

*RONG NGENG*

THE TRANSFORMATION OF MALAYAN SOCIAL DANCE MUSIC IN THAILAND  
SINCE THE 1930S

by

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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## ABSTRACT

*RONG NGENG:*

THE TRANSFORMATION OF MALAYAN SOCIAL DANCE MUSIC IN THAILAND  
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by

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This is a historical and musicological inquiry into how rural performers, at the confluence of two distinctly different cultural and linguistic areas, created traditional repertoires from multiple sources. It examines the migration of the well-known *ronggeng* social dance music of Malaya and Indonesia to southwest Thailand in the 1930s, and the distinctive song and dance genre, called *ร็องเงง* *ห่เอง*, (pronounced *rong ngeng*), that subsequently developed there. *ร็องเงง* *ห่เอง* was sung and danced to violin and hand-drum accompaniment in public dances where male patrons paid a token fee for an approximately three-minute round with a professional female dancer. It was a popular medium for rural courtship, and performing it was a rite of passage for many young men and women.

This dissertation chronicles *ร็องเงง* *ห่เอง* history from the 1930s until the present, exploring how island communities took up *ร็องเงง* *ห่เอง* and propagated it throughout the lower Andaman Sea coast. During the genre's golden age of the 1940s and '50s, new Thai-speaking performers adopted *ร็องเงง* *ห่เอง* and transformed its Malayan repertoire (itself a fusion of music from urban theaters, dance halls, and rural folk songs), adapting

it to a local Thai poetic form, lullabies, courtship songs, and folk theater tunes. This study traces the development of *ρώνη ηέεη*'s two distinct forms: a Malay-language, Malayan-repertoire style of the islands, and a Thai-language, hybrid, coastal mainland style that came to be known as '*tanjong* song.'

*Ρώνη ηέεη* is a case study of a cultural form's transformations as it moves through different social, economic, and linguistic zones. It is also a window into movement and migration of individuals and communities in the twentieth century. Its history provides a local perspective of social developments in a region situated at the confluence of two modern states and the types of changes that took place as political and cultural dominance shifted from Malay to Thai.

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Figure 1. Map of southwest Thailand and place of interest related to this study

## Index of Place Names for Figure 1

### Thailand (alternative names in parentheses):

Aâw Pɔɔ, A1  
Bâan Khuan, C2  
Baan Pâw, D3  
Bubooj, E4  
Chaluŋ, E5  
Che Bilang, E5  
Ciloŋ, A2  
Da-âu (Bâan Hũa Lěem Klaaŋ), C3  
Hàad Jaaw, D3  
Hàad Sámraan, D4  
Hûaj Nám Khăaw, C2  
Kampung Tengah (Bâan Klaaŋ) C2  
Kantaŋ, D3  
Kò Jaaw (Pulau Panjang) B1-2  
Kò Juan, E4  
Kò Khiam, D3  
Kò Khiam Tâj, B1  
Kò Lipèe (Pulau Nipis), D5  
Kò Múg (Pulau Mutia), D3  
Kò Panjii, B1  
Kò Sii Bɔɔjaa, C2  
Kò Tárutaw, D5-E5  
Khlɔɔŋ Janat, C2  
Khlɔɔŋ Juan, C2  
Khlɔɔŋ Pîŋ, C2  
Khuan Thanii, D3  
Kràbii, C1  
Langatod, C2  
Lantaa, C2-C3  
Laŋdaa, C1  
Làŋuu, E4  
Lěem Krùad, C2  
Lěem Phoo, C1  
Naa Kò Săj, C1  
Nakhon Siihthammárâad (Ligor) E1  
Phaŋŋaa, A1  
Phátthaluŋ, F2  
Phuukèet, A2

Pulau Adang, D5  
Pulau Babi (Kò Mũu, Kò Sũkɔɔn) D4  
Pulau Dapur (Kò Pɔɔ), C3  
Pulau Mutia (Kò Múg), D3  
Pulau Nipis (Kò Lipèe), D5  
Râamàad, C2  
Raawaj, A2  
Râj Jàj, C1  
Săalaadàan, C2  
Săŋkaa-Ūu, C3  
Sātuun, F5  
Semut Tanoi, D3  
Sireh Island (Kò Sireh), A2  
Sõŋkhlăa, G4  
Talibong, D3  
Tammalang, F5  
Tanjung (Bâan Hũa Lěem), C3  
Tanjung Pauh, E5  
Teluk Besar (Lók Jàj), C2  
Thîŋraj, C2  
Thûŋ Khaa Khəəj, D2  
Traaŋ, D3

### Malaysia:

Alor Setar, F6  
Arau, F6  
Georgetown (Tanjung), F8  
Gunung Jerai, F7  
Kedah, F5-G8  
Kuah, E6  
Kuala Kedah, F6  
Kuala Perlis, F6  
Langkawi, E6  
Padang Matsirat, E6  
Penang, F8  
Perlis, F5-6  
Pulau Dayang Bunting, E6  
Teluk Ewa, E6  
Yan, F7

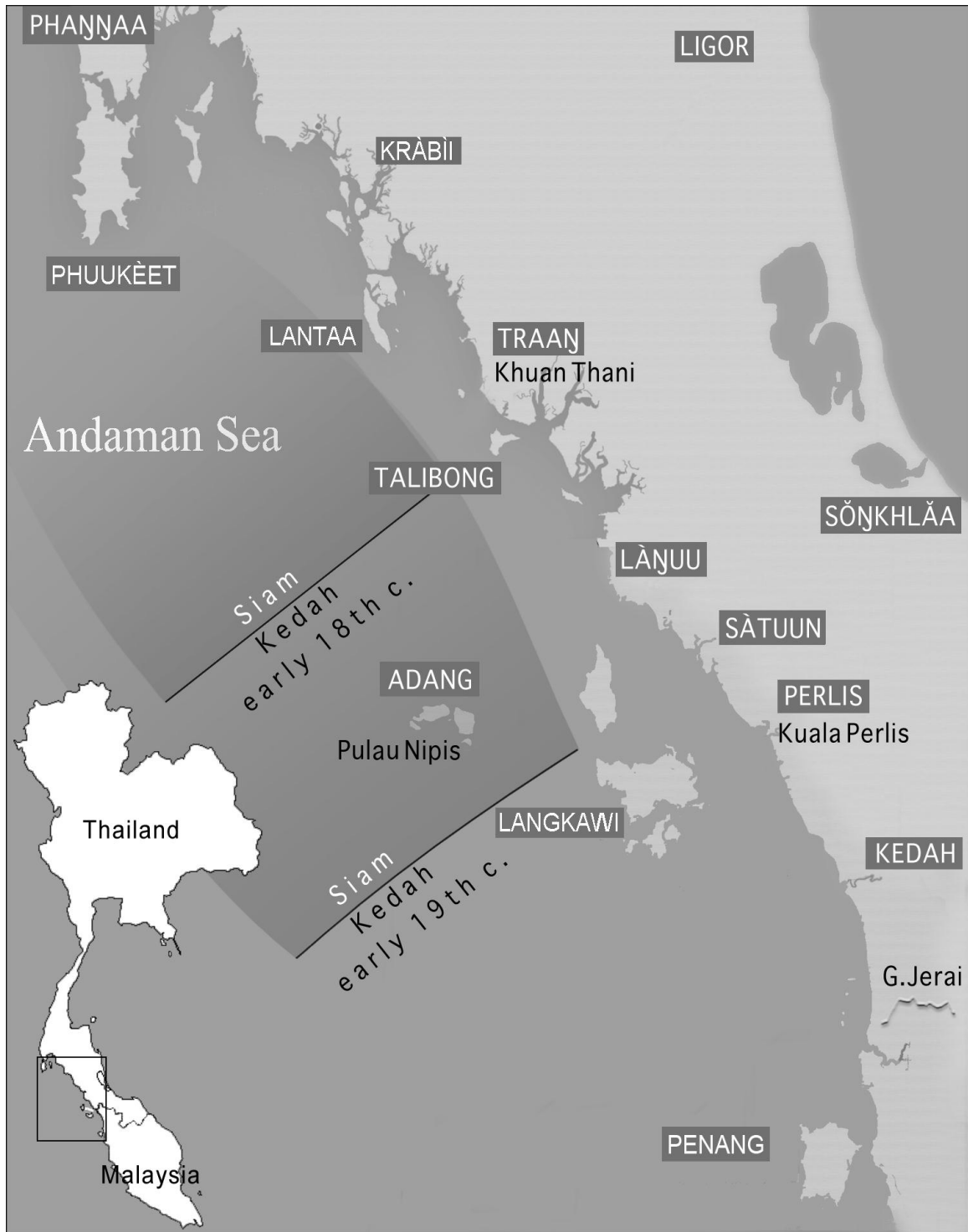


Figure 2. The Andaman Region showing points of interest related to changing Siam-Kedah boundaries and *ρώνη ηέειη* history

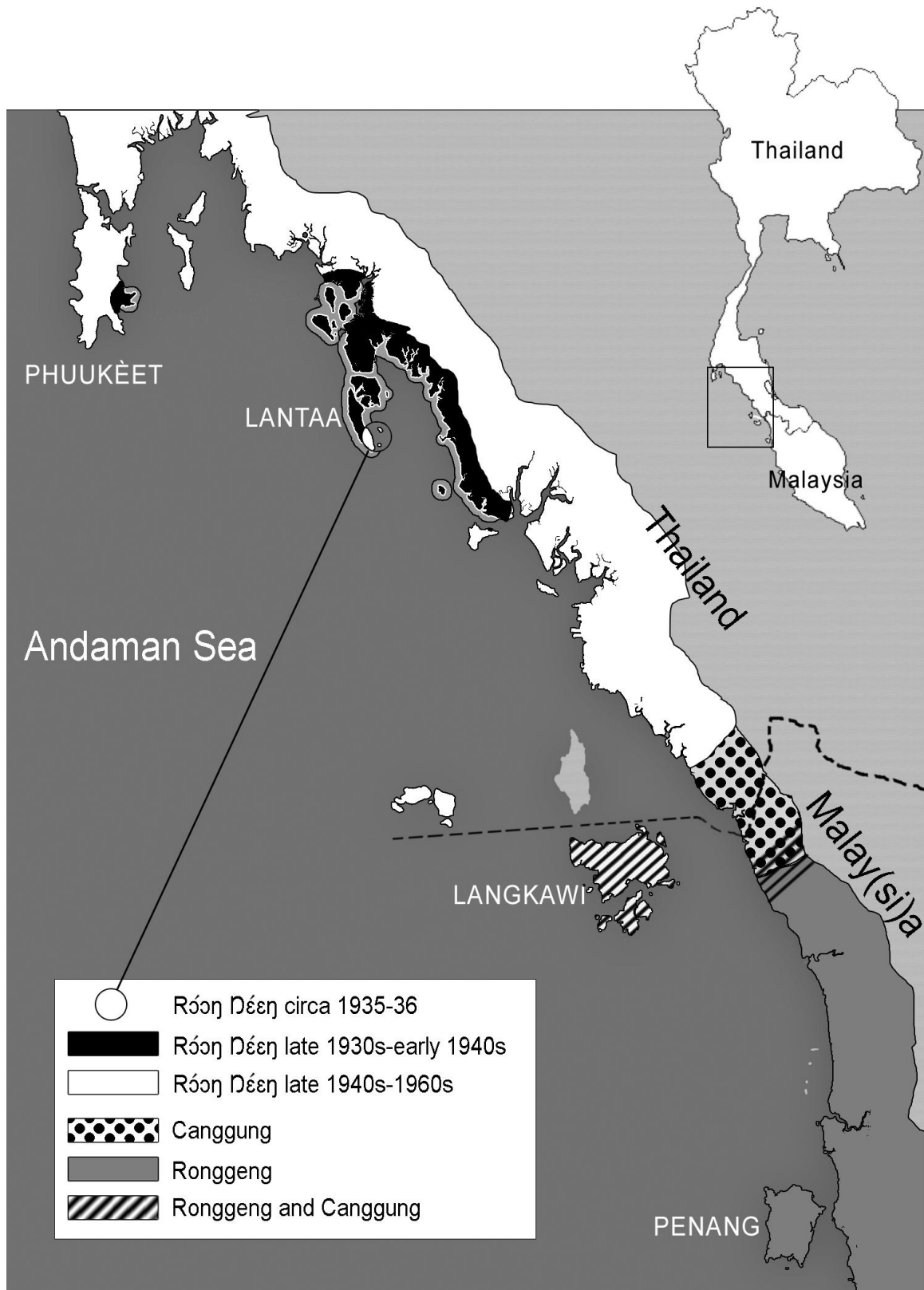


Figure 3. *Róνη ηέση*, *canggung*, and *ronggeng* along the Thailand-Malay(si)a coast, 1930s-1960s (Figure 4 shows locations of current performing groups)

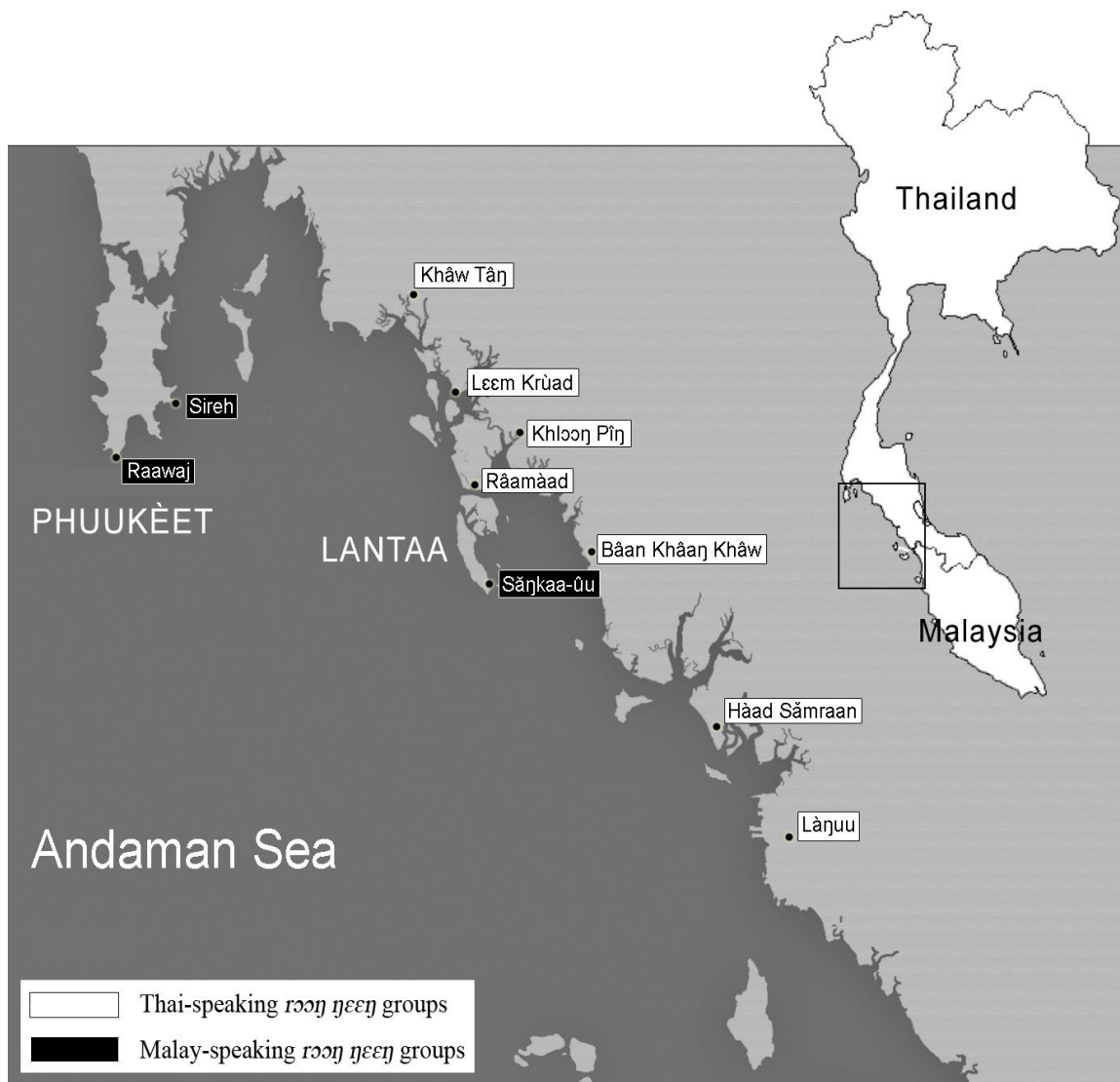


Figure 4. Locations of active Malay-speaking and Thai-speaking *rōng hēng* groups today

## NOTES ON THE TEXT

This dissertation uses numerous terms in Thai and Malay. Thai is a tonal language whose orthography and pronunciation do not always easily lend themselves to Romanized transliterations, for which there are numerous systems. The widely used Royal Thai General System of Transcription is perhaps easy to read for English speakers, but does not accurately convey the language’s phonology. This study employs the Mary Haas system (Haas 1964) for all Thai terms and proper names (except for this dissertation’s title, bibliographic material—for which incorrect renderings of IPA fonts could cause confusion to readers and databases alike, and the word ‘Thai’) because—to borrow from Dusadee—it “shows all possibly relevant details: it distinguishes all consonants, all vowels, all tones and also shows vowel length consistently” (Dusadee 2003: viii). The pronunciation guide below, also borrowed from Dusadee, should be familiar to readers with knowledge of the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA)

### PRONUNCIATION GUIDE FOR THAI TERMS<sup>1</sup>

#### Consonants

c	is pronounced as English j
j	is pronounced as English y
k	is pronounced as the g in the word ‘go’
kh	is pronounced as k
ŋ	is pronounced as ng in the word ‘sing’
p	is pronounced somewhere between b and p; there is no English equivalent
ph	is pronounced as p

---

1. From Dusadee (2003:ix-xi) with certain additions, modifications, and omissions

r is flapped or rarely trilled, with tongue tip pointing slightly back  
t is pronounced somewhere between d and t; there is no English equivalent  
th is pronounced as t

### Vowels

a like u in cut  
aa like o in car  
i like i in hint  
ii like ee in meet  
y like English could but with a slight smile (short)  
yy same as above (long)  
u like u in put  
uu like oo in boot  
e like e in net  
ee like the a in late  
æ like ur in turn  
ε like a in mare (short)  
εε same as above (long)  
o like o in host (short)  
oo same as above (long)  
ɔ like o in British hot or American ought (short)  
ɔɔ same as above (long)

Tonal Indicators

no tone mark	=	mid-tone
˘	=	low-tone
ˆ	=	falling-tone
ˊ	=	high-tone
ˋ	=	rising-tone

A COMPARISON OF SYSTEMS

The following compares renderings of some commonly found terms in this dissertation using the Haas and Royal Thai systems:

<u>Haas</u>	<u>Royal Thai</u>
<i>bàat</i>	<i>baht</i>
<i>bàəg rooŋ</i>	<i>berk rong</i>
<i>caŋwà</i>	<i>jangwa</i>
<i>câuthîi</i>	<i>jaothi</i>
<i>chaaulee</i>	<i>chaole</i>
<i>chúid</i>	<i>chut</i>
<i>dâŋ dəəm</i>	<i>dang derm</i>
<i>dòəg phígun</i>	<i>dok phikun</i>
<i>dəən rooŋ</i>	<i>derm rong</i>
<i>fýynfuu</i>	<i>fuenfu</i>
<i>hîŋ</i>	<i>hing</i>
<i>jyn</i>	<i>yuen</i>

<u>Haas</u>	<u>Royal Thai</u>
<i>khâaŋ</i>	<i>khang</i>
<i>kheeg</i>	<i>khaek</i>
<i>kləən</i>	<i>klon</i>
<i>Kə Cam</i>	<i>Ko Jam</i>
<i>Kràbîi</i>	<i>Krabi</i>
<i>ləj ryya</i>	<i>loi ruea</i>
<i>Làŋuu</i>	<i>Langu</i>
<i>Lantaa</i>	<i>Lanta</i>
<i>loŋ lûug</i>	<i>long luk</i>
<i>manooraa</i>	<i>manora</i>
<i>líkee paa</i>	<i>like pa</i>
<i>myaŋ</i>	<i>mueang</i>

<i>paarii</i>	<i>pari</i>
<i>phâag tâj</i>	<i>phak tai</i>
<i>Phañṅaa</i>	<i>Phangnga</i>
<i>Phuukèet</i>	<i>Phuket</i>
<i>phûujàj</i>	<i>phuyai</i>
<i>Râamàad</i>	<i>Ramad</i>
<i>rammánaa</i>	<i>ramana</i>
<i>ramwoj</i>	<i>ramwong</i>
<i>rṓṓb thammádaa</i>	<i>rob thamada</i>
<i>rṓṓṅ ḡéṅṅ</i>	<i>rong ngeng</i>
<i>rooṅ</i>	<i>rong</i>

<i>Sàtuun</i>	<i>Satun</i>
<i>tanjoṅ</i>	<i>tanyong</i>
<i>thăam</i>	<i>tham</i>
<i>Thîṅraj</i>	<i>Tingrai</i>
<i>tṓṓb</i>	<i>top</i>
<i>tèṅṅ</i>	<i>taeng</i>
<i>Traaṅ</i>	<i>Trang</i>
<i>wâag</i>	<i>wak</i>
<i>wâj khruu</i>	<i>wai khru</i>
<i>weethii</i>	<i>wethi</i>

Certain southern Thai terms are transliterated here using the Haas system as well, and are based in Thai spellings found in *Photchananukrom phasa thin tai* [The Dictionary of Southern Thai] (Munithi Thaksin Khadi Sueksa 1982).

#### MALAY TERMS

Malay terms generally follow standardizations used by the Malaysian government's Institute of Language and Literature (see Noresah 1996: xxxviii), but older Malayan and Indonesian spellings appear in this text, as song titles (for example "Burong Putih" and "Burong Puteh" are older and newer spellings, as are "Changgong" and "Canggung," "Tjik Mamat" and "Che Mamat," "Dajong Sampan" and "Dayung Sampan"). Rather than provide a full pronunciation guide, it should suffice to use British pronunciation for most words, except for the following letters:

c is pronounced as the English ch, an example is ‘*canggung*’(chang-gung)

gh is often pronounced as the Arabic *ghain*, or an English g, an example is the Arabic loan word *ghazal*

ng is pronounced as ng in the word ‘sing,’ as in *angin* (a-ngin)

gg is pronounced as a hard g, as in *ronggeng* (rong-geng)

Malayan-provenance songs that appear in *รจนา ญะเยง* repertoires are rendered here as modern Malay spellings (e.g., “Mak Inang,” Siti Payung,” “Siapa Itu,” to name just a few) or, in certain cases where the songs have become distinctly localized, with Thai transliterations (e.g., “Jaṅṅoon” from “Canggung,” “Sinaadoon” from “Senandung Sayang”). *Lagu*, a Malay loan word for ‘song,’ which is also understood along the Andaman coast, strictly in the context of *รจนา ญะเยง*, appears with a Malay spelling.

#### RENDERINGS OF *รจนา ญะเยง*/RONG NGENG

There is no standard for rendering or pronouncing *รจนา ญะเยง* / *rong ngeng*. The most common Thai spellings suggest a pronunciation as *รจนา ญะเยง*, with two brief high tones and a slight accent upon the second word. In Andaman vernacular, where the initial ‘r’ is frequently pronounced as ‘l,’ and the ‘ng’ as ‘h,’ it often sounds like *ลจนา ญะเยง*.

In Thai publications, I have found it spelled as ร้อง ญะเยง (*รจนา ญะเยง*, in Sathaphon Sisatchang and Wian Chanakun 1986, and Phongsathon 2005), as ร้อง ญะเยง (*รจนา ญะเยง*, Klin 2005), as ร้อง ญะเยง (*รจนา ญะเยง*, Sutima 2008), and หลือ ญะเยง (*ลจนา ญะเยง*, Sathaphon 1986, 1990).

#### ETHNONYMS, TOPONYMS, AND OTHER USAGES

The term ‘Malay’ is complex, has multiple interpretations throughout Southeast Asia, and can be problematic for the various ethnic or cultural assumptions that it carries.

For Andaman Coast people, a decline in recent generations of the Malay-speaking population has accompanied the near disappearance of ‘Malay’ as a local ethnic designation—replaced by the geographically and ethnically ambiguous term ‘Thai-Muslim’ (pronounced locally as *thaj mútsàlim*).

For this study, I use the geographical and cultural terms ‘Malaya’ and ‘Malayan’ to identify people (though not with specific ethnic affiliations), goods, dances, and music found on the peninsula during the European colonial periods (from the sixteenth century until the 1950s), while ‘Malaysia’ and ‘Malaysian’ connote the post-1963 era (Malaysia gained independence in 1957 but remained known as the Federation of Malaya until 1963); the terms “Malay(si)a” and “Malay(si)an” transcend those periods. ‘Malay-speaking’ refers to Muslim and Orak Lawoi islanders in southwest Thailand during the period covered by this study. Likewise, rather than characterize the rest of the population as Thai (or Siamese, using the pre-1939 term), I refer to them as ‘Thai-speaking’ on account of their diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds.

I use ‘southwest Thailand’ and the ‘Andaman’ (coast or region) interchangeably to refer to maritime and coastal areas of Phuukèet, Phanḡaa, Kràbii, Traaḡ, and Sàtuun provinces on which this study focuses, rather than inland districts where *róḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ* did not have a significant presence, or any other part of the Andaman Sea.

The terms ‘prewar,’ ‘wartime,’ and ‘postwar’ all refer to periods surrounding the Second World War (1941-45), during which we find significant developments to *róḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ* and transformations to the region.

Also, to avoid confusion with Indonesian *ronggeng*, which can refer to the song and dance genre and its female singer-dancers, in southwest Thailand, *róḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ* only

refers to the genre—not the dancers themselves. They are referred to by various Malay and Thai terms (depending upon the speaker) including *penari* and *naaη ram* (dancer), *penyani* and *nág róηη* (singer).

Finally, genealogical charts of *róηη ηέεηη* performers and their relations, found in Chapters 3 and 4 and Appendix F, present basic data on kinship, those individuals who were performers, whether they are living or deceased, and teacher-student relationships.

They use the following symbols:

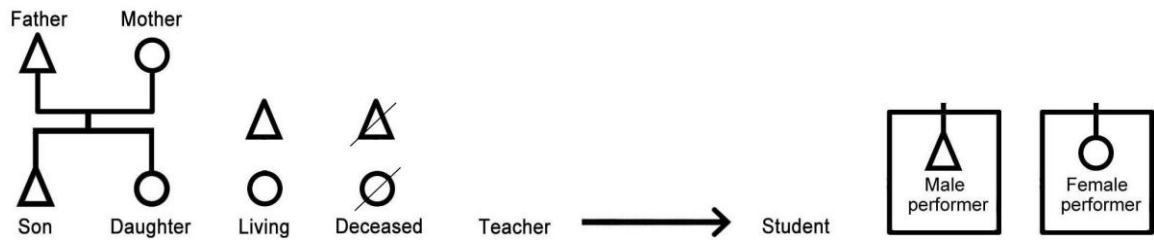


Figure 5. Genogram Symbols

## PREFACE

This dissertation is a culmination of a four-year research project, begun in 2006, when I embarked on a Fulbright-sponsored study of music-making in Muslim communities in southwest Thailand. My experiences in the region began twenty years earlier when, as a twenty-year-old, I traveled to Southeast Asia, and spent a good part of the following ten years living in and exploring the area. I met my wife, Sarimah, in Penang, and in 1993 we married and moved to Kuala Lumpur. I worked there, and later in my hometown, New York, as a musician and music teacher (jazz and popular genres, mostly), and eventually found myself in graduate school, reading how people study and write about music and culture, and planning to do the same. When the time came to return to Southeast Asia, I set out with a rather broad objective to study folk performance along the Andaman Coast of southwest Thailand. It made as good sense as any area, being a northern neighbor of my wife's home state, Kedah, where I was already quite familiar with the people and the cultural landscapes. I also spent a good deal of time in Thailand when I was younger, had traveled a bit in the south of Thailand, and had adequate Malay and Thai language skills. I set off.

My early gazes turned toward a local folk theater form called *líkee paa*, which fascinated me for the way its small casts portrayed Andaman life through sung *klɔɔn* (poetry) and simply-staged dramas. I found several *rɔ́ɔŋ ɲéɛŋ* troupes shortly after, and began attending events as often as possible. There were other possibilities for study as well—and over the years I have tried to take in as much as possible—but I eventually settled on telling the story of *rɔ́ɔŋ ɲéɛŋ*, as I discovered so many threads to pursue.

The old performers I met, as I traveled throughout the region, all seemed to be

related or connected in some significant way. The music had strains of old Malayan music, yet it was sung in Thai. I began to visualize a prior era, when *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* was a network of performers and performing communities, and sought to establish their connections to the present. The timeline that took shape suggested interesting parallels between *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ*'s history and the ways in which Andaman lifestyles changed significantly in the postwar era. Thus my project took shape.

I was fortunate to have chosen the area I did; not only because of the natural beauty, but because the people were always so gracious and helpful. I was invited to travel and stay with performers, and able to observe their musical activities and everyday lifestyles. Each event was a special memory, and distinctive in setting, repertoire, performers, hosts, and patrons. I spent several years attending *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* events in southwest Thailand. Many were like the one I that I share with you below, which took place early in my fieldwork. This occasion was a wedding in an isolated village on the coast of Sàtuun Province in southwest Thailand, and I traveled along with one of the few remaining working professional *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* troupes, Săam Phîi Nóɔŋ, which was the celebration's nighttime entertainment. My notes begin that afternoon.

#### A RÓɔŋ D́ÉÉŊ PERFORMANCE

At two-thirty on Saturday, on a torrid, dry January afternoon, husband and wife, Hâamá and Miiá, sit on the *khàñăm* (a multipurpose outdoor wooden and/or bamboo covered platform found ubiquitously throughout the South, seen in the rear, to the left of Figure 6) by the front door to their home, waiting for their dancers and musicians to arrive. A large sign, standing several yards in front of them, at the edge of a paved yet dusty road that is the village's main artery, proclaims "Róɔŋ D́éɛŋ Kháná: Săam Phîi

Nó๓๓” (The Three Siblings R๓๓๓ D๓๓๓ Group) in large, stylized script, with the name Ban H๓am๓, Khl๓๓๓ P๓๓๓ Village, Kr๓bii Province, and two separate telephone numbers, mobile and home, painted at the bottom.



Figure 6. The signboard outside of S๓am Ph๓i N๓๓๓ headquarters (rear left)

Khl๓๓๓ P๓๓๓ is a Thai-speaking Muslim settlement in south Kr๓bii populated by approximately two hundred families. It lies close to a two-lane highway connecting Kr๓bii and Tra๓๓, two of the region’s largest cities. H๓am๓ and Mii๓, both of whom are in their sixties, have two homes in the village. Their primary residence is a short walk to the rear of the present structure, accessible by an overgrown dirt track that passes through a small oil palm plantation. This one is a simple wooden rectangular-shaped box, built on the ground (as are most homes in the village) with a dirt floor, dark interior, a few pieces of furniture, and not much decoration other than peeling children’s stickers on the door

and some Islamic calligraphy above it. This house functions mainly as a headquarters for their *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* troupe to gather, rest, bathe, and change clothing. Hidden away from public view, behind a cloth partition in the rear, is a *hîŋ* ‘ritual offering shelf’ upon which they regularly set out candles, dishes, and other items for the *khruu mɔɔ* ‘ancestral founding teachers’ of *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*.

The dancers begin arriving on the backs of motorcycles and by foot, and the house soon becomes a hive of activity; teenage and young women are dressing, applying makeup, and chatting on their mobile telephones. Outside, drummers Buu and Săn, both in their fifties, arrive from different directions: Buu from Saaj Khăaw (thirty minutes away to the south), and Săn from several houses down the lane, where his house-front signboard proclaims KKK, the name of his *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* troupe. They join Hâamá on the *khànăm*, remove zippered tobacco pouches from their pockets, and roll thin *bajcàag* ‘palm leaf’ cigarettes. The group’s singer, Bɛɛá, a contemporary of Miiá, arrives seated side-saddle on the back of a motorcycle, wearing a common outfit for women her age—a batik sarong, a blouse with flowery prints, a knitted cap—and clutching a handbag. At three-thirty, the village *phûujàj bâan* ‘village headman’ and his *mia nɔɔj* ‘minor wife’ pull up in front of the house in his polished new pick-up truck to carry the group to their performance this evening in Lànɔu, on the northern coast of Sàtuun province. The whole troupe climbs aboard; Hâamá and Miiá sit in the cab with the *phûujàj* and his wife, while the eight dancers, Bɛɛá, Buu, and Săn sit in the open truck bed alongside small bags of dance costumes and makeup carried by each dancer, and the musical instruments—Hâamá’s worn violin case, and two *rammánaa* drums wrapped in an old fertilizer bag.

