaw* scale variation (A, B, C, D, E, G)

(3.1)

D	D<E	E	E-D	D	D-E		G	E	D	E	D
ອ	ອ	ແ	ອ	ອ	ອ		ຄ	ໄ	ຄ	ເ	ນ
òòn1	òòn1	kèèm4	aaj4	òòn1	òòn1		khan2	daj4	khùùn2	mùa2	nòòn2

So soft, your cheeks are so soft, if you come back to lie with me

(3.2)

C	D	E	C	B		D	E...C	B-A
ໄ	ຄິ	ຮ	ນ	ແ		ບ	ນ	ແ
daj4	khit1	hòòt4	nòòng4	nèè1		baat5	nòòn2	lèèw4

if you think of me whenever it's time for bed

(3.3) Line 3

<G	B'	D'	A'	A'	A' B'	A'>	G'-A'A'		E	C	D
ມ	ນ	ຟ	ຂ	ສ	ສ	**ຕ**	ຫ	ລ	ບ	ໄ	**ກ**
mùù4	nii4	fang2	khaaw1	siang3	sa2nee3	**taan4**	laaj3	kham2	bòò1	daj4	**kaaw1**

Today, listen to to what I have to say, many words were not said

(3.4) Line 4

G'..E	G'-A'	C'...E	E	C		D E		E-D	D	E...D>
ອ	ບ	ມ	**ສິ**	**ຖ**		ທ		**ຂ**	**ບ**	ເ
aaj4	baaw1	maa2	**sang1**	**thòòj5**		tha2lèèng3		**khùn5**	**bòòk5**	haw2

you came and said things to me

(3.5) Line 1

D'	D'>	D'>	A'	B'	G	A'>E		G	A'	G	E E
ນ	ເ	ຟ	ຂ	ລ	ພ	**ເຈົ້າ**		ເ	**ແ**	ເ	ສ
naang2	eej6	fang2	khaaw1	kham2	pha1	**caw4**		een4	**èèw1**	aw6	sa2nee3

Oh listen to the words of the lord, calling out for you

(3.6) Line 3

G	G...E	D		D	D	D	B-C
ນ	ໄ	**ໄ**		ຫ	ໄ	ເ	**ບ**
naang2	laj2	**daj4**		haang1	kaj6	keen6	**bòòn1**

I ended up far away

(3.7) Line 3

D'	B'>	B'	A'	B'-A'	B'	E-A'		A'	D'	B'-A'	A'	G	A'>
ລ	ເ	**ອ**	ບ	ຄ	ຂ	**ຂ**		ໃ	ທ	ນ	**ນ**	ໄ	**ພ**
kham2	eej6	aaj4	bòò1	khuan2	khat2	**khòòng5**		naj2	tham2	nòòng2	nòòng4	kaj6	**phii1**

Oh Kham, you shouldn't argue about your going away

(3.8) Line 4?

D-C	A'	G	E	G>	D	E	C-D	D-E	D...E
ນ້ອງ	ຈະ	ຈໍາ	**ຈາກ**	**ເຈົ້າ**	ກະ	ເປັນ	ອໍ	ເຮືອນ	ນາງ
nòòng4	ca1	cam6	**caak6**	**caw4**	ka3	pên6	khòò3	hùan2	naang2

I shall be apart from you in order to care for the house

(3.9) Line 1

D'	B'>	B'	B'>	A'>	G	A'>	G	A'	G	G-E-D
ຄໍາ	ເອີ	ຕອນ	ນັ້ນ	ນ້ອງ	**ຈາກ**	**ອ້າຍ**	ໄປ	**ຢູ່**	ແດນ	ໄກ
kham2	eej6	tòòn6	nan4	nòòng4	**caak5**	**aaj4**	paj6	**juu1**	dèèn6	kaj6

Oh Kham, then you left me and went to live in a far off place

(3.10) Line 2

<A'	gE	G	<A'	A'-D	D-E	F	D	E>	B-A
ຢ່າ	ສົງ	?ᵊ	ຫ្	ແນວ	**ວ່າ**	ນາງ	ຊິ	ມີ	**ຊູ**
jaa1	song3	saj3	laaj3	nèèw2	**vaa1**	naang2	si1	mii2	**suu4**

don't be wondering if I have a new lover

(3.11) Line 3

G-A'	B'>	G>	A'	B'	G	B'>E	<D'	D'	D'-A'	A'	G	G>E
ດວງ	ແພງ	ຫວນ	ຄິດ	ຄືນ	ຈັງ	**ເບື້ອງ**	ອັນ	ວິ	ວ່າ	ແລະ	ຕົກ	**ແຕ່ງ**
duang6	phèèng2	huan3	khit1	khùùn2	cang6	**bùang4**	van2	vi1	vaa2	lè1	tok2	**tèèng1**

Duang Phaeng, I think back to our wedding day

(3.12) Line 4

D	A'	E	G	G>	D	E	D	<D	D-E
ພໍ່	ແມ່	ເຫ็	ຕໍ່	**ຕົ້ງ**	ກະ	ວາງ	**ໃຫ້**	**ຮ່ວມ**	ກັນ
phòò1	mèè1	bèèng1	**tòò1**	**tang4**	ka2	vaang2	**haj5**	**huam1**	kan6

our parents agreed that we two should be together

(3.13) Line 1

B'	B'	A'	G-A'	G	A'-G-E	G-A	B'-A'	A'	A'	G-E	G>D
ແຕ່	ຄໍາ	ນຶກ	ໜ້າ	**ມື່ນ**	**ຊົ່ນ**	ສັນ	ຍາ	**ວ່າ**	ບໍ່	ໄກ	ກັນ
tèè1	kham2	nùk1	naa5	**mùùn1**	**san4**	san3	ñaa2	**vaa1**	bòò1	kaj6	kan6

But thinking ten thousand words, we promised never to be apart

(3.14) Line 2

E-G	A'<	A'	D	D-E	E-D	D	B-A
ສາຍ	ພົ	ພັນ	ໄດ້	**ຮ່ວມ**	ແຮງ	ແພງ	**ນ້ອງ**
saaj3	phua2	phan2	daj4	**huam1**	hèèng2	phèèng2	**nòòng4**

our relationship would be strong and loving

(3.15) Line 3

D'	D'>	B'-A'D'	D'	B'	A'	A'	D'	D'-B'A'	G>	A'
ຄໍາ	ເອີ	ໃຈ	ຍັງ	ຄອງ	ຄອຍ	**ສ້າງ**	ວັນ	ຄືນ	ມາ	ຢູ່	ບ้ານ	**ເກົ່າ**
kham2	eej6	caj6	ñang2	khòòng2	khòòj2	**saang5**	van2	khùùn2	maa2	juu1	baan4	**kaw1**

Oh Kham, my heart still waits for the day you'll return to your old home

(3.16) Line 4

D	G>	A'	G	E	G>	E-D	C	D	E	E...E
ແຕ่	ນ้ອງ	ຍັງ	ຄิด	**ຮอด**	**เจ้า**	กิน	**เข้า**	ภะ	ข่	ลิว
tèè1	nòòng4	ñang2	khit1	**hòòt4**	**caw4**	kin6	**khaw5**	ka2	**bòò1**	long2

but still I miss you, I eat but the food won't go down

(3.17) Line 3

B'	D'>	B'	A'	C'-B'	A'	A'	<D'	D'	B'-A'G>E	E	A'
ຄิด	ดเ	ถึด	เพ็ม	ยาม	เธิา	**เอ๊า**	ใม	อ้ม	มอม	ซ้อม	ปู่	**เซื่อ**
khit1	dêê6	khit1	hên3	ñaam2	haw2	**khaw5**	naj2	van2	nòòn2	sòòn4	juu1	**sùa2**

Just think! I think of when we were sleeping together

(3.18) Line 4

D-C	eA'	A'>	E	G	B-D	G..A'	>b	D>	D	E..E
ยาม	ฆาอ	มา	อ้าย	**ฮิ่ม**	**ผ้า**	ยาม	ธอม	**อ้าย**	**แต๋ง**	วิ
ñaam2	naaw3	maa2	aaj4	**hom1**	**phaa5**	ñaam2	hòòn4	**aaj4**	**tèèng1**	vii2

in the winter you'd get the blankets, in the summer you'd make the fan

(3.19) Line 3

D'	B'-G'	A'	A'D'	A'	B'	A'	A'	G-A'	a'E	E	D
ຄอาม	ดิ	อ้าย	ภะยัง	บ่	ม่าย	**ม้าง**	ซิ	ปะ	นาง	นอม	**เป๋า**
khuam2	dii6	aaj4	ka2ñang2	bòò1	maaj1	**maang4**	si1	pa2	naang2	nòòn2	**paw1**

Virtue, you still haven't lost yours, but you've left me to sleep alone

(3.20) Line 4

G	G	G	E	G>	E	C	C	D	D...E
ตอม	บี้	น้องๆ	**จาก**	**เจ้า**	ไป	**ฟ้า**	ภะ	**เผื่อ**	ทาม
tòòn6	nii4	nòòng4	**caak5**	**caw4**	paj6	**naa5**	ka2	**phùa1**	thaan2

so now I'm apart from you, I keep on going for you

(3.21) Line 1

D'	B'>	G	B'>	D'-B'	B'	B'>	A'G<	A'	G	G-E
ຄำ	เอีย	ให้	อ้าย	ถึง	**ยู่**	**บ้าน**	สะถาม	**ถิ่น**	เติ่น	ต่าอ
kham2	eej6	haj5	aaj4	khong2	**juu1**	**baan4**	sa2thaan3	**thin1**	deen1	taaw1

Oh Kham, I ask you to remain at home, back from where you have travelled

(3.22) Line 2

A'	A'	A'	A'	A'>	C	D	G'E	E	B-A
นาง	ซิ	กับ	ลืน	มา	ได้	**ฮ่วม**	ธฮง	ฑฮง	**เจ้า**
naang2	si1	kap2	khùùn2	maa2	daj4	**huam1**	hiang2	thiang1	**caw4**

I'll come back too, to share your bed

(3.23) Line 3

B'	B'>	B'	A'	D'	A'	A'	D'	D'-A'	A'>	E	A'
ถึด	ดเ	ถึด	เพ็ม	ยาม	กิน	**เอ๊า**	ผา	ผาม	น้องๆ	ได้	**แต่ง**
khit1	dêê6	khit1	hên3	ñaam2	kin6	**khaw6**	phaa2	phaan2	nòòng4	daj4	**tèèng1**

Just think! I think of whenever we ate, I'd prepare our table

(3.24) Line 4

C	D	G	A'	B'	G	A'-G-E	E	D	C-D	D	D...E
ເພິ່ນ	ວ່າ	ຄິດ	ເຫັນ	ຄຳ	**ປາກ**	**ເວົ້າ**	ຕອນ	ຊິ	**ເຂົ້າ**	**ບ່ອນ**	ນອນ
peen1	vaa1	khit1	hên3	kham2	**paak5**	**vaw4**	tòòn6	si1	**khaw5**	**bòòn1**	nòòn2

they say, think of the words you say when you go to bed

(3.25) Line 1

D	E>	D	D	D>C	G>	G>	E	gA'	<B'	<D'
ອີກ	ຍາມ	ນ້ອງ	**ຢู່**	**ຊ້ອນ**	ອ້າຍ	ອອຍ	**ອອກ**	ສະ	ແດງ	ຫາ
iik5	ñaam2	nòòng4	**juu1**	**sòòn4**	aaj4	òòj6	**òòk5**	sa2	dèèng3	haa3

another time we were together, you'd console me

(3.26) Line 2

A'	G'>	D	D<	E	D	E-D	B-A
ວ່າ	ຈາ	ຈິງ	ຕໍ່	ຍິງ	**ບ່**	ລືມ	**ໄດ້**
vaa2	caa6	cing6	tòò1	ñing2	**bòò1**	lùùm2	**daj4**

saying you were true to women, and that you'd never forget me

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(3.27) Line 3

D'	D'>	B'	B'	D'	A'	D'	A'	G-A'	G>	E>	E>	D
ຄິດ	ເດ	ຕອນ	ທີ່	ພັນ	ພະ	ນ້ຽ	**ກ້ຮ**	ຫຼຮ	ຄືນ	**ອ້າຍ**	ເວົ້າ	**ອ່ອຍ**
khit1	dêê6	tòòn6	thii1	phan2	pha1	nang2	**kiaw4**	liaw3	khùùn2	aaj4	vaw4	**òòj1**

Think! of those times when you'd flirt, and turn back to me saying soothing words

(3.28) Line 4

A'	G-A'	B'	A'	A'	A'	A'	G>	C	D	E...E
ຄຳ	ຫວານ	ຊີ	ນ້ຳ	**ອ້ອຍ**	ອ້າຍ	ອອຍ	**ນ້ອງ**	ກະ	**ບ่**	ນອນ
kham2	vaan3	khùù2	nam4	**òòj4**	aaj4	òòj6	**nòòng4**	ka2	**bòò1**	nòòn2

sweet words are like sugar cane juice, I couldn't sleep

(3.29) Line 1

G-A'	B'>D'>	B'>	A'	G	A'-G-D	G>	E	G-A'	A'-G	E
ດຮ	ນີ	ນາງ	ໄດ	ຈຳ	**ຈາກ**	**ເຈົ້າ**	ໃຈ	ກະ	**ເງົ່າ**	ຄືນ	ຝົນ
diaw6	nii4	naang2	daj4	cam6	**caak5**	**caw4**	caj6	ka2	**ngaw1**	khùù2	fon3

So now I'm apart from you, my heart is dark like rain

(3.30) Line 2

G	E>	D	D	D<	D-E	E-D	B-A
ທົນ	ທົງ	ທຸກ	ໄດ	**ຮ່ວມ**	ກັນ	ນາ	**ແລ້ວ**
thon2	thang2	thuk1	daj4	**huam1**	kan6	maa2	**lèèw4**

I must endure this suffering that is now part of my life

(3.31) Line 3

D'>	B'>	D'	D'	D'-B'B'	B'	a'B'	B'	D'	B'-A'G-E	E	A'
ແພງ	ເອີຍ	ອິດ	ນາ	ຕ່າ	ຢ່າ	ສູ	**ໄຫ**	ອິດ	ນາ	ໃຈ	ຢ່າ	ສູ	**ລົ່ນ**
phèèng2	eej6	ot2	naa2	taa6	jaa1	suu1	**haj5**	ot2	naa2	caj6	jaa1	suu1	**lon1**

Oh Phaeng, control you eyes, don't let them cry, control your heart, don't let it overflow

(3.32) Line 4

D	<G	A'	G	B'>	<G	a'G	G	E	G>
ເພິ່ນ	ວ່າ	ຄົນ	ຮັກ	ຄົນ	ສັງ	ມາ	ເປັນ	**ຈັ່ງ**	**ຊີ**
pheen1	vaa1	khon2	hak1	khon2	sang3	maa2	pên6	**cang1**	**sii4**

they say, when people love one another, this is how it goes

(3.32a)

G	A'…B'	E-D	D	E...D
ຊິ	ນອນ	ດີ	**ຈັ່ງ**	ໃດ
si1	nòòn2	dii6	**cang1**	daj6

how can I rest?