The journey—southbound along the west-coast highway—takes nearly three

hours. It follows a series of well-maintained thoroughfares that passes through several of the region's major towns, and rolling countryside; and it forms a logical demarcation between coastal and mainland areas. Though not commonly conceived as such, it is also the western boundary of the territory where most of *róŋŋ ɣéɛŋ*'s major events took place and its important figures lived. At Lànjuu Town, they diverge from the main road for the remainder of their trip. The road from that point is a once-paved, though now crater-scarred track that leads to the coast. The terrain becomes a low, tangled web of tidal mangrove forest, dotted with a few isolated and sparsely populated villages that are fringed by fallow fields, and commercial fish ponds whose incessant water wheels churn up rafts of white foam. As the afternoon heat begins to fade, they arrive at an unadorned wooden house, raised on posts several feet above the ground, where preparations for a wedding feast are underway.

Saman, the father of the bride, pauses from arranging tables and chairs and greets the troupe as they alight from the vehicle. He has never met Hâamá before (they made arrangements by phone) but knows of Săam Phîi Nóŋŋ by their reputation; *róŋŋ ɣéɛŋ* today is practically synonymous with Khlóŋŋ Pîŋ, and Săam Phîi Nóŋŋ is the best known of that village's three groups. Saman explains that he was born in south Kràbii, not far from Khlóŋŋ Pîŋ, but moved to Lànjuu after marrying a local woman, adding that, as a Kràbii native, he feels a wedding is incomplete if there is no *róŋŋ ɣéɛŋ*—and lamenting how that is not the case in Sàtuun. He invites the performers to a table under one of two rented canopies where banquet food and drinks are being placed. The other canopy covers the adjoining *rooŋ* (performance space), located between the house and an open, thatched-roof hut where Saman and his family process fish. The *rooŋ* occupies a

rectangular, roughly forty-by-twenty-foot area, and has been dressed with a fresh layer of white gravel ground cover. Along the hut side is a row of plastic chairs for the dancers, while under the hut's roof are several more for the musicians and a P.A. system. Outside of the *roon*, on both sides of the hut, two men erect banks of 'tûu lamphoon.' These types of loudspeaker systems are ubiquitous at public occasions in Thailand, and always seem larger and louder than necessary for an event's size; today's sound system is no exception. Once the troupe's women finish eating, they ascend a short flight of wooden steps into the home, leaving Hâamá and the drummers chatting and smoking *bajcàag* while Thai pop music blasts from the *tûu lamphoon*.

With sunset arrive the call to prayer from the village mosque and hordes of early evening mosquitoes which chase the men inside. They sit in a corner of Saman's spacious guest area on its broad, wooden-plank floor, and smoke more *bajcàag* cigarettes. On the other side of the room the dancers are deeply into their routines, applying thick layers of makeup and putting on their performance outfits. The host family sets down packets of three-in-one instant coffee, a thermos with hot water, and ceramic cups on the floor for the men, who prepare it themselves, folding the foil wrappers into coffee stirrers.

After the night time *isha'* prayer call is issued at eight-o'clock, the troupe descends down the steps to the *roon*, which is now enclosed by two red synthetic twine cordons on three sides (at one and three feet from the ground), and with a table placed by a small opening on the end that lies opposite the row of dancers' chairs. Two of Saman's daughters, dressed in casual nighttime attire of pajamas and face powder, sit there with booklets of dance tickets in hand, ready to sell to the villagers. Saman and Săam Phîi Nónŋ have a typical financial arrangement: the group receives a fixed fee of 5,500 *bàat*

(approximately US\$179), and Saman recoups his expenditure by selling two types of dance tickets: (1) *rôḥb thammádaa* tickets for ten *bàat* (\$0.33), where a patron chooses a dancer in the *rooŋ* for one approximately three-minute round, or (2) *rôḥb phísèet* ‘special round’ tickets for twenty to forty *bàat*, for which one or more miniskirt-clad young women provide several minutes of often provocative, private table dances.

Before the performance begins, Hâamá requests several items from Saman for a *bàəg rooŋ* (ritual opening): a candle, a pack of cigarettes, several betel leaves, pieces of areca nut, and some paper currency, which are provided on a small dish. He places the dish of items, *rammánaa* drums, and violin on two plastic chairs arranged side by side in the middle of the *rooŋ*, then sits facing them on a third chair. He lights the candle, makes a brief recitation in a nearly inaudible voice, and moves his hands over the drum bodies several times, striking them at the end of each gesture. He concludes by waving his hand over the candle to extinguish the flame. Hâamá then takes a seat behind the dancers, checks the tuning and amplification of his violin, and begins a triple-metre, double-stop ostinato to begin “Lagu Dua,” the first of three consecutive *wâj khruu* ‘honoring the teacher’ tunes (the *bàəg rooŋ* and *wâj khruu* rituals are described in Chapter 7). Săn, playing the larger *jyn*, enters with an asymmetrical two-stroke figure, followed by Buu, who strikes sharp, contrasting accents on the smaller *lâk*.

From this drone texture a violin melody emerges. As it carries out to the village, the dancers, dressed in light jackets and full-length batik sarongs, rise several steps in front of their chairs to dance. They move their hands and arms gently in front of their bodies, sway their hips slightly, and tread their feet in light steps. The atmosphere becomes clamorous as people from the village stream into Saman’s compound: women

and children crowd around the perimeter of the *rooη*, and beyond the fringes of the illuminated area, young men lean on their parked motorcycles, gathered in groups, gazing fixedly on the distant dancers. After about five minutes, the *wâj khruu* concludes and the dancers retreat to their row of chairs. They unfold their sarongs, raising them—tube-like—to their shoulders as temporary dressing rooms. Inside, they remove their outer layers, and minutes later emerge in tight t-shirts and miniskirts.

The crowd of men and women is drawn to a near frenzy by the costume change. Patrons tussle around the ticket table and swarm into the *rooη* as Hâamá's violin sounds the opening melodic phrase of the iconic Andaman tune "Hâad Jaaw." After one cycle of the melody, the characteristically strident *r'óη ηέεη* timbre of Βεεά's voice—distorted even further by its heavy amplification—projects from the *tûu lamphooη*. She begins with a hybrid Thai-Malay non-sequitur text that makes this musical style so distinctive, "*bunaa tanjon kamphon læ n'óη jan d'òg rêe*" (*bunga tanjung kampong*, see the young woman, like the rhododendron flower).

After playing for around one hour, the musicians take a break, leaving the dancers to continue entertaining for the next twenty minutes to a DJ-provided accompaniment. The music's loud throbbing pulse and shaking of the dancers' bodies gives the occasion more of a discotheque-like ambience. Throughout the night, Hâamá's group and the DJ alternate between live and recorded music in this manner. At midnight the performers take an instant coffee break and, before they resume, Saman decides to end the performance even though he has hired the group to play until 3 A.M. He is primarily concerned that arguments among several young men (whom he suspects have been drinking alcohol) might get out of hand. He hands Hâamá his fee, and the group departs

aboard the *phûujàj*'s pickup truck shortly thereafter. Most of the dancers in the back of the truck sleep or smoke cigarettes during the return ride through the dark countryside. They stop once at a twenty-four-hour 7-Eleven in the small inland market town, Jâantaakhăaw, for snacks and cans of energy drink and then drop off individual performers along the main road near their homes as they approach Khlôṅ Pîṅ.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

This is a historical and musicological inquiry into how rural performers, at the confluence of two distinctly different cultural and linguistic areas, created traditional repertoires from multiple sources. It examines the migration of the well-known *ronggeng* social dance music of Malaya and Indonesia to southwest Thailand in the 1930s, and the distinctive song and dance genre, called *ร้องเหยง*, (pronounced *rong ngeng*), that subsequently developed there.

*ร้องเหยง* is a case study of a cultural form's transformations as it moves through different social, economic, and linguistic zones. It is also a window into movement and migration of individuals and communities in the twentieth century. Its history provides a local perspective of social developments in a region situated at the confluence of two modern states, and the types of changes that took place as political and cultural dominance shifted from Malay to Thai.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

*Ronggeng* is an old term that goes back to fourteenth century Java, and has commonly stood, since that time, for some type of music ensemble featuring a female singer-dancer—if not a term for the dancer, herself—throughout the Malay-speaking world. In early twentieth-century Malaya, *ronggeng* was a popular two-step dance that also came to connote a diverse collection of tunes played for social dances. Its songs often sounded like they had been lifted from Western theaters, but there was also much local or regional music that gave it a distinctive character. The slow, ballad-like poetic exchanges from Malaccan *dondang sayang*, Arab-Malay song and dances from *zapin*,

and syncopated *chalti* rhythms from India, could all be called *ronggeng*; as could a Chinese folk melody, or the Cuban *rumba* for that matter, when performed in such a context. At the heart of the *ronggeng* canon were the dance rhythms *joget*, *inang*, *asli*, *masri*, and *zapin*.

This mix of styles came to form the prevailing popular music in the era of the 78 rpm gramophone, radio, and the traveling theater. *Ronggeng* songs were played in dance halls and cosmopolitan *bangsawan* theaters, and were the popular music of the day. At public dances, male patrons could pay a token fee, and dance a three-minute round with a professional female dancer to the sounds of *ronggeng*. In the larger towns and cities of Malaya, where much of the music was created, Western-style ensembles or orchestras accompanied such dances. But *ronggeng*'s popularity also reached into rural areas, where ensembles consisting of a violin, pair of frame drums, and a gong played the same popular songs, and incorporated them into their own repertoire folk songs. It is these rural-type ensembles that concern us most, as they were the antecedents of *ρώχη ηέεη*.

*Ρώχη ηέεη*'s roots are in northwest Malaya. Contemporary Malay-language popular songs circulated from the multicultural port city, Georgetown, on Penang Island (a British possession at the time), to the neighboring coast and countryside of the northwest Malayan states Kedah and Perlis. Local performers in that region created a new idiom of *ronggeng* by playing those tunes alongside their own folk songs, which themselves were comprised of popular tunes from an earlier era.

In the mid-1930s, an itinerant violinist named Abu Qasim, a player in the Kedah and Perlis style of *ronggeng*, traveled up the coast into Thailand (then Siam), and settled on Lantaa Island, to become *ρώχη ηέεη*'s first pioneer. On Lantaa, he taught locals his

songs and dances, and then continued onward, spreading *róçñ ηέεη* further up the coast to Malay-speaking communities on Cam and Sireh Islands, and elsewhere, like a musical Johnny Appleseed.<sup>2</sup>

In his path, Abu Qasim's students kept playing the *róçñ ηέεη* songs he taught them. They held nightly village dances, which evolved into professional training sessions; and they formed performing troupes that toured the neighboring islands and mainland, often traveling for weeks upon end. The mainland offered them new opportunities to perform, but it required walking from village to village, and often under difficult conditions. Through this process, however, *róçñ ηέεη* first encountered its Thai-speaking audiences, ushering in a new chapter of its history.

Compared with the islands, which were traditionally populated by two Malay-speaking groups (Malay Muslims, and so-called sea gypsies, the Orak Lawoi), the mainland along the coast was a mixed Thai-speaking area, dotted with rural Muslim and Buddhist communities, and set amid a tangle of mangrove forests and rivers. In that region, *róçñ ηέεη* underwent its most significant transformations. New performers there began to sing its melodies in Thai, using a local poetic form, and adapt their own lullabies, courtship songs, and folk theater tunes to the *róçñ ηέεη* musical style.

This new Thai-language, mainland counterpart to the Malay-language, island style became known as *róçñ ηέεη tanjon*, or just *phleey tanjon* 'tanjon song.' It developed into a distinctive repertoire over the 1940s and '50s, concurrent with the rise of *róçñ ηέεη* (meaning both styles), to become the Andaman's most ubiquitous form of entertainment. During that heyday, *róçñ ηέεη* was the most prominent medium for courtship among

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2. Johnny Appleseed was an "American pioneer and orchardist" (Chapman 2004), and American folk icon. His name is symbolic of a traveling disseminator.

young people. In many areas, it became common for young women (ranging in age from their early teens to their twenties), to dance professionally, as a rite of passage, and be courted by their male patrons. When old people reflect upon *róçñ ηέεη* as a polite and creative medium, it is this era that they have in mind.

## THE DECLINE OF *ΡÓÇÑ ΗΈΕΗ*

Having mapped its rise, we may look at several reasons for *róçñ ηέεη*'s decline. One important reason was that it became less significant to a new generation of youngsters. In the 1960s, tastes changed. They reflected a more modern identity and a more Thai one as well. *Ρόçñ ηέεη* continued to be performed, and it was still well-received in villages, but the sources for new performers were drying up. Song and dance forms from Central Thailand, such as *ramwoñ* and *lâug thûñ*, became more popular. The new music, particularly *ramwoñ* (a mixed-sex circle dance that I discuss later in this chapter), developed a bad reputation for the drinking and fighting that took place at its public dances. *Ρόçñ ηέεη*, by association, was also saddled with a poor image. Locals remember the Andaman during that era—the late 1960s and early '70s—as being a more dangerous place because of those and other social ills. They tell of districts and municipalities banning *ramwoñ* and *róçñ ηέεη* during that period.

It was around that time that the first *dakwah tabligh* Sunni and Shi'a Islamic missionaries arrived in the region.<sup>3</sup> There was a broadening of Islamic-based education

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3. *Dakwah tabligh*, or *Tablighi Jamaat*, is a Sunni Muslim organization described by Horstmann as “a transnational Islamic pietist movement that emerged in India in 1927,” and one in which members travel for days or months “in small groups (...) to proselythize [sic] among fellow Muslims” (Horstmann 2007: 107). This movement arrived in South Thailand around 1968 and developed a strong following among local Muslims. Shi'a Islam, which has a much smaller presence in the region, grew from the

(*pondok* schools), and locals developed a new enthusiasm for Islam and their Islamic identity. Many heretofore nominally religious Muslim communities conformed to more doctrinaire interpretations of Islam, abandoning social dancing, folk theater, and other “non-Islamic” folk practices. Thus, the revival of religion in public and private spheres became central to *róçh ηέεη*’s decline. And even though *róçh ηέεη*, since its earliest days, had been found mostly in Muslim communities, it faced stronger moral opposition from within.

A third reason for *róçh ηέεη*’s decline was that evening social spaces were losing their participatory nature. Active and reciprocal forms of expression, such as local folk theater and public dancing, were yielding to passive reception of externally produced mass media, such as radio, television, cinema, and eventually, cassette tapes, CDs, and video discs. Paitoon’s observations of radio’s integration to rural lifestyles in north Thailand, during that period, were the same stories I heard from Andaman people, who remember the introduction of radio and television:

*A radio is usually turned on in the evening when the people spend their hours leisurely after the daily chores and hearty dinners. Important radio programs are also timed to coincide with these hours. Most Thai people, especially rural ones, do not turn on the radio for themselves or for their families alone, but tune it up quite loud so the neighbors who do not have radios are indirectly urged or invited to listen to the programs. (...)*

*[T]he number of people who hear or passively listen to radio programs from a neighbor’s house is considerably less significant as an indication of meaningful acceptance of radio than the number of villagers who flock to listen to it as a substitution of or an addition to a major traditional recreational activity of Thai rural people, a group chatting session in the evening. (Paitoon 1962: 52-53)*

The world today is a vastly transformed place from that of the 1930s and ’40s.

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activities of pamphleteers who arrived in the 1970s. Personal correspondence from Màmádoosèt Àkunjaadaa.

The Malay language is on the verge of disappearing from the islands. Distances have become shorter with motorized transportation and better infrastructure. And the youth do not wander as much as they did in the past. People in general have become more settled, due in a large part to rubber cultivation, which since the 1960s, has developed into a veritable monoculture over the region, and provided baseline prosperity for agriculturists.

*Róçŋ ηέεη*, too, has adapted; acquiring distinctive characteristics in several different localities, but all of them are threatened today with extinction. There have been some efforts recently to revive it (described below), and time will tell if they will continue. The crucial problem is that violinists, guardians of the melodic repertoire, who were once found in droves, today number less than twenty men for the whole region; and the youngest of them is already in his sixties. There are few, if any, people trained to succeed them, or the other musicians and singer-dancers for that matter. Violinists say that when they disappear, so will *róçŋ ηέεη*. And while the likelihood is that there will always be people to sing and dance, whether accompanied by drums, or *a capella*, the questions that will bear most upon *róçŋ ηέεη*'s future are whether or not they will want to perform in that manner, and if so, how will they do it.

### *RÓÇŊ DÉÉŊ* TODAY

The extant *róçŋ ηέεη* styles are keys for understanding the currents through which it was propagated during the active years. Their development is intimately tied to the modern transformations that occurred in Andaman society. In certain respects, *róçŋ ηέεη* is performed today in much the same way it was in the past, with many of the same tunes, dance movements, and violin/drum accompaniment. *Róçŋ ηέεη* occasions are still mostly rural 'taxi dances,' where men compete for dancers' affections, and women compete for

men's money, and sometimes their affections as well.<sup>4</sup>

While the most common extant *róɔŋ ɳéɛŋ* style is that of the modern *tanjɔŋ*-style troupe, there are also traditionalists from Malay- and Thai-speaking backgrounds. Their styles are described below. All types perform *róɔŋ ɳéɛŋ* in either of two general venue types: (1) village celebrations (*róɔŋ ɳéɛŋ kaalǎa*), which hold taxi dances as late-night entertainment for a multi-day wedding or other ritual feast,<sup>5</sup> or (2) stage *róɔŋ ɳéɛŋ* (*róɔŋ ɳéɛŋ weethii*), which are brief cultural shows, often found at festivals in south Thailand, but performed without public dancing, and with a limited repertoire of the most popular songs. Taxi dances that took place in towns (*tàlǎad*) were also common during the wartime and postwar decades, but no longer occur outside of festivals.

Today's ensemble types have some small differences in personnel. Traditionalist groups perform with a violin, two drums, a gong, and several (male or female) singer-dancers. As they are often community-based, there is no limit to how many people might join in, striking percussion, or taking turns singing. The more commercially oriented *ramwɔŋ*-style groups, described below, perform with violin and drums, no gong, and employ one professional singer and six to ten young female (or transvestite male) dancers, ranging in age from their teens to early twenties, who do not sing. Both groups may be joined by singers from the audience.

Aside from the different types of percussion background, their musical textures are quite similar. Vocal timbres are strident and resonant. Violinists play in loose unison

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4. Paul Cressey used the term 'taxi-dancer' to describe women in Chicago, who danced professionally in urban dance halls, and received a fee for each round. (Cressey 1932)

5. Other than weddings, *róɔŋ ɳéɛŋ* of this type is played for circumcisions (*khâo sǔunád*), annual festivals (*ɳaan pràcham pii*), construction of new homes (*ɳaan khÿn bâan màj*), or vow fulfillment rituals (*kêe bon*).

with the sung melody, and fill in elsewhere with multi-string drones and other ornaments. Drummers play interlocking periodic rhythms on large (*jyn*) and small (*lâk*) *rammánaa* (frame- or stout-barrel) drums. There are other manners in which they differ, a number of which I address below and in later chapters.

### *The Ramwoŋ Style*

*Tanjoŋ*-style groups that also employ modern elements, borrowed from contemporary Thai pop culture, are often referred to as *ramwoŋ*-style *róŋŋ h́ééŋ* groups, after the Central Thai social dance that has existed as a social-dance counterpart to *róŋŋ h́ééŋ* since the late 1930s. *Ramwoŋ*, which was created under the first Phibuunsǒŋkhraam government (1938-44) as part of a cultural policy intended to unify and modernize disparate regions of Thailand,<sup>6</sup> became, on a local level, associated with drinking, fighting, and bad behavior that took place at its dances. Thus, by calling a particular form of *róŋŋ h́ééŋ* a *ramwoŋ* style, locals may also be ascribing it certain negative qualities, and lamenting the loss of a gracious past.

*Róŋŋ h́ééŋ* and *ramwoŋ*'s parallel development mirrored the fundamental changes to social identification in the region that took place during the postwar era, alluded to earlier. *Róŋŋ h́ééŋ* represented an older, rural Malay identity that was becoming anachronistic to an increasingly Thai-speaking, and (Thai) culturally assimilated Andaman youth; whereas *ramwoŋ* was new, Thai, urban, and bore the Thai state's

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6. *Ramwoŋ* was formed from a central Thai circle dance called *ramthoon*, whose origins date to the Àjútjaa period (or Ayutthaya, fourteenth to eighteenth century), and which featured exchanges of short poetic verses by male and female dancers, to an accompaniment of barrel drum (*thoon*), and various idiophones.

imprimatur.<sup>7</sup> By the 1960s, when *ramwoŋ* began to supplant *róŋŋ h́ééŋ* in popularity, some performers of the latter fashioned themselves to be more like *ramwoŋ*, by incorporating *ramwoŋ* tunes and adopting *ramwoŋ*-like attire. As *róŋŋ h́ééŋ* died out on the islands, the geographical “center” of what had become a *róŋŋ h́ééŋ* “tradition” (in the sense that it had been a regular practice for twenty years or more) moved inland to areas where the *ramwoŋ*-style prevailed. Today, those groups are the most in-demand of all *róŋŋ h́ééŋ* styles. There are approximately six of them remaining in Kràbii and Traaŋ, with Khlóŋ Pŋ and Hàad Sámraan being the two most active areas.

*Ramwoŋ*-style groups are hired to perform for a fee. For a six- or seven-hour performance, they command between five and eight thousand *bàat* (approximately US\$140-225), from which the dancers and drummers each earn about 250-300 *bàat* (US\$8-10), and the violinist and lead singer (when they are not leading the troupe) earn as much as twice that amount. Dancers may also earn tips up to one thousand *bàat* per night. In performance, they frequently repeat their most popular songs, enabling them to stretch a relatively small repertoire of less than twenty tunes, over six or more hours. Every half hour or so, the musicians alternate with a disc jockey who plays contemporary Thai pop songs. The dancers keep performing.

*Ramwoŋ*-style *róŋŋ h́ééŋ* occasions are, in many ways, incongruous with the modest and reserved lifestyles of the rural Muslim communities where they are generally performed. The professional dancers wear revealing attire and dance provocatively for the male and female villagers of all ages, the latter of whom discard their inhibitions, and behave in ways that would be considered scandalous at other places or times. Old men

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7. See Phathrawadee’s study of entertainment in postwar Bangkok (Phathrawadee 2550)

may be seen dancing *rôb thammádaa* ‘regular rounds’ with the taxi dancers, while still dressed in their quotidian attire of skullcaps and sarongs. Groups of young giggling women in glittering head scarves sit at the perimeter of the *rooη* (performance area), and order the dancers to perform *rôb phísèet*, or ‘special rounds’ that are analogous to a ‘table dance’ in a go-go bar. Patrons leer at the dancers, try to get as physically close to them as the dancers will allow, and generally treat them as depersonalized objects for their amusement. A number of groups employ one or more male transvestite dancers, who perform with the women, and receive similar treatment from the patrons. The dancers remain, for the most part, remarkably stoic amid all of this activity. They perform their movements in mechanical fashion, while gazing ahead with detached looks. As soon as they hear the song’s final cadence, they return quickly to the seats to await the next round. A few might be seen engaging with their patrons—soliciting tips and exchanging telephone numbers—which raises suspicions among villagers that they also sell sexual favors on the side.

### *The Malay-language Island Style*

The once-preeminent, now dying, Malay-language island style of *rôη ηέηη* descends from the original form introduced to Lantaa by Abu Qasim and several locals after him who spent time in Malaya during the 1930s. Because of its rich history as the source for all current forms of *rôη ηέηη*, and its role in preserving early repertoire, it is perceived as the repository of traditional *rôη ηέηη* in the Andaman. Singer-dancers dress in Malay-style attire of *kebaya* blouses and long *batik* sarongs, and dance in styles that, by some accounts, are related to the extinct Andaman and Malayan folk theater, *makyung laut* (see “Makyung Laut” in the following chapter), that preceded *rôη ηέηη*. Of all the

*róçŋ ȳéey* styles, its songs, dances, dress, and manners of performance most resemble northwest Malay(si)an *rōggeng*, and it has been least affected by Thai culture.

Today the Malay-language style is sustained by a dwindling number of mostly-retired, Malay-speaking performers, who may be found in island communities on Lantaa, Kò Cam, Phuukèet, and elsewhere. Although they are dispersed over a fairly large geographical area, many of these performers are linked to one another through kinship. They also have close ties to their communities, where some of their last remaining opportunities to perform exist. Only two or three village groups may be considered somewhat active (although active may be an overstatement): two in Phuukèet, and one in Săŋkaa-ûu Village on Lantaa, both of which are Orak Lawoi. These groups play *róçŋ ȳéey* for rituals, festivals, cultural shows, and occasionally to teach school children. Other performers come out of retirement if an occasion arises, but such opportunities are infrequent, and unlike in their heyday, there are no longer villagers who receive a regular income from playing *róçŋ ȳéey*.

#### *Stage-show Róçŋ ȳéey*

The one exception to the vanishing Malay-language island style is Phuukèet's Sireh Island Orak Lawoi group, Phòonsawăn, whose choreographed stage-show performances borrow significantly from contemporary Thai entertainment. The group is led by the doyen of *róçŋ ȳéey* singer-dancers, Cïu Pramoŋkid—one of three well-known *róçŋ ȳéey* performing sisters of the postwar era (mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4).<sup>8</sup> Her group performs a distinctive, commercial form of *róçŋ ȳéey weethii* that lies somewhere between the traditional Malay and *ramwoŋ* styles, incorporating some surprisingly

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8. Phongsathon wrote a master's thesis on this group (Phongsathon 2548)

obscure Malayan repertoire (as far as *ρώχη ηέεη* repertoires go) with *ramwoη* songs and modern *ramwoη*-style uniforms for the dancers. Their performances typically take place at local cultural events and Phuukèet hotels.

### *Revivalist Tanjoη*

Nostalgia exists among certain Thai-speaking *ρώχη ηέεη* performers for the *tanjoη* of the past, prior to the ascendancy of the *ramwoη* style. It is a sentiment that expresses a close bond with traditional lifestyles and the sea, and it motivated performers in Râamàad Village to form an ensemble dedicated to reviving *ρώχη ηέεη* of the past. There may be indirect links between this phenomenon, and a growing awareness of local languages and cultures that has taken hold in several of Thailand's peripheral regions over the past decade or so, the Andaman included.<sup>9</sup> It may even be possible to point to recent, however ambiguous, national requirements for primary and secondary schools to teach five percent of local content (*làgsùt thόχη thìn*),<sup>10</sup> for that was a significant break from past policies that impressed centralized notions of Thai-ness upon minority communities.<sup>11</sup> To fulfill this vaguely structured mandate, local schools have been employing older folk performers from their communities to teach students to perform, usually with the goal of making a cultural show presentation.

Râamàad has a long history of folk theater performance, and was one of the

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9. The recent phenomenon of local expression in a context of a new-found northern Thai identity is discussed by McGraw in his article on *pin pia* music (McGraw 2007). In south Thailand, a genre of Thai pop song has appeared that features some local dialect and instruments, and conveys images of islands, food, and culture, through their lyrics and videos.

10. Personal communication from Pràsìt Satecít, headmaster of the Râamàad Village School and founder of the Phÿyn Phátthánaa ensemble.

11. See Kobkua 1995

earliest sites where the *tanjong* style took root in the 1940s (see “South Kràbii” section in Chapter 4). Following decades of inactivity, descendants of the village’s early performers, in their fifties and sixties mostly, re-established *róong hēēng* and other dormant performance genres in 2003, calling their group Phÿyn Phátthánaa, uniting the words for ‘friends’ and ‘development.’

Part of what distinguishes Râamàad’s ensemble from other *róong hēēng* groups in the region is the manner in which they organize and conduct their affairs collectively, by meeting regularly to discuss events and rehearse, distributing their income equitably, and retaining a share in a group fund from which they purchase instruments, costumes, and other items. They often state at their performances that their mission is to “revive and preserve local folk culture” (*fÿynfuu ànúrág wáthánátham phÿynbâan*). As I have noticed firsthand, from living in this unique village, they not only apply this principle to folk performance, but it is also part of their agricultural philosophies and practices, and other inherited traditions.

*Róong hēēng*, for the members of Phÿyn Phátthánaa, is not a primary source of income, nor do they wish it to be. As such they do not view themselves as professional performers, an occupation which has negative connotations for many communities today. Instead, they perform *róong hēēng* to promote their ideal past, which they perceive as rapidly disappearing from modern Thai life, and give expression to their Andaman-ness. For these reasons, they are very particular about the types of invitations they accept, preferring to play for cultural events, and not performing on days or at times that conflict with local religious occasions.

Despite its deep roots, Râamàad still has a fairly limited repertoire, and its

performance style is neither as elaborate nor as distinctive as the Orak Lawoi. At the same time, they have none of the provocative-ness of *ramwoη*-style groups. The dancers wear ‘respectful’ costumes (*kebayas* and sarongs, like those of the island groups), and sing songs that *khàp lâw*, or ‘tell stories’ that reflect romanticized notions of Andaman village life. The men wear uniforms, exchange instruments and other small percussion, and in the community spirit, contribute *ramwoη*-like *chia* (secondary vocal exclamations, from the English to “cheer”) to enliven the performance.

### WHO CLAIMS *ΡÓΧΗ ΗΈΕΗ*?

As might be expected from a genre that has taken on several different styles, people connect to or claim *ρόχη ηέεη* as theirs in different ways. Individual villages often had connections to particular *ρόχη ηέεη* communities, and among them, memories of past star performers still resonate as part of their local history and folklore.

People older than sixty, whose youth coincided with *ρόχη ηέεη*’s golden age, have the strongest connection to it. They are nostalgic about the now-disappeared, participatory social function of *ρόχη ηέεη* that once brought them together to have fun; this fits into their critique of modern life as lacking certain things. Understandably, they expect no future for *ρόχη ηέεη*, and foresee its complete disappearance once its custodians have passed away. Most were happy that this study would tell about what they felt was ‘their’ history.

Elder Malays and Orak Lawoi in particular, lament the loss of the finer aspects of *ρόχη ηέεη*, such as the large song repertoire, specialized dances, and knowledge that performers once possessed. They may be disdainful of *tanjoη* groups, saying their music, “isn’t the real thing” or “they don’t know how to play,” but they enjoy listening to, and

performing *tanjong* song.

Violinists have a special connection to *róong ηέεη*, as they are self-professed guardians of its musical repertoire, and natural leaders of most ensembles. Each guardianship traces its lineage to a particular teacher or series of teachers. They elevate them as gurus, in some cases to sacred levels. They have seen a lot over the years, as traveling performers, so their stories are full of anecdotes about learning to play as a youngster, touring, maturing into a leadership position, and names of people with whom they played. Most of them know one another, having crossed paths over the years, but not all are friends; in their respectful praise or criticism of other violinists, they express an unspoken hierarchy.

Dancers, ones who are older and mostly retired, recall *róong ηέεη* and their youth to me with a sparkle in their eye, even though their lives were difficult and the performing was demanding. Their connections to their teachers, as with violinists, are also strong, whether to the women or men who taught them, or to the leaders of their troupes. In my conversations with dance specialists, they acknowledged the beauty of the dances, their past diversity, and how few are able to perform them anymore. Many told stories of learning to dance as a girl, the performers they once admired, and the polite nature of everything. They would even break into song and dance if nudged. Some of them still perform, for cultural shows generally, while others renounced it completely upon marriage, many years ago. I did not find them reluctant or shy to talk about their *róong ηέεη* careers, as has been the case with some former well-known *ronggeng* dancers in Malaysia.<sup>12</sup>

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12. Personal correspondence from Baharoodin Ahmad, see footnote 43.