(3.33) Line 1

G>	B'>	D'	D'	B'	A'-B'	B'>	D'	A'	A'>	A'	G	E
ອ້າຍ	ເອີຍ	ຄຳ	ທີ່	ນ້ອງ	**ບອກ**	**ອ້າຍ**	ຍັງ	ເປັນ	**ຫ່ວງ**	ບ่	ລືມ	ນາງ
aaj4	eej6	kham2	thii1	nòòng4	**bòòk5**	**aaj4**	ñang2	pên6	**huang1**	bòò1	lùùm2	naang2

My dear, all those words I said to you, I'm still worried, don't you forget me

(3.34) Line 2

A'	G	A'>	E	G	A'	D	D	G>	E-D	B-A
ຄວາມ	ຫວັງ	ນາງ	ຕ້ອງ	ກັບ	ຄືນ	**ໄດ້**	ຮ່ວມ	ຮ່ວງ	ຄ່ວງ	**ຊ້ອນ**
khuam2	vang3	naang2	tòòng4	kap2	khùùn2	**daj4**	huam1	hiang2	khiang2	**sòòn4**

My wish is for you to return, so we can be together again

(3.35) Line 3

D-C	D	E	E	G	dC	<A'	A'	G	E	C	D
ຕອນ	ນີ	ນາງ	ສະເໝີ	**ໃຫ**		ອົດ	ເດີ	ໃຈ	ອ້າຍ	ຊິ	**ຫວ່າງ**
tòòn6	nii4	naang2	sa2nee3	**haj5**		ot2	dee6	caj6	aaj4	si1	**vang1**

So now I've said my piece, I must be strong, my heart is empty

(3.36) Line 4

A'	A'	A'	G	G-D	D-E	D>	D>	D<	E...A
ນາງ	ຊິ	ກັບ	**ສູ່**	**ບ້ານ**	ຫາ	**ເຈົ້າ**	**ນ້ອງ**	**ບ่**	ລືມ
naang2	si1	kap2	**suu1**	**baan4**	haa3	caw4	**nòòng4**	**bòò1**	lùùm2

I shall return home to look for you, I won't forget you

(3.37)

A	A-D	E	E-D	D	D-E	E>	D	E	G	E>
ອ່ອນ	ສ່ວນ	ແກ້ມ	ອ້າຍ	ອ່ອນ	ສ่วม	ນາງ	ຢ່າ	ຊ່ວນ	ເມືອ	ນ້ຳ
uan6	suan1	kèèm4	aaj4	uan6	suan1	naang2	jaak5	suan2	mùa2	nam2

so soft, your cheeks are so soft, I want to ask you to go with me

(3.38)

D	E	D>	D	D-B	D	E...	B-A
ອ້າຍ	ບ่	**ລ້ຳ**	ບ่	ຖ่	ບ่	ນ	ແລ້ວ
aaj4	bòò1	kham4	bòò1	thòò1	bòò1	nòò2	lèèw4

but you won't (final words unclear)

Transcription 4: Lam Som performed by Som Sii at Pakse 25/1/99

Sung to a *ñaaw* scale variant (A, B, C, D, E, G)

(4.1)

bA	C	D-E	C	C-A	B	E		E>	E	A'	E	E
ດົນ	ປານ	ໃດ	ໂຕ	ນ້ອຍ	ປານ	ໃດ		ເວົ້າ	ບໍ່	ທັນ	ພໍ	ໄດ້
don6	paan6daj6		too6	nòòj4paan6daj6				vaw4	bòò1	than2	phòò2	daj4

For how long? I've not said

(4.2)

D	C	D-E	C	B		D	E...E	B-A
ຢາກ	ໄປ	ຫາ	ຜູ້	ໃໝ່		ເດີ	ນໍ	ນ້ອງ
jaak5paj6		haa3	suu4	maj1		dee6	nòò2	nòòng4

I want to go off to find a new lover, listen to me my dear

(4.3) Line 3

A'	B'>	B'	G'	C'	C'	B'>A'	C'	A'	C'-A'A	A'...D	
ບັດ	ນີ້	ຈັກ	ออก	ถวาม	ลำ	**แจ้ง**	ลำ	โสม	สา	**กอน**	โอ...
bat2	nii4	cak2	òòk5	khuam2	kham2	**cèèng4**	lam2	soom3	saa3	**kòòn1**	ooo

Now, firstly I shall tell my tale, and sing lam som

(4.4) Line 4

G	A'	G	A'	G>	A'	A'	E	D	E-D
ເວົ້າ	ເບื้ອง	ต้น	**แต่**	**ก่**	ເอ๊า	มิ	**ผู้**	**ยู่**	บ่ำ
vaw4	bùang4	ton4	**tèè1**	**kii4**	khaw3	mii2	**suu4**	**juu1**	nam2

Speaking of before, then I had a lover

(4.5) Line 1

a'B'	B'	B'	A'	G-B'	A'	B'	A'	B'>	A'-d'
ยาด	อา	ได้	**ธอม**	**อ้าง**	ผู้	**เก่า**	พ่	ภาย	ฟี
baat5	vaa1	daj4	**huam1**	**khaang5**	suu4	**kaw1**	phòò2	kaaj6	nii3

when they say you have someone near, my old lover leaves

(4.6) Line 2

A'	G	A'<	G	G>	C	D	E>	E	E-D	B-A
ปะ	สม	สี	ฟ่	ลำ	**บอก**	ธ่ำ	ไห้	บ่	มี	**แล้ว**
pa2	som3	sii3	mòò3	lam2	**bòòk5**	ham1	haj5	bòò1	mii2	**lèèw4**

abandoning me, mohlam Som Sii, I cry, I have no one now

(4.7) Line 3

B'	a'B'	G	A'	C'	G	A'	A'-C'	B'	A'>	G>	D
บาง	เอีย	ตั๋ง	แต่	ลาอ	ภิก	**เค้า**	สอง	เธิ	เว้า	กัน	**ยอม**
naang2	eej6	tang4	tèè1	khaaw2	kok2	**khaw4**	sòòng3	haw2	vaw4	kan6	**òòn1**

Oh lady, right from the very start, when we first spoke gently together

(4.8) Line 4

A'	G	E>	E	G>D		C	E	C-D	D	E...C
ตอบ	อ่า	ได้	ถวาม	**อ้าย**		ผัด	แพง	**พ้า**	**บ่าย**	ฉาย
tòòn6	vaa1	daj4	khuam2	**aaj4**		phat1	nèèng3	**naa5**	**naaj1**	saaj2

then you got my message, and you disdained me

(4.9) Line 1

A'<B'C'	B'	C'	b'A'		A'	G	E	E-A'
ຫຼี	เจ๊า	ตี	**อ่า**	**อ้าย**	ภาย	**ก่า**	ดำ	พอง
lùù3	caw4	tii6	**vaa1**	**aaj4**	kaaj6	**kam1**	dam6	pòòng3

so, do you think that I'm too dark and ugly?

(4.10) Line 2

A'	G	G	E<	g'D	D	D E-D	E-D	B-A
มัน	บ่	ลี	สิ	ทอง	**แม่**	มะ นี	นาง	**น้อง**
man2	bòò1	khùù2	sii3	thòòng2	**mèè1**	ma1nii2	naang2	**nòòng4**

not like the colour of gold or like a shining jewel, my dear

(4.11) Line 3

A'>	B'	A'	B'	A'<B'	A'<	C'>A'	C'	A'
เจ๊า	สัง	ป๋ง	ปะ	**ทิ้ม**	พือ	แพง	พ่าย	**ข่าง**
caw4	sang3	pòng6	pa2	**thim5**	phua3	phèèng2	phaaj1	**haang1**

so you decided to discard me, and to run away from your precious husband

(4.12) Line 4

A'	a'C'	G	G	E<G	G	G>	D	C	D	D	E-D-C
นาง	เอีย	บ่	ลิด	เห็น	**แต่**	**อ้าย**	หมาย	สัง	**ย้าย**	**ยู่**	บ่ำ
naang2	eej6	bòò1	khit1	hên3	**tèè1**	**aaj4**	maaj3	sang3	**ñaaj4**	**juu1**	nam2

Oh my dear, don't you think of me or worry about me?

(4.13) Line 1

A'<B'	A'	C'	A'	B'>E	G	C'	A'	A'	E<A'
เถิง	เมื่อ	ยาม	**ค่ำ**	**ลอย**	ตาเอ้ม		**ลอด**	ลาย	แสง
theeng3	mùa1	ñaam2	**kham1**	**khòòj4**	taa6vên2		**luat4**	laaj2	sèèng3

when the dusk arrives, and the sun shines its last rays

(4.14) Line 2

G	G	G>	E	G	G	E	G-D
สม	พี่	อาย	ละ	นึง	ทา	กอง	แผง
som3	phii1	saaj2	kha1	ning2	haa3	duang6	phèèng2

that's when I, Som Sii, think of you, Duang Phaeng, the lady who I can't have

(4.14a)

D	D E		E	eD	B-A
น้อง	**ผะ**นาง		บ่	ได้	**ซ้ำ**
nòòng4	**pha1**naang2		bòò1	daj4	**sam4**

the lady who I cannot have

(4.15) Line 3

A'<B'	A'	B'	A'	A'	E G	A'-G gE	D
ກ່ອນ	ຊິ	ໜີ	ໄກ	**ອ້າຍ**	ລະນິງ	ນ້ຳ ຄວາມ	**ເກົ່າ**
kòòn1	si1	nii3	kaj6	**aaj4**	kha1ning2	nam2 khuam2	**kaw1**

So before you run far from me, think of the things

(4.16) Line 4

A'	G>	G	G	G>	C	D>	D	D<	D-E
ເຮົາ	ເວົ້າ	ກັນ	**ແຕ່**	**ກີ**	ບໍ່	ມີ	**ถึม**	**ถ่าย**	ทอม
haw2	vaw4	kan6	**tèè1**	**kii4**	bòò1	mii2	**thim5**	**thaaj1**	thòòn3

that we said before, don't discard any of it

(4.17) Line 1

G	G-B'	B'-A'	A'	C'	A'	A'>E	A'	G	G	A'-E
ຂ້ອຍ	ວ່າ	ໃຈ	ແມ่	ยิง	**ซ่าว**	**จ้อม**	ตอม	**ถอก**	ผือ	แพง
khòòj5	vaa1	caj6	mèè1	ñing2	**saang1**	**còòn4**	tòòn3	**dòòk5**	phua3	phèèng2

I say that a woman's heart knows to please her beloved husband

(4.18) Line 2

G	G	G>	C	G	G	D	D-E
ເถิง	ยาม	แลง	ใต้	ผือ	ง่ม	หา	ใส
theeng3	ñaam2	lèèng2	haj5	phua3	ngom2	haa3	phaj3

when the evening arrives, he'll reach for her

(4.18a)

D	D E	eD	B-A
ໝອງ	ผะนาง	บ่	**ນ້ອງ**
mòòng3	**pha1**naang2	nòò2	**nòòng2**

when the evening arrives, he'll reach for her

(4.19) Line 3

A'	A'>	B'	B'	B'	A'	G	B'	A'	E-D	D
ນາງ	ເອີย	ภับ	ลืม	ม่า	ทา	**ห้อง**	เรือม	ซุาม	บ่าม	**ซุอง**
naang2	eej6	kap2	khùùn2	maa2	haa3	**hòòng5**	hùan2	saan2	baan4	**sòòng1**

Oh my dear, come back to your room, and your home

(4.20) Line 4

G	G-A'	E>	D	E	E	D	<E	E-D	D	D-E
ນาງ	ເอีย	เจ้า	ซิ	ธ้อง	**ธ่ำ**	**ไห้**	ทา	**อ้าย**	**ยู่**	บ่
naang2	eej6	caw4	si1	hòòng4	**ham1**	**haj5**	haa3	**aaj4**	**juu1**	bòò6

Oh my dear, do you ever cry and think of me?

(4.21) Line 1

G-B'	A'	B'>	G	A'>	G	A'<	<A'	A'	A'>
สอน	อา	อาย	**ลึด**	**ผั**	มี	**ปี๋ง**	สาม	เวลา	
suan1	vaa1	aaj4	**khit1**	**phòò4**	mùù4	**nùng1**	saam3	vee2	laa2

As for me, I think of your soft face three times a day

(4.21a)

G	E-G	G>	D..
ນอน	ฟ้า	นาง	เธีย
nuan2	naa5	naang2	eej6

my dear

(4.22) Line 2

G	C	G<	A'	G	<E	D	D E	D	B-A
ขลับ	จะ	ตา	ลิง	ใน	หมอน	**ธ่ำ**	ละนิง	น้ำ	**น้อง**
lap2	ca1	taa6	long2	naj2	mòòn3	**ham1**	kha1ning3	nam2	**nòòng4**

I close my eyes, rest my head on the pillow and think of you

(4.23) Line 3

A'<B'C'>	C'	A'	A'<	A'<	A'	G'>E	A'	A'>	A'	G'>E	D
หาย	อัม	ลืม	แต่	สิม	สี	ลอง	**น้อง**	ฝย	แพง	ซิ	ลืม	**ต่าอ**
laaj3	van2	khùùn2	tèè1	som3	sii3	khòòng2	**nòòng4**	mia2	phèèng2	si1	khùùn2	**taaw1**

many days and nights I've waited for you, my beloved wife, to return home

(4.24) Line 4

A'	G	A'	A'	A'	E	D	C	E	D-E
มี	ผู้	เว้า	ย่	**น้อง**	บ่	ลา	**เจ้า**	**จั่ง**	ไป
mii2	phuu5	vaw4	ñòò2	**nòòng4**	bòò1	laa2	**caw4**	**cang1**	paj6

there are people who praise you, but you just went away

(4.25) Line 1

G-B'	A'	A'	G	G>	C	A'	A'	G<	A'
ถ้า	อา	น้อง	**ลึด**	**ไถ้**	ละ	นิง	**ที่**	ผือ	แพง
thaa5	vaa1	nòòng4	**khit1**	**daj4**	kha1	ning2	**thii1**	phua3	phèèng2

so if you ever think of me, your beloved husband

(4.26) Line 2

A'	A'	G	C	E	E	C	D	<E	D-E	B-A
เถิง	ยาม	แลง	ใต้	นาง	ภับ	ดอก	**ต่าอ**	มา	ทา	**อ้าย**
theeng3	ñaam2	lèèng2	haj5	naang2	kap2	dòòk5	**taaw1**	maa2	haa3	**aaj4**

when the evening comes, come back looking for me

(4.27) Line 3

G<	B'>	A'	A'	G<	A'	G>	B' G	A'	G	D
เสย	ดาย	ตั้ง	แต่	สอง	เธิา	**ม้ม**	ผันทะนัง		ก๊อ	**กิ่ม**
sia3	daaj6	tang4	tèè1	sòòng3	haw2	**man5**	phan2tha1nang2		kua4	**kin1**

What a shame! ever since we were betrothed, promised to one another

(4.28) Line 4

G	G	A'	G	A'	D	E	D	D	E-D-C
ลาอ	เมือ	ยัง	ฆุ่ม	**น้อย**	บ่	ที	**ข้อย**	**ผี**	ซาย
khaaw2	mùa1	ñang2	**num1**	**nòòj4**	bòò1	tii6	**khòòj5**	**phii1**	saaj2

when we were still young, you didn't think of me as a brother

(4.29) Line 1

A'-B'A'	A'>	A'	A'>	A'	A'	G'	E-A'
บาด	อา	ได้	**ฮวม**	**แล้ว**	มัน	**แค่**	กาย	เหิง
baat5 vaa1	daj4	**huam1**	**lèèw4**	man2	**kèè1**	kaaj6heeng3		

so now this matter's over, a long time has passed by

(4.30) Line 2

A'	G	G	D	D-E	D	D<	E	D E-D	B-A
ตี	พี่	ซาย	สิม	สี	**ฮูบ**	บ่	ดี	สะหม่	**น้อง**
tii6	phii1 saaj2	som3	sii3	**huup4**	bòò1	dii6	sa2mòò3	**nòòng4**	

now you think that I'm no good, don't you my dear

(4.31) Line 3

a'B'	A'	A'>	A'	G	C'	C'>	A'-G
แม่บ	จั่ง	ใด	สิม	สี	ลอง	ลอย	**น้อง**
mèèn1	cang1daj6	som3	sii3	khòòng2	khòòj2	**nòòng4**	

nonetheless, I shall wait for you,

(4.31a)

A'	>E	D	E	D
หาย	ปี	กะ	ตาม	**ย่า**
laaj3	pii6	ka2	taam6	**jaa1**

many years it doesn't matter

(4.32) Line 4

A'	E	A'	E<	D-E	D	E	D	D	E-D-C
เมย	บ่	มา	**ฮวม**	**อ้าง**	ฮวม	**อ้าย**	ซิ	**นั่ง**	ก่อน
mia2	bòò1	maa2	**huam1**	**khaang5**	uan6	**aaj4**	si1	**nang1**	kòòn1

my wife doesn't come to be with me, or ask me to be seated first

(4.33) Line 1

a'B'	A'	C'>	A'	A'>	A'>G	G	G	A'>
สิม	พูด	สี	ฮวม	**น้อง**	นาง	**นาถ**	ดวง	แผง
som3	phuut4	khùù2	uan6	**nòòng4**	naang2	**naat4**	duang6	phèèng2

so I try to entice you, my princess Duang Phaeng

(4.34) Line 2

G<	G	A'	G	G>	C	D	E>	E-D	B-A
ใจ	แม่	ยิง	สี	นาง	**บอก**	อา	หอง	ได้	**อ้าย**
caj6	mèè1	ñing2	khùù2	naang2	**bòòk5**	vaa1	huang1	daj4	**aaj4**

a woman's heart like yours, they say will want me

(4.35) Line 1

A'	B'	B'>	A'	A'	A'	G>
นาง	เอีย	เจ้า	ผู้	นั่ง	แลม	**แก้ว**
naang2	eej6	caw4	phuu5	nang1	khèèn2	**kèèw4**

Oh my dear, the one who sits so elegantly,

(4.35) Line 1

C	G<	A'	A'>	A'-B'	G	A'
ใต้	แนม	**ตั๋ง**	ยาม	หาว	แม่	เอ
haj5	nèèm2	**tang1**	ñaam2	naaw3	nèè1	ee6

in the winter you'll be looking

(4.36) Line 2

G	E-D	G	D	E	D	E	D	D	E-D	E-D	B-A
นาง	เอีย	ลัม	อา	มี	หาว	ค่ำ	ใต้	**นั่ง**	แล	ธาว	**ธ้อ**
naang2	eej6	khan2	vaa1	mii2	haaw3	kham1	haj5	**nang1**	lèè2	haaw2	**hua4**

Oh my dear, in the evenings I sit watching on the fence

(4.37) Line 3

A'	B'>	B'	G	B'	A'	A'>	E	G<A'	A'	G-E	D
ดูอ	บี	นาง	หาก	มี	ผัว	**แล้ว**	ซิ	หา	ฉ้อน	ลิม	**ใหม่**
diaw6	nii4	naang2	haak5	mii2	phua3	**lèèw4**	si1	haa3	sòòn4	khon2	**maj1**

So now, even though you have a husband, you look for someone new

(4.38) Line 4

D	E	E	E	F-D	E<	E>	C	D	D-E
บาด	อา	**ลูก**	**เจ็ก**	ไต้	ใผ	**แล้ว**	ซิ	**ฉ่อย**	ออย
baat5	vaa1	**luuk4**	**caw4**	haj5	phaj3	**lèèw4**	si1	**sòòj1**	òòj6

when your baby cries who will help you?

(4.39) Line 1

A'<B'A'	B'>	A'	A'>	G>	A'	G	A'	E-A'
สวม	อา	อัม	**ค่ำ**	**ลอย**	อาย	**ธ่ำ**	ละมิง	หา
suan1	vaa1	van2	**kham1**	**khòòj4**	aaj4	**ham1**	kha1ning2	haa3

those days and nights I've waited, I think of you

(4.40) Line 2

G	A'>E	G	C	E	E	C	D	E	E	E-D	B-A
อา	เมย	แผง	ซิ	กับ	มา	**กอก**	ธอง	บ่ำ	บ่	มิ	**แล้ว**
vaa1	mia2	phèèng2	si1	kap2	maa2	**dòòk5**	huang2	nam2	bòò1	mii2	**lèèw4**

and that my beloved wife will return,

(4.41) Line 3

a'B'	B'	A'	A'	A'>	E	a'B'	A'>E	E-G	D
แม่บ	เจ้า	ไป	ใส	**แล้ว**	ใต้	โง	ลิม	หา	**พี่**
mèèn1	caw4	paj6	saj3	**lèèw4**	haj5	ngoo2	khùùn2	haa3	**phii1**

so wherever you have gone, please come back looking for me

(4.42) Line 4

G>	G	gE	G	G>	D	D-E	cD	E...D
อาย	ยิบ	ดี	**ต่ำ**	**น้อง**	อัด	**อ้อง**	**ป่อย**	โอ
aaj4	ñin2	dii6	**tòò1**	**nòòng4**	khat1	**khòòng5**	**puaj1**	soo2

I shall welcome you and nurse you back to health

(4.43) Line 1

G	A'	G	G	G>E	A'	G>	A'	A'	A'-D
ตั๊ว	แต่	หมุ่ม	**ธอด**	**เถ๊า**	เธ๊า	เอ๊า	**อ่า**	มัง	มัง
tang4	tèè1	num1	**hòòt4**	**thaw5**	haw2	vaw4	**vaa1**	mang2	mang2

from when we were young and now we're old, we've spoken proudly

(4.44) Line 2

C	D	G	gE	D-E	C	D	E..E	E-D	B-A
เจ๊า	เสีย	ฟัง	ถวาม	ใผ	กะ	**สั่ง**	ไก๊	ลืม	**อ๊าย**
caw4	kheej2	fang2	khuam2	phaj3	ka2	**sang1**	daj4	lùùm2	**aaj4**

have you ever listened to them telling you to forget me?

(4.45) Line 3

A'-B'A'	C'>	C'>	A'	A'	A'	E	D	D
ตื๊	ซี่	ซาย	ลิบ	**เก๊**	แก่	แถ๊	ธูบ	ป่	**ถอง**
lùù3	ii1	saaj2	khon2	**kêê4**	kèè1	lèè5	huup4	bòò1	**khòòng1**

or you think I'm too old, old and wizened

(4.46) Line 4

A'>	E	G	E	C-D	E	G>	D	D D-E
เมย	เสีย	ป่	**ยาก**	**สาว**	สืม	**ซ้อม**	ต๊อง	สะเพ
mia2	leej2	bòò1	**jaak5**	**saang5**	som3	**sòòn4**	tòòng4	sa2nêê3

you my wife, don't want to touch and court me

(4.47) Line 1

G	A'	A'	G	G-E	E	A	G<A'	G	E-A'
สอม	อ่า	หาง	**ใต๊**	บี๋	กะ	ยัง	**หวง**	น้ำ	หา
suan1	vaa1	thaang2	**haj5**	nii4	ka2	ñang2	**huang1**	nam2	haa3

so it's come to this, but I shall still worry

(4.48) Line 2

D	E'	E	E>	G>	D	D	E>	E-D	B-A
ละ	นิง	เถิง	อาม	อ๊า	**พี่**	ป่	ไก๊	ลา	**น้อง**
kha1	ning2	theeng3	aam6	khaa5	**phii1**	bòò1	daj4	laa2	**nòòng4**

and think of you mother, I never said goodbye

(4.49) Line 3

<A'	C'	C'>	B'	G-A'	G	B'	B'	A'	eG
กับ	ลืม	มา	อ่า	ลื	ใต๊	เมย	ลืม	มา	**ห้อง**
kap2	khùùn2	maa2	saa1	lùù2	haj5	mia2	khùùn2	maa2	**hòòng5**

so please come back, I want my wife to return to the room

(4.49a)

A'	A'	A'>	G-D	D
ผือ	ซี	ล่อง	ไอ้	**ภอม**
phua3	si1	khòòng1	vaj4	**kòòn1**

I have kept aside for her

(4.50) Line 4

G>	A'	G-E	G>	A'	A'	G	<E	D-E
เอ๊า	ห่	บี๋	แล้อ	ซิ	หวัง	**อ่อม**	หา	**ถูา**
vaw4	thòò1	nii4	lèèw4	si1	vang3	**òòn5**	haa3	**laa5**

Now I've said enough, I shall gently hope

(4.50a)

A'	G-D	C	D	E-D-C
เมย	แม้อ	**ใต๊**	ต่าอ	มา
mia2	kèèw4	**haj5**	**taaw1**	maa2

that my precious wife comes back

(4.51) Line 1

D	C	D	D	C-D	G	A'	gA'	G-B'
ผี	ซิ	ไก๊	**จาก**	**ถูา**	ลา	**สั่ง**	ไห	พี
phii1	si1	daj4	**caak5**	**laa5**	laa2	**sang1**	kaj6	nii3

so now I shall leave, farewell and I'm away from

(4.52) Line 2

A'	G	E	E<	G	B	D	E-D-E	E-D	B-A
สาอ	ผู้	ดี	พ้	ล่ำ	ใต๊	**ธ๋ำ**	ธ้อม	น้	**น้อง**
saaw3	phuu5	dii6	mòò3	lam2	haj5	**ham**	hòòn4	nòò2	**nòòng4**

my virtuous lady mohlam who I shall think of

(4.53)

B	B<E	C	C>	C	E	A'>	E	A'	G	G
อิ่ง	ติ่ง	แก้ม	เจ๊า	อิ่ง	ติ่ง	แมม	เบิ่ง	ใส	ธิ่ง	ธิ่ง
ong1	tong1	kèèm4	caw4	ong1	tong1	nèèm2	beeng1	saj3	hong2	hong2

your cheeks are bright and bold, I look at them clear, bright and bold

(4.54)

D	E	dC	A	B	B	E-D-E-D	B-A
ออม	อุอม	แก้ม	อิ่ง	ติ่ง	ซิ	ลา	นาง
òòn6	sòòn2	kèèm4	ong1	tong1	si1	laa2	naang2

they're soft, your bright and bold cheeks, goodbye my dear

Transcription 5: Khap Ngeum performed by Paeng Thong, Vientiane 1998

Performed to *sòòj* scale variation (A, C, D, E, G)

(5.1)

E…	E…	E-G’	G’-E	E	<C	<D…E	C…A	A
ໂອ	ເດ	ແກ້ມ	ໃໝ່	ໃໝ່	ໃສ	ງາມ	ເອີ	ເອີຍ
oo3	dêê3	kèèm4	maj1	maj1	saj3	ngaam2	ee3	eej3

Oh, your cheeks are fresh, clear and beautiful

(5.2) Line 3

E-G’	E-A’-G’	E	E-D	<E	C	D-C-A	E>	E	C	C	E
ໂອ	ນໍ	ບັດ	ນີ	ຝັ	ເອົາ	**ທ້ອນ**	ໃຫ	ຂະນ້ອ	ງ	ນ້ອຍ	**ໃຫຍ່**
oo3	nòò2	bat2	nii4	fang2	aw3	**thòòn4**	haj5	kha2nòòng2		nòòj2	**ñaj1**

Oh now listen to me, all of you, great and small

(5.3) Line 4?