The connections to *ρώνη ηέεη* for today's young women dancers, however, are much less strong. Many are young mothers and/or divorcees, who work as part-time karaoke lounge hostesses, and perform *ρώνη ηέεη* solely for money. They receive some mentoring from the elder singer-dancer, as well as from veteran dancers for dance movements, but there is no demand upon them to sing, or perform the fine movements of the past. They appear blasé about their relationship to the troupe, teachers, and *ρώνη ηέεη* in general.

The whole region's people can claim a couple of iconic *ρώνη ηέεη* tunes, "Håad Jaaw" and "Jaanooη," as their own. A group of boys who performed the iconic *tanjooη* "Håad Jaaw" at a cultural festival told me that singing *tanjooη* was part of their "local Andaman identity" (*èegàlág thóωνη thìn fàη thálee Andaaman*). They learned it in school, as part of the curriculum, but had no desire to become *ρώνη ηέεη* performers. Still, they appreciated the beauty of the style and the talents of their great grandparents.

## THE FIELDWORK AREA

Fieldwork for this study took place primarily in the coastal region stretching from Thailand's Phuukèet in the north to Malaysia's Penang in the south, and set amid a strikingly beautiful and diverse coastal geography. It encompasses karst formations that rise sharply from land and sea, forming whimsical coastal landscapes dotted with waterfalls and hot springs, islands and coastlines that are fringed with mangrove forests and long, sandy beaches, and rolling hills blanketed in primary jungle and the monoculture of Pará rubber plantations. Rain falls in abundance during two prolonged periods: the southwest monsoon, which begins around May and lasts for several months, and a less-intense northeast monsoon, which arrives for a couple of months beginning

around December, with attenuated winds, after traversing South Thailand's central range. Other than the urbanized resort island Phuukèet and several medium-size cities whose populations range from thirty to sixty thousand (Wolfram Alpha 2010), the Andaman Coast is primarily rural and agrarian. Agricultural activity is dominated by rubber—tapping and raw processing—which takes place mostly during drier periods. Fishing is also a primary occupation and is done throughout the year, except when heavy winds and rain make sea travel too dangerous.

Although the well-known violence taking place in Pattaanii (southeast Thailand) was far removed from this area, the Andaman suffered greatly from the 2004 Boxing Day Tsunami, in which tens of thousands lost their lives, homes and property were destroyed. During my research, many sad signs and stories still remained. In spite of that travail, the Thais continue to smile warmly, as it is practically their national pastime. They have the good fortune of living in one of the loveliest places on earth, blessed with an incredible landscape, a prosperous, predominantly rural population, and a rich melding of cultures. For the most part, the Andaman Coast is not overrun with tourism, other than Phuukèet and several island resorts. Traaṅ, where I lived for 2007, was particularly low-key. This region does have a dark and disturbing side as well—though it does not hold this distinction exclusively—that is (an often violent) commercial exploitation of people and resources.

I resided for more than one year in Baaṅ Pâw: a village situated two kilometers from Kantaṅ Town, an important port and market town in Traaṅ Province, and a convenient location for the work that I carried out in the lower west-coast provinces. I also lived for several months in Râamàad, which is situated a bit further north of Baaṅ

Pâw, and was accessible to the upper bounds of my research area. Life in those two communities offered very different perspectives into southwest Thailand society. Baan Pâw, though rural and agricultural, lies close to urban and suburban areas around Kantaᅇ and Traaᅇ, with a mainly Thai-speaking Muslim population that is situated amid longstanding Buddhist, Chinese, and South Asian communities.<sup>13</sup> As with many Muslim villages in the region, the Islamic *dakwah tabligh* have built a strong presence there in recent decades, resulting (according to locals) in a relatively austere social life and eradication of many so-called “un-Islamic” folk practices.

In contrast, Râamàad was until recent decades an isolated, coastal village that, prior to the 1980s, was several hours’ boat journey from the nearest market town. Today, though linked to the mainland by a bridge and new roads, it is still a thirty minute drive by car from the nearest urban area, and one hour to either Kràbii or Traaᅇ, the nearest cities. A significant part of Râamàad’s now-Thai-speaking Muslim population descends from Sàtuun Malays whose legacies appear in many Malay words that sprinkle their Southern Thai dialect and in their extant cultural practices. Unlike Baan Pâw, Râamàad has a strong community spirit. Residents meet regularly to discuss local issues, help plant each other’s rice fields, collectively maintain their public spaces, host village and district festivals, and have formed numerous agricultural and cottage-industry cooperatives. One of these, *Phÿyn Phátthánaa* (discussed earlier in this chapter), is dedicated to the preservation of performance traditions introduced by their early-twentieth-century forbears, including *r’óᅇᅇ ᅇéᅇᅇ*, *líkee paa*, and *silat gayung* martial arts. Through participation in festivals, cultural performances, seminars on rural practices, nature

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13. The South Asian community has existed in Kantaᅇ since the nineteenth century. Its members descend from immigrant textile traders from present-day Pakistan.

outings, and affiliations with academic institutions around Thailand, they promote Râamàad to outsiders as a prosperous and harmonious model for rural Thailand. Though conservative religious ideology has made inroads in the community in recent decades, villagers generally eschew the Islamic *dakwah tabligh* missionaries, viewing them as unwelcome to their felicitous balance of local traditions and religion.

## METHODS

I collected the historical and musical data for this study in two primary forms: (1) as oral histories from a diverse range of Thai- and Malay-speaking informants along the Andaman Coast and in northwest Malaysia, including current and retired *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* performers, patrons, and their relatives whose experiences collectively date from the 1930s until the present; and (2) through observations and audiovisual documentations of *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* performances. My methods used to analyze *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* rhythmic and melodic repertoire are described at the beginning of Chapters 6 and 7.

From oral records collected through interviews, I constructed genealogical charts of performers from which a larger picture emerged of *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* as a socially uniting phenomenon that once linked numerous Andaman communities. Developing those charts—parts of which appear in Chapters 3 and 4, as well as in Appendix F—continually led to new discoveries related to the complex network of social connections that existed among performers during the postwar height of the form’s popularity—many of those connections were little-known among locals in terms of their larger implications. This process still provides new material, yet the opportunity to explore *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* through oral histories is not likely to last much longer, since surviving performers’ memories weaken and they pass away, as a number of primary informants have during the course of my

research.

This historiography has presented several challenges as it comprises many disparate oral accounts that have provided insights into very narrow segments of a larger *ρώχη ηέεη* chronicle, each limited to the individual informant’s purview. An adequate inquiry into this history necessitates two perspectives: one diachronic, to show transformations that occurred to *ρώχη ηέεη* over the twentieth century; and one synchronic, to explain the coexistence of diverse styles. Addressing those challenges has required interviews with a large number of Thai- and/or Malay-speaking performers and other community members from several generations. A full study of *ρώχη ηέεη*’s history needed to encompass a wide geographical region, and provide data to construct detailed genealogies (an area that I will address in the following section). It was a process that constantly evolved, needed frequent reevaluation, and repeatedly led to new areas.

Telling the story of Abu Qasim—an itinerant *ρώχη ηέεη* pioneer whose legacy is recounted throughout these pages—is a case in point for piecing together such historical data. He was an individual who many informants knew personally, but few were aware of the scope of his legacy, his role in introducing *ρώχη ηέεη* to southwest Thailand, and the extensive path he had traveled in doing so. I first heard his name from Lat Khlōndii, who early in our first meeting informed me (in his colloquial Andaman Malay), “*orang pertama bawa ρώχη ηέεη nama Qasim* [the first to bring *ρώχη ηέεη* was named Qasim].” Although I did not realize then its full significance, as this study grew to encompass communities throughout the region, I repeatedly heard similar sounding names—Bu Qasim, Qasim Prīaη, and Ma’asem—mentioned to me as founding teachers of *ρώχη ηέεη*, until it became clear that they were one and the same left-handed, hearing-impaired

pioneer violinist from Langkawi.

Certain challenges arose when trying to represent these data in a manner that would best portray the bilingual character of the fieldwork area, and show language and cultural transformations over time. I considered using terms that would immerse the reader in Malay for *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*'s early period, and replacing them with Thai for the postwar era—a writing style that would have presented a general (and idealized) depiction of social and linguistic transformations, but might have given the impression that those changes were clearly demarcated or uniform across the region, which they were not. With so many voices contributing to these accounts, verbatim expressions could not capture every nuance, or stand for the whole, and an attempt to include each one would have resulted in a hodgepodge that would have muddled the text. Ultimately, I opted for certain terms to describe particular phenomena—such as *jalan bangsai* (performing excursions), *caŋwà* (rhythm), and *rooŋ* (performance space)—while noting their Malay or Thai equivalents, and providing both in the glossary of terms in Appendix A.

Writing a comprehensive *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* history was another challenge of perhaps impossible magnitude, as there were so many performers and performing communities within the Andaman (other than the most significant and well-known ones presented here) that could have been the basis for several more chapters. The data that comprise these histories are formed from contributions of dozens of individuals, several of whom are introduced to the reader through biographical data that appear in extended footnotes in later chapters, and whose accounts of significant people, places, events, and past *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* practices have been particularly detailed and informative.

## LOCATING THIS RESEARCH

This dissertation contributes to Thai music studies in two areas that are currently deficient: (1) it brings attention to the south of Thailand, a region that has received little to date, and (2) uses a cross-border approach that takes into account close ties that many of the local performance traditions have to northern Malaysia. It is the first English-language look at *rǒng hǎeng* in southwest Thailand, and the most extensive in any language. Its historical account of *rǒng hǎeng*, and descriptions and analyses of its song and dance repertoires, joins works by authors who have written on various aspects of other local forms that have included *likee paa* (Preecha 1995), *nǎng tǎluy* (Smithies 1972, Paritta 1980, Dowsey-Magog 2002, 2005), *manoora* (Nicolas 1924, Ginsburg 1972, Tianchai 1999, Guelden 2005, Parichat 2006) as well as *rǒng hǎeng* (Sathaphon 1986, Liangprasit 1992, Klin 1995, Phongsathon 2005, Ross 2009, 2011). Though this list is not comprehensive, it shows more of a focus (of published works, at least) on forms that are most associated with Buddhist communities in the central and central-east provinces of the south, than those of the southwest Andaman coast.

For Malaysian studies of music, the cross-border approach is just beginning to appear in studies looking at relationships between Borneo and the south Philippines (such as recent work by Mohd Anis and Hanafi Hussin 2011), and *manoora* on west and east coast borders of Thailand (Ang 1997, Johnson 1999). I see this study as a natural complement to Tan's works on *bangsawan* (1993, 1995) and *ronggeng* (2005), as it not only provides a picture of what happened when those forms circulated from the city to the countryside, but also describes forms that developed at the same time, in different parts of the region.

Beyond Southeast Asia, in the broader strands of ethnomusicological studies, this dissertation deals with roles of kinship and social groups in musical dissemination as a small number of authors have (Neuman's 1990 study of North Indian musicians, and Finnegan 1989 in England are two examples). It contributes to a growing literature concerned with music in border regions (see Paredes 1958, Madrid 2008, and Ragland 2009, on the U.S.-Mexican border, Baker 2010 on Croatia and Serbia, Spinetti 2005 on Tajikistan, and Béhague 2000), and gives new case studies of transnational circulation, and transformations between popular and traditional forms (e.g., Manuel 1990, Sarkissian 2000).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

*Rόχη ηέεη* scholarship is limited to several works by Thai researchers, writing in Thai, that have appeared since the late 1980s and focus on certain regions, performing communities, or performance practices. Their works are examined below. They do not, in my opinion, satisfactorily explore connections between *ρόχη ηέεη* and its antecedents in Malaya and its neighbors. To this objective, the subsequent section looks at some works from a comparatively larger body of scholarly literature on music and society in Malaysia and Indonesia, which offers useful points of reference for this study, allowing for comparisons of musical repertoires and their sources, and helping to understand how *ρόχη ηέεη* fits into a larger pattern of indigenized social dance forms incorporating folk and popular music that emerged in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. A third area looks at literature that deals with geography and society.

## *South Thailand*

Literature on Andaman *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɲéɛŋ* comprises a limited number of published works and theses that are concerned with Thai- and Malay-language poetic texts (Liangprasit 2535, Klin 2538), social mixing among Muslims and Buddhists in Traaŋ Province (Sathaphon 2533), case studies of performing communities in Phuukèet (Phongsathon 2548) and Sàtuun (Kitichai 2549), as well as two general information entries for *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɲéɛŋ* in the *Encyclopedia of Southern Thai Culture* (Sathaphon and Wian 2529), only one of which focuses on the Andaman style. (The other deals with an east-coast Malay-language style that is very similar to *rɔ̀ŋgeng*.) Several Thai authors are disposed to use language which comes from official state discourses and contributes to the marginalization of local minority communities; two examples being the frequent use of the overly general and exonymic terms “Thai-Muslim” and “*chaawlee*” (sea people), the latter referring to the Orak Lawoi (see following chapter).

More problematic are issues of historiography contained in several of these works (even though history is, admittedly, not their primary focus). Sathaphon, Wian, and Klin portray *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɲéɛŋ* as a centuries-old practice originating from music introduced by Portuguese colonists to fifteenth-century Malacca or other Malay courts—views that likely come from similar normative perceptions of *rɔ̀ŋgeng* history found in Malaysia. The former two authors assert that *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɲéɛŋ* has been present in the region for “not less than two-hundred years,” offering two theories for its origin: that it (1) came from an (unidentified) Malay royal court, and/or (2) traveled up the coast from Penang (Sathaphon and Wian 2529: 8445). A similarly ambiguous explanation by Klin suggests that Portuguese colonists or Javanese introduced *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɲéɛŋ* (Klin 2538: 1). In contrast

with historical scholarship of *ronggeng*—such as Goldsworthy’s—which provides a plausible hypothesis of *ronggeng*’s connections to the Portuguese colonial era and pre-colonial Javanese forms, these authors’ extrapolations of *ronggeng* to explain *რჯიეეე* history all miss a crucial point: that regardless of connections to early colonial contact, *რჯიეეე* is a more recent phenomenon whose roots lie primarily in transformations to early twentieth-century popular Malayan dance hall and theater music, rather than an archaic form perpetuated from earlier centuries. Not to discount connections with the older roots, but recent history is more germane to what makes *რჯიეეე* distinctive.

English-language scholarly literature on South Thailand’s folk music is scant and does not include discussions of *რჯიეეე*. *Grove Music Online* devotes one paragraph to the region and gives mention to the common forms found among Thai-Buddhist communities—primarily associated with the eastern side of the central range—such as *manora* (*manoora*), *nang talung* (*nāṅ təlun*), *gaelaw* (*kaalǎw*), *pleng bok* (*phleey bóg*), and *pleng rong rua* (*phleey rǎw ryya*) (Panya 2010). *The Garland Encyclopedia of World Music: South East Asia* contains brief mention of local folk theater forms *manora* and *likay pa* (*líkee paa*), but its admission that “only two distinctly southern ensembles have been identified” (Miller and Williams eds. 1998: 304) reveals how under-represented this area is in music literature.

### *Malaysia and Indonesia*

Goldsworthy’s 1979 dissertation, *Melayu Music of North Sumatra*, is an historical study of *ronggeng* that looks at early records of social dance in the Indonesian archipelago, its relationship to colonial-era Portuguese and Spanish folk dance music, and the diffusion of *ronggeng*-like genres in Indonesia and Malaysia, as well as an

examination of one particular *ronggeng* form typical to North Sumatra. The latter is useful to this study for the comparisons it allows to be drawn among that region and neighboring areas of northwest Malaysia and Thailand. Takari's 1998 dissertation, *Ronggeng Melayu Sumatera Utara* [Malay *Ronggeng* of North Sumatra], like Goldsworthy's study, looks at repertoire and performance practice, but with a closer examination of North Sumatran social history, including the influence of local political formations and mixed immigrant communities upon what became known as the 'Deli' style of *ronggeng*, a popular form in Penang during the early- to middle-twentieth century.

Early twentieth-century *bangsawan* theater was a primary crucible for *ronggeng* repertoire and, while Goldsworthy and Takari both acknowledge this connection, studies by Tan and Cohen of Malayan and Indonesian urban theater forms provide fuller demonstrations of its significance. Tan's *Bangsawan* (1993) description of the theater, its mixed ethnic performers, impresarios, and cosmopolitan audiences in early twentieth-century Malaya, and its subsequent postwar, post-colonial transformation into the cultural heritage of ethnic Malays not only paints a picture of the period, but also offers a contrast to the folk styles (explored herein) for which it became a primary source. Similarly, Cohen's 2006 study, *The Komedi Stamboel*, shows the centrality of popular theater in the social life of contemporaneous Java, its professional connections to Malayan *bangsawan*, and its roots in the Parsi theater of Mumbai.

Malaysian music has a long tradition of assimilating elements from popular and rural styles, a characteristic it shares with *ρώγη ηέεη*. Matusky and Tan's *Music of Malaysia* (2004) surveys some of the most important forms of social popular music and

ensembles, including the pan-Malaysian *ronggeng* and *keroncong* as well as the regional styles *dondang sayang*, *ghazal*, and *dikir barat*. In his study of *zapin*, a rural Arab-influenced Malay dance found in the southern part of the Malay Peninsula, Mohammad Anis highlights certain transformations to the form as a “regional culture and performing [art]” that was integrated into “the national popular culture” (Mohammad Anis 1993:1), a phenomenon that, in certain respects, is the inverse process of *ρώχη ηέεη*’s transformation of popular and commercial songs and dances into a rural tradition. Few works deal with performance styles specific to northwest Malaysia. Rejab’s brief but germane 1962 article, “Tarian Changgong,” discusses history and performance style of the *canggung* social dance (whose related tune “Jaaṅooṅ” is examined in Chapters 6 and 7 of this dissertation), and its relationship to the extinct *makyung laut* folk theater—an important precursor to *ρώχη ηέεη* music and performance style that once abounded along the Malaya-Siam maritime border.

### *Geography and Society*

Several works provide rare insights into the geography and society of the early nineteenth-century Andaman region, and thus preface its transformation from a Malay- to a Thai-dominant society, including John Anderson’s *Political and commercial considerations relative to the Malayan peninsula, and the British settlements in the straits of Malacca* (1824), which contains an enumeration of the rivers and communities he encountered along the Andaman Coast; his *Mission to the East Coast of Sumatra* (1826), which is an account of East Sumatra with some intriguing ethnographic descriptions, including a list of “Tunes and Music” that could suggest connections between repertoire in that region and Malaya (Anderson 1826: 291-92); and Skinner’s 1985 *The Battle for*

*Junk Ceylon*, which is a translation and exegesis of a northwestern Malayan *sya'ir* (poem) chronicling an 1809-10 battle in Phuukèet, a series of events that would result in Siam's inexorable expansion southward and lead to the formation of the modern Thailand-Malaysia border.

Ethnographic studies of current Andaman society include several that explore traditional and modern practices of the once-migratory, strand-dwelling Orak Lawoi—central figures in the dissemination and revival of *róçh ηέεη*. One is Aporn's 1989 thesis on the biannual *lòçj ryya* festival in Lantaa's Hūa Lěem community (also one of the earliest sites for *róçh ηέεη*), which contains descriptions of one group's cultural practices that I have also observed among other maritime communities in Thailand and northwest Malaysia. Two studies of tourism and modernity's effects upon traditional lifestyles of Orak Lawoi communities on Lantaa Island (Granholm 2005) and Adang Island (Supin 2007) discuss the disappearance of older practices, of which *róçh ηέεη* is one. Horstmann's 2007 study of *dakwah tabligh*, "The Inculturation of a Transnational Islamic Missionary Movement: Tablighi Jamaat al-Dawa and Muslim Society in Southern Thailand," explores a twentieth-century regional phenomenon that has contributed to the loss of folk practices in many areas.

## CHAPTER LAYOUT

This dissertation consists of seven chapters encompassing two smaller studies: an historical one (Chapters 2 through 4), and a musicological one (Chapters 5 through 7). In the first part, Chapter 2 examines the region in which *róçh ηέεη* emerged and its musical antecedents, including a look at the life and legends of one *róçh ηέεη* pioneer, Abu Qasim. Chapter 3 examines the formation of early performing groups in southwest

Thailand and their dissemination of *ρώχη ηέεη* among island communities in the prewar and wartime years. Chapter 4 looks at the *ρώχη ηέεη* heyday during the 1940s and '50s: how it spread to mainland communities, and how sub-regional spheres of influence emerged and were defined by interactions between established island performing communities and the newer *tanjoη*-style ones on the neighboring mainland.

The musicological study begins with Chapter 5, which is an overview of the musical instruments found in the *ρώχη ηέεη* ensemble as well as performance techniques and musicians' roles within the ensemble. The final two chapters are quite lengthy, and for that reason, may be a challenge to the reader's patience. Their length is directly related to my initial ambitions for this project, to document the music, showing its diversity and account for the repertoire in as detailed a manner as possible. There may not be another opportunity, as *ρώχη ηέεη* is at risk of imminent extinction once the current generation of its performers passes away. With that in mind, and if the reader still wishes to press on, Chapter 6 is a study, categorization, and inventory of *ρώχη ηέεη* rhythms, and Chapter 7 explores *ρώχη ηέεη* poetic texts, its dances, and melodies, providing a categorization and inventory of the latter.

## CHAPTER 2. ROOTS OF ANDAMAN *ῥῶῶη ἠέειη*

This chapter looks at northwest Malaya and the Andaman region prior to *ῥῶῶη ἠέειη*'s introduction in the 1930s in order to provide historical and social contexts for the people and the land where the genre would eventually take root. In the scope of intersecting interests between Siamese and Malay kingdoms in the past two hundred years, the Andaman may be seen as a lightly populated rural backwater on the “overlapping margins” (Thongchai 1994:97) of two very different cultural and religious spheres. It was not sovereign among the pre-twentieth century patchwork of smaller regional kingdoms, but fell under the control of its stronger neighbors in Siamese Ligor (present-day Nakhon Sīithammārâad) and Kedah, a Malay state to the south. The Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909 established the present boundaries between present-day Thailand and Malaysia, and made the Andaman region an important territorial concern of the Thais, as it became increasingly separated from Malayan society and culture. As prologue to the discussion of *ῥῶῶη ἠέειη*, we learn about the people of this region: the Malays and Orak Lawoi islanders who were its earliest practitioners, and the mainland coastal Muslims who adopted it later.

The subsequent section returns to coastal northwest Malaya to look at the musical environment in the early twentieth century, explore the antecedents of early *ῥῶῶη ἠέειη* repertoire in popular urban *bangsawan* musical theater and *ronggeng* dance hall music, and the rural folk theaters and social dances of the Siam-Malaya border region. In relating *ῥῶῶη ἠέειη* to those genres, we learn that it came to Siam, at the outset, as a very Malayan style, but transformed in later years in multiple ways.

Thus, having established the connection between the music of northwest Malaya

and the people of southwest Thailand, the latter part of this chapter explores some of the bridges that linked the two: it looks at myths and legends from both sides of the border, where we find common themes of heroism, deception, and supernatural abilities; and practical transportation issues that would have confronted an itinerant musician such as Abu Qasim.

## REGIONAL POLITICS: KEDAH AND SIAM

The southernmost provinces of contemporary South Thailand—encompassing those situated on the Malaysian border and their immediate neighbors—may be seen as comprising three general areas (shown in Figure 7). One is the lower East Coast—sometimes referred to as the “deep south,” or in Thai, “the three border provinces” (*sǎam caṅwàd chajdeen*)—which comprises several predominantly Malay and Muslim provinces (Pattani, Yálaa, Náraathíwâat, and parts of Soṅkhlaă) that once formed the Pattani sultanate (and have been the site of recent communal violence). A second area encompasses the inland districts that straddle the central Nakhon Sîithammárâad mountain range and its adjoining agricultural areas, which were populated through a centuries-old network of Buddhist monasteries in Soṅkhlaă, Phátthaluṅ, Nakhon Sîithammárâad and Traaṅ. Those areas are predominantly Thai-speaking Buddhist, but have significant Muslim populations. A third area is the West Coast maritime region—the locus of this study—that was, until the mid-twentieth century, the least populated and least developed area in the South.



Figure 7. South Thailand: three geographical and cultural areas

Historically, the maritime regions of northwest Malaya and southwest Thailand were closely related. Their populations, though embracing various ethnic or religious identities (Malay, Thai, Orak Lawoi, Muslim, Buddhist, and ancestor/spirit worshiper, being among the most common), were united through common lifestyles, cultural practices, and region-wide kinship networks. The most salient divisions were political and religious ones between Muslim Malayan and Buddhist Siamese realms.

Siam, following the fall of its capital Ayutthaya to the Burmese in 1767, briefly withdrew its centuries-long suzerainty over the Andaman and several tributary Malay states along the southern margins of its empire. One of those states, Kedah, took advantage of that absence and extended its control over the region's trade,<sup>14</sup> up to the frontier with Burma, until new Siamese kings in Bangkok forcefully reestablished their

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14. The region's most profitable exports included tin, edible birds' nests and sea cucumbers (see Skinner 1985:3 and Anderson: 1824:69).

overlordship in the following years.

Kedah was one of the most Siamese of the Malay kingdoms on the peninsula, having for centuries been linked by proximity, royal intermarriage, and its large Siamese population.<sup>15</sup> However, it did not appear to have been, “either by writing or tradition (...) governed by Siamese Laws or Customs,” according to Francis Light, founder of British Penang (Anderson 1824:45). Even after it resumed its long-standing practice of sending tribute to its overlord, Kedah remained sovereign, though “not so much a unitary state as a confederation of territories” and “loosest with the northern territories, i.e., Langkawi, Lànjuu [Lànjuu], Setul [Sàtuun], Perlis,” et cetera (Skinner 1985:6).<sup>16</sup>

Notwithstanding Kedah’s brief expansion to Phuukèet in the late eighteenth century, the kingdom’s northern districts had generally comprised lands and islands to the south of the Traaŋ River, whereas Siamese interests, which had been mainly in control over the region’s tin and its main seaports, were expanding inexorably southward toward Kedah. As a result, the border dividing those two realms gradually became redefined over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and much of that change occurred within the lower Andaman (see Figure 2).

## THE ANDAMAN

Up until the twentieth century, much of the Andaman seacoast was a thinly populated wilderness. Small Orak Lawoi, Malay, and Siamese settlements dotted islands and riverine areas, typically comprised of anywhere from a few to several dozen homes

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15. Pattaanii, the northeasternmost Malay kingdom on the peninsula, also could fit that description.

16. Anderson observed in 1824 that Kedah historically “has submitted only to a certain limited dependence upon Siam, in no way derogating from her Sovereignty” (Anderson, *op. cit.*, 20).

(roughly a hundred and fifty inhabitants or less).

At the northern end of the region, Phuukèet stood out as a fair-sized and cosmopolitan trading post, attracting Indians, Chinese, Europeans, and others. During the late-eighteenth-century interregnum between Ayutthaya and Bangkok dynasties, one Kedah *laksmana* (admiral) briefly ruled over the island, but was reportedly ousted by locals for his despotism.<sup>17</sup> Siam returned to assert its control over the island as a western port for its trade with India and its chief extraction, tin ore, and fought several times with Burma, which tried on multiple occasions to extend its empire there. Clashes between those two powers resulted in the periodic destruction of Phuukèet's major trading posts and relocation of its population.<sup>18</sup>

According to Light, the area between Traaη and Phaηηaa included “a number of islands, [with] no Inhabitants, except the Orang Lauts, who navigate from Island to Island” (in Anderson, *op. cit.*, liv). Lying opposite the northern Traaη seacoast, Lantaa Island—which figures importantly in *ρόση ηέση* history from the 1930s onward—was described in the early nineteenth century as a small Orak Lawoi settlement.<sup>19</sup>

Traaη, situated roughly halfway between Phuukèet and Kedah, encompassed the area around a large river delta that provided a western port for the southern Siamese kingdom Ligor (now Nakhon Sîithammârâad Province, henceforth Nakhon). Its central location and ship-building industry made it an important staging area for Siamese attacks

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17. This event was described by Light in the 1780s and appears in Anderson, *op. cit.*, 69).

18. See, for example, Skinner's translation and analysis of the early nineteenth-century Kedah text, *Sya 'ir Sultan Maulana* (Skinner, *op. cit.*), which recounts events surrounding a Siamese and Malay expedition to evict Burmese forces from Phuukèet in 1809-10, and provides an often detailed look at the region during that era.

19. Anderson's description of Lontar as a “small River, frequented by parties of the Orang Laut occasionally” (*ibid.*, 139) likely refers to the mangrove estuary around Kò Klaaη and Khlóση Thom (see Chapter 4).

on Burma and Kedah in the early nineteenth century. A Malay to Thai shift in local power appears to have taken place during the early decades of the nineteenth century, moving from Talibong Island, which was a Malay and Orak Lawoi area at the river's mouth (and along major shipping lanes), to an inland riverine settlement at Khuan Thanii that was under Nakhon-Siamese control.<sup>20</sup> Occurring, as it did, at the fluctuating Malay-Siamese border of that time, the shift was one early manifestation of the large-scale Malay-to-Siamese transformation of the region that took place prior to and during the *ρώση ηέση* era.

Siamese presence increased in the southern Andaman during the first decades of the nineteenth century. This area, at the fringe of the Kedah kingdom, encompassed the Langkawi and Adang archipelagos, and coastal districts Sàtuun and Làjuu. Siam seized the latter two from Kedah in 1813 (thus moving the frontier to the doorsteps of Langkawi and Perlis), then invaded and brutally occupied the rest of the kingdom for twenty years, beginning in 1821. Upon its departure in 1842, Kedah was divided up again, with Perlis being turned into an independent principality, ostensibly as punishment for Kedah's earlier collusion with the Burmese. This border became permanent and, in 1909, was formalized in a treaty between Siam and the British, who went from holding a late eighteenth-century trading colony on Penang, to representing Kedah's affairs a century later.

To strengthen Siam's border and provide a bulwark against possible British claims, Sàtuun's governor invited an Acehnese immigrant named Kiri (Tok Kiri) and his

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20. According to the Sya'ir Sultan Maulana, "terang itu pegangannya (...) Trang was a dependency of Talibong" (Skinner, op. cit., 90-91), governed in 1809 by Raja Pangéran, who also received a Siamese title. The sya'ir's author refers to Talibong ships (like Kedah's) as "Malay" (ibid, 167) although their crews are "orang laut" (ibid, 101). A decade later, Anderson found "no inhabitants, but plenty of Deer, Buffaloes, &c." on the island (Anderson op.cit, 139).

companions to settle Nipis Island (Kḏ Lipèe) in the Adang Archipelago, a short distance from Langkawi, on the Siamese side of the frontier. Prior to his arrival in Adang, Tok Kiri had migrated from Kedah to Langkawi, Bulon, and Lantaa Islands (at the latter he married an Orak Lawoi woman), and apparently developed close ties with the Orak Lawoi, who joined him in significant numbers on Nipis, and formed one of their largest Andaman settlements. Tok Kiri became the Nipis headman and today, the deceased community leader is revered by the Orak Lawoi as an *orang megah*—a glorified person believed to possess extraordinary powers.<sup>21</sup>

#### ANDAMAN COAST POPULATIONS

*Ṛḓḓḓ ḡḡḡḡ* united Andaman communities of different ethnic and religious backgrounds.<sup>22</sup> It became established on Lantaa Island in a mixed Malay-speaking community of Malay and Orak Lawoi performers (the focus of Chapters 3 and 4), who lived together in the same or neighboring communities, shared cultural practices, and often intermarried. In the earliest days of the form, they honed their professional skills at dances hosted by Chinese shopkeepers, and later toured as troupes in Thai-speaking Muslim and Buddhist communities on the mainland. Concepts of identity were generally flexible; although people professed different religious faiths, those identities and their community affiliations could change according to one's situation. The following describes certain social aspects related to Andaman Muslim and Orak Lawoi communities who were central to *Ṛḓḓḓ ḡḡḡḡ*'s development.

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21. Supin (2007:10-11) summarizes Tok Kiri's migrations

22. This is the view of many *Ṛḓḓḓ ḡḡḡḡ* performers and the subject of Sathaphon's 1990 dissertation examining *Ṛḓḓḓ ḡḡḡḡ* as a medium for "social and cultural mixing" among Thai Buddhists and Muslims in Traaḡ Province.

### *Andaman Muslims*

Andaman Coast populations express various national, ethnic, and religious identities. This is a complexity that is often overlooked by their neighbors in Malaysia and Thailand, who have expectations that people in the region should conform to their own social discourses. Malaysians, for example, tend to see indigenous Muslims in south Thailand as part of a greater Malay family that encompasses much of mainland and maritime Southeast Asia, but do so through their somewhat homogeneous notions of Malay-ness.

Andaman Muslims have for centuries lived on the periphery of regional Malay (and Siamese, for that matter) kingdoms, and today do not share the cultural knowledge and practices that constitute the identity and authority of the modern Malaysian state. Up until the mid-twentieth century, they were recognized as two general groups: Malay-speaking islanders who self-identified as Malay, and Thai-speaking mainlanders who did not. In the postwar era (under pressure from Thai nationalist ideology) both groups recast themselves with the ethnically ambiguous, state-contrived moniker, “Thai Muslim,” and the use of Malay—the former *lingua franca* of maritime communities—mostly disappeared.

Thai-speaking Muslims populating coastal mainland areas see themselves as neither Malay nor Thai. They have been labeled with the exonym *samsam* by regional Malays (and by the British in their Malayan census records from the early 1900s)—a term that dates to the 1820s or earlier, and means ‘half-half,’ ‘mixed,’ or ‘Malays that do not speak Malay,’ though many are not aware of the term. In Malaysia, though *samsam* is no longer used officially, it is still understood, in quasi-ethnic terms, to connote a

particular marginal group found in Kedah and Perlis with a reputation for banditry in the early twentieth century.<sup>23</sup>

Non-Muslim Thais frequently refer to Muslims as *khèeg* ‘guest,’ a general term for Malayan, Indonesian, South Asian, or Arabian Muslims (their respective languages are all ambiguously referred to as *phaasǎ khèeg*, ‘*khèeg* languages’). More specifically, the term *khèeg* may connote Malay- and Thai-speaking Muslims on Thailand’s southern border with Malaysia. It appears in the names of a Malayan barrel drum ‘*klɔɔŋ khèeg*’ and a traditional Malayan costume ‘*chúd khèeg*,’ and it describes singing (*rɔɔŋ ñéey* and other forms) in Malay, ‘*khàp khèeg*.’

In addition to national discourses that shaped local identities in the postwar era, beginning around the early 1970s the region saw the advent of a more doctrinaire and comparatively austere practice of Islam, propagated initially by *dakwah* (missionary) groups from South Asia and Iran. These groups were seen to possess an authority that derived from their connections to transnational religious networks, which eclipsed local Islamic institutions (i.e., the *pondok* religious academies that produced most local *imam* ‘religious leaders’) that many came to view as parochial and unsophisticated. As these *dakwah* groups made their presence felt in local affairs, social lives of Andaman Muslim communities were transformed; folk practices—including *rɔɔŋ ñéey* and other entertainment forms—were labeled *haram* ‘forbidden,’ and in many areas they were

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23. Several authors have written about *samsam*, including Kobkua on their origins and development, Kuroda on their social practices and marginality within Malayan society, and Cheah on the *samsam*, banditry, and economic hardships in the 1920s (Kuroda 2002, Kobkua 2000, Cheah 1985 and 1988). An intriguing appearance of the term appears in Anderson’s 1823 mention of a tune entitled “Samsam” in eastern Sumatra musical repertoire, which he refers to as one of “[t]heir most admired tunes” (Anderson 1826:291), and another tune entitled “Siam,” though it is not clear if those terms bear any relationship to Kedah and southwest Thailand folk melodies.

abandoned completely. Religious differences that were once seen casually among mixed communities increasingly became, in some Muslims' views, important to defining and distinguishing their community from their neighbors.

### *Orak Lawoi*

Orak Lawoi is an endonym meaning 'sea people'—a cognate with the Malay term *orang laut* and equivalent to the Thai *chaaulee*—that refers to the network of strand-dwelling migrant fishing communities who populate the islands of southwest Thailand between Phuukèet and Langkawi. According to an Orak Lawoi origin tradition, their ancestors once lived at Gunung Jerai (Kedah Peak),<sup>24</sup> and, while that area today is overwhelmingly Malay, and no longer has an *orang asli* (indigenous people) population, there is evidence that supports this belief. Anderson noted in 1824 that one particular group of Semang (an indigenous Malayan people) “formerly inhabited all the Islands of the Archipelago [in] small parties... [and are] still to be found on many of them” and were found “most numerous in the interior of Ian [Yan], a small River to the Northward of the Mirbow [Merbok], near the lofty mountain Jerei [Jerai], in the Quedah territory” (Anderson 1824:xxxviii)—the precise point of origin described by a number of Orak Lawoi informants I interviewed. Furthermore, through Anderson we learn that the group's practices seemed closer to those of the Malays than those of other indigenous people, and that there were significant contacts between the two—characteristics of Orak Lawoi today, as well as during Tok Kiri's time.

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24. In a twice-yearly tradition, Orak Lawoi groups send a small ritual boat (*pelacak*) to sea, 'returning' it to Gunung Jerai, accompanied by songs, including one that beseeches an eponymous *datuk* (guardian spirit) of that mountain for forgiveness and protection. See Aporn's 1989 study of this ritual in Hūa Lĕem Klačj Village, Lantaa Island.

Thai-speakers often refer to the Orak Lawoi with the official State euphemism “Thai Māj,” or ‘new Thais,’ a blanket term for borderland minority peoples in Thailand who have been accepted as Thai citizens. A few refer to them inaccurately as Mōkēen—another regional sea-dwelling community near the Myanmar-Thailand border—which some locals use as ridicule to connote ‘uncivilized.’ Some see them as related to other *orang laut* found throughout the Indonesian Archipelago; though, in actuality, the Orak Lawoi encompass a conglomeration of past migrants from Malaya, Sumatra, and Thailand to the former fringes of society.

### RÓΩΩ DĒĒD’S MUSICAL ANTECEDENTS IN NORTHWEST MALAYA

Three areas in early twentieth-century Malaya were significant sources for the first *róωη ηέεη* repertoire. (Chapters 3 and 4 examine its dissemination in Thailand.)

There was Perlis, a small mainland border state, was a regional center of commerce and culture where prototypical *róωη ηέεη* social music and dance was created by local performers from a combination of Malayan popular and local folk repertoires. Perlis attracted would-be local performers from Langkawi who went there to apprentice in their craft, as well as traveling troupes from Malaya and Siam, whose performances brought exchanges of styles and repertoires.

Penang Island, to the south, provided northwest Malaya with much of its popular *rōggeng* repertoire through the *bangsawan* theater and contemporaneous social dances, which were likely carried north to Kedah and Perlis by traveling *bangsawan* and *rōggeng* troupes, as well as through commercially distributed gramophone recordings of *bangsawan* singers.

Langkawi Island was the home of *róωη ηέεη* pioneer Abu Qasim as well as a place

of long-term residency for several early propagators of the form in Thailand. Prior to the Second World War, it was a rural, often lawless backwater of Kedah and peripheral to most of the region's folk performance activity. There were no native *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* troupes at that time. Local folk performance consisted of several theater groups scattered around the island and traveling *bangsawan* theater troupes from the mainland that sometimes performed at the larger settlements.

Early *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* musical repertoire arose from two Malay-language styles present in Perlis during the 1920s and '30s:

One was a pan-Malayan, often Western-sounding, popular *ronggeng* song genre that came from *bangsawan* theater and appeared in *ronggeng* (or *joget*) social dances and on gramophone records. It emerged in the major urban entertainment centers in Penang and Singapore (among other places), and was carried to rural northwest Malaya by traveling troupes, who performed it at fairs and other social events. Over time, those popular tunes became part of the local musical vernacular.

The other major source was regional folk music of Perlis and Kedah that arose in a heterogeneous musical environment of Malay and Thai folk theaters, popular social dances and songs, *tok selampit* and *awang belanga* rhapsodists, and shamanistic rituals. While little documentation exists to help us understand the folk entertainments of that place and time, locals frequently cite *makyung laut* folk theater and *canggung* social dance as its leading forms. The former may be considered a source of *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ*, whereas the latter developed concurrently with it.

### *Makyung Laut*

*Makyung laut* was one of the more popular rural entertainment forms in the

Andaman Coast region during the 1920s. It was a shamanistic and entertainment folk theater performed outdoors, “in the round,” in a temporary, typically bamboo and thatch pavilion, by troupes of eight to ten musicians and dancers, accompanied by a melodic dual-reed aerophone or spike fiddle, two barrel drums, a gong, and various metallic and/or bamboo idiophones. *Makyung laut* was most likely a localized form of *makyung*, introduced to the region by itinerant troupes from Pattaanii and Kelantan who actively toured Malaya and Indonesia around that same period—the *laut* (meaning ‘sea’) in its title connoted an idiomatic style of island and coastal communities. Numerous *ρώνη ηέειη* performers had parents or other relatives who were *makyung laut* performers prior to the Second World War, and who recognize elements of its dance and music retained in other subsequent local forms, including *ρώνη ηέειη* and *canggung*.

While Kelantanese *makyung* has been the subject of a considerable amount of scholarship (see, for example, Malm 1971, Ghulam-Sarwar 1976 and 1992, and Matusky 1994), *makyung laut*, which has effectively disappeared in recent generations, has not. Rejab briefly mentions *makyung laut* as a precursor to the Perlis *canggung* social dance (described below)—a view also held by local performers—but calls it a “Siamese form played at the edge of the beach” (Rejab 1962:8). While this description acknowledges the form’s local character, it obscures the fact that in Malaya as well as southwest Thailand, *makyung laut* had been a Malay-language form, played primarily by Andaman Muslims and Orak Lawoi.

### *Canggung*

*Canggung* began as a folk dance tune (“Canggung” or “Ala Canggung”) and evolved into a localized *ronggeng*-like amalgamation of various tunes and dance

rhythms. It was not a source for *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*, as the two were contemporaneous and, in the early years of their development, each had similar styles. They used the same ensemble type (a violin, two frame drums, and a gong, accompanied by male and female singer-dancers), were typical to rural communities, and were both mediums for entertainment and courtship exchanges. The two forms initially had a shared repertoire taken from local folk tunes and the popular Malayan songs of the day. However, over time and space, their repertoires diverged; *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* developed in a distinct socio-linguistic area from *canggung*, carried there by a small pool of primary teachers, where it remained isolated from postwar Malayan social dance styles.

According to Rejab, *canggung* originated in *makyung laut*, from a teacher who lived on Panjang Island (on the opposite side of the nearby Siamese border).<sup>25</sup> He taught *canggung* dance and song to several young Perlis women from one village, who practiced it while pounding and dehusking rice. *Canggung* groups appeared during the Japanese occupation, at which time it was popular in rural communities as well as among princes in the Perlis and Kedah royal houses (Rejab 1962: 37-38). Sheppard credits the invention of *canggung* to a man named Pak Man in 1945—an assertion complicated by the fact that the term *canggung* appears in a 1942 Penang newspaper advertisement where it is called “Ronggeng Perlis” (see Yachiyo 1942)—but he does not mention *makyung laut* (Sheppard 1972: 91).

## MYTHS AND LEGENDS IN *RÓɔŋ ɣÉɛŋ*'S FOUNDING

In the absence of detailed knowledge about *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*'s historical roots in Malaya,

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25. This most likely refers to Kò Jaaw (Panjang ‘Long’ Island) in Puujuu District, Sàtuun Province, on the Perlis border, rather than the larger and better-known Kò Jaaw in Phaŋŋaa Province.

performers and audience members acknowledge its Malayan roots, and have a sense that it is very old, in part due to several founding *róʔŋ h́ééŋ* myths that have circulated in the greater community since the form's earliest days on Lantaa. Three such stories about *róʔŋ h́ééŋ*'s founding were told to me by elderly Andaman performers and are transcribed below. They have certain themes that link them to other Southeast Asian folklore, and were likely imported; however, there is little evidence of how these stories came to the Andaman.

All three tales recount an abduction of a spouse by a foreign king or queen, to their captor's country, and the heroic journey of their partner to rescue him or her, using *róʔŋ h́ééŋ* as a means of deception. The tidbits of *róʔŋ h́ééŋ*'s past that we may glean through them tell us that it was danced, accompanied by certain instruments, and that when it was performed, people became inebriated. These stories portray triumphs of commoners over unjust royals from foreign lands to the east (China) and west (the Middle East), point to supernatural revelation, and provide connections between present rituals and their origins.

*Siti Abedah founded róʔŋ h́ééŋ. The handsome Malay, Seta Abidin, was her husband. He was coveted by seven Chinese princesses but did not want to go with them. So they kidnapped him and returned to China. The princesses reiterated their desire for him but he refused. He said he could not be with them because he was Malay and they were Chinese. The princesses then put him in a well as torture and to die. Siti Abedah followed her husband to China on a horse. She dressed as a róʔŋ h́ééŋ dancer to find him. When the Chinese were drunk at a performance, she looked for her husband and found him in the well. She carried him to the back of the horse and the two escaped from China to return home.*

—Lat Khlóŋdii, Ĺém Phoo (learned this story from Tok Intan in Tanjung Village, Lantaa)

*A widowed Chinese queen kidnapped Abdullah, the husband of Aminah, and took him from Myyŋ Thêet back to China.<sup>26</sup> Aminah and her family pursued them in a*

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26. Myyŋ Thêet, 'foreign nation,' is an ambiguous term, like *khèeg*, that in this case likely

*boat, carrying a violin, ramánaa drums, and a gong. They reached the port in China and docked there. There they stayed, playing rṓṓḡ ḡḡḡḡ music. Villagers came to see them when they heard the music. They asked Aminah and her family to come ashore and took them to the palace. At the palace, Aminah saw her husband but he did not recognize her. She invited him to the boat the following day. Upon her instructions, her three relatives started the engine when he went aboard the boat and began to return home. The Chinese wife followed in her boat and caught up with Aminah and Abdullah. She fought with Aminah until the latter cut off both of her hands. The dying queen declared that whoever gives her offerings on the eighth and fifteenth lunar nights will be rewarded with silver and gold. She then turned into a spirit.*

—Bumee Takimchi, Kṓ Sṡi Bṓṓḡḡḡ (learned this story in his village)

*Rṓṓḡ ḡḡḡḡ came from Jerusalem (Myḡḡ “Lei Latum Kradat”). Tunku Brahim was its first teacher. He received Allah’s inspiration. Phraya [nobleman] Namrud wanted Kadiya’s husband and took him. Kadiya sought help from Brahim to get her husband back. Two women and four men went into the forest, Brahim among them. While asleep there, Brahim received a revelation from Allah telling him how to perform rṓṓḡ ḡḡḡḡ. He heard everything in his ears and remembered it all. He told his children about this revelation and instructed them to go and practice. They practiced until they all learned, then went to Namrud’s home to perform. Namrud was having fun and became very drunk, at which point Kadiya’s husband took the opportunity to flee.*

—Saman Tiṡsaṡḡḡḡ, Bubooj (learned this story from Una Gabai in Tanjung Village, Lantaa)

### *A Musical Johnny Appleseed*

The legends of rṓṓḡ ḡḡḡḡ’s founding have a modern counterpart in the peregrinations of rṓṓḡ ḡḡḡḡ’s foremost pioneer, Abu Qasim. Although knowledge of his story is not widespread among the population (neither, for that matter, are the previous myths), there are a number of communities in which his name still resounds, as a man from Langkawi who played, and spent his life traveling in southwest Thailand, and spreading rṓṓḡ ḡḡḡḡ songs on his violin like a musical Johnny Appleseed. Extant data of his life come from personal accounts from people who knew him during the period he spent in Siam/Thailand, from around 1936 until his death in the early 1960s, but do not

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refers to either India or the Malay kingdoms to the south.

tell us of his life prior to his arrival in Thailand.

Although the earlier period of his life is unknown, Abu Qasim’s musical background can be partly inferred through an understanding of northwest Malayan society and its local folk performance styles around the mid-1930s. A summary of what is known or may be speculated includes the following: He came from Langkawi but, as oral data have established, Langkawi did not have *róωη ηέεη*; so he likely went to learn elsewhere, possibly to Perlis because it was common for Langkawi performers to do so, and the folk songs he played (such as “Canggung”) were typical of that region. He also played a style of *gendang silat* music found in Kedah and Perlis.<sup>27</sup>

The reasons Abu Qasim left Malaya to spend the rest of his life in Thailand can only be the subject of conjecture; though, often when people migrated long distances and never returned home, they were fleeing from an unsettled dispute, debts, or homicide.<sup>28</sup> He traveled to Lantaa Island, a common stop along regional sea lanes at that time. While some islanders or their antecedents had migrated from or spent time in northwest Malaya, there is no evidence that Abu Qasim had such ties. It is possible that he stopped there en route to another destination, such as Phuukèet (where he later spent many years and ultimately died), but ended up staying longer, teaching *róωη ηέεη* and seeing the establishment of the first local *róωη ηέεη* performing community.

Abu Qasim sowed seeds of *róωη ηέεη* in local communities wherever he went. His travels and sojourns represent significant steps in the propagation of *róωη ηέεη* from

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27. Personal correspondence from Dollah Dibut, Khlóωη Rεεδ

28. I mention homicide here because several performers, and others interviewed for this study, had antecedents who arrived in the Andaman as fugitives from a killing, looking to establish a new life. While these people introduced some new folk practices to Andaman communities, they do not represent a significant part of the *róωη ηέεη* community, nor does this information imply that *róωη ηέεη* was, in any form, a fugitive music.

Lantaa to the rest of southwest Thailand beginning in the late 1930s. While much of this propagation was carried out by his students, Abu Qasim was responsible for establishing at least three important regional *róḳḳḳḳ ḡḡḡḡ* centers—one on Lantaa, a second on Kò Cam, and a third on Sireh Island in Phuukèet—all within several years of his arrival in Thailand. His legacy is to have introduced *róḳḳḳḳ ḡḡḡḡ* to communities which had never witnessed that type of music and dance and, through his entertaining and teaching, to have prepared the way for the form to gain wide acceptance as its performers and audiences expanded in number in the postwar years.

#### *Langkawi Legends of Abu Qasim*

Among some Langkawi natives, both performers and non-performers, the name Abu Qasim elicits oral legends of an individual recognized as the one-time apotheosis of violinists. Common to several versions of those stories is that he was a young man who traveled to Perlis to learn violin, and returned later as a master of the instrument, a *ronggeng* ensemble leader, and an *orang megah*.

One informant, a local folk performer, recounted how his father knew a violin player named Abu Qasim (they were from the same village and were around the same age), who told him stories, in some detail, of how he associated with a gangster—who, coincidentally, was also named Abu Qasim.<sup>29</sup> According to the father, the gangster named Abu Qasim could magically transport the performers underwater, inside a protective

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29. Abu Qasim (alternate spellings could include Abu Kasim or Abu Kassim) was not an uncommon name. In addition to the violinist and gangster, there was an Abu Qasim from Minangkabau (West Sumatra) who reportedly first settled the straits separating Langkawi and Pulau Dayang Bunting that now bear his name (personal correspondence Mahat Diman). Qasim (presumably of Penang) is also the name of a singer who appears on one of Fred Gaisberg's pioneer 1903 sound recordings.

bubble, to play around the region, so that police and pirates could not catch them. The performer named Abu Qasim in the story disappeared around the time this informant was born, in the mid-1930s.

Another informant—an occasional, non-specialist drummer—heard stories of a well-known violinist named Abu Qasim who traveled the islands from Langkawi to Phuukèet, and played so mellifluously that sea cucumbers would crawl out from the sea, and birds would descend from the sky to listen to him. He also heard that Abu Qasim died on Lantaa and the *orang laut* took him for burial in Phuukèet, which is partly true; Abu Qasim died among the Orak Lawoi on Phuukèet, and was buried in their cemetery.

The Abu Qasim of the previous accounts and other anecdotes survives only in the imaginations of living Langkawians who imbue ‘him’ with mythological qualities that reach beyond the storytellers’ embellishments to reflect their own lives and environments. The narrator and subject of these tales share the same home village or travel similar journeys. They have common underworld associations, as in the first account, and live as *orang laut*, literally, ‘sea people,’ in the second.

Although it may be tempting to interpret these legends as confirming a connection between the Abu Qasim of Langkawi legends and the Abu Qasim who later pioneered *ρώνη ηέεη* in southwest Thailand, there is no conclusive proof that they were the same musician or even that the former was anything more than an aggregation of several musical (or other) personalities whose histories were particularized in Langkawi folklore. But even as circumstantial as these connections may appear to be, they not only set the stage for the accounts that follow, but set forth a diachronic connection between a violinist named Abu Qasim who disappeared from Langkawi, and the Abu Qasim who

arrived on Lantaa at more or less the same time.

## MODES OF SEA TRANSPORTATION

Abu Qasim almost certainly traveled to Siam by boat, as sea and river travel were still the most common modes of transportation among Andaman communities. (Even with today's well-constructed, mostly paved, and comprehensive network of roads, travel among littoral communities in the region by land is circuitous in comparison with sea travel.) Those routes carried communications and commerce, united kinship networks, and the earliest *ρώνη ηέεη* communities.

Before motorized sea travel became widespread in the 1950s, most people traveled in *perahu*, narrow wooden oar- or sail-powered vessels that could carry a dozen or more passengers. *Perahu* shared the sea lanes with larger *tongkang* merchant vessels and charcoal barges that plied among kilns situated in the mangrove forests dotting the islands and mainland.

A trip by *perahu* could take anywhere from several hours to a couple of days, depending upon the distance traveled and seasonal winds. On longer journeys, travelers typically made overnight stops. There were fewer boats in those days, however, so even a short trip could turn into one lasting weeks or months while waiting for onward transportation.

One early *ρώνη ηέεη* performer, Hassan Rasoojbut (Jan), lived for years on Langkawi and returned to Lantaa with his wife and three children at the onset of the Second World War. Their trip followed a common route but, with few available boats, it

took over one and a half years.<sup>30</sup> For comparison, their journey is shown in Figure 8 together with the 1809 route of Kedah's naval fleet, documented in *Sya'ir Sultan Maulana* (the arrows indicate places mentioned), in order to show the coastal passage that Abu Qasim most likely traveled. The first leg of Hassan's family's trip took them to Pulau Babi (Kò Mu, Kò Sukon) on a trader's private vessel. There, they were forced to wait several months until another boat became available and took them to Haað Jaaw, near Talibong (Kò Libon) at the mouth of the Traaᅇ River, to endure a similarly long layover. A third boat took them to Pulau Mutia (Pulau Mutiara, Kò Múg) where, once again, they spent months waiting for a boat to deliver them to Lantaa.<sup>31</sup>

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30. The same journey today would take only five or six hours in a motorized speedboat.

31. Hassan Rasoojbut was an avid *róᅇᅇ ᅇéᅇᅇ* singer and dancer and member of the Lantaa group that first performed *róᅇᅇ ᅇéᅇᅇ* in Bangkok in 1955. His son, Ahmad Rasoojbut, who was twelve at the time, recounted the story of their journey in a personal communication. Ahmad (b.1930) was born on Langkawi Island. He was the eldest of three siblings to a father Hassan (Jan), a Lantaa-area native and economic migrant, and mother Yah, from Kuala Kedah. The family lived in Padang Matsirat Village until the Japanese invasion of Malaya in 1941, then fled over the course of more than one year, by way of a series small boat trips that carried them to Lantaa. Though Ahmad was not a professional performer, he grew up among many of them (including his father who sang and danced *róᅇᅇ ᅇéᅇᅇ*) on Lantaa and nearby Pulau Dapur. His recollections provided this study with a significant source of data on 1940s and '50s *róᅇᅇ ᅇéᅇᅇ* and the genealogies of its performers.

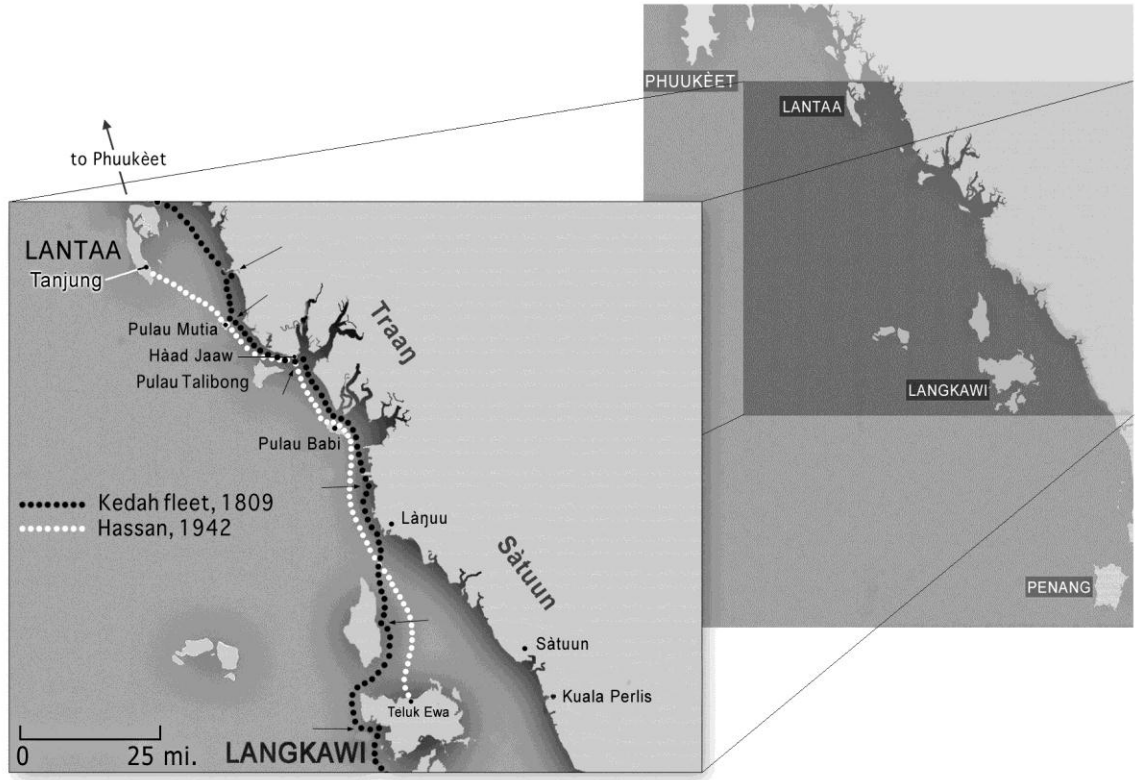


Figure 8. Routes from Langkawi to Lantaa taken by a Kedah fleet in 1809 and Hassan Rasoojbut in 1941

While Abu Qasim likely traveled a similar route to Lantaa as Hassan, perhaps calling at some of the same islands and littoral communities, we may surmise that he did not take as long to do so, primarily because he had a well-known propensity for spreading *ρώνη ηέειη* that would have certainly resulted in a legacy of performers and/or performing communities springing up along the way, prior to their appearance on Lantaa. However, none did.

The boat is an object of central importance to maritime communities and appears as an object or theme throughout regional folklore, in poetic texts, and oral histories, as illustrated in part by the following two examples. In the first, an early Lantaa *ρώνη ηέειη* performer Lat Khlōṅṅdii tells about the disappearance of his group’s boat during a trip to play on the mainland in 1939. The second is an often-heard sung *ρώνη ηέειη* stanza in

which a man's desire to see the woman he loves is frustrated by a lack of a boat to carry him.

*I was twelve the first time I traveled to perform outside of Lantaa. Wa Yusuf brought eight of us to play in Nám Róon for three or four days.<sup>32</sup> Saman played rebana along with Una from Kò Cam and Pendek. I played gong. The dancers were Mijjah, Reah, and Halui. We played at the village headman's house. While we were there, a crazy person stole our boat and hid it in the mangrove swamp. They told us it had been taken for repairs. There were no other boats so we had to stay in the area and perform for a month until our boat came back. I think they liked róon ηέην and wanted to keep us there.*

—Lat Khlóonjii, Lěem Phoo<sup>33</sup>

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32. 'Wa,' short for *tua* (old), designates the eldest in a family or generically describes an older person. In this case, Wa Yusuf was the eldest brother of Lat's mother. He took them to perform in Bò Nám Róon, Khlóonj Thom District, Kràbii. See also the explanation of 'Long' that appears as a footnote in the following chapter.

33. Lat Khlóonjii (b.1927) grew up in Tanjung Village as the eldest of six children to a Malay-speaking, Lantaa-native mother, and a Thai-speaking policeman father from Lanḡaa who had been stationed on the island. As a young boy, Lat attended the earliest *róon ηέην* occasions where Abu Qasim and Che Mat taught, and remembers how Bunga's home emerged as a focal point for village entertainment. He began playing gong at age nine and accompanied his uncle Yusuf on performing excursions to neighboring islands and the mainland. He took up *rammánaa* at age twelve, violin in his late teens, and then left Lantaa at around age twenty for Semut Tanoi and Kò Múg where he married and spent the following seven years performing, fishing, and chopping mangrove wood for commercial charcoal kilns. He divorced his first wife around 1955, moved to Thîḡraj where he spent two years performing and teaching *róon ηέην*, and then settled in Lěem Phoo (a coastal village near the mouth of the Kràbii River) after meeting his future second wife while performing there. Now in his eighties, still married, but with no children, Lat practices traditional healing (including treatments of various maledictions and love magic), is a committee member at the local mosque, and fishes daily from a small rowboat. I came to know Lat through his late brother Sabu—a *rammánaa* player and witness to the early years of *róon ηέην* on Lantaa—whom I met in Tanjung in the early stages of my research. In our numerous meetings and journeys together to Lantaa and Thîḡraj between 2007 and 2010, he recounted stories of *róon ηέην*'s earliest days on Lantaa with tours of the island, informed me of personal and sometimes intimate details of *róon ηέην*'s pioneers and early practitioners, told anecdotes from his performances and *dəən roon* experiences—all with frequent interruptions to play violin, *rammánaa*, sing, and dance the *róon ηέην* and *ramwoḡ* songs that he learned in his youth, lamenting that many of them have disappeared. Lat's long career made an impression upon many of those I encountered during my field research, who always spoke of him fondly and with high regard for his violin playing and singing voice.

<i>jaŋ dɔɔg rêe</i>	The <i>senduduk</i> flower <sup>34</sup>
<i>sàmàg ràg khon thálee</i>	I am willing to love the sea girl
<i>màj mii ryya cà kee</i>	(but) there is no boat
<i>paj hǎa nɔɔŋ</i>	to go find her

—Local Thai verse<sup>35</sup>

## SUMMARY

When *rɔɔŋ ñéey* emerged in the 1930s, the Andaman region had already begun to experience a significant transformation from a culturally Malay area lying at the margins of Malayan society, into a modernizing, Thai-dominant one, although still very much situated at the political and economic margins. Local populations, at that time, while comprising a heterogeneous mix of ethnicities and religions (including Thai, Malays, Orak Lawoi, and Chinese, among others), shared many social practices, intermarried, and in many ways interacted as a community. What would become significant about *rɔɔŋ ñéey* in that setting was how it grew beyond its initial group of Malay proponents to become a common medium for people throughout the region, and in doing so, adapted new hybrid characteristics.

In contrast to the myths that still persist related to *rɔɔŋ ñéey*'s founding (several of which are recounted here), the diachronic progression that resulted in the creation of *rɔɔŋ ñéey* is fairly clear. The initial repertoire originated in the folk and popular *ronggeng* music of early-twentieth-century Malaya—forms that coalesced at the meeting point of

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34. *Pokok senduduk* is a common Malay name for a type of rhododendron plant—*Melastoma malabathricum*.

35. Transcribed from Jàafàad Waaháràg, Lěem Krùad, 2 December 2007

larger Siamese and Malay cultures—and was later propagated to neighboring southwest Thailand along traditional sea routes, principally through the efforts of a wandering Malayan performer named Abu Qasim.