C-G’	E-G’	E	E	D-E	D	C	D-C-A	E	C-A	C-E	C	C
ໂອ	ນໍ	ລະວັ	ໄພ	ພະຍາດ			**ຮ້າຍ**	ໂລກ	ເອດ	ອັນຕາລາຍ		
oo3	nòò2	la1vang2	phaj2	pha1	**ñaat4**		**haaj4**	look4	êêt4	an3taa3laj2		

Oh, beware the bad and dangerous disease of AIDS

(5.3a)

D	E>	C-E-D-C
ເນີ	ຊາຍ	ເນີ
nee2	saaj2	nee2

(5.4) Line 1?

C-G’	E-G’	E	E>	D	E	E>	A<D-C-A	C	C-A	<C	C	D-C-A
ໂອ	ນໍ	ບໍ	ໃຫ	ມັນ		ສາມາດ	ເຖິງ	ຊີ	**ຄອບ**	ຄົວ	ທົ	ຫຼາຍ
oo3	nòò2	bòò1	haj5	man2	saa3	**maat4**	theng3	si1	**khòòp4**	khua2	thang2	laaj3

Oh, don’t allow it to reach your families

(5.5) Line 3

C-G’	E-G’	A’-E	E	E	D	dE	C	C	C	C	D-C-A
ແມ່ນ	ອ່າ	ທົ່ວ	ທີ	ໂລກ	ກາ	**ກ້ວາງ**	ກະ	ເປັ	ມາ	ມວນ	**ມາກ**
mèèn1	vaa1	thua1	thii1	look4	kaa3	**kuang4**	ka2	pên3	maa2	muan2	**maak4**

all over this great big world

(5.6) Line 1?

C-G’	E-G’	E	G’>	D-G’	C	C	D-C-A	C	C-D	E-D-C	C	C-A
ແມ່ນ	ອ່າ	ພາ	ໃຫ	ເສຍ	ຊີວິ		ນວນ	ກໍ	ໄຫລ	**ແລ້ນ**		ອະເນ
mèèn1	vaa1	phaa2	haj5	sia3	si2**vit1**		nuan2	kòò1	laj3	**lèèn1**		a2nêêk4

it has taken away many precious lives

(5.6a)

D..D	D-E	D	E-G’-D-E	CD…CA
ນໍ	ອ່ຶ	ຄົນ	ງາມ	ເອີຍ
nòò2	ang1	khon2	ngaam2	eej3

of many beautiful people

(5.7) Line 2

E-G’	E-G’	E	E	D	E	C>A	D-G’-E-D	E	E	C	C	D-C-A
ໂອ	ນໍ	ຄວນ	ທີ	ຫາ	ຊໍ້	ຫົນ	ທາງ	**ເພື່ອ**	ລະ	ວັງ	ກັນ	**ແກ**
oo3	nòò2	khuan2	thii1	haa3	sam3	hon3	thaang2	**phùa1**	la1	vang2	kan3	**kèè4**

Oh, we should seek ways to prevent this disease

(5.8) Line 3

C	<G’	E-G’	E	E	D	E	C	E	C>A	C-E	C	D	C
ອັນ	ນີ	ແລ້ວ	ມັນ	ແມ່ນ	ອັນ	ສໍ່າໃດ		**ແຫ**	ສາຍ	ທາງ	ທີ	ພາ	ເກີດ
an3	nii4	lèèw4	man2	mèèn1	an3	sam1daj3		**thèè4**	saaj3	thaang2	thii1	phaa2	**keet5**

This is it! there are many ways it can be caused

(5.9) Line 4

C-G’	E-G’	D	E	A’>G’E	D	E	C	D-C	C	D	E
ແມ່ນ	ອ່າ	ນາງ	ຊິ	ເວົ້າ	ສໍ່າ	**ເລັກນ້ອຍ**	ຕາມ	**ຮູ**	**ແຕ**	ລະ	ອັນ
mèèn1	vaa1	naang2	si1	vaw4	sam1	**lêk1nòòj4**	taam3	**huu4**	**tèè1**	la1	an3

So now I’ll tell you just a little about the things I know

(5.10) Line 2

C-G’	E-G’	E	D	E-D	E	C-D	C-A	D	A
ໂອ	ນໍ	ເອັນ	ນຶ່ງ	ນັ້ນ	ແມ່ນ	ເຂັ	ສິດ	ສັກ	ຢາ
oo3	nòò2	an3	nùng1	nan4	mèèn1	khêm3	siit5	sak2	jaa3

Oh, the first way is through hypodermic needles

(5.10a)

C	E	C E	C-E	E	G’-E-D	C	D-C-A
ບໍ່	ໄດ	ອານະໄ	ມ	ໃຊ້	ກັນ	ກັບ	**ກ໋ອງ**
bòò1	daj4	aa3na1	maj2	saj4	kan3	kap2	**kòòng4**

that are clean and protected by a container

(5.11) Line ?

C-G’	E-G’-E	D	D	C	C-A	<E	D	D-c-a
ແມ່ນ	ອ່າ	ສັກ	ແຕ	ລະ	ເທື່ອ	ສັກ	ຜູ	ນັ້ນ
mèèn1	vaa1	sak2	tèè1	la1	thùa1	sak2	phuu5	nan4

so every time one is used for injections, we inject one person

(5.11a)

E	E	D-E	cA	C	D-C-A	C	E-G'-D	C	C	<C-E	
ผัด	ไป	สัก	ใส่	ผู้	ปี้	ทาง	ที่	ผัด	เสื่อม	ลอย	
phat1	paj3	sak2	haj5	phuu5	nii4	thaang4	thii1	phat1	lùan1	lòòj1	

then inject another, that's a way we can never be sure of

(5.12) Line 3

C-G'	E-G'>E	D	E>	C	D-E	C	C	D-C-A
ໂอ	บ๋	อัน	สอง	**ปั๋น**	ซาย	ยิง	บ่	เสือก	**เผด**
oo3	nòò2	an3	sòòng3	**nan4**	saaj2	ñing2	bòò1	lùak2	**phêêt4**

Oh, the second thing is for men and women not to be promiscuous

(5.13) Line 4

C-G'	E-G'	E	C	C-D	E	D-E	E	C-A	D-C-A
แม่น	อ่า	ฮวม	สำ	พัน	ซาด	สาย	ซ้ำ	**ทื่อ**	**ปั๋น**
mèèn1	vaa1	huam2	sam3	phan2	saat4	saaj3	sam4	**thua1**	**nan4**

Having relations like that

(5.13a)

C	D	E-D	C	C-A	D-G'..D		D	E-A'-E..	C-D-C..A
กะ	เป็น	**ได้**	**ดอก**	ง่าย	ดาย		เบ	ซาย	เอีย
ka2	pên3	**daj4**	**dòòk5**	ngaaj1	daaj3		nee2	saaj2	eej3

is an easy way to contract it

(5.14) Line 2

C-G'	E-G'	E	G'-E	C	D-C-A
ໂอ	บ๋	อัน	ปี้	สาม	ปั๋น
oo3	nòò2	an3	nii4	saam3	nan4

Oh, the third thing is

(5.14) Line 2

A	C	C	D-C	A>	C-D	C	D-C-A
ผู	ยิง	เธ้า	ปี้	ที	ผา	ติด	**เฮ้ือ**
phuu1	ñing2	haw2	nii4	thùù3	phaa2	tit2	**sùa4**

when a pregnant woman has the disease

(5.14a) Line 4

C	D	C-A	C	C	C-E	C	C	D-E	C	D
มัน	จะ	เกิด	ใส่	**ผูก**	**บ๋อย**	อัน	มี	**เฮ้ือ**	**ต่**	แมอ
man2	ca2	keet5	haj5	**luuk4**	**nòòj4**	an3	mii2	**sùa4**	**tòò1**	nèèw2

she can pass it onto her baby

(5.15) Line 4

C-G'	E-G'	D	E	C-A	C-A	D-c-a	C	D	C-A	D	A
แม่น	อ่า	หิน	ทาง	ใส่	**ฮีด**	**เอ้ิน**	บ่	**ใส่**	เกิด	ปั๋น	ทา
mèèn1	vaa1	hon3	thaang2	haj5	**liik5**	**vên4**	bòò1	**haj5**	**keet5**	ban3	haa3

So the path of abstinence is the best way to avoid problems

(5.16) Line 2

E	D	C-A	C	C	D	E	E-D-C	C	C	D-C-A	
ต้อง	เป้น	ผัว	เป้น	เมย	ใส่	**ชู้**	ถึง	บ่	ภาย	**ฉัอว**	
tòòng4	pên3	phua3	pên3	mia2	haj5	**sùù1**	tong4	bòò1	kaaj3	**liaw4**	

we must be faithful wives and husbands, and not stray

(5.17) Line 3

C-G'	E-G'-E	E	D	D-E	D	C-D	E	C	C-E	C-D	C	D	C-A
แม่น	อ่า	เป้น	ผัว	ดอว	เมย	ดอว	**แต่**	ใส่	แผง	ภัม	ปุก	ปะ	**เสิด**
mèèn1	vaa1	pên3	phua3	diaw3	mia2	diaw3	**thèè4**	haj5	phèèng2	kan3	puk2	pa2	**seet5**

we must be monogamous, and love and cherish one another

(5.18) Line 4

>C	E	C-A	A	D>	C	C	E-D	C	D	
ยาม	เมื่อ	เกิด	**ลูก**	**บ๋อย**	กะ	เป็น	**ก๋อม**	ตอม	เภา	
ñaam2	mùa1	keet5	**luuk4**	**nòòj4**	ka2	pên3	**kòòn4**	tòòn3	kêêng4	

when our children our born, it's a time for wonder

(5.19) Line 3

C-G'	E-G'	E	E	D	E	C-A	D-C-A	C	C	C	D	C-A
โอ	บ๋	อุบปะมา			ซ้ำ	ฮอง	**ใช้**	ละอ้ง		ไผ	ทุก	**เพื่อ**
oo3	nòò2	up2pa2maa2			sam4	khòòng3	**saj4**	la1vang2		phaj2thuk1		**thùa1**

Oh, all the things we use, we must take care each time

(5.20) Line 4

E	E	A-D	C	D-C-A	C	C-D	C-A	C	D	
เสื่อง	ป้อง	หู	**เล๊ก**	**บ๋อย**	และ	เอ็ม	**สิก**	สัก	ลาย	
khùang1	pòòng4	huu3	**lêk1**	**nòòj4**	lè1	khêm3	**siik5**	sak2	laaj2	

implements that pierce ears and tattooing needles

(5.21) Line 2

C-G'	E-G'	G'-E	E	D	E	D	E	C-A	C	C	D-A	
โอ	บ๋	แล๊อ	เอ็ม	แมอ	ซ้ำ	เธ้า	**ป๊ก**	ปอด	ตาม	ภาย	**เมื๊อ**	
oo3	nòò2	lèèw4	khêm3	nèèw2	sam4	haw2	**pak2**	puat5	taam3	kaaj3	**nùa4**	

Oh, and other needles which can pierce our bodies

(5.22) Line 3

D	C	A-C	C-A	E-D	A-C	C	E	D	C
มิด	แถ	พิม	แถ	**ขิ๋อ**	โกม	เค็า	มิด	แถ	ฒอด
miit4	thèè3	phom3	thèè3	**khiw4**	koon3	khaw2	miit4	thèè3	**nuat5**

blades for cutting hair and shaving eyebrows and beards

(5.23) Line 4

C	E	E-G' E	G' E-G' C	C	D-C-A	C	C-D	E-D-C	C	C-A
ອັນ	ນີ້	ແລ້ວ ແຕ່	ລະ ອັນ	**ແຕ່**	ລະ	**ມື້**	ບໍ່	ຄວນ	**ໃຊ້**	**ຖອກ**	ຮວມ
an3	nii4	lèèw4tèè1	la1van2	**tèè1**	la1	**mùù4**	bòò5	khuan2	**saj4**	**đòòk5**huam2	

So every single day we shouldn't share the use of such things

(5.23a)

D...E	D	G'A'..E	C-D...D-C-A
ກັນ	ວານ	ທອງ	ເອີ
kan3	vaan2	thòòng2	eej3

(5.24) Line 4

E-G'	E-G' E	E	D	E	C-A	D-C-A	C	C	E-C	C	cA
ໂອ	ນໍ	ໃຫ	ມັນ	ສຸກ	ສໍ່າ	**ລຽບ**	**ລ້ອຍ**	ຈິ່ງ	ສົມ	**ໄຊ**	**ສູ**	ວ່າງ
oo3	nòò2	haj5	man2	suk2	sam1	**liap4**	**lòòj4**	cùùng1	som3	**saj3**	**suu1**	vaang2

Oh, for us to be happy, we need to use things properly

(5.25) Line 1

D-E-D	E	E	C	C-A	D-C-A	D	C-A	D	A-D
ຍາມ	ຕັ້ງ	ໃຫ	ສັດ	**ຊື່**	**ແທ**	ບົນ	**ບອກ**	ຄວາມ	ຈິງ
ñaam2	tang4	haj5	sat2	**sùù1**	**thèè4**	bon3	**bòòk5**	khuam2	cing3

and to be faithful, truthful people

(5.26) Line 2

C	<G'	E-G' E	E	C-D	E	cA	C-D	C-A	C-A	C	D-C-A
ອັນ	ນີ	ແລ້ວ ບໍ່	ວ່າ	ພົວ	ຊໍ້າ	ຫຼື	ເມຍ	**ໝູ່**	ຝູ່ງ	ລຸງ	**ປ້າ**
an3	nii4	lèèw4bòò1	vaa1	phua3	sam4	lùù3	mia2	**muu1**	fung3	lung2	**paa4**

Well now, no matter if you're the husband or wife, or uncles and aunts

(5.27) Line 3

E	C	C	E	C	E-D	C-A	aC-E-D	C	D
ຄວນ	ເຫັນ	ໃຈ	ຜູ	ຕິດ	**ເຊື້ອ**	ເອມ	ໂຊ	ໂຕ	**ຈ່ອຍ**
khuan2	hên3	caj3	phuu5	tit2	**sùa4**	phòòm3	soo2	too3	**còòj1**

we should all sympathise with those who have the skinny disease

(5.28) Line 4

C-G'	E-G' E	E	D	E	C-D	C-A	C-A	D-C-A
ໂອ	ນໍ	ຄັນ	ເຈັບ	ປວດ	ກະ	ຄວນ	ໃຫ	**ຫຼີກ**	**ເວັ້ນ**
oo3	nòò2	khan2	cêp2	puat5	ka2	khuan2	haj5	**liik5**	**vên2**

Oh, if they're aching and ill, we have to assist

(5.28a)

C	E	C	A	C-A	<A-D-..D	D-E G'...E	C-D-C...C-A
ອັນ	ຕາມ	**ຂໍ້**	**ເພິ່ນ**	ວ່າ	ມາ	ສາທາ	ເນີ
an3	taam3	**khòò5**	**phen1**	vaa1	maa2	saa3thaa2	nee2

according to what they say

(5.29) Line 2

C-G'	E-G' E	E	D	E>	C	C	E	G'-E-D	C	C	D-C-A
ໂອ	ນໍ	ຢູ່	ຮວມ	ກັນ	ສໍ່າ	ກິນ	ນອນ	**ຊູ**	ວັນ	ກະ	ຍັງ	**ໄດ້**
oo3	nòò2	juu1	huam2	kan3	sam1	kin3	nòòn2	**suu1**	van2	ka2	ñang2	**daj4**

Oh, you can live and eat together (with someone who has AIDS)

(5.30) Line 3

C	G'	E-G' E	G'	D	E D	C	A	C	E-D	E C-A
ອັນ	ນີ	ແລ້ວ ໝົດ	ຈຸ	ຄົນ	ກະ ຄວນ	**ໃຫ**	ເຫັນ	ໃຈ	ໄດ	ປະໂยด
an3	nii4	lèèw4mot2	suu1	khon2	ka2khuan2	**haj5**	hên3	caj3	daj4	pa2**ñoot4**

Yes, everyone should show empathy and learn

(5.31) Line 4

C	E C	C-A	C	C	E-D-C	C C	E
ມີ	ກຳລັງ	ຕໍ່	**ສູ**	ຄົນ	**ຮ້າย**	ຕະຫຼອด	ຍົ
mii2	kam3lang2	**tòò1**	**suu5**	khon2	**haaj4**	ta2**lòòt5**	ñang1

to have the will to resist bad people of all kinds

(5.32) Line 1

C-G'	E-G' E-D	E-D	D>G'E	E-D	C-A	D-C-A	E	E-D	C-A	<D A
ໂອ	ນໍ	ນ້ອง	ນີ	ສຸด	**ແต่**	**ย้าม**	ลืม	ลั้ม	ลั้ม	**ลื่ม**	เฮือ	วิใส
oo3	nòò2	nòòng4	nii4	sut5	**tèè1**	**jaan4**	lùùn2	lon4	lon4	**lùùn1**lùa3		vi1saj3

Oh, we are all very afraid

(5.33) Line 2

E	E	C	C C	D	E	G'-E-D	C-D	D-C-A
แม่น	บ่	มี	อันใด	ซิ	**ป฽ย**	ปุ่น	ปาม	**ได้**
mèèn1	bòò1	mii2	an3daj3	si1	**piap5**	pun3	paan3**daj4**	

because there is nothing else which can compare with this disease

(5.34) Line 3

<C	E-G'-E	E	G'	D	E	D	E	C E-D-E	A-D-C
แม่น	ว่า	ยัง	บ่	ทัน	ซ้ำ	ธรม	**ฮู้**	วิชา	การ
mèèn1	vaa1	ñang2	bòò1	than2	sam4	hian2	**huu4**	vii2saa2	kaan3

Well before now we didn't know (about this disease)

(5.34a)
C D C-A
ດອກ ມາ ກ**ອນ**
dòòk5 maa2 **kòòn1**

(5.35) Line 4
E E A-C C C-E C C C-E C-A C-D
ອ້າຍ ຫາກ ເປັນ ຜູ້ ຮູ້ ຊຶ່ງ ພາ **ນ້ອງ** **ຫ້ອງ** ຫຽວ
aaj4 haak5 pên3 phuu5huu4 cùng3 phaa2 **nòòng4** **thòòng1**thiaw2
So those of you who know, must guide others

(5.35a)
C D-C-A
ແດ່ **ຫ້ອງ**
dèè1thòòng4

(5.36) Line 3
C-G' E-G E E D E E C-A
ແມ່ນ ວ່າ ຂັນ ແມ່ນ ມາ ສົ່ງ ຮອດ **ນີ້**
mèèn1 vaa1 khan2 mèèn1 maa2 sam1 hòòt4**nii4**
So I've made it to here,

(5.36a)
E E-D-C C-E-D C C D
ອ້າຍ ຈາມ ສິ່ງ ຈັ່ງ ລໍ່ ຕໍ່
aaj4 caan3 sing3 cang1lam2**tòò1**
Acaan Sing will lam now.

(5.37) Line 4
C-G' E-G' E E D-E G' C D-C-A
ໂອ ບໍ ພວກ **ນ້ອງ** ເປັນ ສົ່ງ **ຜູ້** **ນ້ອຍ**
oo3 nòò2 phuak4 nòòng4 pên3 sam1 **phuu1** **nòòj4**
Oh, you're young and small people

(5.37a)
A C-D E D C-A C-D-G'…D D E-G'…G'>C-E…D-C-A
ຊິ ຟັງ **ເຈົ້າ** **ດອກ** ກ່າວ ກອນ **ຜູ້** ດີ ເອີຍ
si1 fang2**caw4** **dòòk5** kaaw1 kòòn3 phuu5 dii3 eej3
so listen to the next verse you good people

(5.38)
C<E C D-G'..E E C D-A A E C-A E-G'-E C…D C-D…A
ວ່າ ແຕ່ ແກ້ມ ຊໍ້ໆ ໃໝ່ໃໝ່ ອໍ **ໃຫ້** ສາຍ ງາມ ງາມ ເອີຍ
vaa1 tèè1 kèèm4 sam4 maj1maj1 khòò3 **haj5** saaj3 ngaam2ngaam eej4
your cheeks are so fresh, may they stay clear and beautiful

Transcription 6: Khap Ngeum performed by Acaan Sing, Vientiane 1998

Performed to a *nòòj* based scale (C, D, F, G, A)

(6.1)
A-D-C-A D…G A…A A F< A fA…A G…D
ໂອ ເດ ແກ້ມ ສອງ ໃສ ຮົ່ງ ຮົ່ງ ເອີຍ
oo1 dêê6 kèèm4 sòòng1 saj3 hong2 hong2 eej3
Oh, your cheeks are clear and wonderfully bright

(6.2) Line 3
aC aC A A A> <A F A A G-A A G-F fA
ໂອ ນໍ ຟັງ ເອົາ **ຫ້ອນ** ຟັງ ກອນ ຜັດ ລໍ່ **ມ**ວນ ພີ ນ້ອງ ເອີຍ
oo1 nòò2 fang2aw3 **thòòn4** fang2kòòn3 phat2lam2 **muan1** phii1 nòòng4 eej3
Oh, listen now, listen to my happy verse all of you

(6.3) Line 4
G-A A-G-A fG A F A G> A G A>
ແມ່ນ ວ່າ ຂໍ ສິບ ຊວນ **ພວກ** **ຜູ້** ຍິງ ເອີ້ຍ **ນ້ອງ**
mèèn1 vaa1 khòò3 son3 suan2 **phuak4** **phuu5** ñing2 ùaj4 **nòòng4**
I ask you all you women to pay attention

(6.3a)
F G-F F F G-A
ຟັງ ຫອມ ຄູ ສູ ຄົນ
fang2thòòm2 khuu1suu1 khon2
and listen carefully, all of you

(6.4) Line 1
F A-B-A G-A G> A-G G Af G-A G A A F
ໂອ ນໍ ຟັງ ຄວາມ **ຮູ**້ ເບື້ອງ ຕົ້ນ ເພື່ອ **ຊີ**ວິ**ດ** ໂຕ ເອງ
oo1 nòò2 fang2khuam2 **huu4** bùang4 ton4 phùa1 sii2**vit1** too3 êêng3
Oh listen to this fundamental knowledge for your life

(6.5) Line 3
<A-G A> F G G-A D F-D F F fG...D
ເວ ລາ ຖື ພາມານ **ໃ**ຫ້ ປອດ ໄພ ທີ່ ຍວນ
vêê2laa2 thùù3phaa2maan2 **haj5** pòòt5phaj2 thii1 uan3
to keep you safe when you are pregnant

(6.6) Line 3

G-A A A…AA G >A
ແມ່ນ ວ່າ ໃຫ້ ເຮົາ ເດີນ ຊໍ້າ
mèèn1 vaa1 haj5 haw2 deen3 sam4
Yes, this will help you keep to the right path

(6.6a) Line 3

F-G F F< F-A F-G F F
ຕາມ **ເສັ້ນ** ສາຍ ທາງ ແສນ ປະ**ເສີດ**
taam3 **sên5** saaj3 thaang2 sèèn3 pa2**seet5**
keep to the right path

(6.7) Line 4

<A F-G F-D G A G-A G-A A F <G-F F F G F
ໂຄງ ການ ສາ ທາ ລະ ນະ ສຸກ **ເພິ່ນ** ຂໍ ໄວ້ ໃຫ້ ເຮົາ **ໄດ້** ດອກ
khoong2kaan3saa3 taa2la1na1 suk2 **pheen1** khòò3**vaj4** haj5 haw2 **daj4dòòk5**
There's a public health program they have arranged for us

(6.7a)

F G
ທ່ອງ ທ່ຽວ
thòòng1 thiaw1

(6.8) Line 2

G-A A G A F-D F F-A A F F F
ໂອ ນ້ອງ ມີ ແພດ ໝໍ ປະຈຳ ການ ຊີ **ເບິ່ງ** ແຍງ
oo1 nòòng4 mii2 phèèt4 mòò3 pa2cam3 kaan3 si1 **beeng1** ñèèng2
Oh, it has doctors who will care for you

(6.8a)

F G…G G A G…D
ແລງ **ເຊົ້າ** ວ່າ ເຊີ້ນ ເດ
lèèng2 **saw4** vaa1 sên4 dêê3
morning or night

(6.9) Line 3

fA C A A G…G A F< A A F< F F F G>
ໂອ ນໍ ແມ່ ຍິງ ເຮົາ ຢູ່ ຕາມ **ບ້ານ** ນັ້ນ ຖື ພາ ທຳມະ**ຊາດ**
oo1 nòò2 mèè1 ñing2haw2 juu1 taam3 **baan4** nan4 thùù3phaa2 tham2ma1**saat4**
Oh, you village women who are pregnant

(6.10) Line 4

F-C-A A A A G A> F G-F F Agd F F
ແມ່ນ ວ່າ ແມ່ນ ຊີ ວິ ຊໍ້າ **ດ** **ທ້າວ** ຕາມ ທ້ອງ **ຕ໊ົວ**ແ**ຕ**
mèèn1 vaa1 mèèn1 si1vii2 sam4 **dêê1** **hang5** taam3 thòòng4 **tang4tèè1**
Oh yes, this life is precious

(6.10a)

F G G-A-G A-G A-G-F
ບຸນ ວັນ ນີ້ ນ້ອງ ນີ
bun3 van2 nii4 nòòng4 nii4
my dears

(6.11) Line 3

<A C A G A F A G-F G-A A F-D
ໂອ ນໍ ບູຮານ ເພິ່ນ ເຄີຍ **ເວົ້າ** ນໍ ຄຳ ປະ**ຖົ**ມ
oo1 nòò2 buu3haan2 pheen1 kheej2 **vaw4** nòò2 kham2 pa2thom3
Oh, in the old days they used to say formulas