### CHAPTER 3. THE EMERGENCE OF *ΡΩΩΗ ΗΕΕΗ*

This chapter looks at the early history of *ρωωη ηέεη* along the Andaman Coast during the late 1930s until the early 1940s, situating it and the lifestyles that it engendered within the social context of migratory maritime communities of the time. This account begins on Lantaa Island where Abu Qasim helped establish the first *ρωωη ηέεη* performing community. It explains how the genre took shape as a rural pastime in two stages: one in which villagers played and danced the new songs among themselves; and a second stage in which commercial performing troupes created by the new local performers introduced *ρωωη ηέεη* to their neighbors in the region. We are introduced to Tanjung Village and its environs, where *ρωωη ηέεη* first took root, and meet its first-generation performers who gained renown as they spread *ρωωη ηέεη* throughout the Andaman region. Subsequently, the chapter explores the performance training and teacher-student relationships that characterized the earliest *ρωωη ηέεη* groups, when the genre was still a novel form, danced as a rural entertainment, and in a nascent commercial stage. It looks at the coterie of the genre's first musicians and Tanjung's principal *ρωωη ηέεη* dance "academy" founded by a female instructor named Bunga—one of the genre's most important early figures. Lastly, it looks at the creation of *phleey tanjoey*—the Thai-language style of *ρωωη ηέεη* that began to appear among mainland communities in the postwar era.

#### TWO STAGES OF *ΡΩΩΗ ΗΕΕΗ*'S INTRODUCTION

*Ρωωη ηέεη* first arrived in southwest Thailand around 1936 to a Malay-speaking seaside settlement called Tanjung (cape) on Lantaa Island, introduced by two Malay

musicians. There, it developed apart from its Malayan roots as an idiomatic style, taking form initially in two general stages that emphasized separate areas of the ensemble. In the first stage *ρώνη ηέεη* began as an informal, non-commercial entertainment consisting of Malayan dance songs played at evening social gatherings. In the second stage it became a pecuniary venture in which locally trained musicians and dancers propagated the form to neighboring maritime areas, eventually reaching the whole Andaman region.

The first stage pioneers, Abu Qasim and Che Mat, stayed in Tanjung for several years and taught locals to play songs on violin, *rammánaa*, and gong. In the second stage, beginning during that period (between 1936 and 1939), a local woman named Bunga, who had lived on Langkawi, returned and introduced formalized Malayan-style dances to nascent village *ρώνη ηέεη* gatherings where, until that time, dance had been performed freely, without instruction. She became the village's first dance instructor and taught successive generations of young local women and teenage girls to be professional singer-dancers. The alumni of these musician and dance groups formed a replenishable workforce for a commercialized form of *ρώνη ηέεη* that became Lantaa's most popular entertainment export to the surrounding Andaman communities in the 1940s and '50s.

## TANJUNG VILLAGE

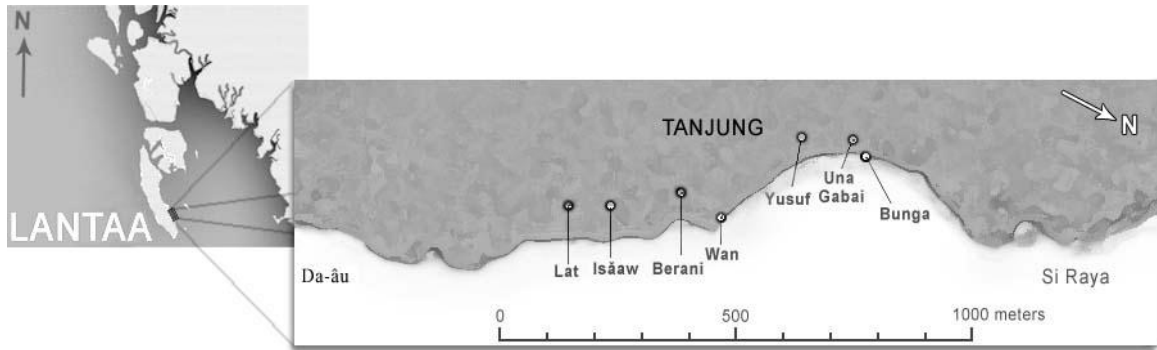


Figure 9. Map of Tanjung Village, its environs, and homes of some noteworthy individuals

In the 1930s, Tanjung (known today by its synonymic Thai name, *Bân Hũa Lẽm* ‘Cape Village’),<sup>36</sup> encompassed several small mixed Malay and Orak Lawoi settlements, each comprised of around a dozen houses or less, stretching approximately one mile along a small bay and promontories on the island’s southeast coast. The two primary ones were the mostly Malay Tanjung Village, and the predominantly Orak Lawoi settlement, Da-âu, slightly to its south.

This area was strategically positioned for the dissemination of *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*. From its shores, one beheld a panorama of a large bay dotted with small islands, fringed in the distance by the mainland districts of southern Krábii and northern Traaŋ provinces. These were once sparsely populated areas that, in the early twentieth century, became increasingly settled with Thai-speakers and were some of the first areas visited by Tanjung’s newly formed *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* troupes.

Tanjung’s neighbor to its immediate north, Sri Raya (Sıraajaa, also referred to today as Lantaa Old Town), was the island’s small *amphəə* (administrative and

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36. Tanjung is also a Malay name for Penang in Kedah vernacular.

commercial center) and had a small Chinese merchant population that over the years provided some patronage to local *ρώνη ηέεη* groups. On the fringes of Tanjung, stretching into the island's interior, was a dense, tiger-filled jungle.

Tanjung's Orak Lawoi community lived to the south of the Malay settlement in a village they called Da-âu (in Thai, Bân Hũa Lëem Klaan and in Malay, Kampung Tanjung Tengah—both meaning Central Cape Village). *ρώνη ηέεη* took root there prior to the Second World War, shortly after its introduction to Tanjung Village. During the war, all but a few Orak Lawoi families left Da-âu and moved to the Adang archipelago.<sup>37</sup> Those who later returned to Lantaa established a new village called Sãnkaa-Ûu several kilometers further down the southeast coast, which today is the principal Orak Lawoi settlement on Lantaa's southeast coast.

Tanjung villagers lived either on the beach or on higher inland ground near their fields and orchards, in homes constructed of wood and thatch. Most livelihoods came from the sea—fishing, shrimping and collecting shellfish, according to the season—or, for those with land, cultivation of wet and dry rice, fruit, and Pará rubber trees. Up to four years of primary education was provided through a Thai-language school established in Sri Raya prior to the war as well as local Muslim and Buddhist religious institutions. Young men fished, or found work in the local charcoal industry as wage laborers, cutting mangrove wood, baking it into charcoal, and shipping it to Penang.

## THE FIRST MUSICIANS

When Abu Qasim first arrived in Tanjung, he was approximately thirty-two years old; his partner at the time, Che Mat, was about twenty-five. It is not clear if they arrived

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37. Personal correspondence from Dëem Tháleelyg

together or separately. The two stayed with a local man named Yusuf who lived at the edge of a small rubber estate situated on higher ground, a short distance from the beach, and was their first violin student. They spent their evenings playing *róʔŋ ɣéɛŋ* at gatherings hosted at the beachfront home of Tok ‘Old Man’ Wan, or at those of two other men who also became violin students and prominent local performers, Una Gabai and Berani Butmin.

Abu Qasim (known as Ma’asem to the Orak Lawoi) was a man of average size and weight, with a *damdeɛŋ* (dusky) complexion. He played violin left-handed and was considered a fine musician with a large and diverse repertoire of songs that ‘resided in his heart,’ as locals often describe their non-notated music. He suffered from partial deafness that worsened later in his life; however, this disability was not evident to all and does not appear to have been more than a minor obstacle to his musicianship, although it could explain his idiosyncratic playing style. He apparently compensated by adjusting his violin technique to make hearing the instrument easier. He tuned its strings tautly to high pitches and held its body high on his right shoulder with his right ear close to the sound hole. When he played, he sat with his back to the dancers and audience, and hummed along or “made sounds” to himself.<sup>38</sup>

Che Mat was a corpulent man with thick fingers who always wore a white skullcap. In addition to playing *róʔŋ ɣéɛŋ*, he was once a teacher at a *pondok* (Islamic

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38. Descriptions of Abu Qasim and Che Mat came from numerous personal correspondences from people who lived, traveled, and performed with him including Hussein Bâaréem, Tilid Bâaréem, Biidá Chajpeed, Baaw Tháleelýg, Dollah Dibut, Khamé Haphon, Phýyg Khíausòd, Lat and Sabu Khlóŋdii, Hamid Kimbası, Man Matdiya, Baya and Cıu Pramóŋkıt, Rahman (Semut Tanoi), Son Baŋçàag, Dóem Tháleelýg, ʔon and Jàafàat Waaháràg.

religious school) in Sàtuun,<sup>39</sup> and made a living as a *bomoh* (shaman) treating illnesses and maledictions, assisting fishermen, and performing love magic. Locals regarded him as a well-traveled, educated, and pious man who prayed regularly, and his position was unique and respected in the communities where he resided including those on Lantaa, Kò Pòò, Semut Tanoi, and Kò Mùg.

As with other regional folk performance genres, the *róòŋ ɣéɣɣ* teacher-student relationship and the act of ‘teaching’ can be interpreted in multiple ways. It can be a form of direct instruction or another type of bond that unites the two. For example, troupe leaders consider the performers under their leadership to be *lûugsìt* (students or disciples), and performers acknowledge their troupe leaders and other mentors as *khruu* (teachers)—it is not uncommon for them to have more than one. Abu Qasim and Che Mat were considered to be teachers to all of the early Tanjung performers regardless of the extent of their personal or professional relationships.

Abu Qasim and Che Mat’s first local students—the first *ruun* (generation) of native *róòŋ ɣéɣɣ* musicians, music teachers, and ensemble leaders—were an all-male group, all in their twenties or early thirties, that included Yusuf, Una Gabai, and Berani (the first three Tanjung violinists) as well as Mid, who built his own violins; Yob Yasen, who played *rammánaa* (and reportedly did little else—his future wife, Amewah, and daughter, Biidá, would become two of *róòŋ ɣéɣɣ*’s most celebrated singer-dancers). Two others from this *ruun* included Madiyya Butmin, Berani’s paternal uncle, a violin player, singer, and dancer who lived on nearby Pulau Dapur (Kò Pòò); and Pendek, who came

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39. Personal communication from Che Mat’s adopted son Baaw Tháleelýg, Kò Mùg. According to Lat Khlóòŋdii and Rahman (Semut Tanoi), Che Mat also taught local school children.

from Lĕem Phoo in central Kràbii playing a *phraan* (jester) in a traveling *manora* folk theater troupe, and became another long-term guest at Yusuf’s home.

## FORMAL DANCE TRAINING IN TANJUNG

Bunga was born in Tanjung around 1914. Villagers knew her as ‘Long’<sup>40</sup> (Bunga, Malay for ‘flower,’ was a pet name given by her mother, Juriah),<sup>41</sup> and remember her as a kind-hearted woman with a small and slim build and a light brown complexion, who hosted regular *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* dances at her home, and trained young people to be performers. While a young woman, she married a Langkawi man and lived on that island until he passed away and she returned to Lantaa, still in her twenties. Bunga remained a widow and childless for the rest of her life.

In Tanjung, Bunga participated in the evening *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* gatherings with Abu Qasim and Che Mat, dancing the styles that she had learned in Malaya. Locals recall her being a talented performer; and likely saw her as a bearer of a modern, cosmopolitan Malayan form that they admired, but to which they received little exposure. She became a sought-after teacher and, by the late 1930s, the *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* gatherings had migrated to her home, which became a nightly social entertainment venue and training academy for village youths.

Bunga’s home, which she shared with Juriah and her younger sister, Beda (until

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40. ‘Long,’ short for ‘*sulung*’ (eldest), is the top level in a Malay taxonomy for siblings denoting the eldest one in a family. It is synonymous with ‘Wa’ (described in the previous chapter) but does not occur as a generic form of address for older people. See a full taxonomy in Appendix F.

41. No one remembers Bunga’s father. He may have been Juriah’s husband Man Datuk (Pin), a former policeman from Kuala Kedah who reportedly fled to Lantaa after killing someone, though some believe Juriah had been married previously. Pin later married a woman named Mah and produced several descendants who became *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* performers on Kò Cam.

the latter married Yusuf), was a wooden structure on posts, situated beside Juriah's coconut grove, on the fringe of a sparsely populated beach that they shared with five other dwellings. On any given night, for more than two decades, until her death in the 1960s, a dozen or more dancers and musicians could be found performing and/or rehearsing there. Her now-legendary gatherings began at nightfall and often ended after sunrise, taking place outside, on the sands at the foot of her front steps, under the illumination of *dammarr* oil lamps.

### THE SINGER-DANCERS

The first *ruun* of singer-dancers included several women who went on to become troupe leaders, dance teachers, and star performers in the Kràbii and Traaj coastal areas during the late 1930s and early war years (encompassing an area within a day's travel or less from Lantaa ). They included two Malay teenagers named Amewah and Ah who were Bunga's first students, and several young Orak Lawoi women including—in (approximate) descending age order from mid-twenties to mid-teens—Mijjah, Itam, Sima, and Nih.



Figure 10. Biidá Chajpeed and her father Yob in the 1950s: daughter and husband of famed first-*ruun* *róʔŋ* *ŋéey* singer Amewah. Also see photo of mother and daughter in Figure 11 (photos courtesy of Biidá Chajpeed)<sup>42</sup>

In addition to dance, Bunga trained her students in several other areas of *róʔŋ* *ŋéey* performance, including how to sing *pantun* (Malay quatrains), maintain appropriate social demeanor, and prepare love charms using makeup and accessories. Each student

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42. Hajah Biidá Chajpeed (b.1938) was the only child born to two first-*ruun* performers: Yob, her father, who played *rammánaa*, and Amewah, who was one of Tanjung's first singer-dancers in the 1930s. Biidá was the star of Lantaa's so-called second *ruun* performers, known throughout the Andaman, and is one of only a few surviving dancers of her generation. She learned at Bunga's home under the tutelage of Sima, was the youngest (and now only surviving) member of the Tanjung *róʔŋ* *ŋéey* group to perform in Bangkok in the 1950s (see photo in Figure 11), and at age thirteen, was left in the care of Yob's uncle, Yakob, who led Kò Sii Bòʔjaa's *róʔŋ* *ŋéey* group for three years (during which time she did not see her parents). Upon her return to Tanjung, she and her mother led the Lantaa Rŷynrom troupe for several years until she married in 1957 at age nineteen. Today, Biidá and her husband run a prosperous sundry shop from the front of their home (once the home of Yob) in Tanjung; one in a row of long wooden houses along the beach, only several hundred feet from the site where Bunga's home once stood, and next to the home of Sabu Khlóʔŋdii who first introduced us. In our meetings between 2007 and 2010, Biidá's numerous insights revealed much about the lifestyles and training habits of *róʔŋ* *ŋéey* performers.

spent about one or two months learning to become a dancer, and ‘graduated’ in a public performing debut, often at a shop house in Sri Raya. At her home, as well as when performing elsewhere, Bunga collected money from each patron who danced a round with her students, and divided the money among the dancers and musicians at the end of each night. This was an economic model that characterized professional *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* performances for decades, until the 1960s, when groups began commanding fixed fees.

From the late 1930s until the 1960s, becoming a *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* dancer was a rite of passage for teenage girls on Lantaa (and elsewhere as the form later spread), rather than a social stigma such as it was for contemporaneous Malayan female *ronggeng* or *bangsawan* performers. They were not generally thought of as ‘loose’ women or prostitutes, as *ronggeng* taxi dancers in Malaya at that time often were.<sup>43</sup> In terms of local norms, their dress and behavior were modest, and they were always under the watchful eye of a *mak nóɔj* (female chaperone, often an older ‘retired’ dancer).<sup>44</sup> Some used their performing skills to elevate their status, and many of the better-known performers married men from prominent positions in their communities.

While young women during that era were generally less independent than young men, they had unique opportunities as *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* performers to travel and socialize. They benefited from becoming dancers in two significant ways: (1) their performance fees

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43. Tan discusses perceptions of the morality of *bangsawan* performers, who were often *ronggeng* singers as well (Tan 1995:611-12). The late Baharoodin Ahmad mentioned to me in a personal communication that many retired female performers he interviewed were reluctant to talk about their past lives as *ronggeng* and *bangsawan* performers due to embarrassing episodes, such as being compelled to provide sexual favors to district officers or other important figures in exchange for performance permits. They were, however, happy to discuss their later careers as movie actors.

44. *Mak nóɔj* combines the Malay ‘mother,’ *mak*, with the Thai ‘little,’ *nóɔj*: literally ‘little mother.’

provided some economic independence for themselves and support for their families; and (2) through regular public exposure, they had a wide choice of prospective marriage partners.

To enhance their appeal and raise their socio-economic level, *ῥόση ηέση* dancers commonly used *ilmu pengasih* (love magic) consisting of incantations and other rituals that they believed would make them appear more attractive, give strength and beauty to their voices, and provide endurance for hours of non-stop singing and dancing, which often lasted for eight hours or more. In pre-performance rituals, dancers applied magic charms to their handkerchiefs and face powder. In the latter, known in Thai as *phíthii séek pêesh*, a ‘casting charms on powder’ ritual, dancers held the white powder—a combination of rice powder and fragrant flower extracts—in their upward-facing cupped hands as the group leader read an incantation, and applied it to their faces in a single gesture at the ritual’s conclusion.<sup>45</sup> Mantras and charms were not exclusive to female performers. Men also employed them for similar purposes (i.e., enhancing their musicianship, singing voice, or attractiveness).<sup>46</sup> These practices typically incorporated esoteric texts in Pali, Malay, Arabic or Thai (used by Muslim, animists, and Buddhists alike), and folk charms such as the ‘tears’ of a *dujosh* (from the tear ducts of a dugong—a manatee-like sea mammal), which were believed to be potent charms.

The female *ῥόση ηέση* dancer’s handkerchief (*kain sapu tangan* in Malay, *phâa*

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45. Sathaphon discusses *phíthii séek pêesh* and other rituals associated with *ῥόση ηέση*, and implies that these are inherited Thai Buddhist practices (Sathaphon 2533:69-70). I see these instead as regional folk practices rather than the domain of a particular religious or ethnic group.

46. Lat Khlōōndii learned a ‘sweet voice’ mantra (*mentera manis suara*) from Lantaa dancer Itam when he was a young boy, the text of which includes references to Allah (God) and Islamic prophets Daud, Yusuf, and Muhammad, as well as those to animistic spirits and numerology (transcribed in Appendix C)

*chéed nâa* in Thai) was another indispensable performance accessory, held between the fingers of her right hand while she danced. It was reputed to be a powerful item imbued with love magic that could beguile any man who brushed against it. According to local beliefs, love charms would make women who appeared normal during the daytime become irresistible at night. And local folklore abounds with stories and songs about men who, once charmed by *róçh ηέεη* dancers and their *dujoh* tears, would swim across channels or walk for days to see their objects of adoration. The following *tanhoh* verse illustrates the anguish suffered by a man who has been spellbound by a *róçh ηέεη* dancer's love magic.

*Tôn rêe*

*lop bâan maj róçd sĩa lêew dee*

*thùg sà nèe nám plaa dujoh*

*khot khâau sàk wàg*

*khíd thỹη khũu ràg kin khâau maj loh*

*thùg sà nèe nám plaa dujoh*

*kin khâau maj loh sàk kham diaw*

The *senduduk* tree

I can't return home, I'm lost,

charmed with dugong tears,

scoop a single ladle of rice

missing my love partner, I cannot eat

charmed with dugong tears

I cannot eat a single bite<sup>47</sup>

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47. From Klin 2538, my translation



Figure 11. Early- to mid-1950s photo of a Tanjung *róꝋŋ* *ŋééŋ* troupe during their first visit to perform in Bangkok, showing several individuals mentioned in this chapter. Standing from left to right are Pendek, Madiyya Butmin, Berani Butmin, Hassan ‘Jan’ Rasoojbut, Mid, Talib, Debing. Seated from left to right are Sima, Biidá Chajpeed, Nəən’s wife, Kràbii Member of Parliament Nəən, Amewah, Reah, Nəən’s son

### *JALAN BANGSAI: THE TOURING GROUPS*

In the late 1930s, Lantaa *róꝋŋ* *ŋééŋ* troupes began traveling to neighboring islands and coastal villages in Kràbii and Traan to perform at seasonal village celebrations.

Typically, those trips coincided with semi-annual dry spells when most wedding feasts took place, with the most sustained travel occurring during the early part of the *angin barat* ‘west wind’ season in March and April. Troupes traveled continuously for weeks or months, from village to village on foot, playing several nights at each stop. This was called *jalan bangsai*, a local idiom meaning ‘walk from performance to performance.’<sup>48</sup>

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48. This expression was already in use among other types of performance troupes at that time. It combines the Malay *jalan* ‘walk’ with *bangsai* ‘shed’ (or in colloquial terms, a

Their journeys often began with an invitation from a *penghulu* or *phûujàj bâan* (village headman) somewhere in the region to perform for a celebration. They went in teams of six to eight players, departed from Lantaa in a *perahu* sent by the host with a small delegation of villagers to fetch them, and performed for three or more nights. From there, they either received invitations to perform at other celebrations or set out on foot looking for other opportunities.

In that era, hosts did not pay the *róçh ηέεη* troupes that they invited. Instead, troupe leaders collected a ten-*sataη* coin (then equivalent to the price of a cup of hot tea) from each patron who danced an approximately three-minute song round with one of the singer-dancers, and divided the total among the whole group after each performance. Their earnings were often meager and sometimes all they received was food, shelter, and late-night hot drink courtesy of their host. However, despite the difficult conditions, they found *jalan bangsai* better than staying at home on Lantaa. Lat Khlóçhðii remembers:

*During the war, we walked all over in search of gigs. The gong was large and heavy. Two men had to carry it on a pole over their shoulders. Other men carried the instruments and other things. The dancers did not carry anything. We went in the beginning of ‘angin barat’ and walked for days, sometimes a month or more, before returning home. People did not always come looking to hire us. When we arrived in a village, a host gave us food and a place to sleep. Life was difficult and we often just went to get rice to eat. After a few days in a village, we set out on foot looking for the next performance.*

—Lat Khlóçhðii

## SOCIAL FUNCTION, LIFESTYLE AND COMMUNITY

The *róçh ηέεη* social dance occasion provided a new and unique social experience for performers and patrons. It was most popular with young people of marriageable age as it provided a medium in which to socialize, display their performing skills, and search (‘performance space’) and is equivalent to the Thai *dàen rooη*.

for prospective marriage partners. *Róζη ηέεη* skills were not difficult to acquire and involved participation of the patrons. Dance occasions occurred more frequently than other entertainment forms, in some places every night, and could be performed on its own, outside of large celebrations, purely as social entertainment. Furthermore, unlike folk theater genres, it was not explicitly associated with rituals and the supernatural that might have scared away participants.<sup>49</sup> The activity that *ρόζη ηέεη* generated resulted in waves of traveling troupes of young performers spreading across the region. While this was not, in and of itself, a novel phenomenon, the traveling *ρόζη ηέεη* troupes that appeared during this period were more commonplace than itinerant theater troupes had been in the past.

The lifestyles of the early performers were flexible and peripatetic. They often lived without fixed jobs. Some had an elementary education, usually four years or less; many had none. Typical of that era's youths, they often spent long periods away from home outside of fishing or planting seasons. Those lifestyles only began to change around the 1960s, toward the end of the *ρόζη ηέεη* heyday, when the population became more settled and youthful wandering declined.

Performers were typically divided by gender into two groups: musicians who were exclusively male (this was just normative practice, there were no proscriptions against women musicians), and singer-dancers who were predominantly female, but also included many men who were highly regarded for their talents (some men were both musicians and singer-dancers, though there were no transvestite performers during the

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49. *Róζη ηέεη*'s associations with supernatural practices have been generally limited to pre-performance preparation rituals and, unlike folk theaters such as *manoora* and *likee paa*, do not involve trancing.

early *róçh ηέεη* period). The “stars” of *róçh ηέεη* were almost entirely women known for their captivating beauty and lovely voices, and the best remembered are those who became troupe leaders and had long careers.



Figure 12. Photo of ten-*sataη* coin—the medium of payment for one dance in the early *róçh ηέεη* era—several elderly *róçh ηέεη* performers keep a coin like this one tied on a string around their waist.

Male patrons, motivated by their fancies for particular female singer-dancers, were known to follow troupes for days or weeks from performance to performance, constituting a *shadow audience*, who appeared every night but were not seen during the daytime. Some of those fancies between singers and their fans turned into patron/performer marriages and husband/wife-led troupes.<sup>50</sup> A significant example is the

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50. Women and their husbands who co-led *róçh ηέεη* troupes are mentioned throughout these pages and include: Mijjah and Núj in Teluk Besar, Sima and Long in Da-âu, Yaamiiá and Ren in Hûaj Nám Khāaw, Jimliá and Dam on Kò Cam, and Taadam and Ali

marriage between Isăaw and Ali (described later in this chapter) that brought *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* to Thai-speaking mainland communities.

Several other general observations may be made regarding gender and the length of a performing career. For men, being a *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* musician or singer-dancer was a part-time seasonal occupation that supplemented fishing, farming, cutting wood, tapping rubber, or other livelihoods. Their performing careers often began in their teens or earlier, and continued into old age, though a few stopped when *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* was no longer (a) economically viable because of fewer performance opportunities, (b) necessary for their economic stability as their prosperity increased, or (c) tenable with a more conservative religious outlook. For the *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* female singer-dancer who did not become a troupe leader, a *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* career was typically shorter, beginning in her early- or pre-teen years and lasting until marriage, usually in the late teens or early twenties.

### *RÓŬŬ ĐÉÉĐ COMMUNITIES*

As performers traveled and settled beyond Lantaa, they established local troupes around which arose new ‘communities’ of performers and patrons. The first communities that took root were in those villages that first received *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* and subsequently became frequent hosts of Tanjung groups. Some Lantaa performers relocated to villages that they had visited while on tour where they formed new troupes. In many cases, they found marriage partners along the way or were asked to stay and teach *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*.

Che Mat settled in Semut Tanoi prior to the war because villagers there convinced him to stay and teach them *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*. There he established one of the earliest *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*

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in Lanḡdaa.

footholds on the mainland.<sup>51</sup> He was a familiar figure in that Malay-speaking fishing community—situated within the Traaᅇ River estuary socio-economic sphere (see Figure 13)—having made a number of tours of the area. Locals encouraged him to move there so they would not have to fetch groups from Lantaa each time they wanted to dance *rᅇᅇᅇ ᅇᅇᅇ*. Che Mat lived there and taught *rᅇᅇᅇ ᅇᅇᅇ* until the 1980s. A widower in his sixties, he then married Sinang, a twenty-year-old *rᅇᅇᅇ ᅇᅇᅇ* dancer from his group, and spent the remainder of his life on nearby Mutia Island (Kᅇ Múg).<sup>52</sup>

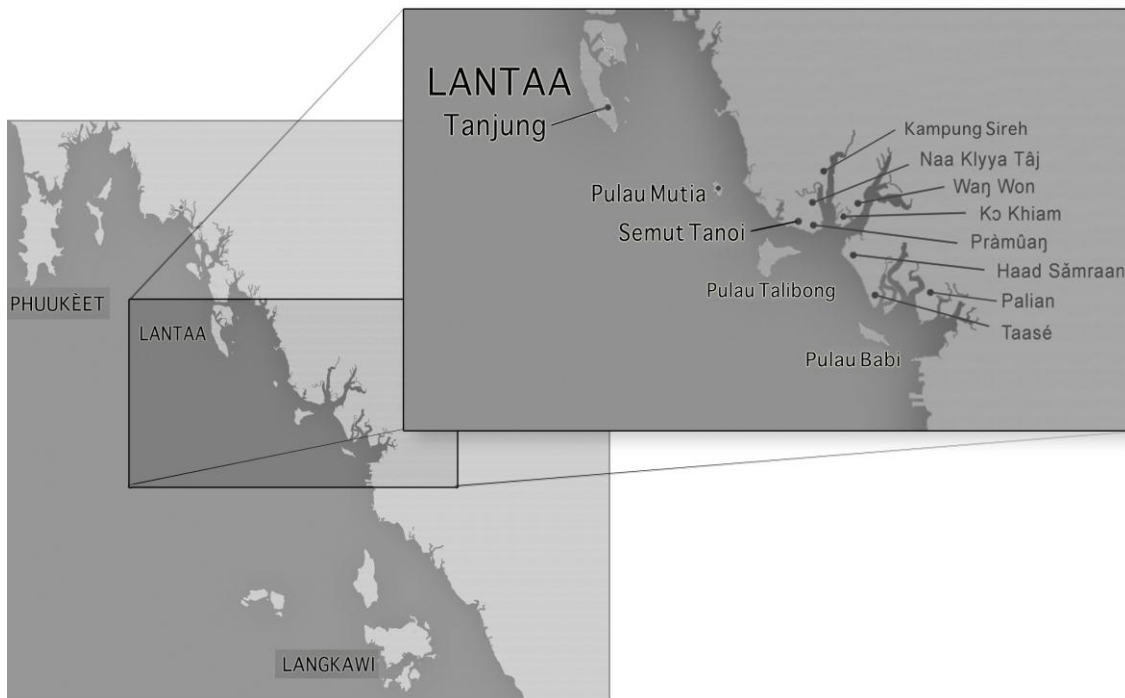


Figure 13. A littoral network of known *rᅇᅇᅇ ᅇᅇᅇ* villages in post-war Traaᅇ

Yusuf was one of Che Mat’s early students on Lantaa and frequently joined him to perform on the mainland. He and several other Lantaa performers also settled in Semut

51. Semut Tanoi is known in Thai as Mᅇd Tānᅇᅇ. It is located in Kantaᅇ District, Traaᅇ Province.

52. A large segment of Semut Tanoi’s population spent the *angin timur* (east wind) fishing season on Kᅇ Múg.

Tanoi following the war after marrying locals. They included Lat Khlōṅdii (Yusuf's nephew and violin student, seen in Figure 14), Butui (Bunga's student and niece of Yusuf), and Mahmud (Abu Qasim's student from Kō Cam who married Semut Tanoi's first local dancer, Roah).



Figure 14. Lat Khlōṅdii circa 1950 and in 2008 (photo on left courtesy of Lat Khlōṅdii)

#### ISĀAW AND THE BIRTH OF *PHLEED TANJOḶ*

Malay-speaking *rōṅṅ ḡḡḡ* communities, such as Semut Tanoi's, appeared elsewhere around the region, mostly around the islands where Malay speakers were most concentrated. They were typically led by one or more immigrant performer-teachers from Lantaa who taught them the Malay-language style. A second and very different style emerged in the early 1940s among Thai-speaking Muslims in mainland Krābii and Traaṅ, who played a hybrid form of *rōṅṅ ḡḡḡ* that became known as *rōṅṅ ḡḡḡ tanjoḶ* or *phleḡḡ tanjoḶ*.

The transformation of Malay song texts into Thai was one of the most significant

changes to *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* that took place as the form spread to non-Malay-speaking communities outside of Lantaa. It paralleled important social changes that were taking place in the region after the Second World War, such as the increasing separation of Malayan and southern Thai cultural spheres, and the ascendancy of Thai as the national language. Malay's position as a lingua franca among maritime communities in the lower Andaman Sea region was supplanted by Thai in the post-war period, as national schools expanded in rural areas and immigration of Thai-speakers increased.

Tanjung's first-*ruun* *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* performers such as Amewah, Sima, and Mijjah were primarily Malay speakers; they spoke passable Thai, but sang only in Malay. Isăaw, a young Tanjung woman and student of Bunga, who was several years their junior, was the first in that community, and by extension the region, to sing *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* tunes in Thai.<sup>53</sup>

Although Isăaw's role was obscured by her death at an early age, she made two important innovations to modern *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*. First, she sang the existing repertoire in *phâag tâj* (southern Thai) dialect, replacing the Malay *pantun* with a localized style of Thai *klɔɔn*. Second, she introduced new melodies that were similar to local courtship songs or lullabies '*phleeŋ klom dèeg*.'

The new melodies were assimilated into the repertoire alongside the original tunes, constituting a musical and textual subset of *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* known as *tanjoŋ* song (*phleeŋ tanjoŋ*, *lagu tanjoŋ*). Its introduction to the mainland, according to Lat Khlɔɔŋdii, began in the early war years:

*Before Isăaw, there was no tanjoŋ, not on Phuukèet or anywhere else. She was the first to sing it. She sang all of the róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ songs and new songs like Hàad Jaaw. She sang the words 'bunga tanjung' like they do today. Yusuf took us to perform in*

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53. Isăaw is a southern variation of the Central Thai *săaw* (young woman) and a common prefix for women's names in South Thailand.