(6.11a)

A F-G F-D
ເພິ່ນ ເຄີຍ **ຈົ່ມ**
pheen1 kheej2 **com1**
they used to incant them

(6.12) Line 4

A F G-F D-A F G F-D F-G F G fG
ລູກ **ເ**ອົ້າ ທ້ອງ ຄອງ **ຖ**ໍ້າ **ແ**ຕ່ **ມີ** ຕາຍ ວ່າ **ເ**ຊີ້ນ ບ່
luuk4khaw5 thòòng4 khòòng2thaa5 **tèè1** **mùù4**taaj3 vaa1 **sên4** **bòò1**
Once the childentered the belly, you'd just wait for the day it died

---

(6.13) Line 3

fA A G-A G A F F-A F G F
ແມ່ນ ວ່າ ຄວາມ ຈິງ **ແ**ລ້ວ ບ່ ຄື ຄຳ ເພິ່ນ **ວ່າ**
mèèn1 vaa1 khuam2 cing3 **lèèw4** bòò1 khùù2 kham2 pheen1 **vaa1**
Yes, but the truth is that it's not like they said

(6.14) Line 4

A G A F-D F F F-G G F-D F G
ແມ່ ຍິງ ທຸກ **ເ**ທື່ອ **ໝ**້ໍາ ກໍ່ ຮຽນ **ຮ**ູ້ **ສ**ູ່ ປະ**ກ**ານ
mèè1 ñing2 thuk1 **thùa1naa5** kòò1 hian2 **huu4** **suu1** pa2kaan3
women can now learn all the facts

(6.15) Line 1

<A A G A F-D fG G…G A C> G A F-D <G
ໂອ ນ້ອງ ເອລາ ຖື ພາ ມາ ໃຫ້ ເຈົ້າ ໄປ ຊໍ້າ **ຝ**າ**ກ** **ທ**ໍ**ອ**ງ
oo1 nòòng4 vêê2laa2 thùù3phaa2maan2 haj5 caw4 paj3 sam4 **faak5thòòng4**
Oh, so when you are pregnant, you should place yourself

(6.15a)
F A-G F GA..G
ນ້ຳ **ແພດ** ນ້ຳ ໝໍ
nam2 **phèèt4** nam2 mòò3
in the doctor's care

(6.16) Line 2
A C F <G A A-G A F G G-F
ເພິ່ນ ໄດ້ ເບິ່ງ ແຍງ ເອົາ **ສູ** ປະກັນ ຈົນ **ສຽງ**
pheen1 daj4 beeng1 ñèèng2 haw2 **suu1** pa2kaan3 con3 **siang5**
He'll take care of you, treat your problems until they're gone

(6.17) Line 3
<A A…AA A-G G-A F-D A-G A G-A A G G
ໂອ ນໍ ແມ່ນ ວ່າ ດີ ຫຼື **ຮ້າຍ** ຜາຍ ໃນ ເພິ່ນ ໄດ້ **ເບິ່ງ**
oo1 nòò2 mèèn1 vaa1 dii3 lùù3 **haaj4** phaaj2naj2 pheen1 daj4 **beeng1**
Oh, so whether your well or ill, he'll check out your insides

(6.18) Line 4
G-A Aca G A A-G G-A C G A F G-A G F
ແມ່ນ ວ່າ ສຸກ ກະພາບ ແມ່ ແລະ ເດັກ **ເພິ່ນ** **ໄດ້** ປ້ອງ ປະ ກັບ
mèèn1 vaa1 suk2ka2phaap4 mèè1 lè1 dêk2 **pheen1** **daj4** pòòng4 pa2kan3
Yes, he's there to protect and care for mother and child's health, to keep them safe

(6.18a)
A-G F fG… A G C G…D
ໄວ້ **ປອດ** ໄພ ຈັ່ງ ຊີ ເດ
vaj4 **pòòt5** phaj2 cang1 sii4 dêê3
that's how it is

(6.19) Line 3
<A A-G A-G G A F G F F< A-F
ໂອ ນໍ ອີກ ອັນ ນຶ່ງ ກໍລະນີ ດີ **ຮ້າຍ**
oo1 nòò2 iik5 an3 nùng1 kòò3la1nii2 dii3 **haaj4**
And another thing, in good or bad cases,

(6.19a) Line 3
F-A F A F G
ທັນ ການ ເພິ່ນ ໄດ້ **ຊ່ວຍ**
than2kaan3 pheen1 daj2 **sòòj1**
any time he'll help you

(6.20) Line 4
F-A A-G-A A-C C-A A-G F fA G-F
ແມ່ນ ວ່າ ຍາມ ເມື່ອ ລອດ **ລູກ** **ນ້ອງ** ໝໍ
mèèn1 vaa1 ñaam2 mùa1 khòòt4 **luuk4nòòng4** nòò3
Now, when you give birth, be diligent and take care

(6.20a)
A F G-F G F-D
ກ່ອນ ມານ ຜຽນ ຖະໜອມ
kòòn1 maan2 phian2 tha2nòòm3
be diligent and take care

(6.21) Line 3
A> A F F-G <A F F A F F
ໃຫ້ ເອົາ ກິນ ນົມ **ຕູ** ຂອງ ຕົນ ສົ້ມ ຕະ **ຫຼອດ**
haj5 aw3 kin3 nom2 **tuu4** khòòng3 ton3 sin5 ta2**lòòt5**
feed your baby your own breast milk all the time

(6.22) Line 4
<A <C A G A F <A F> <F F
ໂອ ນໍ ເພິ່ນ ກະ ຣອດ ປີ ຫົກ ເດືອນ **ຫ່ຽງ** **ໝັ້ນ**
oo1 nòò2 pheen1 ka2hòòt4 pii3 hok2 dùan3 **thiang1** **man5**
Oh, now when your child is one and a half years old

(6.22a)
F gA F F-D G<C… A…A G-F-G-F-D
ຈິ່ງ ເອົາ **ເຂົ້າ** **ປ່ຽນ** ຕ່າງ ນ່າງ ງ່ວມ
cing3 aw3 **khaw5** **pian1** taang1 naang2 ngaam2
you can wean it

(6.23) Line 1?
<A aC <A A F> F-A F-D G-F F A-G F F-G F-G G-A
ໂອ ນໍ ອັນ ພິເສດ ຊໍ້າ **ແທ** ແທ ໃຫ້ ເຈົ້າ **ຊິ** ຈຳ ເອົາ ເນີ
oo3 nòò2 an3 phi1sêêt5 sam4 **thèè4**thèè4 haj5 caw4 **cùù1** cam3 aw3 nee2
Oh, and a really special thing you must remember

(6.23a)
A F F F G
ຜູ ຍິງ ລາວ ເຮົາ ເນີ
phuu5 ñing2 laaw2 haw2 nee2
you Lao women

(6.24) Line 1

F-A	A	G	A	F-D	G	G…A	G-F-D	A>	A>	F-G	F-D	F-A	
ແມ່	ວ່າ	ເວລາ	ຖື	ພາ	ມາ	ນໍ		ໃຫ້	ເຈົ້າ	ໄປ	**ຝາກ**	**ຫ້ອງ**	
mèèn1	vaa1	vêê2laa2	thùù3	phaa2	maan2	nòò2		haj5	caw4	paj3	**faak4**	**thòòng4**	

Oh, so when you are pregnant, you should place yourself

(6.24a)

F	F	F	F-D-G
ນ້ຳ	**ແພດ**	ນ້ຳ	ໝໍ
nam2	**phèèt4**	nam2	mòò3

in the doctor's care

(6.25) Line 2

<A	C	A	A	F-A	F	A	F	G	F-A	G-F-A
ໂອ ນໍ		ອັນ	ທີ່	ສອງ	ຢ່າ	ລືມ	ພາ	ກັນ	ລືມ	ນໍ
oo3	nòò2	an3	thii1	sòòng3	jaa1	suu1	phaa2	kan3	lùùm2	nòò2

A second thing you must all not forget

(6.25a)

A	F	F	F	<A-G
ໃຫ້	**ຈື່**	ຈຳ	ເອົາ	**ໄວ້**
haj5	**cùù1**	cam3	aw3	**vaj4**

you must remember well

(6.26) Line 3

F<A	F	A-G	A>	G	A>	F	F-G	F	A-G	F	F>D
ເວລາ		ມີ	ຊຸ້ງ	ລູກ	**ນ້ອຍ**	ພາ	ຄ້ຳ	ແຄ່	ໃກ້	ຊິ	**ອອກ**
vêê2laa2		mii2	sam4	luuk4	**nòòj4**	phaa2kham2		khèè1	kaj3	si1	**òòk5**

when you're having a child, just as it's ready to be born

(6.27) Line 4

F-A	A-G	A…AA	G	A	F	F	A		F	F-G	A-G
ແມ່	ວ່າ	ໃຫ້	ເຈົ້າ	ໄປ	ຊຸ້ງ	ອອກ	**ລູກ**	**ພຸ້ນ**		ໂຮງ	ໝໍ	**ນ້ຳ**
mèèn1	vaa1	haj5	caw4	paj3	sam4	òòk5	**luuk4**	**phun4**		hoong2	mòò3	**nan4**

go to the hospital to give birth

(6.27a)

F	F	G…A	G…A	fG-A-F-D	fD
ເພິ່ນ	ເບິ່ງ	ແຍງ	ຄ້ຳ	ແພງ	ເອີຍ
pheen1	beeng1	ñèèng2	kham2	phèèng2	eej3

they will care for you

(6.28) Line 1

A	C…AA	G	A>	F	A	F	G	A-G	
ໂອ ນໍ		ເປັນ	**ຈັ່ງ**	**ຊີ**	ລັນ	**ລูก**	ໃຫຍ່	ມາ	**ແລ້ວ**
oo3	nòò2	pên3	**cang1**	**sii4**	khan2	**luuk4**	ñaj1	maa2	lèèw4

And so now, when your child is grown up

(6.29) Line 2

F	A	F-G	G	A-G	G	A	F-D	F	G-A	
ເປັນ	ຕາ	ແພງ	ຕາ	ແຍງ	ໄປ	ທ່າງ	ເໝືອ	ທ່າງ	**ໃຕ້**	
pên3	taa3	phèèng2	taa3	ñèèng2	paj3	thaang2	nùa3	thaang2	**taj4**	

and they are lovable, no matter where you go

(6.30) Line 3

G	F-D	D	F	F-A	F	F-G	F	F	G	
ໃຜ	ເຫັນ	ກໍ່	ຢາກ	**ອຸ້ม**	ໃຜ	ເຫັນ	ກະ	ຢາກ	**ຈອງ**	
phaj3	hên3	kòò1	jaak5	**um4**	phaj3	hên3	ka2	jaak5	**ciang1**	

anyone who sees it will want to hold it or to pick it up and carry it

---

(6.31) Line 3

<F-A	<A	A	F	G	A-G		F	F-G	A<	F F
ແມ່ນ	ວ່າ	ຍັນ	ເກີດ	ມາ	**ແລ້ວ**		ຢ່າ	ລືม	ໄປ	**ຢອດ** ຢາ
mèèn1	vaa1	khan2	keet5	maa2	**lèèw4**		jaa1	lùùm2	paj3	**jòòt5** jaa3

Yes, so when it's born don't forget to take it to be vaccinated

(6.32) Line 4

F	G	A-F	A	F	F	D-F	G	F	F	F-A
ກັນ	ພະຍາດ		ຊຸ້ງ	**ຫຼໍ**	**ຖ້ວน**	ສาม	ຄັ້ง	**ใต้**	**ซี่**	ເອົา
kan3	pha1	ñaat4	sam4	**thii1**	**thuan5**	saam3	khang4	**haj5**	**cùù1**	aw3

against disease, you need to go three times remember

(6.33) Line 2

<F-A	A-C-A	A	A	G	G	F	A	F-G	G-A
ໂອ	ນໍ	ແม่น	ວ่า	ມี	ອาหาม		ຊุ้ง	หวาน	ຄาอ
oo3	nòò2	mèèn1	vaa1	mii2	aa6haan3		sam4	vaan3	khaaw2

Oh, give it food, both sweet and sour (i.e. a balanced diet)

(6.33a)

G	A	>F	G	F-D	F-G
ใต้	**ถอย**	หอม	ทะหมอม		**ตุ้ม**
haj5	**khòòj1**	thòòm2	tha2	nòòm3	**tum4**

and care and cherish it

(6.34) Line 3

F	A	F	F<	A-G	F-G	G-A	F	F	G
ຄັນ	ລູກ	ມີ	ແຮງ	**ແລ້ວ**	ໄປ	ໜ້າ	ກະ	ແມວ	**ງ່ວຍ**
khan2	luuk4	mii2	hèèng2	**lèèw4**	paj3	naa5	ka2	nèèw2	**ngaaj1**

If your child is strong it will progress easily

(6.35) Line 2?

<A	A	A-C	A C>	F	F	G-A	F-A	F	F...D	G...A
ແມ່ນ	ວ່າ	ສຸກ	ກະພາບ	ກະ	ຊິ	ຍ້ວນ	ຟ	**ຂຶ້ນ**	ກໍ່	ງາມ
mèèn1	vaa1	suk2	ka2**phaap4**	ka2	si1	uan4	phii2	**khùn5**	kòò1	ngaam2

If its healthy it will be chubby and beautiful

(6.35a)

G	<C	G...D
ຈັ່ງ	ຊ	ເດ
cang1	sii4	dêê3

that's it!