*the Lěm Krùad market during the war. Pendek played rebana, I played gong, and Isăaw—the daughter of my neighbor Abu—danced. She was an attractive woman, tall, slender, with a fair complexion, and fine voice. Ali from Lanđaa saw Isăaw performing, followed us back to Lantaa, and asked to marry her. He took her to live in Lanđaa where she became a rṓṓη ηέεη teacher. She had four original students: Săawteεη, Săawnúj, Săawbaη, and Taadam. They spoke only Thai so she taught them to sing tanjoη style. However, she died young and no one remembers her. They only remember her student, Taadam, who married her teacher’s husband, Ali, and became a famous rṓṓη ηέεη.*

—Lat Khlṓṓηdii

As alluded to by Lat, Isăaw’s move to Lanđaa precipitated the rise of Taadam Muajdii, a young Thai-speaking woman from neighboring Bân Khuan who was one of her first dance students in Lanđaa. The two were known as rivals, and some believed that Isăaw died a victim of Taadam’s poisoning, particularly after Taadam married Ali and took leadership of the Lanđaa troupe. Taadam thereafter became one of the region’s most popular *tanjoη*-style *rṓṓη ηέεη* singers in the post-war era (see photo of Taadam and Ali in Figure 15).



Figure 15. Taadam Muanḍii and Ali Mat-Oosòd, in later years (photos courtesy of Timah Mat-Oosòd)

### THÎDRAJ, KÒ CAM

Around 1939, Abu Qasim traveled beyond Lantaa in a circuit that brought him to Kò Cam, Phuukèet, and south-central Kràbii (see Figure 16 map), following which he returned to spend another decade on Kò Cam. By the time of his second sojourn on the latter island, around 1943, his legacy of spreading *róḡḡ ḡéḡḡ* was already largely accomplished; it had reached new audiences and given rise to new performing communities that would come to rival Lantaa as centers for *róḡḡ ḡéḡḡ* activity during the post-war years.

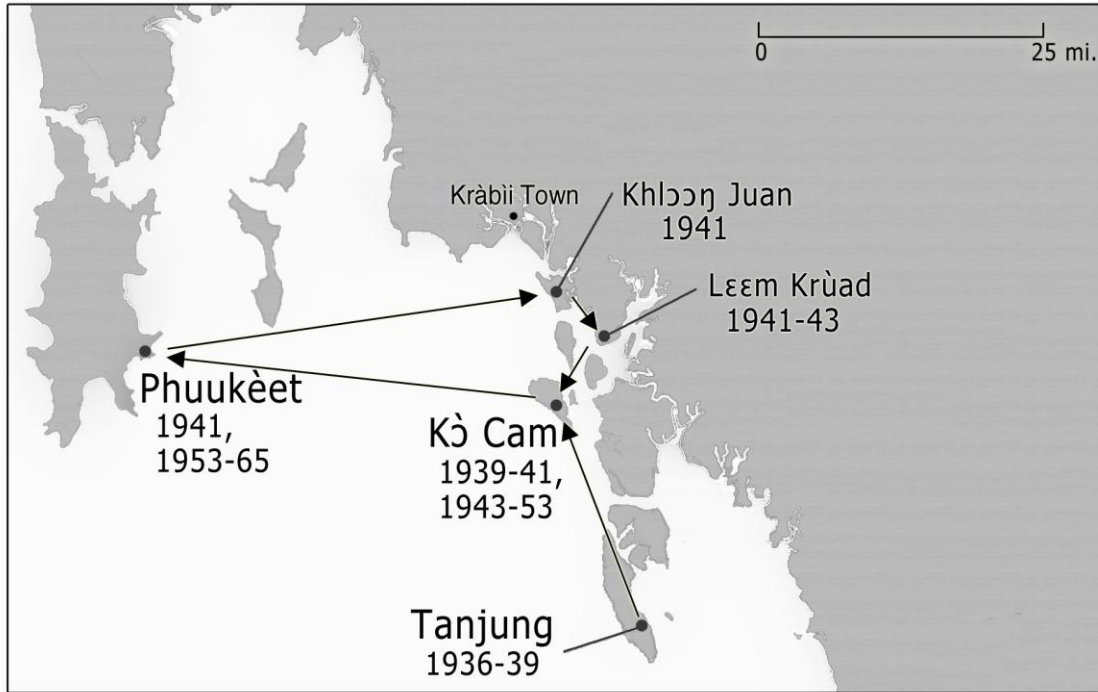


Figure 16. Travels and sojourns of Abu Qasim, 1936-1965 (dates are approximate)

After his lengthy and significant stay on Lantaa, Abu Qasim’s next sojourn was on Kò Cam, an island about twenty miles to the northwest of Tanjung that had a nearly identical social composition: mixed and intermarried Malay-speaking communities of Malays and Orak Lawoi, whose livelihoods were based in fishing and agriculture. There were also numerous kinship ties that united both islands’ populations and fostered exchanges that brought *rɔɔŋ ŋéey* to Kò Cam.

However, because of its location and the prevailing sea currents, Kò Cam was oriented toward a geographical region lying to Lantaa’s north. This formed a separate socio-economic community encompassing a group of neighboring islands (Kò Sii Bɔɔjaa, Tulang Island, and Kò Haan) that traded in Kràbii and a newly established market at

Lĕem Krùad.<sup>54</sup> During the post-war era, those trading connections became avenues for the subsequent spread of *róɔŋ ɣéey* to mainland south-central Kràbii, which heretofore had received little or no exposure to Lantaa troupes. (Chapter 4 discusses *róɔŋ ɣéey*'s development in separate socio economic areas along the Andaman Coast.)

Abu Qasim spent approximately one or two years on Kò Cam living in the predominantly Malay village Thîŋraj. During that period, the village received frequent visits from Lantaa performers (including singer-dancers Sima, Amewah, and Butui) and saw the rapid emergence of a local performing community that would make Thîŋraj a second regional *róɔŋ ɣéey* center—a coequal in size and activity to Tanjung—although one that did not have a central *róɔŋ ɣéey* 'academy' or teacher like Bunga.

Thîŋraj's *róɔŋ ɣéey* community began with Abu Qasim and his first violin student, a young Malay man in his twenties named Jim. Together, the two trained others and formed a touring group. The first *ruun* of dancers in 1939 included three young women: a fifteen-year-old dancer named Tilid Bâaréem and her two companions Romah (the daughter of the village headman Kò Sareh), and Mek Mah.

Tilid, who did not have an opportunity to go to school (in those days Kò Cam did not have one), became a dancer in order to support her widowed mother and six siblings. She became the island's first local star, famous throughout rural communities along the Kràbii and Traaŋ coasts. Her relatively long career lasted until she was twenty seven (around 1951), when she married *kamnan* 'district headman' Wari.

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54. Prior to the establishment of Lĕem Krùad's market, Kò Cam islanders traveled north along the coast to Kràbii Town. Lantaa islanders generally traveled to markets in south Kràbii (Khlóɔŋ Phon) or Traaŋ.

## PHUUKÈET

In 1941, prior to the war, Abu Qasim spent several months on Phuukèet. He stayed in an Orak Lawoi fishing village on Sireh Island (Pulau Sireh in Malay, Kò Sirèe in Thai), situated near the provincial capital and main trading center. Sireh and a few other neighboring Orak Lawoi settlements formed the northernmost outpost of their Andaman Coast community (with Adang at the southern extremity and Lantaa at its center).<sup>55</sup> It received a number of migrant performers from Lantaa who, in the early 1940s, together with Abu Qasim, established the island's first *ρώχη ηέεη* community.

Orak Lawoi settled two places on Sireh Island. The first was at Yuban Village (Kampung Yuban, known today as Lěem Túkkεε), but the community moved to Tanjung Rang (Lěem Raη) in the midst of a pandemic. They were at Tanjung Rang when Abu Qasim first arrived, and in the late 1950s moved back to Yuban, where they have remained ever since.

Prior to *ρώχη ηέεη*'s introduction, Orak Lawoi entertainment comprised two main forms played for various festivals and other ritual occasions: *berana* songs, performed by male and female vocal and percussion groups; and *kabong*, an Orak Lawoi form of *makyung laut*. Sireh islanders became the first and foremost propagators of *ρώχη ηέεη* around the coastal areas of Phuukèet and Phaηηaa.

Abu Qasim taught Sireh's first violin player, Mat Deh. He was the younger, partially blind brother of the well-known Tanjung *ρώχη ηέεη* troupe leader Sima, and was one of three Orak Lawoi migrants from Lantaa who settled on Sireh and founded its first *ruun*. The other two were dance teachers—a man named Dang (also known as Jεε Kok

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55. Phuukèet actually lies to the northwest of Kràbii. 'Northernmost' is shorthand for lying 'up the coast.'

Kok) and a woman named Teh. Also part of the Sireh Island performing community were a married couple of *kabong* actor/musicians, Ad and Champa, who became traveling *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* performers and raised five children who all played *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*. The youngest three girls, Biidá, Baya, and Cíu, became celebrated singer-dancers throughout the region in the 1940s and '50s.

## MAINLAND CENTRAL KRÀBÌÌ

Aalaj 'Da-aa' Khrajbut is a prominent postwar *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* figure whose life and contributions to the form are explored in Chapter 4. In 1941, he was a fifteen or sixteen-year-old Thai-speaking Muslim boy from mainland Kràbìì, who traveled to Phuukèet with a friend. He says, “we did not have any work at home in those days so we just traveled.” Da-aa spent about a month at Tanjung Rang where he first came to know Abu Qasim. They met while traveling from the nearby *tàlàad* ‘market town’ to Sireh.<sup>56</sup> Da-aa recounts:

*‘Bu Qasim was carrying a violin. I had never seen anything like it before so I went to make conversation with him. He spoke ‘khèeg’ [Malay] and only a little Thai. I only spoke Thai but we managed to communicate. He stayed on Sireh Island with the Chaaulee [Orak Lawoi] and they played róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ on the beach at night. Not long after we met, he and I traveled to my village and he stayed there for about a month. He played at weddings and taught me to play the rammánaa and violin. I learned to play one song on violin, “Paarii” [Paarii Dèeg]. The war began around that time. Abu Qasim left for Lëem Krùad. He said he was on his way to Kò Cam to see his friend Itam. I never saw him again.*

—Aalaj Khrajbut (Da-aa), Naa Kò Saj<sup>57</sup>

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56. The *tàlàad* in this case was Phuukèet Town, a few kilometers away

57. Aalaj 'Da-aa' Khrajbut (b.1925) grew up on the central Kràbìì mainland in Khlóɔŋ Juan village, not far from Lanɗaa. As a teenager, he saw *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* for the first time and met Abu Qasim. Da-aa says that he only knew Abu Qasim briefly, and at the time of our first interview, was unaware of his significance to *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* history. (During my

According to Da-aa, when they met, Abu Qasim had been staying on Sireh for several months and was planning to return to Kò Cam. Although Da-aa cannot speak in regard to Abu Qasim's exact plans at the time, we may infer that his sojourn in Da-aa's village, Khlòŋ Juan, for a month or more and subsequent travels were brief detours from that return. Although Abu Qasim did not leave behind a new performing community in Khlòŋ Juan, as he had in Tanjung, Thîŋraj, and Sireh, following his visit, *ròŋŋ h́́́́́́* began to spread throughout the area; Isăaw moved to nearby Lanđaa and central Kràbii's first *ròŋŋ h́́́́́́ tanjoŋ* groups emerged.

After he left Khlòŋ Juan, Abu Qasim—then in his late 30s—moved to Lěem Krùad, a port and weekly market located at the crossroads of south-central Kràbii's island and mainland communities. One local man, Dollah Dibut,<sup>58</sup> who was a teenager at the time, remembers that “he could play everything,” saying that in addition to playing violin with Kò Cam groups, Abu Qasim played *pui* and *thoon* (a type of reed instrument and barrel drum) with a local *silat gayung* ensemble. During that period (approximately 1941-43), Abu Qasim was married to a Lěem Krùad woman, Mek Sah, and the two lived in a wooden house on the waterfront. Dollah recalls that they were hard of hearing and that, when Mek Sah died, Abu Qasim moved (back) to Thîŋraj.

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fieldwork, I kept him regularly apprised of what I had learned.) Da-aa later moved to his brother-in-law's village, Naa Kò Săj, and founded a *likee paa* theater troupe which he led for a decade. In the 1950s, he spent a year in Thîŋraj—at that time a local *ròŋŋ h́́́́́́* hotbed—and rekindled an interest in it, leading him to establish the Naa Kò Săj troupe that later became among the most popular in central Kràbii. Retired for several years now, Da-aa's name is still widely recognized as having been the progenitor of the modern, *ramwoŋ*-style of *ròŋŋ h́́́́́́*.

58. Dollah married Lipah, a *mak nòŋŋ ròŋŋ h́́́́́́* ‘chaperone,’ from Kò Sii Bòŋjaa who is mentioned in Chapter 4 (Phuukèet and Phanŋaa Bay) as Jimliá's companion during the latter's first encounter with Khamé ‘Dam’ Haphon, in Kò Khiam Tăj Village.

## THÎDRAJ II

Abu Qasim’s second sojourn in Thîņraj (approximately from 1943 to 1953) occurred during a particularly active period for *róçņ ηέέη* both on the island as well as the mainland. There were numerous performers in the village and two or three *rooņ* played each night. As with Tanjung, the village attracted numerous performers and patrons, both locals and outsiders. In the words of many locals who experienced that period, there were “too many performers to mention.”

Among the most prominent musicians in Thîņraj during that time were two young migrant violinists from Tanjung, Hussein and Usob who toured actively, bringing *róçņ ηέέη* to new areas in Kràbii and Traaņ. Both were students of Abu Qasim and grew up in the early Tanjung scene among its first-*ruun* performers. Hussein learned to play *róçņ ηέέη* in Thîņraj after moving there as a teen with his divorced mother. Usob, who was several years older, moved to the village with his wife Leah, a war refugee from Langkawi who also danced *róçņ ηέέη*.<sup>59</sup> He is credited with having taught Lanġdaa’s first violin players.<sup>60</sup> Hussein claims that he was the first to teach Jimliá, the woman who would become, arguably, the region’s most famous *róçņ ηέέη* performer/troupe leader.

Hussein and Usob were relatives of Tilid, Thîņraj’s first star dancer, and shared her surname, Bâaréem. The Bâaréem (ប្រាំឆ្នាំ) clan appears to have lived in several areas of maritime Kràbii. Hussein and Usob were first cousins on their mothers’ sides, while Tilid and Tanjung’s premier violinist, Berani Butmin, were more distant relatives. Figure 17 shows performers that share the Bâaréem surname.

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59. Personal correspondence from Usob and Leah’s son, Karim “Dεεņ” Bâaréem.

60. Usob moved to Phuukèet in the 1970s where he performed with Sireh Island troupes for the remainder of his life.

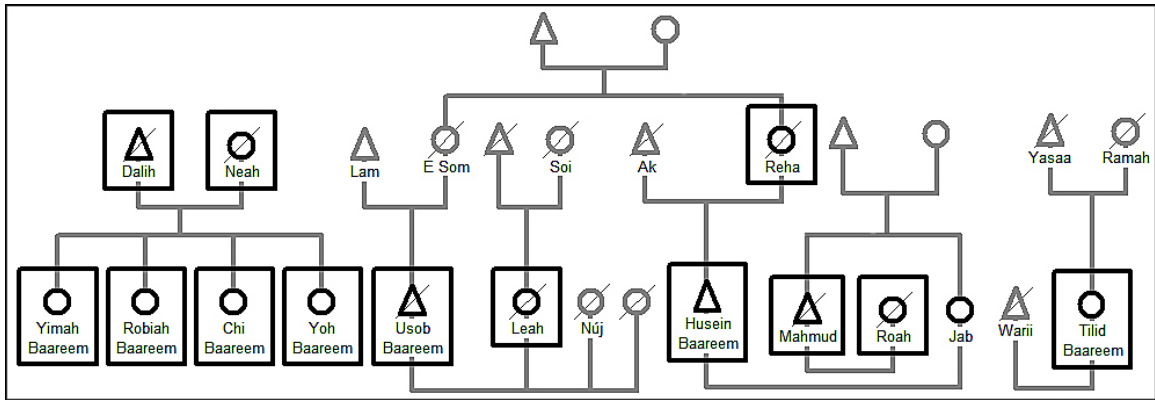


Figure 17. Performers with the surname Bâaréem and their kin

Jimliá was about three years younger than Tilid (who was already well known when Jimliá was still a novice). Her career began in the late-1940s and she became one of the most recognized names in *ρώχη ηέεη* during the 1950s heyday. She prodded social boundaries with her passionate personal life (including innumerable affairs and marriages, including several to her accompanists) and performance manner; where she would do things such as arouse male patrons by singing while seated in their laps.

Jimliá performed in the Malay-language style and enlivened her shows with certain distinctive elements. While performing a folk-theater-like song her drummers wore *phraan* masks (such as those worn in *manora* or *makyung*),<sup>61</sup> and when each song concluded, her dancers gave a hybrid *wâj* (Thai salutation gesture) with hands pressed together to the side of the chest, rather than the customary bow of Muslim dancers or the standard Thai *wâj* with the hands held over the center of the chest.

61. See examples of local *makyung* masks from neighboring Kò Sii Bəəjaa in Figure 27.



Figure 18. Jimliá with her last husband Khamé ‘Dam’ Haphon in the early 1960s (photo courtesy of Khamé Haphon)

## SUMMARY

When *róççη ηέεηη* first took root among Malays and Orak Lawoi in Tanjung Village on Lantaa Island several years prior to the Second World War, it had been introduced to the community, and later enriched, by several individuals who had come from, and lived in or near Malaya. It began with informal evening gatherings in which locals learned to play instruments, sing and dance. Within a short period they formed professional traveling troupes which propagated the form to neighboring islands and the mainland, where locals had never seen the form, yet quickly became enthusiastic about it. On Lantaa and in the new communities to which it expanded, *róççη ηέεηη* training became a central feature of village life during the wartime and postwar decades. This chapter shows

the lifestyles of those early years, how performers lived, traveled, spread the new music and dance; and how a generation of youths embraced the genre, turning this into *ร่ำร้อง* *เห่เห่*'s golden age. *ร่ำร้อง* *เห่เห่* was so well received, in part, because it fit with the seasonal, peripatetic lifestyles of locals, and gave young men and women a novel medium for socializing and courtship.

The next major transition for *ร่ำร้อง* *เห่เห่* occurred after being introduced throughout the region by the early island groups. On the mainland, in Thai-speaking areas, new communities of *ร่ำร้อง* *เห่เห่* performers and audiences arose, singing *ร่ำร้อง* *เห่เห่* tunes in Thai, and adding local songs of their own to the repertoire. These developments would lead *ร่ำร้อง* *เห่เห่* into an age of greater diversity, and geographical spread, as larger social spheres formed between these mainland performing communities and their neighboring island counterparts.

## CHAPTER 4. POSTWAR *රජාන ධේන* ‘SPHERES OF INFLUENCE’

This chapter looks at the postwar period of the 1940s and '50s. This was *රජාන ධේන*'s heyday, during which performing communities, particularly Thai-speaking ones, took root in all corners of the region. This dispersion may be compared to its extent during the prewar years as shown in Figure 3). The form expanded rapidly as a result of several factors. First, it became a Thai-language medium, and accessible to a much larger mainland audience. Second, its audience base grew, particularly in market towns that saw an inflow of migrants, many of whom came as laborers in rubber, tin, fishing and logging industries; southwest Thailand's population nearly doubled from 1937 to 1963 (see Montesano 1998:36-38). Other factors were improvement to local infrastructure, including better road networks and motorized sea travel that enabled performers and patrons to move around more easily; and increased agricultural cultivation, particularly rubber, which brought corresponding increases in prosperity.

Each of the following four sections in this chapter examines a distinct sub-regional *රජාන ධේන* 'sphere of influence' within the Andaman Coast region, that developed in the two decades following the war, and in which performers expanded the form's reach and gave it new characteristics. A 'sphere,' in this case, is a synchronic and diachronic framework for understanding relationships among Malay- and Thai-speaking *රජාන ධේන* communities. It roughly mirrors well-trodden socio-economic networks that, for ages, have linked island communities with their closest mainland markets—connections that have been crucibles for the creation of various hybrid cultural forms.

Three spheres were principal to *රජාන ධේන*'s development: (1) the Lantaa sphere, which encompassed mainland areas of south Kràbii and Traaη, (2) the Kò Cam sphere,

that encompassed the islands and mainland around south-central Kràbii, and (3) the Phuukèet sphere centered on the performing community at Sireh Island, and linked to villages along the Phuukèet and Phaηηaa coastline (see Figure 19). The characteristics of each of these spheres were distinctive, with individual sets of local stars, repertoires, performers, and teachers. A fourth sphere discussed here is Sàtuun, but unlike the previous three, it was not unified in the same sense. Instead, it had three smaller *ρώση ηέση* communities, which did not interact significantly, or form a single entity.

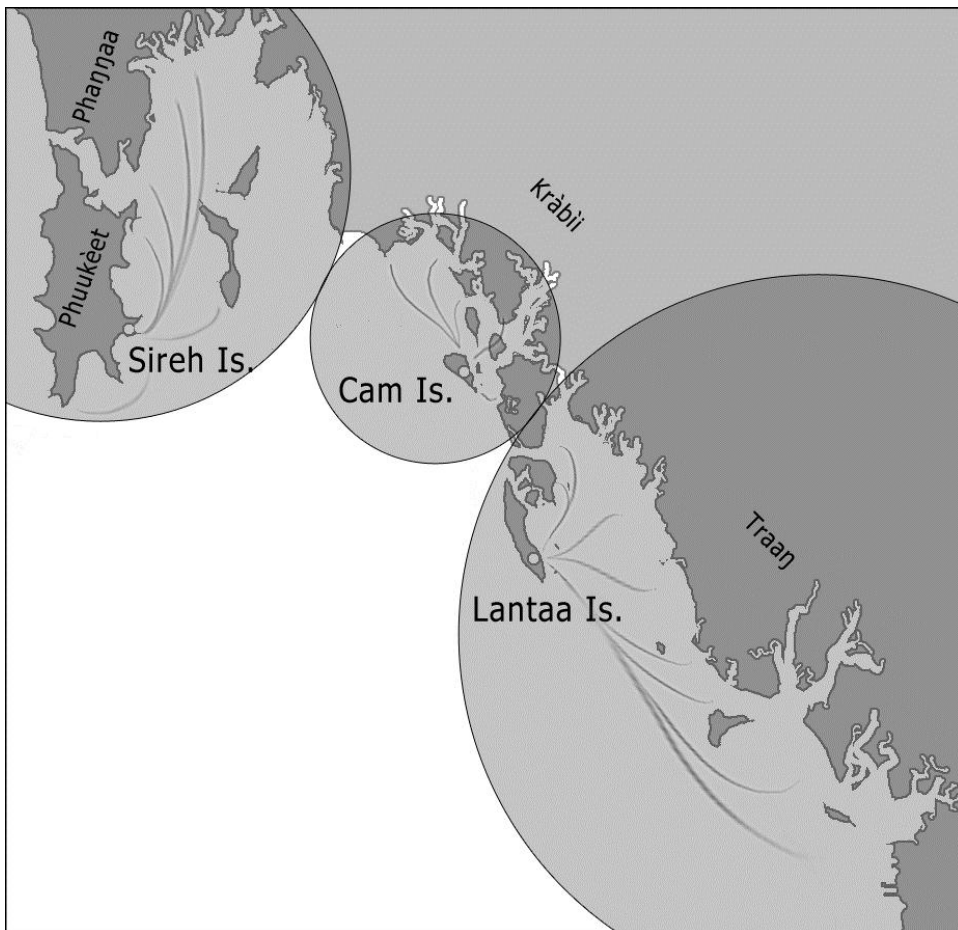


Figure 19. The three early *ρώση ηέση* centers and their spheres of influence

Although each sphere developed certain distinctive characteristics, they were neither exclusive, closed areas, nor were they bound by any physical or social restrictions

preventing people from transcending their imaginary boundaries. Indeed, there were numerous interactions among them. Many *rǒɔŋ h́́eɛŋ* performers traveled out of their home areas to become famous in new ones, and a few became pan-regional stars, known from Phuukèet to Sàtuun. Moreover, a sphere could be more than just a contiguous geographical zone, as exhibited by the mobile Orak Lawoi, whose *rǒɔŋ h́́eɛŋ* associations united villages across distant migration routes.

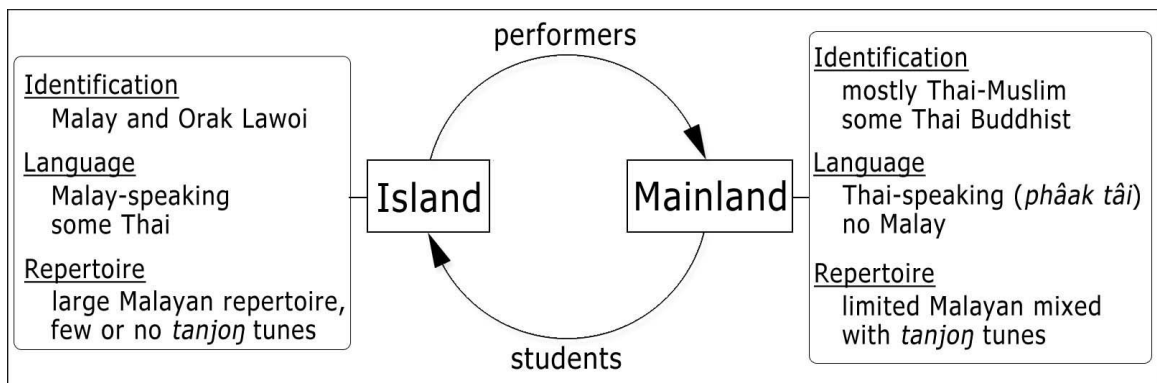


Figure 20. Circulation of *rǒɔŋ h́́eɛŋ* within a sphere of influence

Figure 20 is my model for *rǒɔŋ h́́eɛŋ*'s transmission and circulation in the early stages of its development. The islands produced traveling troupes, avid participants (*rǒɔŋ h́́eɛŋ* patrons), economic migrants, and others, who became bearers of the new form to their mainland neighbors; and their villages became hosts and training centers for mainland students, and hubs of *rǒɔŋ h́́eɛŋ* activity. Mainland students returned home to disseminate *rǒɔŋ h́́eɛŋ* to their neighbors and nearby communities. That region, in turn, circulated their back to the islands in the form of new songs and dances. The effects of island upon mainland may be considered greater in scope than any mainland contributions to the island *rǒɔŋ h́́eɛŋ* style, which has been minimal, in the form of a few *tanjɔŋ* songs.

The same figure enumerates several distinctions between island and mainland communities in terms of their ethnic or religious identification, primary language, and repertoire style. Island performers came from predominantly Malay and Orak Lawoi communities, who generally coexisted symbiotically. They shared a common language and were often indistinguishable outside of certain ritual practices. Both sang *ρώχη ηέεη* in Malay and had repertoires that consisted of a diverse variety of more than fifty Malayan tunes and dances. Mainland performers were mainly Thai-speaking Muslims who played smaller *tanjong*-style repertoires comprised of between ten and twenty local and Malayan tunes and, because of their language and location, mediated the entrance of *ρώχη ηέεη* to Thai Buddhist communities. These two groups communicated in Malay or Thai. Thai was the second (or first) language many islanders. Mainlanders who lived on Lantaa during the 1940s and '50s learned to speak Malay. If it happened today, all would be speaking Thai.

The following sections look at the four spheres individually. It would be impossible to trace every path that *ρώχη ηέεη* traveled within those spheres, so I focus on the communities that locals told me were the most significant, and the progression *ρώχη ηέεη* took from the islands to the mainland.

## LANTAA AND LOWER KRÀBÌÌ

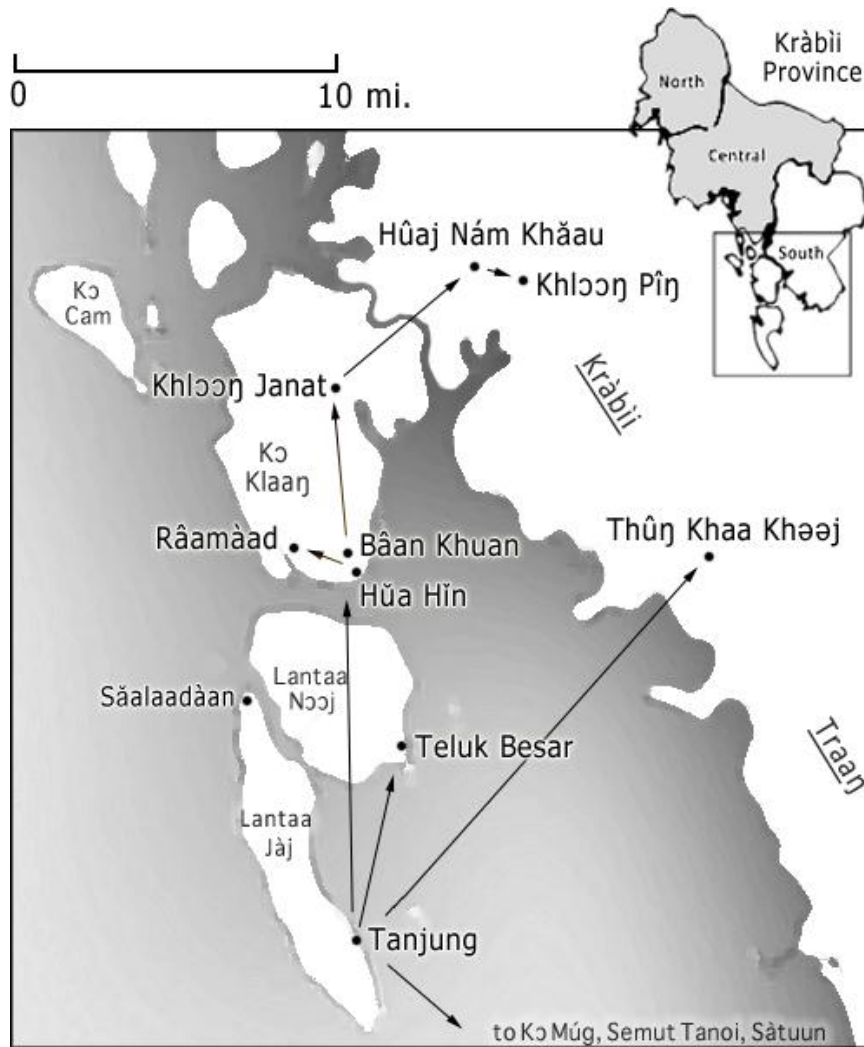


Figure 21. The spread of *r'óŋŋ ɣéɛŋ* from Lantaa to Kò Klaaŋ and mainland Kràbìì

Lantaa's *r'óŋŋ ɣéɛŋ* community was the oldest in southwest Thailand and its performers were pioneers and early propagators in the two other major training and performance centers located on Kò Cam and Sireh Island. Of the three principal spheres of influence, Lantaa's extended across the widest geographical area. It encompassed parts of Kràbìì, Traaŋ, and Sảtuun, and resided at the center of a network of Orak Lawoi villages that stretched from Phuukẻt to Langkawi. It had two early satellite performing

communities prior to the war: one in Teluk Besar (Lók Jàj) led by Mijjah, and another in Semut Tanoi led by Che Mat.

After the war, South Kràbii was a particularly active region for *róoη ηέεη* within the Lantaa sphere.<sup>62</sup> Figure 21 shows a chronological progression from Tanjung to Khlóoη Pîη, via Kò Kllaη, Khlóoη Janat, and Húaj Nám Khăaw that was fundamental to local *róoη ηέεη* history. After Lantaa, some of the earliest groups formed among mixed Malay and Thai-speaking Muslim farming and fishing communities on the south coast of Kò Kllaη (northernmost in the Lantaa island group), in an area then known as Selat Tòn Jaaη.<sup>63</sup> Today's groups in south Kràbii are connected by a clear line of transmission to Kò Kllaη's first local singer-dancer and troupe leader, Soosiá of Bâan Khuan, who founded a *róoη ηέεη* group in the 1940s amid an already active folk theater scene. One of Soosiá's students, Jaamiiá Kacàtpaj, migrated to Húaj Nám Khăau on the mainland, where she led troupes, performed, and taught continuously for decades, becoming an icon of local *tanjooη* song. Jaamiiá's students, in turn, established neighboring Khlóoη Pîη as a new center for *róoη ηέεη* to succeed Húaj Nám Khăau, where it remains one of today's last bastions of the form in southwest Thailand.