(6.36)

<A	F	G...A	G	G...F	F>	F-A	F	F-D	F	G...A	G-F-D
ວ່າ	ເຫດ	ເວົ້າ	ໃຫ້	ນ້ອງ	ຈື່	ຈຳ	ເອົາ	ຢ່າ	ລູ	ລືມ	ເດ
vaa1	thêêt4	vaw4	haj5	nòòng4	cùù1	cam3	aw3	jaa1	suu1	lùùm2	dee4

I've these words, you must remember them, don't you forget

Appendix 4

A Checklist of Parallel Features in Southeast Asian Vocal Music Traditions

This appendix contains a brief check list of the main features common to many of the vocal music traditions which occur throughout mainland and island Southeast Asia and southern China. The list is designed to illustrate some of the similarities and differences between the vocal musics of this region. It is not meant to be an authoritative reference, nor is it r a rigorous or exhaustive comparative study.

Ethnic group names appear in bold and are followed by the name of the musical tradition written in italics (where this is known). When a specific genre/tradition name is not available I have provided a simple description of the music. Some listings are by geographical region with an ethnic group or genre sub-title depending upon whether the references contained this information or not.

The bulk of this information was drawn from the chapters in volume four of the *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music, Southeast Asia* edited by Terry E. Miller and Sean Williams (1998). The chapters were written by Harnish; Kartomi; Keeler; Maceda; Matusky & Chopyak; Miller; Miller & Williams; Nguyen; Sam-Ang Sam; Sutton, Sundea & Williams and; Uchida & Catlin. Additional information for traditions from southern China is based upon the work of Yang Mu (1998) and Davis (1999).

	all night	repartee	accompaniment	poetry	vocal style	payment	content	alcohol
Khmer								
ayai	yes	yes	yes (lute)	stanzas 28 syllables (4x7)	syllabic	?	bawdy, love	?
chrieng chapey	yes	no	yes, (lute), alternates with song	?	?	?	jataka based narrative epics	?
Hmong								
kwv txhiaj	?	yes	no	repetition, parallelism and 'puzzled' texts	melody determined by lexical tones	?	emotions, love of nature, love of homeland, family love, loss and separation, loneliness	?
Yao								
vocal style	?	?	yes, yat (oboe), wooden drums, gong and cymbals	improvisation	Free meter, descending melody. High tones are prolonged	?	nuptial songs	?
narrative style			as above	improvisation	duple meter, melodic nucleus of perfect 4ths.		tales about Yao ancestral dog 'Banko'	?
Lao								
khap-lam	yes	yes	yes	4 line stanzas of 9-14 syllables each	syllabic & ornamented, metrical and non-metrical	yes	love, literature, bawdy elements, moral didactic, religion, excerpts from traditional stories	yes
Thai								
plecng phuun baan	?	yes	yes, minimal	?	duple rhythm	?	?	?
Akha								
songs of love	?	?	no	improvised texts	non-metrical, flowing melodic lines. 3, 4, and 5 tone scales	?	love, cultivation of rice (different songs for all stages)	?
funeral, shamanisitc	?	?	no	?	metrical, repetitions of short, simple recitations, breathy voice	no	funeral	?

	all night	repartee	accompaniment	poetry	vocal style	payment	content	alcohol
Karen	?	yes	?	?	lexical tones affect melody, 3, 4, and 5 tone scales. Tends to be non-metrical. Some improvisation of melody. Narrow throat used.	?	customs, legends, New Year songs, cradle songs	?
Lisu	?	?	no, but instruments often played nearby	?	non-metrical, descending contour, improvised melody around a basic structure	no	courtship, festival songs	?
Shan	yes	yes	?	?	melody determined by lexical tones		love, courtship	?
Khmu								
oral poems	?	yes	?	yes	limited melodic formulas (usually one per village) descending melodic contour, free meter	?	love, courtship, welcoming	?
fixed melody songs	?	?	?	5, 6, 7 syllable lines. Last syllable in each lines rhymes with first syllable of the following line	short musical phrase, narrow melodic range. emphasis on rhythm	?	children's songs, cradle songs. Shaman's songs	?
Lahu	yes	yes	no	yes	3, 4, and 5 tone melodies. Large vocal range with large intervals	?	courting and love songs	?

	all night	repartee	accompaniment	poetry	vocal style	payment	content	alcohol
Burmese								
court songs (*coù, bwé, thahcìñhkañ*)	no	no	normally a Burmese harp, xylophone or hsaiñ ensemble	all music based upon poetic text (but not always with performed with a vocal part). Archaic and allusive language	difficult to perform. High tenor voice preferred for men, deep contralto for women	?	?	?
deìn thañ	no	no	yes as above		short strophic songs	?	used for propitiating spirits	?
Vietnamese								
hát	yes	yes	no	yes, mixed with dancing, acting, drumming	?	?	3 stages: greetings, main/contesting songs, and farewell songs. Love, ritual (local deities), riddles, occupations	?
(hát) quan ho	yes	yes	no	?	sung in teams of men and women	?	courtship, social customs, paired village, funerals	?
khe truyen	?	n	optional, drum or clapper	mix of poetry and prose	?	?	long stories	?
Southern China								
Li								
longgui/funiangfu	yes	yes	bamboo flute, nose flute, or jew's harp	?	text is extemporised, melodies are fixed and small in number	no	love/courting	?
Han								
qingmangun/ yeyou	yes	yes	none?	?	unison parts sung in groups. texts and melodies are original	no	love/courting	?
Dai								
zhangkhap	yes	yes	end-blown flute	yes	alternating single male and female parts	yes	love/courting, Buddhism	yes

	all night	repartee	accompaniment	poetry	vocal style	payment	content	alcohol
Malay								
Selangor-Minang (*kaba*)	?	?	singer accompanies self with rebab or violin	?	?	?	?	?
Keantun (*tarik selampit*)	?	?	singer accompanies self with rebab	?	vocal line with rebab repeating or in unison. Melismatic end, rhythmically dense	?	?	?
Tumbuk kalang	yes	yes	mortar and pestle	4 line stanzas	responsorial	?	life cycle events	?
dakir barat	?	yes	rebana and kercing drums	pantun, improvised	male singers, responsorial, duple rhythms	?	competitive form on numerous topics	?
Javanese								
macapat	?	no	no	4 line stanza, at least 9 metrical forms determined by final vowel and number of syllables	simple, free meter or else metered and sung to gamelan. Sundanese and Bahasa languages	yes	love, religion, moral didactic tales, children's songs, drama. May be short or long (excerpts from larger texts)	?
other *tembang*	?	?	?	certain meters associated with particular moods	each meter has one or more basic melodies which are variable	?	?	?

	all night	repartee	accompaniment	poetry	vocal style	payment	content	alcohol
Sumatra								
Minang *cerito/gaba*	?	no	singer accompanies self with rebab or adok (frame drum) and gandang drum.	?	?	?	long tales	?
sijobang	yes	no	singer accompanies self, usually with small rhythmic instrument	9 syllable lines pantun, parallelism	?	yes	long narrative incorporating romantic passages, trickster stories	?
other **Minang**	?	?	?	?	slow	?	loneliness, unrequited love	?
Basmah *guritan*	yes	no	?	?	chant-like melodies	semi-prof	stories	?
Minaas *idang*	?	?	yes, frame drum, strict quadruple meter	?	4, 5, 6 tone palettes	?	?	?
Sulawesi								
Buginese & Makassarese	?	?	zither kacapi	pantun quatrains	?	?	?	?
Maluku								
Kai archipelago *ngel ngel*	yes	?	no	allusive	highly melismatic, free meter	?	wedding songs; m/f love, family relations	?
Islamic Philippines								
tagil style	?	?	optional	?	slow, free meter, melismatic, high tessitura	?	religion, Qur'an readings	?
paggabbang style (*kata kata*)	yes	?	yes	linear duration of verse gives metric pulse	fast, metrical, syllabic, medium tessitura	?	secular, epics, genealogies, exploits of ancestor heroes	?
pulsok		yes	yes (simple)	?	syllabic, simple musical elements	?	sung debates	?
Upland People of Philippines								
Kalinga	?	no	?	7 syllables per line	chanted, responsorial songs	?	epics, exploits of heroes	
southern areas	yes	no	?	8 syllables		?	epics	yes

	all night	repartee	accompaniment	poetry	vocal style	payment	content	alcohol
Christian Philippines *harana*	?	yes	guitar	traditional Tagalog poetry	based on metrical romances using an I IV V progression	?	musical debates between two people on any topic	?
Roti *sasandu*	?	?	tube zither w. palm leaf resonator	parallel phrasing of semantic elements. Alternates poetic language with spoken language.	proverb in bini (ritual language)	?	proverbs, theme world is ruled by fate and life is often disappointing and ultimately ephemeral	?
West Timor atoni songs (*koa*)	?	no	(4 string lute)	?	male singer	?	narration of actual events	?
Flores *mbata*	yes	yes	drum and gong	?	male soloist leads, reponsorial male or female or mixed gp.	?	predicts coming agricultural cycle	?
Ende-Lio area (*feko genda*)	?	no	?	?	diatonic, unison duet	?	weddings, nuptial duet	?
Sumba work songs	?	?	?	?	?	yes	work songs performed for large scale collective works	?
kawoking	?	?	optional (lute or fiddle)	?	?	?	courtship songs, love	?
Sabah								
Murut	?	yes	?	poetic verse		no		
Bajau	?	yes	?	set no. of lines	Q and A	no	funeral dirges, epics, songs of love & courting, war, general entertainment, oral lit. customs	?
Sarawak								
Kajang *wa, mu'a*	?	yes	?	stanzas of set rhymes	syllabic, soloist with group chorus	no	narrative songs	?

	all night	repartee	accompaniment	poetry	content	payment	vocal style	alcohol
Balinese								
kekawin	?	?	?	Indic meters sung in old Javanese language	performed at life cycle events	?	context governs musical elements. meter determines rhythm, no. of pitches, and melodic contour	?
kidung	?	?	?	Indic meters in Javanese, read from palm leaf manuscripts	romance, quasi-historical poems	?	melismatic, group or solo (solo performance more ornamented)	?
tembang	?	?	?	lyrical poetry derived from Javanese macapat	?	?	?	?
Sulawesi								
Toajans	yes	no	two bamboo flutes	yes	happy and sad music. Funeral dirge, compares ancestors to natural entities; expression of grief and veneration of the deceased	?	solo singer	?

Appendix 5

COMPACT DISC TRACK LIST

The accompanying compact disc contains six performances of three regional genres of Lao *khap-lam* vocal music. Music and text transcriptions of these performances appear in appendix 2 and appendix 3. The first four performances (tracks 1-4) were recorded direct to stereo using a Sony TCD-D8 DAT recorder with a Sony ECM-MS597 stereo microphone. The *khap ngeum* performances (tracks 5 and 6) were recorded to multi-track at the Lao National Radio Studios in Vientiane by Thongvan and have added effects and signal processing. All six recordings were mastered by myself using Cool Edit2000 audio software at By George Studios in Canberra, Australia. A small amount of compression and some frequency equalisation were used in the mastering process but no editing has been undertaken.

Track	Genre	Performer	Recorded at	Track Time
1.	*lam siphandon*	Duang Phaeng	Lao National Radio, Pakse 25/1/1999 by Adam Chapman.	5:38
2.	*lam siphandon*	Som Sii	Lao National Radio, Pakse 25/1/1999 by Adam Chapman.	5:28
3.	*lam som*	Duang Phaeng	Lao National Radio, Pakse 25/1/1999 by Adam Chapman.	5:14
4.	*lam som*	Som Sii	Lao National Radio, Pakse 25/1/1999 by Adam Chapman.	4:43
5.	*khap ngeum*	Paeng Thong	Lao National Radio, Vientiane. 1997 by Thongvan.	6:10
6.	*khap ngeum*	Acaan Sing	Lao National Radio, Vientiane. 1997 by Thongvan.	6:01
			Total Time	**33:14**

GLOSSARY OF LAO TERMS

aan	ອ່ານ	to read.
aan nangsùù	ອ່ານໜັງສື	a form of entertainment, considered to be the predecessor of *khap-lam* genres, in which tales from Lao traditional literature were read aloud to an audience.
acaan	ອາຈານ	professor; instructor. Often applied to a *mohlam* who has taught others.
baan	ບ້ານ	village; home.
baat	ບາດ	four lines of verse in *kòòn aan* structure; moment.
baj laan	ໃບລານ	palm leaf manuscripts upon which Lao traditional literature was written.
basi	ບາສີ	more commonly known as *suu khuan*, this is a ceremony in which the *khuan*, the body's essential energies, are called back to the body. It is usually performed for people who are ill, about to embark on a trip, and at weddings.
bòò	ບໍ່	negating particle placed before verbs to give a negative.
bòò muan	ບໍ່ມ່ວນ	unpleasant, not entertaining.
bun	ບຸນ	Buddhist festival; merit making activity; merit, good deeds; opposite of *paap*.
bun kathin	ບຸນກະຖິນ	the presentation of new robes and utility items to monks at the end of the wet season.
cangva	ຈັງຫວະ	rhythm (different meanings in music and textual context).
caw	ເຈົ້າ	you, lord; affirmative response to a question.
caw phaap	ເຈົ້າພາບ	host; sponsor.
caw sathaa	ເຈົ້າສັດທາ	host; sponsor.
cèèw	ແຈ່ວ	a spicy jam-like condiment eaten with sticky rice.
coot	ໂຈດ	interrogate; used to refer to verses in which *mohlam* ask each other questions.
dontii	ດົນຕີ/ດົນຕຣີ	music.
falang	ຝະລັ່ງ	foreigner.
fee	ເຝີ	rice noodle soup.
fòòn	ຟ້ອນ	to dance.