#### *Bâan Khuan And Râamàad*

The first accounts of folk performance in Kò Kllaη tell of early twentieth-century

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62. The division of Kràbii into South Kràbii and south-central Kràbii, which appears later in this chapter, does not reflect political or administrative regions, but roughly coincides with Lantaa and Kò Cam socio-economic spheres or, in simpler terms, where people from those areas generally went to the market.

63. Selat Tòn Jaaη, uniting the Thai name for the dammar tree with the Malay word for strait (*selat*), was how locals referred to the north coast of a one-mile-wide channel separating Kò Kllaη and Lantaa Nój in the mid twentieth century. As this area was once referred to as Selat Tanjung (in Skinner 1985: 274), it is likely that Tòn Jaaη derived from the Malay word *tanjung*, though they are unrelated terms.

traveling *manoora* troupes that, while journeying through, stopped at a secluded hillside shrine to perform offering dances (*ram thawǎaj*) for the local guardian spirits whom they called *keramat*—from the Malay word for ‘saint,’ borrowed from Arabic for ‘miracle effected by a saint.’ The area soon became populated with agricultural settlers who named their new village Râamàad, after those spirits.<sup>64</sup>

The new settlers to Râamàad were a mix of local Thai-Muslims from Hũa Hĩn and Bâan Khuan, several Malay families from Sàtuun, and a mix of others from far-flung places such as Phátthaluṅ, and Malaya. They brought two forms of shamanistic ritual/entertainment folk theater to the area in the 1920s—the Thai-medium *lĩkee paa* and Malay-medium *makyung*<sup>65</sup>—and held annual *rooṅ khruu* trancing rituals to honor the local spirits and ancestral teachers of each form. A local man named Yahya (Yaa) Matsem established *lĩkee paa* in the village after the studying it elsewhere, and Sàtuun immigrants Hooṅ Waṅsabuu and his son Wii introduced *makyung* and a ritualistic form of *silat gayung* martial arts. In the late 1930s, *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* groups from Lantaa brought social dance to the village when they began performing at annual local celebrations in Râamàad (and in Bâan Khuan and Hũa Hĩn). The first group was led by Sima and her violinist husband Long.<sup>66</sup>

Amran was a conscript in the Japanese army in Malaya during the early 1940s. He fled while in Thailand, on route to Burma, and took refuge in a coastal village in Sàtuun. He recounts here his first encounter with Râamàad’s *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* performers, after the war:

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64. Personal communication from Tàab Waṅsabuu, and unpublished manuscript by Pràsít Sateít.

65. While villagers refer to the form as *makyung*, their descriptions suggest that it was closer to *makyung laut* or Orak Lawoi *kabong* theater.

66. Personal communication from Tàab Waṅsabuu.

*At the beginning of the war the Japanese army took me from Johor (Malaya) to Thailand to be a soldier. I ran away when we reached their base at Traaŋ and walked from village to village, eventually reaching Sātuun where people in a Thai-speaking village hid me until the war ended. Soosiá came touring with her rɔ́ɔŋ ŋééŋ troupe around 1948, playing two or three nights in each village. The young folk there really liked it. She could make fifty bàat a night from dances—that would be like five-thousand bàat today [about US\$165]. After three months she returned to Selat Ton Yaaŋ. I was recently divorced from my second wife and wanted to travel so I went with Soosiá’s group. The folks here said I came with the rɔ́ɔŋ ŋééŋ which was not exactly true, although I admit I was a little crazy for her.*

—Amran, Râamàad<sup>67</sup>

The Thai-speaking Soosiá Ranwansii, according to Kasim Haawaa,<sup>68</sup> learned *rɔ́ɔŋ ŋééŋ* from watching Sima and Long’s group perform when they visited from Lantaa. She was born in Bâan Khuan around 1927, beginning her career as an actor in a local *líkee paa* troupe led by Sare, that was active in the early 1940s. She formed Kò Kllaŋ’s first *rɔ́ɔŋ ŋééŋ* group after the war. They performed in littoral areas of south Kràbii and Traaŋ (encompassing the Lantaa ‘sphere’), and toured Làŋuu (on the northern coast of Sātuun Province) around 1947 or ’48, at a time when the only other groups to do so were from Tanjung.<sup>69</sup> Soosiá’s group members went on to establish new *rɔ́ɔŋ ŋééŋ* performing

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67. Amran (1926-2009) was born in Pekan Geresik, near Muar in Malaya’s Johor State and was conscripted into the Japanese Army as a teenager. While stationed briefly in Traaŋ, on route to Burma, he fled from the army and was harbored by Muslim villagers in Jâantaakhâaw, and later in Làŋuu where he married the daughter of a wealthy villager. Around 1948, after his first wife had died, and he divorced from his second, Amran became enamored of a visiting *rɔ́ɔŋ ŋééŋ* singer from Râamàad named Soosiá (see *Lantaa and Lower Kràbii* in Chapter 4). He “followed” the troupe back to Râamàad where his knowledge of Islam qualified him to become the local religious teacher, and supplemented his income with a Western-style medical practice (for which he had no prior qualifications) that mostly involved providing injections to the ill. During the time I lived in Râamàad, Amran and I had frequent and lengthy discussions on local rural development, Islam, society, and performing arts in Kò Kllaŋ.

68. Personal correspondence from Kasim Haawaa, 5 July 2009.

69. It is unclear why Soosiá traveled to perform in Làŋuu, particularly since it was quite far away (at least one day’s journey by *perahu* from Bâan Khuan). It is possible that she or members of her troupe had relatives there, as there were a number of immigrant Làŋuu families in Kò Kllaŋ.

communities in the area around Kò Klaan, with those of Râamàad and Hûaj Nám Khăaw being the most prominent.

In Râamàad, many of the core players for the village's *likee paa*, *makyung*, *silat gayung*, and later its *róŋŋ* *ŋéey* groups came from the Ɔon-nuan, Matsem, La-iad, Phitukhaam, Satcít, Sòŋràg, and Waŋsabuu clans (see genealogy charts in Figure 22 and Figure 23). These are still common surnames (*naamsàkun*) in the village found among many of the contemporary generation of the village's performers. Râamàad's first *róŋŋ* *ŋéey* violinists were also performers (musicians and actors) in the other aforementioned forms. They included Misaa Chaannám, Tika Cεemsaj, and brothers Mat Diah and Yan Phitukhaam. There is little consensus among villagers of who was first or how those four contemporaries learned their song repertoire.<sup>70</sup> They likely acquired it from the early Lantaa and Kò Cam performers—as Râamàad was situated roughly in between the two islands—either as students or observers. Oral accounts and other evidence do not suggest that there was repertoire carried directly to Râamàad from the south (such as from Làŋuu where the Phitukhaams had lived or Malaya).

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70. Exactly who was the first violinist in Râamàad is uncertain. Sanan Ɔon-nuan says it was his teacher Misaa. Tàab Waŋsabuu says it was Tika Cεemsaj. Amran, who arrived several years after *róŋŋ* *ŋéey* was established, believes that Yan Phitukhaam was the first, and adds that when he first saw Soosiá in Làŋuu, her violinist was a man named Tayib from Khlóŋ Janat whose wife, Săawbóow, was a dancer in the same group. Châhèet Naaksaŋâa, a Sātuun native with no connection to Râamàad at that time (and whose role is discussed later in this chapter) was present in Làŋuu then and remembers the first visiting violinist's name as 'Old Man' Jika (this was likely Tika).

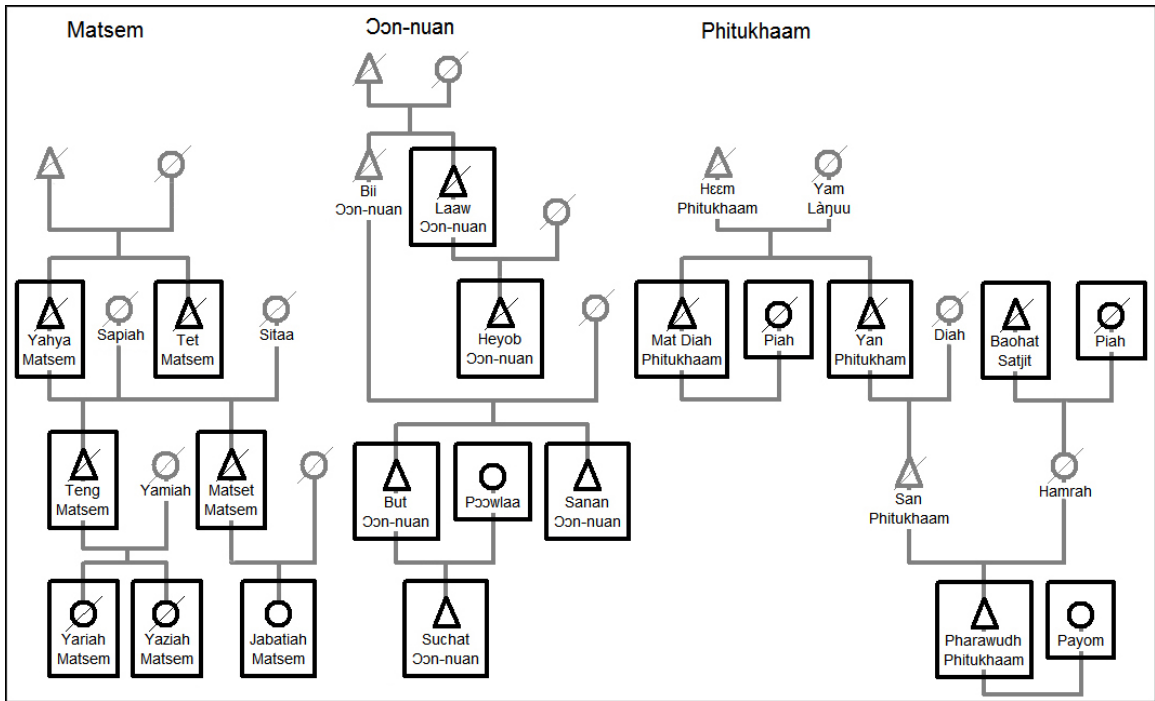


Figure 22. Râamâad’s folk performer families (1): Matsem, Ɔon-nuan, and Phitukhaam. Most of these performers (indicated by dark boxes) were active in *likee paa* and *róŋŋ Ƌéey*.

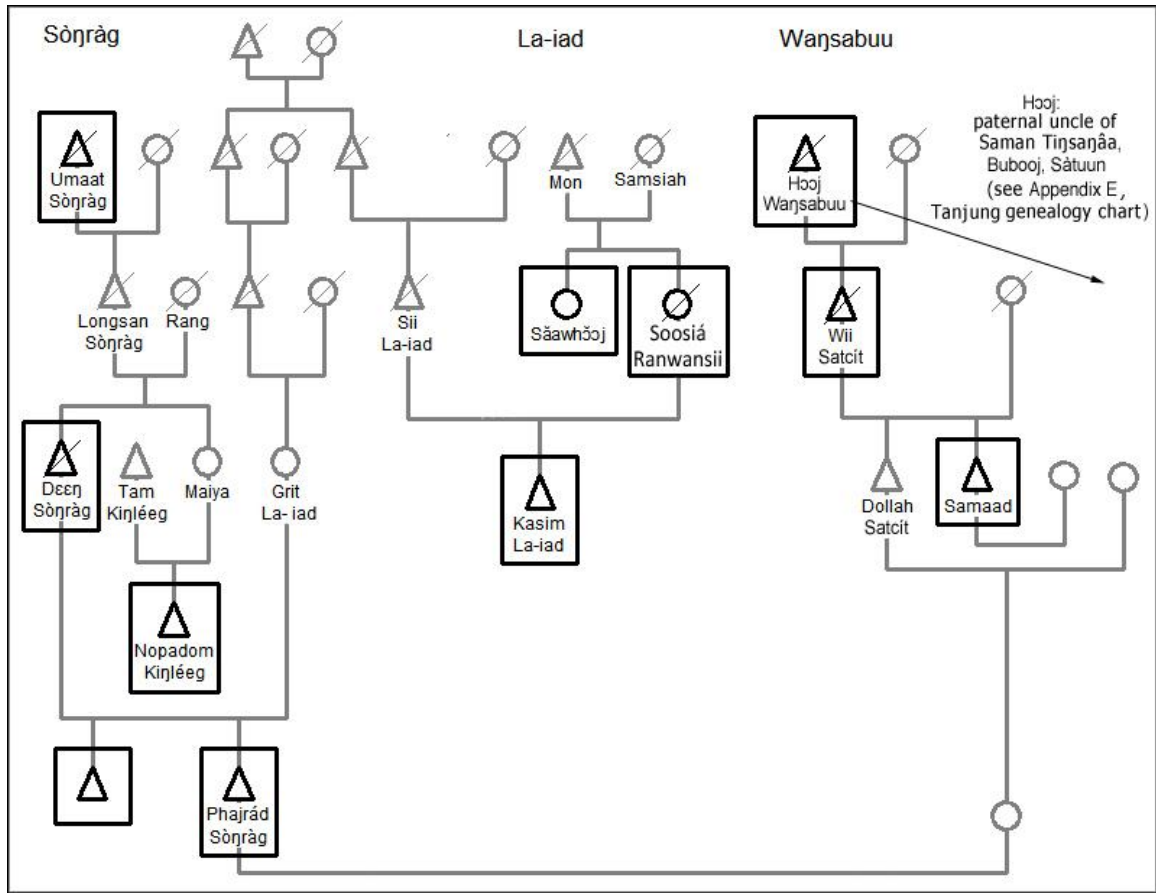


Figure 23. Râamàad’s folk performer families (2): Sònràg, La-iad (both active in *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* and *líkee paa*), and Waṅsabuu (*makyung* and *silat gayung*).

*Hûaj Nám Khãaw and Khlóṅ Pîṅ*

The most significant expansion of *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* in south Kràbii in the 1950s was the establishment of the performing community in Hûaj Nám Khãaw, founded by Jaamiiá Kacàtpaj, a Thai-Muslim *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* dancer who began with Soosiá’s group at age nine, and went on to become the best known proponent of the *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ tanjoh* style in that region. Jaamiiá was born in 1938 in Khlóṅ Janat, a village situated among the mangrove forests of Kó Klaaj’s northeast coast. At eighteen, she moved with her mother to the mainland village, Hûaj Nám Khãaw, about five miles away. There, Jaamiiá, along with her husbands from three successive marriages, led *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* troupes for almost four

decades.<sup>71</sup>

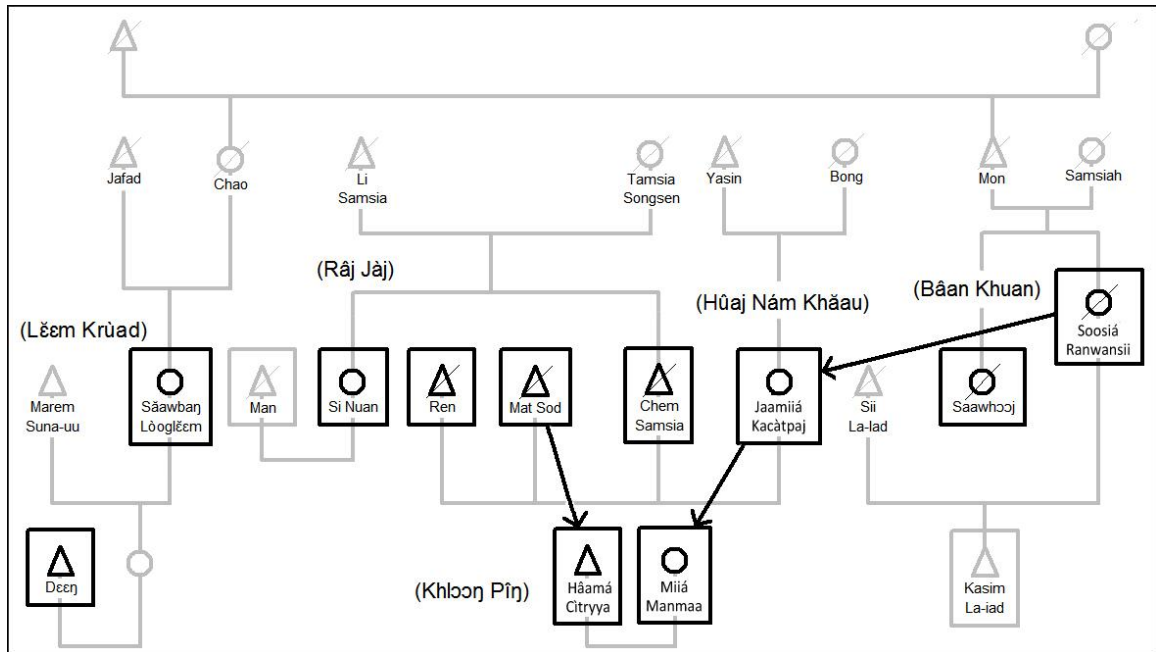


Figure 24. *Rŏŏŋ ŋéŋŋ*'s progression from Bâan Khuan to Hûaj Nám Khăaw, to Khlŏŋ Pîŋ, and genealogies uniting performers in south- and south-central Kràbii. Arrows indicate teacher-student (*khruu-lûugsit*) relationships.

As *rŏŏŋ ŋéŋŋ* communities waned in other parts of Kràbii, Khlŏŋ Pîŋ became its next center and has remained so until the present day, led by several alumni from the Hûaj Nám Khăaw group (see Figure 24). The first was Phỳyg Khăausòd, a Thai-speaking mainlander whose *rŏŏŋ ŋéŋŋ* career began in 1950s Tanjung, and who is one of just a few active violinists today.<sup>72</sup> Phỳyg was born in 1937 in Thûŋ Khaa Khəəj, a mainland village situated near the coast opposite Lantaa, orphaned at an early age, and raised by his elder

71. All three of Yaamiá's now-deceased husbands were involved in *rŏŏŋ ŋéŋŋ*. The first was Chem Samsia, a violinist from Râj Jàj near Lanđaa (and younger brother of Si Nuan, the village's star *rŏŏŋ ŋéŋŋ*, and later *ramwoŋ* performer, mentioned later in this chapter); the second, Mat Sod, was a local violinist; and the third, Ren, managed her troupe. She retired in 1993. (Personal correspondence from Yaamiá Kacàtpaj)

72. See Appendix D for a list of surviving *rŏŏŋ ŋéŋŋ* violinists in southwest Thailand, most of whom learned to play in the 1950s and '60s.

brother.<sup>73</sup> At seventeen, he saw *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* for the first time when a Lantaa group performed for a wedding celebration in neighboring Lɛɛm Khraj, and like other young men of that era for whom *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* became a significant part of their lives, he fell in love with a dancer and followed her and the troupe back to Tanjung.

The group Phỳyg first saw was led by two violin-playing brothers Chi and Sen (Hussein)—half-brothers of Sima and Mat Deh (first-*ruun* pioneers on Lantaa and Phuukèet). The dancer he pursued and eventually married, Iad, was the daughter of another Tanjung violinist, Laa, and niece of Sima’s husband, Long. Phỳyg lived in Tanjung for roughly fifteen years where he fished and played *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*. He from Chi, Sen, and Abu Qasim, who by that time was an infrequent visitor to Tanjung. Phỳyg and Iad divorced in the late 1960s and he left the island to return home to Thûŋ Khaa Khəəj, where he played violin with the two most prominent *tanjoŋ* groups of that time: one led by Taadam in Lanɗaa (see Isăaw and the Birth of *Phleeŋ Tanjoŋ* in Chapter 3), and another by Jaamiiá in Hûaj Nám Khăaw. He formed Khlóɔŋ Pîŋ’s first *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* group, Duandii, during the mid-1970s. The genealogical chart in Figure 25 shows Phỳyg’s relationship to Chi and his family of performers and his connections to *tanjoŋ*-style *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* communities that emerged in Lanɗaa, Hûaj Nám Khăaw, and Khlóɔŋ Pîŋ.

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73. Thûŋ Khaa Khəəj is not to be confused with Thûŋ Khaa, an older local name for Phuukèet (*thûŋ khaa* means a field of thatch grass). *Khəəj* refers to a small variety of shrimp (*kûŋ khəəj*) that is a staple in local cooking, prepared fresh or as a preserved paste (*khəəj* or *belacan*), and was likely once a primary local commodity in that area, as it was in much of the coastal region.

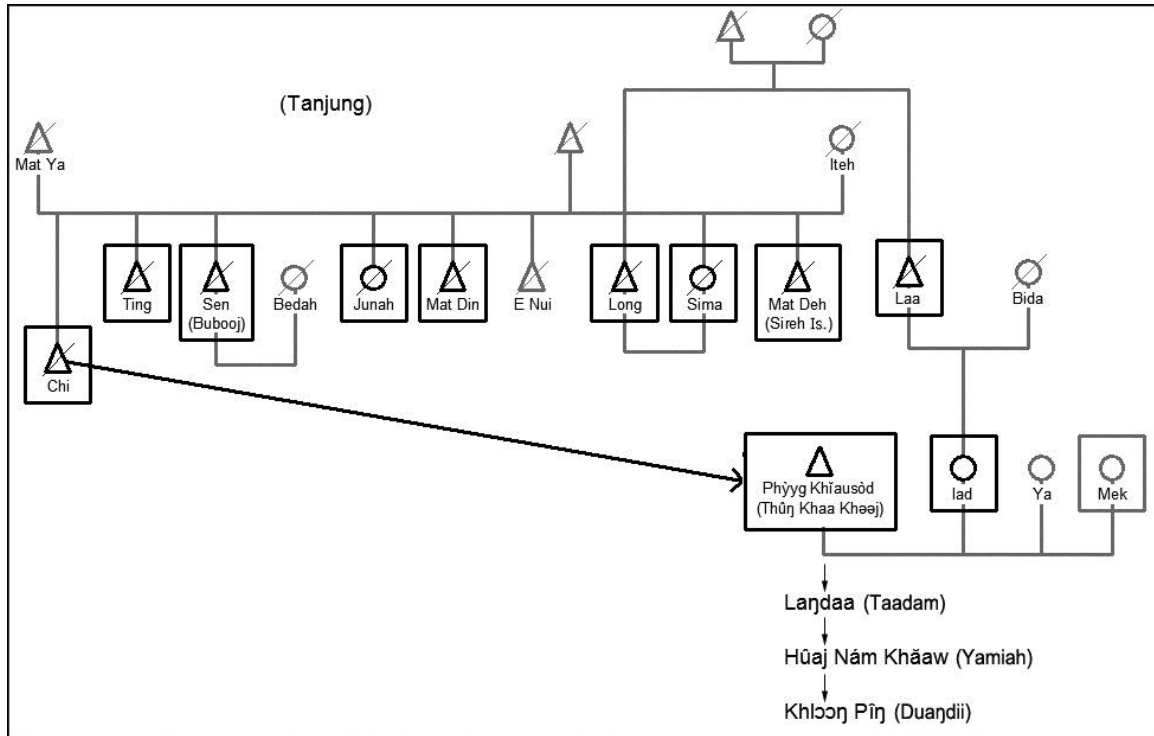


Figure 25. Phỳyg Khĩausòd’s connections to his teacher Chi, the latter’s place in an important family of *rõõḡ ḡééḡ* performers, as well as Phỳyg’s connection to *tanjõḡ*-style *rõõḡ ḡééḡ* communities that emerged in mainland Kràbii.

Khlõõj Pĩḡ’s second group, Sãam Phĩ Nõõḡ (Three Siblings), was founded by two other alumni of Jaamiiá’s group, violinist Hãamá Citryya (who is several years Phỳyg’s junior), and his wife Miiá Manmaa, a student of Jaamiiá. Their group,<sup>74</sup> as mentioned earlier in this dissertation, has become the best-known *rõõḡ ḡééḡ* group in southwest Thailand. Hãamá and Miiá view themselves as sole guardians of the tradition handed to them by Ren and Yamiah of Hũaj Nám Khãaw. Part of that responsibility involves being caretakers of a small private shrine dedicated to the *khruu mḡõõ rõõḡ ḡééḡ* (ancestral founders of *rõõḡ ḡééḡ*), at which they perform brief rituals prior to departing for

74. A third, and more recent Khlõõj Pĩḡ group, Tõõn Khee (Triple ‘K’), is led by rammánaa player Sãn Lanbyḡ who began with Sãam Phĩ Nõõḡ. He plays with violinist Dæḡ Mat-Oosòd (b.1924, a relative of Ali in Lanḡdaa) and Che Beh Riidin.

gigs, and annual *rooŋ khruu* rituals that reinforce an unbroken *róoŋ ɣéey* teacher-student lineage. Although such practices among Muslims are not uncommon in southwest Thailand, or in Malaysia for that matter, they are in contention with the relatively recent Islamic revival, and are done discretely.

Săam Phîi Nóoŋ takes its name from the term *phîi nóoŋ* (siblings), a common postfix in Thailand that appears in names of performing groups and various commercial enterprises. The ‘three’ in the name refers to the three people Hâamá and Miiá recognize as *róoŋ ɣéey*’s *khruu mǎo* in their founding myth: a woman named Tok Si Bunga, and two men named Tok Si Kuning and Tok Nuyung, who they believe first carried *róoŋ ɣéey* to Thailand, arriving by boat at Săŋkaa-ûu Village on Lantaa. Although elements of this tale resemble older regional myths, such as the one attached to the Tó Sée Shrine in Phuukèet,<sup>75</sup> it may have only started getting attention since appearing in a narrated opening to one of Săam Phîi Nóoŋ’s commercially produced VCDs (from a small distribution that seems to have been sold mostly to local performers and fans). The account, brief as it is, has its historical inaccuracies: that Săŋkaa-ûu is mentioned as the original site, even before the village existed; and that *róoŋ ɣéey* began among the Orak Lawoi, where it was primarily a Malay community. However, it has the curious element of mentioning a woman named Tok Si Bunga as one of the founders, where the fact that there was a founder on Lantaa nicknamed Bunga, was unknown to Hâamá and Miiá (and

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75. In Malay, ‘Tok’ means ‘grandparent’ and ‘si’ is a name prefix added to show reverence. In the Kò Cam area, Tok Nuyung is a *khruu mǎo makyung* (see the mask in Figure 27). ‘Nuyum’ likely comes from the Malay term for ‘fortune teller’ (*tok nujum*). Local guardian spirits often have Malay names and are frequently associated with colors or shades though not all are related to folk performance. For example, the Tó Sée Shrine in Phuukèet’s has statues of three of the island’s founders Tó Sée Khăaw (white), Tok Si Dam (black), and Tok Si Dəey (red). (Tok Si and Tó Sée are either identical in meaning. Si and Sée in this case could mean ‘sheikh’ if they were religious teachers.)

in my research of *ρῶνη ηέειη*, the name Bunga only appeared these two times). If indeed there is a connection between the two Bungas, this could suggest a localized, generational process of folklorization, through which well-known performers become venerated ancestral guardian spirits. This is a process that may have also occurred in regional forms such as *manooraa* (where a *khruu mǽ* was a divinely inseminated princess who learned to dance in a dream) and *nǎη τάλυη* (where venerated shadow puppet characters are said to have originated in real people).

## KÒ CAM AND SOUTH-CENTRAL KRÀBÌÌ

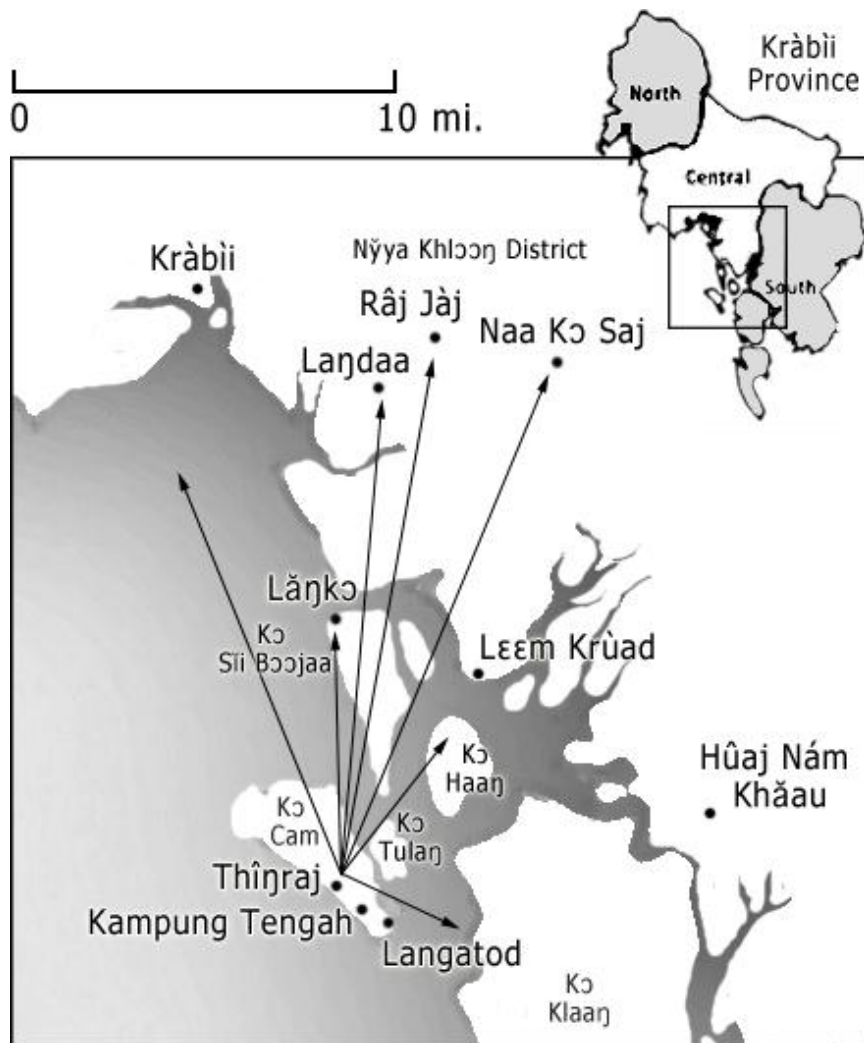


Figure 26. Dissemination patterns of *rɔɔŋ ɲéɛŋ* in south-central Kràbii

### *Kò Cam*

South-central Kràbii's sphere of influence had its initial center among Malay-speaking communities on Kò Cam—including the predominantly Malay areas of Thîŋraj, Tulang Island, and Kò Sii Bɔɔjaaj, and the Orak Lawoi villages around Kampung Tengah and Langatod—and spread outward from there to mainland Thai-speaking communities in Kràbii, particularly around the Nyya Khlɔɔŋ area, where early *tanjɔŋ*-style groups

emerged (see Figure 26).

Thîņraj was the area's largest and most diverse *róçŋ ńééŋ* community. It attracted students from neighboring areas, was home to several performing troupes, numerous musicians and dancers, and produced several regional stars including Tilid, Jimliá, and Piniah.

A dominant figure in local folk performance was Yakob, a Kelantanese immigrant and *makyung* performer, who came to the area in the 1920s with his parents and several other relatives. They settled on Tulang Island,<sup>76</sup> a short distance from Thîņraj, and planted orchards and rice fields.<sup>77</sup> Yakob became the area's *kamnan* (sub-district chief) and policeman,<sup>78</sup> belonged to Thîņraj's first *ruun* of *róçŋ ńééŋ* performers (he learned it locally), and entertained the village with his shamanistic Malayan *makyung*. In his mid-thirties, he moved to Lăŋ Kò on nearby Kò Sîi Bóçjaa, and established a *róçŋ ńééŋ* troupe which was of the best-known island *róçŋ ńééŋ* troupes in the 1950s. It featured his daughter Piniah as lead singer-dancer, his foster son Ceeká as the main violinist, and for several years, Amewah's teenage daughter Biidá, Yakob's grandniece.<sup>79</sup> Yakob was related or connected to a number of other important *róçŋ ńééŋ* figures including Jimliá, Isăaw, Ali, and Yob, as illustrated by the genealogical chart in Figure 28.