fùang	ເຝືອງ	a half line in *kòòn aan* poetic structure; a southern name for a poetic structure which uses continuous rhyme to link consecutive lines.
hoong hian sinlapa dontii hèèng saat	ໂຮງຮຽນສິນລະປະດົນຕີແຫ່ງຊາດ	National School of Music and Dance.
hiit khòòng paphêênii	ຮີດຄອງປະເພນີ	(Lao) traditions and customs.
jumlɔ̀ɔ	ຈຳໂນ	a three-wheeled vehicle with a covered rear area for passengers.
kaap	ກາບ	a type of poetic structure utilising external rhyme, but without the fixed tone-slots of *kòòn aan*.
kampèèng nakhòòn viangcan	ກຳແພງນະຄອນວຽງຈັນ	Vientiane Prefecture.
kasuang thalèèng khaaw lè vatthanatham	ກະຊວງຖະແຫຼງຂ່າວແລະວັດທະນະທຳ	Ministry of Information and Culture.
kathuu	ກະຫູ	see *kòòn kathuu* below.
kêêng	ເກ່ງ	to be skilled at something
kip/kiip	ກີບ	unit of Lao currency; divided into 100 *at* (ອັດ) which have never been in circulation.
kòòn	ກອນ	any type of verse.
kòòn aan	ກອນອ່ານ	a type of poetic structure.
kòòn fòòn	ກອນຟ້ອນ	verse sung during the dance section of *lam siphandon*.
kòòn fùang	ກອນເຝືອງ	a verse type modelled upon literary *kaap* form. It is used in the *fòòn* section of *lam siphandon* performance.
kòòn khùn ton	ກອນຂຶ້ນຕົ້ນ	the first section of a *lam* round.
kòòn laa	ກອນລາ	the final verse of a round where the *mohlam* either says farewell or hands over to the other *mohlam*.
kòòn kathu	ກອນກະຫູ	*lam siphandon* verse which are based on riddles and demand that the opposing *mohlam* answers them.
khaaj/khaaj hian	ຂັນ/ຂັນຮຽນ	a collection of items arranged on a platter for the purpose of paying respects to one's teacher.
khaen	ແຄນ	the free reed mouth organ which accompanies *khap-lam* singing.
kham buphɔbot	ຄຳບຸພະບົດ	additional syllables at the beginning of a line of *kòòn* poetry.
kham sòòj	ຄຳສ້ອຍ	additional syllables at the end of a line of *kòòn* poetry.

khan	ຂັນ	bowl, particularly one used for making offerings or receiving donations at temples.
khap	ຂັບ	sung poetry; to sing poetry (northern dialects).
khap ngeum/ngùùm	ຂັບງຶ່ມ	*khap* genre from Vientiane province.
khap sam neua/nùa	ຂັບຊໍ້າເໜືອ	*khap* genre from Sam Neua province in northern Laos.
khap xieng khouang/siang khuang	ຂັບຊຽງຂວາງ	*khap* genre from Xieng Khouang province in northern Laos.
khap-lam	ຂັບລຳ	general term for all Lao vocal music genres. See the discussion in chapter 3.
khaw pun	ເຂົ້າປຸ້ນ	a type of soup curry with rice noodles, commonly served at *bun*.
khaw phansaa	ເຂົ້າພັນສາ	the festival marking the start of the Buddhist rains retreat (usually July).
khèèng	ແຂວງ	province.
khii suut	ຂີ້ສูด	a black wax used for sealing the *khaen* windchest and for plugging finger holes to produce a constant drone note.
khòò aphaj	ຂໍອະໄພ	to ask for forgiveness.
khùang sangkhaphat	ເຄື່ອງສັງຄະພັ	offerings by lay people to monks.
khuu baa	ຄູບາ	Buddhist monk.
laaj	ລາຍ	mode; improvisation.
laaj nòòj	ລາຍນ້ອຍ	'small mode' based on the *ñaaw* scale D F G A C.
laaj ñaj	ລາຍໃຫຍ່	'large mode' based on the *ñaaw* scale A C D E G.
lam	ລຳ	sung poetry; to sing poetry (southern dialects).
lam diaw	ລຳດຽວ	*lam* performed by a single performer.
lam jùùn	ລຳຢືນ	standing *lam*; used by performers in Champassak to describe genres from northeast Thailand which are performed standing. It is called 'standing' because *mohlam* stand up to perform it, contrasting Lao genres which are performed seated.
lam kiaw	ລຳກ້ຽວ	*lam* verse of any genre with a courtship theme.
lam khòòn savan/khon savan	ລຳຄອນສະຫວັນ	*lam* genre from the Savannakhet region of southern Laos.
lam khuu	ລຳຄູ່	*lam* performed by a pair of performers.
lam khuu lam kòòn	ລຳຄູ່ລຳກອນ	Lao term for the Isan genre *lam klawn/lam klòòn*.
lam laa	ລຳລາ	farewell verses, sung at the completion of a performance.

lam lùang	ລຳເລື່ອງ	a type of theatre in which performers act and sing a story.
lam nang	ລຳນັ່ງ	seated *lam*; another term for *lam taj*, used to distinguish southern Lao genres from northeastern Thai genres.
lam phùùn	ລຳຜຶ້ນ	extinct *lam* genre in which the *mohlam* recites a tale from traditional Lao literature.
lam (thaang) san	ລຳທາງສັ້ນ	the main part of an Isan *lam klawn* performance. It is sung in a rapid tempo to a *khaen* accompaniment based upon one of the three *san* modes.
lam sing	ລຳຊิ้ง	a new *lam* genre which originated in Khon Kaen, northeast Thailand in the late 1980s to early 1990s. It features a drum trap, electrified *phiin* lute (or *kacappi*), while retaining the *khaen* and male-female repartee format.
lam siphandon	ລຳສີພັນດອນ	*lam* genre from Champassak province in southern Laos. There are two variants of this genre: the older form called *lam siphandon deem* 'original *lam siphandon*', and the newer form called *lam siphandon ñuk samaj* 'modern *lam siphandon*'.
lam som	ລຳໂສມ	*lam* genre from Champassak province in southern Laos. This genre is part of the *lam siphandon* tradition.
lam taj	ລຳໃต้	southern *lam*, the two southern-most genres *lam siphandon* and *lam som*.
lam teej	ລຳເต้ีย	an Isan genre which is used to end a *lam klawn* performance with happy themes.
lamvong	ລຳວົງ	a Lao dance viewed as 'traditional' although relatively modern. Also now a label used for modern arrangements of *khap-lam* genres.
law	ເຫຼົ້າ	alcohol.
law laaw/law khaaw	ເຫຼົ້າລาว/ ເຫຼົ້າขาว	a fiery white alcohol made by distilling sticky rice.
liin	ลิ้น	tongue; also used to refer to the metal free reeds of the *khaen*.
like	ลิเก	a genre of Thai/Malay theatre which utilises singing and the spoken word.
luuk sit	ลูกสิด	student, disciple.
maañaa	มายา	trick, illusion; a section in *lam siphandon* where the *mohlam* attempt to deceive one another.

maj èèk	ไม้เอก	a tone marking diacritic, producing a mid-level tone.
maj thoo	ไม้โท	a tone marking diacritic, producing either a low-falling or a high-falling tone .
mùang	เมือง	district (also written as Muang).
moh/mòò	หมอ	doctor; person skilled at X.
mohkhaen/mòòkhèèn	หมอแคน	a *khaen* player.
mohlam/mòòlam	หมอลำ	singer of *lam*.
mohlam muu/mòòlam muu	หมอลำหมู่	a theatrical form of *lam* that originated in northeast Thailand. Since the start of the 1990s it has largely been replaced by *lam sing*.
mohtòòp phañaa/ moh phañaa	หมอตอบผะหยา	a female performer who answers the male *mohlam* with a short spoken reply based upon *phañaa* oral poetry.
moh sòòj	หมอส้อย	in *khap ngeum*, a male who accompanies the male *mohlam* and adds brief descending falsetto parts at the end of sung sections.
muan	ม่วน	fun; enjoyment.
naa	นา	a rice field.
naa tèèk	หน้าแตก	to lose face (lit. broken face).
naam	น้ำ	water; river (northern Lao dialects).
ñaaw	ยาว	to be long; a term applied to the basic Lao scale A C D E G.
nangsùù phuuk	หนังสือผูก	a book of palm leaf pages.
nòòj	น้อย	small; also used to denote a relatively high pitch of an instrument or voice.
ñaj	ใหญ่	large; also used to denote a relatively low pitch of an instrument or voice.
òò/òòlam	อ้อ/ อ้อลำ	incantation to facilitate learning and performance.
òò caj pòòng	อ้อใจป่อง	incantation for fluency and lucidity in performance.
òò cam khòò	อ้อจำอ้อ	incantation to assist memory and memory recall.
òò mahaniñom	อ้อมะหานิยม	incantation for engendering favour with audiences and sponsors.
òòk phansaa	ออกพันสา	the celebration which marks the end of the three-month-long rains retreat of *phansaa*. Normally held at the beginning of October.
paap	ปาบ	sin, bad deeds; opposite of *bun*.
paphêênii	ปะเพณี	custom; tradition.
pathaan baan	ปะถานบ้าน	village headman.

patiñaan	ปะติยาน	to swear an oath.
poo saaj	โปสาย	*khaen* mode based on the *san* scale using tones C D E G A.
phaa biang	ผ้าเบี่ยง	a strip of cloth about 20cm wide and 1.5 metres in length worn over the right shoulder. Women wear ornate ones when dressed more formally while males use them for religious occasions such as giving alms at the temple and basi ceremonies.
phaa hang	ผ้าหาง	traditional formal attire for males, a baggy style trouser-wrap. Also called samphot.
phaam	พาม	a marquee-like structure, often an old parachute which is set up to cover the space where a *khap-lam* performance takes place.
phansaa	พันสา	the Buddhist rains retreat (July-October).
phañaa/phañaa ñòòj	ผะหยา/ผะหยาย่อย	folk courting sayings found in traditional literature and *khap-lam* texts.
phasaat pheeng	พะสาดเผิ้ง	wax palace; This is a small structure built as part of the offerings to monks at *òòk phansaa*.
phêêng	เผง	song (with a fixed melody).
phêêng laaw deem	เผงลาวเดิม	original Lao songs; a name used to describe the repertoire of Lao classical ensembles.
phuu fang	ผู้ฟัง	listeners; audience.
phuu ñaj	ผู้ใหญ่	lit. big person; a person of importance and influence.
phuu som	ผู้ชุม	watchers; audience.
saadok	ชาดก	Jataka tales which tell of the previous incarnations of the Buddha.
saalaa	สาลา	pavilion in a temple where Buddha images are kept but which is also used for secular activities centred on the *vat*.
san	สั้น	to be short; a term applied to the basic Lao scale G A C D E.
sêê/se	เซ	river (southern Lao dialects), e.g. the Sedon in Pakse.
sêêp nòòj	เสบน้อย	classical Lao ensemble with different combinations of xylophones (*lanat*), and gong circles (*khòòng vong*), but no oboe (*pii*) or flute (*kuj*). This ensemble is also known as the *mahori*.

sêêp ñaj	ເສບໃຫຍ່	classical Lao ensemble consisting of xylophones (*lanat*), gong circle (*khòòng vong*), and an oboe (*pii*) or flute (*kuj*). This ensemble is also known as the *piiphaat*.
siang	ສຽງ	voice, sound.
siang vannañut	ສຽງວັນນະຍຸດ	lexical tones.
sim	ສີມ	the main building for housing Buddha images within the temple compound. Predominantly used for sacred purposes.
sin	ສິ້ນ	the traditional Lao skirt usually hand-woven with distinctive regional patterns.
songkhaan	ສົງຄານ	Lao New Year (12-15 April).
som bòò khùt	ສົມບໍ່ຄຶດ	southern Lao term describing extemporaneous composition techniques.
sòò	ຊໍ້	a two or three stringed bowed chordophone.
sòòj	ສອຍ	1. witticism; a poetic rejoinder by an audience member 2. *khaen* mode using pitches D E G A B.
suaj lùa	ຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອ	to help or assist.
suatmon	ສວດມົນ	chanted prayers in Pali performed by monks.
sutsanèèn	ສຸດສະແໜນ	*khaen* mode based on the *san* scale using pitches G A C D E.
suu	ຊູ້	lover; fiancee.
sut	ຊຸດ	suit; set.
tak baat	ຕັກບາດ	the offering of food alms to monks by lay people. This is performed at *bun* and also every morning by the devout who give food to the monks as they make their morning alms round.
thaa thaaj	ທ້າທາຍ	to challenge, provoke; used when referring to the combative section of *lam siphandon*.
thaam khaaw	ຖາມຂ່າວ	asking for information; the early part of a performance in which the two *mohlam* attempt to find out more about each other.
thaang	ທາງ	path, way; a generic name for modes played on the *khaen*.
thamnòòng	ທຳນອງ	melody; form.

thiang naa	ຖຽງນາ	a small hut built in rice fields in which farmers can rest and shelter from the sun.
thaat	ທາດ	a Buddhist stupa. These can be large or small for the internment of relics or cremated remains.
thêêt	ເທດ	a Buddhist sermon in either Lao or Pali. They are usually read to a simple melodic pattern.
vak	ວັກ	a line in *kòòn aan* poetry.
vat	ວັດ	Buddhist temple.
vatthanatham	ວັດທະນະທຳ	culture.
vaj khuu	ໄຫວ້ຄູ	a ceremony in which respects are paid to one's teacher (and the entire lineage of their teachers). It involves arranging a collection of items on a platter (see *khaaj*) and the saying of several brief incantations.
vannakhadii laaw/khap-lam	ວັນນະຄະດີລາວ/ ຂັບລຳ	Lao literature/Lao vocal music texts.

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