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76. Tulang Island (Kò Tulan) is said to have been named for the bones (*tulang*) of dead elephants whose carcasses were discarded from passing trading vessels. Kò Sîi Bóçjaa is said to be originally named Pasir Buaya (Crocodile Beach, in Malay), for an elusive man-eating creature that once roamed its shores.

77. According to Yakob's grandsons, the family followed one of Yakob's uncles, a fugitive from Malaya, who first settled in the region, and went to fetch them in Langkawi (personal correspondence from Mat and Man Taawal, Kò Sîi Bóçjaa)

78. Locals still refer to the late Yakob with the honorific *naaj paan* (*phûujàj bâan*).

79. Piniah also became the fourth wife of Ali Mat-Oosòd of Lanċaa following the death of his first wife Isăaw and divorces from Taadam and third wife Săawbaŋ.



Figure 27. A photograph of Yakob and his two *makyung* masks: Awang (l) and Tok Nuyum (photo of Yakob courtesy of Mat and Man Taawal)

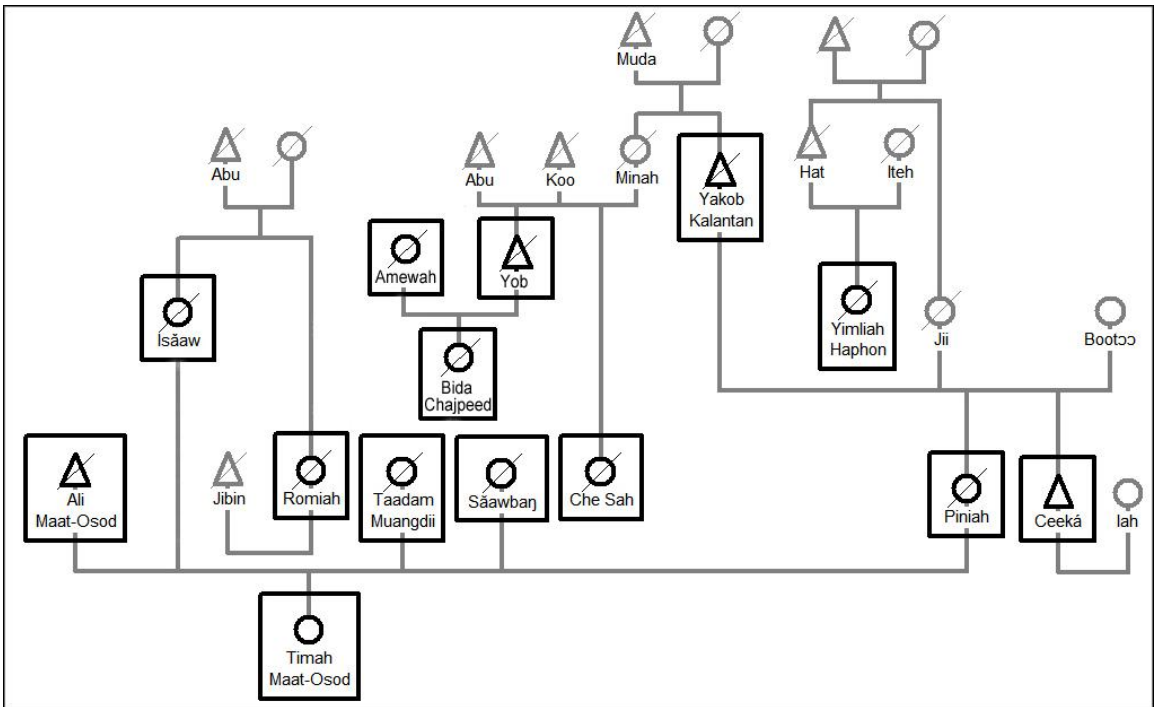


Figure 28. Conjugal and kinship relationships associating Yakob, Jimliá, Taadam, Ali, Biidá, and other important *róꝝη ηέεηη* figures

Performers in Kò Cam's Malay and Orak Lawoi communities mixed together, but

maintained distinct *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* groups. For the Orak Lawoi, *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* began with two of Abu Qasim's students: a male singer-dancer named Itam who became a long-time village troupe leader in Kampung Tengah, and a violinist named Awang who recently passed away in the early 2000s. Like their Sireh Island relatives, this Orak Lawoi community performed *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* for monthly and semi-annual full-moon festivals held at the Tok Burung spirit shrine in Langatod (now called Kò Cam Village) in hybrid celebrations that incorporated ritual and entertainment *rammánaa*-accompanied songs (*berana*), *makyung laut* theater, and *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*. Both communities were involved with circulating *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* to the mainland, most specifically, to the districts around Nýya Khlóɔŋ including Naa Kò Sǎj, Lanɗaa, and Ráj Jàj.

#### *Mainland Kràbii*

Mainland Kràbii's first *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* group led by Isǎaw (and later Taadam) in Lanɗaa had ties to Lantaa and Kò Cam—through Usob Bâaréem who taught its first local violinists Kiŋ, and Hussein Mamia.<sup>80</sup> Other groups soon appeared in the area.

Abu Qasim's erstwhile traveling partner, Da-aa, settled in Naa Kò Sǎj, a land-locked farming village slightly more than five miles to the east of Lanɗaa, moving there at age seventeen to marry a local woman, Sǎawtǔm.<sup>81</sup> Following the war, he led a traveling *líkee paa* troupe for roughly a decade until the early 1950s when, during a stay in Thîŋraj (a major hotbed for *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*), his interest in the social dance was rekindled.

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80. Kiŋ's wife Supiah was an early *tanjong* singer and paternal aunt of Lat Khlóɔŋdii in Tanjung Village.

81. He moved there following his elder sister who married into that village.

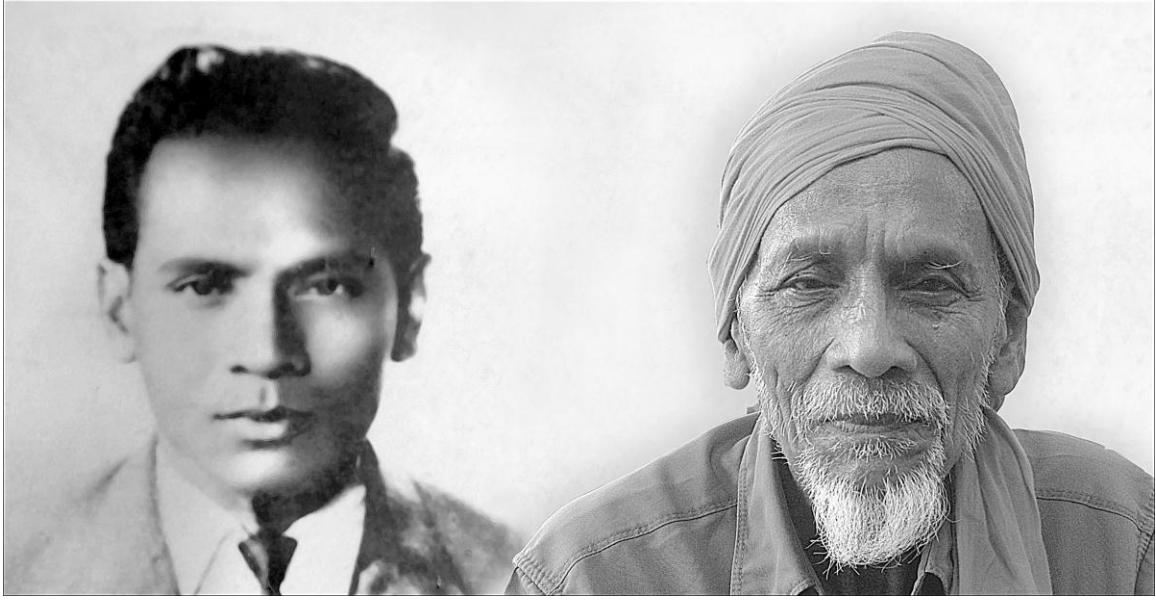


Figure 29. Aalaj “Da-aa” Khrajbut, circa mid-1950s and in 2007 (photo on left courtesy of Aalaj Khrajbut)

Returning to Naa Kò Sǎj, Da-aa and Sǎawtǔm formed a *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* group which brought several notable innovations to the form. One was his signature version of “Jaanooŋ” in which he fused a *líkee paa* melody to the song’s standard chorus. Another was his incorporation of songs from central Thai genres such as *ramwoŋ* and *lâug thûŋ*. In later years, as *ramwoŋ* overtook *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* in local popularity, Da-aa’s dancers began wearing *ramwoŋ*-like short skirts (see, for example, the bottom of Figure 149) that, over time, became the standard outfit of modern *tanjoŋ*-style groups. Along with Taadam and Jaamiiá, Da-aa became one of the most recognized *tanjoŋ* leaders of the 1950s and ’60s. He was an influential innovator, and one of *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ*’s most enduring performers, retiring only in the mid-2000s.

Often mentioned along with *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* groups of this area is Si Nuan, a female troupe leader in Râj Jǎj, less than three miles to the northeast of Laŋdaa, who briefly appeared as a *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* performer around 1960 before switching to *ramwoŋ* a year later.

Si Nuan ‘the gentle one,’ whose real name was Yamah Lăansẵn, learned *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* from Jimliá during a year that she spent living on Kò Cam when she was twenty five, and founded her troupe upon returning home. She performed for more than twenty years, retiring to what she describes as a more pious lifestyle after making a pilgrimage to Mecca.

As non-Muslim or mixed mainland performing communities adopted it into their *líkee paa* and *manora* repertoires, *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* expanded beyond its Muslim and Orak Lawoi base to reach a wider southern Thai audience. It began to appear as entertainment for Buddhist religious occasions (such as funerals and *kêe bon* ‘vow fulfillment rituals), and more Thai-Buddhists became performers. As with Orak Lawoi, who brought elements from their other genres into *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*, and the mainland Muslims who created *tanjɔŋ*, Buddhist performers used *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* for new purposes. They incorporated it into their folk theaters, often to portray local rural life, and stereotype the Muslim community, and in doing so, help broaden the scope of *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* to express a general southern Thainess.

## SIREH ISLAND AND PHANĠĠAA BAY

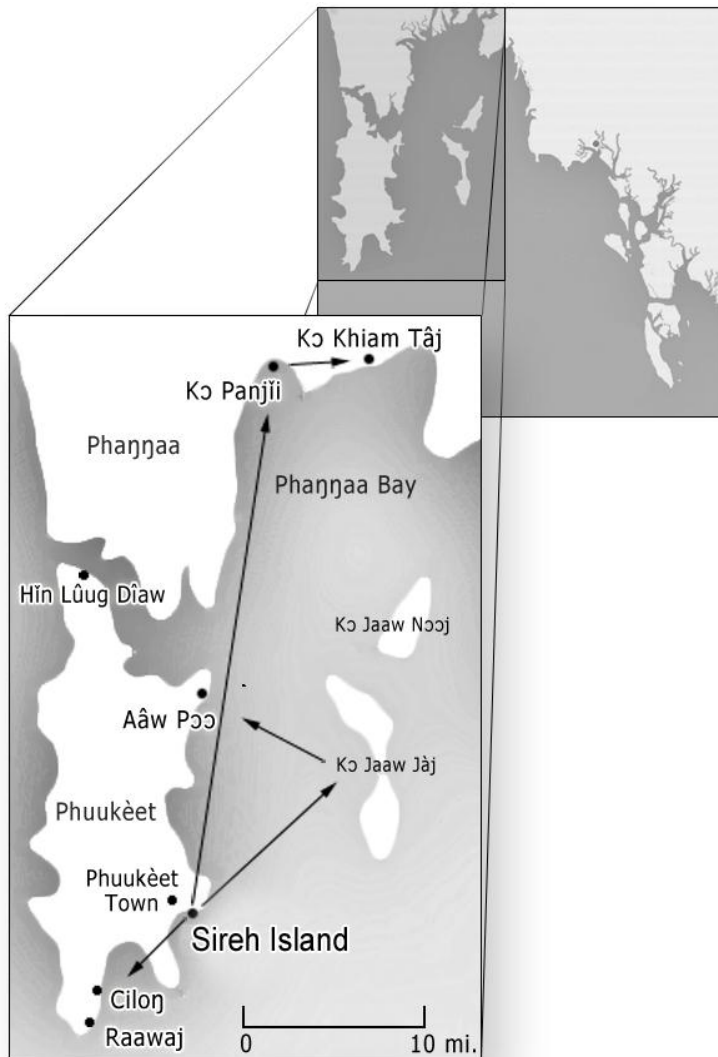


Figure 30. Sireh Island as the center of the Phuukèet and PhanĠĠaa sphere of influence

### *Sireh Island*

During the 1940s and '50s, Orak Lawoi performers from Sireh Island introduced *rɔɔŋ ħéey* to Phuukèet and around PhanĠĠaa Bay, a region that due to the considerable distance separating it from the most active *rɔɔŋ ħéey* areas in central and south Kràbìi, had fewer interactions with the Kò Cam and Lantaa spheres, and was somewhat off the

beaten performing path. Sireh and the rest of the region saw the rise of comparatively fewer small communities. The principal one was led by violinist Mat Deh and was primarily Orak Lawoi. For a long time, its stars were three sisters—Beda, Baya, and Cïu Pramoukít—who were daughters of Ad and Champa. Cïu says she spent most of her youth traveling with her family (her parents, Ad and Champa were *makyung laut* performers). Măan Lèemăn of Kò Múg remembers the effects those dancers had upon him as a young man

*When I was a teenager, I worked for several years in Săalaadàan earning a regular salary at a warehouse. I could not save any money because when the three Sireh Island sisters came to perform, I spent everything on rṓṓṓ ḡéḡḡ. They had very strong love magic. When I finally moved home to Kò Múg I possessed nothing except the pants I was wearing.*

—Măan Lèemăn, Kò Múg

### *Phanṓaa Bay*

Sireh Island’s rṓṓṓ ḡéḡḡ troupe was the first to reach Kò Jaaw, which at that time was known for its *manooraa*. The first local performers were a violinist named Jiwa and his two daughters, Saudah and Romlah who started after the war. There was a slight flourishing of local rṓṓṓ ḡéḡḡ in the area, and then it disappeared, except for the handful of islanders who perform with mainland groups.<sup>82</sup>

During the 1950s, a Malay violin player named Marob toured the Phanṓaa coast from his home on Kò Panjii, in upper Phanṓaa Bay. His handlebar-style facial hair earned him the nickname Marob “the moustache.”<sup>83</sup> He was a student of the Sireh Island school whose performances inspired several Thai-speaking Muslim men in Kò Khiam Tâj to

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82. Personal communication from Săn Chamninaa, a blind violinist who moved to Aâw Pṓṓ, Phuukèet in 1960. He learned to play in the late 1950s from a Kò Jaaw local, Kirijaa Phéeddi, and spent much of his performing career with Sireh Island groups.

83. Marob “Nùad” in Thai or Marob “Misai” in Malay.

take up violin. Most significant was a young teenager named Khamé ‘Dam’ Haphon, whose sole exposure was to Marob when he decided to learn to play the instrument. His talent led him to cross paths with the famed Thîñraj performer, Jimliá, and the two married. Dam went on to become one of Thîñraj’s most celebrated violinists, some of which he describes in the following:

*As a youngster I used to follow Bañ Ɔon to see Tok Marob play r̥óɔŋ ɣéɛŋ in the village rooŋ, an outside space partitioned off with nipah palm fronds. That is where I first learned to play the songs. I just sat there and watched all night. In the daytime, I practiced on a violin I made from jackfruit wood and unbraided automobile brake cables for strings. A few years later, when I was about twenty, Jimliá came with her chaperone Lipah to visit friends in Kò Khiam. She took interest in me because I could play the violin and invited me to return with her to Kò Cam. We married and I played with her group. Bañ Awang was my violin teacher there. Jimliá was very famous. She and I traveled all around Kràbii, Traañ, and Sàtuun. We went to Langkawi several times. I knew of Abu Qasim but did not meet him until we performed in Kràbii at the week-long municipal New Year’s celebration around 1961. He showed up one night and Jimliá, who was his student in Thîñraj, yelled out, “Wa Qasim, come play a song.” He held the violin up high and played “Lagu Dua.”*

—Khamé Haphon, Kò Khiam Tâj

Dam’s elder companion when he first saw r̥óɔŋ ɣéɛŋ was Ɔon Waahakrák, and Ɔon’s son Jàafàad learned violin from Dam, but not in their home village; Jàafàad followed Dam to Thîñraj, and took up violin there. Ɔon, a former violinist who is now in his nineties, told me an anecdote from his *khruu-lûugsit* relationship with Marob. Before Marob died in the early 1960s, he gave Ɔon his violin and *rammánaa* drums. Ɔon later gave them to Jàafàad.<sup>84</sup> Father and son have recollections of Abu Qasim that encompass two spheres: Ɔon remembers watching him perform in Phaŋŋaa with Sireh troupes, describing him as a nimble violinist; Jàafàad recalls that when Abu Qasim made

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84. Jàafàad settled in Lĕem Krùad where he still performs, frequently with drummer Dĕeŋ, a Khlóɔŋ Jaañ (Lantaa area) native whose mother-in-law, Săawbaŋ Looklĕem, was a r̥óɔŋ ɣéɛŋ dancer and first cousin of Soosiá in Bâan Khuan (see genealogy chart in Figure 24). Dĕeŋ’s two-drum playing style is examined in Chapter 6.

unexpected appearances at *róŋŋ ɣéɛŋ* performances around Thîŋraj and Lěem Krùad, audiences cheered him on with “*Qasim prîaŋ*” (literally ‘thunderbolt Qasim’), which became a local nickname.

Abu Qasim moved from Thîŋraj to Phuukèet around 1953 when he was roughly fifty years old, returning to Tanjung Rang on Sireh Island. There he married a local woman, Ci-éɛ, toured with local *róŋŋ ɣéɛŋ* groups, and (some report) may have worked briefly with a foreign tin mining firm. However, he became destitute and, soon after, separated from his wife, moving to Phuukèet Town where he found work sweeping streets. According to Hussein Bâaréem, Abu Qasim went to the municipality (*théetsabaan*) and requested work (*mintá kerja*). Seeing that he was already old (*sudah tua*) they gave him an undemanding job of sweeping streets (*sapu jalan*). Several villagers on Sireh Island only say that Abu Qasim went to the town to “work on the roads” (*buat kerja jalan*).

From town, Abu Qasim moved to Ciloŋ, a Muslim village in south Phuukèet,<sup>85</sup> married Ɛɛ and raised a foster child named Saman. When Ɛɛ died, he went to spend his final years with the Raawaj Beach Orak Lawoi on Phuukèet’s southernmost tip. According to Raawaj villagers, Abu Qasim arrived as an aging and despondent man. Son Baŋcàag, one of his students at that time (now in his seventies), remembers that he stayed with Rɔɔ (Son’s first cousin) and spent his time mostly idling around, playing violin, and teaching *róŋŋ ɣéɛŋ* to young villagers. He married a final time to Săawbaŋ Baŋcàag, before he passed away around 1965.

The Raawaj Orak Lawoi buried Abu Qasim, together with his violin, in the village

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85. Ciloŋ was a local name for the area on Châlǎŋ Bay now called *hâa jèɛg* (five-way intersection) Châlǎŋ.

cemetery (*jirai*),<sup>86</sup> located along the coast toward Ciloŋ. Shamans, folk performers, and others who possessed personal items considered to be ‘spirit abodes’ have typically been buried with those items to ensure that the family of the deceased not inherit the onerous responsibility of having to propitiate those spirits.<sup>87</sup>

Today, the Orak Lawoi in Raawaj remember R๖๖ as Abu Qasim’s first student in the village. Local performers honor him each year with a ritual offering to the “teacher” (*rooŋ khruu r๖๖ŋ ɳ๑๑ŋ*), as befits the first local *r๖๖ŋ ɳ๑๑ŋ* violinist, and teacher to successive generations.

## SÀTUUN

*R๖๖ŋ ɳ๑๑ŋ* at Sàtuun developed in three distinct styles based on location and community: (1) in Làŋuu District, among a community of mixed Thai- and Malay-speaking performers whose first exposure to the form came from visiting Lantaa troupes where it developed as a form of *tanjoŋ*; (2) in the Orak Lawoi community of the remote Adang Archipelago, it developed as a Malay-language island form; and (3) in mainland, littoral, Malay villages of Myaŋ District, close to the Perlis border where it developed as a closely related form of *canggung*.

### *Làŋuu*

*I grew up in Tanjung. My mother Neah was a good friend of Mak Long [Bunga] and a r๖๖ŋ ɳ๑๑ŋ dancer as well. I first learned to dance on the beach outside of Mak Long’s home with ‘Cá’ Sima [Sima]. When I was fourteen, Cá Sima took me touring with her group for three months even though I never really learned to dance*

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86. From the Malay word *jirat*, meaning a non-Muslim grave

87. A footnote to this story: Abu Qasim died just a few years before his erstwhile partner, Che Mat, then in his sixties, arrived in Raawaj with a twenty-year-old wife, Sinang, and adopted son, Baaw for a sojourn lasting several months. Villagers report during that time he played *r๖๖ŋ ɳ๑๑ŋ* and practiced his traditional healing.

*properly. That was my first and only experience as a professional dancer. We went to Pàag Baraa, Teluk Sayu, and finally to Kò Mũu where I met my husband. At each performance, when the music began, I was possessed by a spirit that my mother kept. It knew all of the dances. I only became conscious again when the evening was finished. After that trip, I married and never danced again.*

—Yimah Tijsañâa (nee Bâaréem), Bubooj

*The first róõj ñéey came to our area from Lantaa in 1948 when I was twenty years old. Kamnan Núj hired them to perform at a wedding on Kò Mũu. The group was led by Sima and Long. Yusuf, Chi and Rahman also played. There were three other dancers, Yarimah, Yimah, and Me Hun. I fell for Yimah, who was fourteen. I followed her back to Tanjung; we married, and stayed there for eighteen months. I learned to play violin from Una Gabai and then returned home to Bubooj where I played with Sen.*

—Yimah’s husband, Saman Tijsañâa, Bubooj

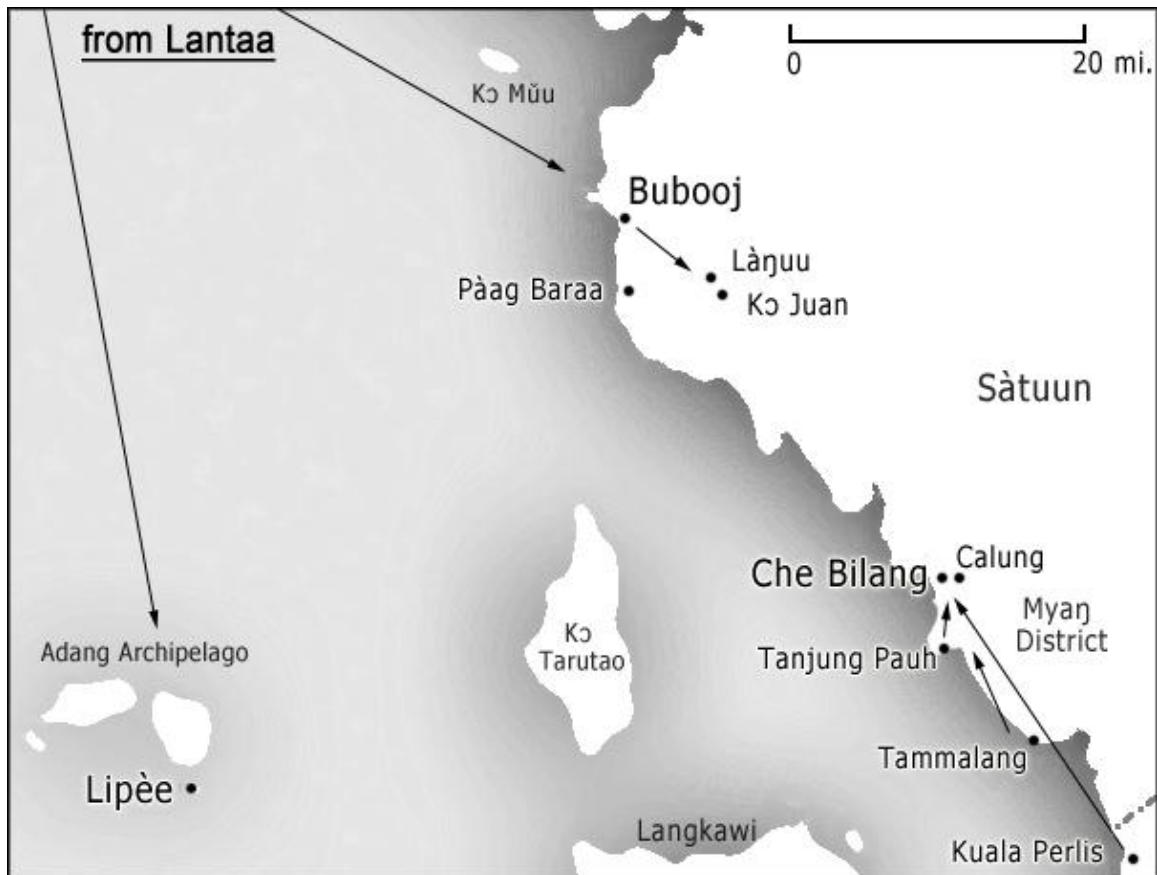


Figure 31. Róõj ñéey centers in Sàtuun Province

Lànjuu, on the northern coast of Sàtuun near Traañ, lay at the periphery of

Lantaa's sphere of influence. Its first exposure to *róçŋ ɣéɛŋ* came through local performances by traveling troupes from Tanjung and Kò Klaaŋ in 1947 or 1948, and its first local troupe was established in Bubooj by Sen, who was from one of Tanjung's largest performing families (see genealogical chart in Figure 25).

Sen was Orak Lawoi, a Sireh Islander who moved to Bubooj (a small coastal community in Làŋuu), became Muslim, married a local woman, and established the area's first *róçŋ ɣéɛŋ* group. He was the preeminent group leader in the district and his students formed most of the local groups that subsequently emerged, in coastal villages and Thai-speaking communities in the Làŋuu market area.

Through his frequent travels, Sen came to mentor violinists elsewhere in the region including Phỳyg and Hâamá in Khlóçŋ Pîŋ, who both credit Sen as having been one of their important teachers. Sen's colleagues, such as Lat Khlóçŋdii and Dam, recall that he perform a large repertoire of both Malayan and *tanjong*-style tunes. According to Phỳyg, he played new *tanjong*-style tunes that singer Bunterm popularized from Adang in the 1960s.<sup>88</sup> After Sen's death in the early 1970s, Bubooj's performing community ceased to be active, while elsewhere in Làŋuu, the *róçŋ ɣéɛŋ* scene gradually ebbed to near-extinction. Today, other than occasional *róçŋ ɣéɛŋ* performances by Châhèet Naaksaŋâa's group, those in Làŋuu are mostly by groups from either Khlóçŋ Pîŋ or Hàad Sămraan in Traaŋ.

Châhèet Naaksaŋâa is a Thai-speaking Muslim who grew up in Kò Juan Village, just outside of Làŋuu town, and is one of the last active Làŋuu violinists from the *ruun*

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88. Personal correspondence from Phỳyg Khĩausòd. Phỳyg performed with Sen and Bunterm at a funeral at Hàad Sămraan on Kò Mũu in the late 1960s or early '70s where he heard, for the first time, three songs that are now *tanjong* staples: "Lagu Mäj," "Lagu Khlaja," and "Sayang La," detailed in Chapter 7.

that learned under Sen. Now in his seventies and an infrequent performer, he remembers first seeing *ρώχη ηέεη* performed by Soosiá's Kò Klaan group at a local wedding in 1947 or 1948 (see Footnote 70), and had his first opportunity to play several years later when Sen's group arrived at Làηuu's annual municipal festival without one *rammánaa* player. He went on to learn violin with the help of two local players,<sup>89</sup> worked as a violinist-for-hire for ten years, and then led *tanjoη*-style groups under his own name.

### *Myaη District*

The performing community in Myaη District comprised Malays living in coastal villages close to the Malayan border. Unlike the rest of southwest Thailand which traces its *ρώχη ηέεη* lineage to Lantaa, their primary sources were visiting troupes from Perlis, and they played a form stylistically similar to *canggung* that was connected to a Perlis-centered *canggung* sphere of influence.<sup>90</sup> Myaη groups did not tour other areas of Thailand, thus their influence was confined to a small area. They also sang exclusively in Malay but did not incorporate (*tanjoη*-style) Thai texts or melodies, though they were familiar with the style from Kràbii, as they knew it.

A community of *ρώχη ηέεη* performers in Myaη arose in the 1950s centered at the home of violinist Brahim bin Sabu (born ca.1924) in the seaside village Che Bilang,<sup>91</sup> where it included Brahim, his wife Esah, and their students from neighboring Chalun, Tanjung Pauh, and Tammalang. The community spanned two *ruun* of dancers; each one

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89. Châhèet says Mud Osama taught him how to tune a violin and Dod taught him melodies. (Personal communication from Châhèet Naaksajâa)

90. *Ρώχη ηέεη* in Thailand's Pattaanii region may also be classified as a Malayan style as it does not have Thai repertoire, and is closely linked to neighboring Malay(si)a. That form's leading proponent is violinist Wan Kadir of Yaring, a nationally recognized artist (*silàpin hènchâat*) who played with Malayan *bangsawan* troupes as a teenager.

91. Brahim was also known as Brahim Yike, *yike* being another pronunciation of *likee*.

consisting of no more than four or five women. Esah, a divorcee and daughter of a Kedah *bangsawan* performer, led the first during the 1950s, and her daughter Pah led the second during the 1960s and early '70s. Brahim ceased performing in 1964 and his violin student Saunan Bilanglaut, who succeeded him as leader, disbanded the troupe a decade later.

Being close in geographical and social terms to Malaya, a relatively larger proportion of the Muslim population associated *runggeng* with low morality than communities to the north, where *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* found wide acceptance and was even an important rite of passage for young men and women. For that reason, Saunan and his wife Ramah, both of whom began to perform at the relatively older age of thirty, hid their “shameful” performing careers from their families.<sup>92</sup>

### *Adang*

Prior to motorized transportation, the Adang Archipelago was the least accessible area to the rest of southwest Thailand, taking one or two-days travel from Lànɣuu or Myaŋ. It became further isolated during the wartime years when a penal colony on neighboring Tárutaw Island became a notorious pirate haven that made travel in local waters dangerous.

Many *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* musicians on Adang were migrants from other Orak Lawoi communities. Lantaa-born Bunterm, mentioned earlier as a propagator of several *tanjon* tunes, was the best known of them. During the late 1950s, she was a major proponent of both *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ tanjon* and *ramwoŋ* as well as a regional star. She married a Sàtuun man and settled on Pulau Nipis (Kò Lipèè) in the Adang Archipelago where she was a troupe leader for several decades. Today, Bunterm and the last violinist on Adang have passed

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92. Personal communication from Saunan and Ramah Bilanglaut

away, and if not for occasional visits by outside violinists, *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* would no longer be played there.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has presented several of the many smaller stories that may be told regarding how *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* spread in the postwar era, from the different relationships that developed within the socio-economic spheres linking islands and their mainland neighbors, to the names and backgrounds of individuals who created *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* communities. The framework for viewing the diversity in *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*—from its introduction in the 1930s, to its particularly vigorous development over the two subsequent decades—is as a single Andaman community, but one in which language and culture circulated between two different worlds, one Malay-speaking, and one Thai-speaking.

The story that gave birth to all of the others is that of Lantaa, the stylistic lodestar for all of *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* ever since performers first circulated it to Malay-speaking island communities (and some on the mainland). The process then replicated in each new place it touched. Then, with propagation of *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* to mainland Thai-speaking communities, a remarkable transformation occurred, with its adaptations to a new language and poetic style, and acquisition of new local melodies.

Amid this bifurcation of *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*, localizations appeared within individual regions encompassing both sides of the linguistic divide. They coalesced around three larger groupings of districts—one radiating outward from Lantaa, another linking Kò Cam and the Nýya Khlóɔŋ mainland, and a third centered on Sireh Island, Phuukèet and the Phaŋŋaa coast—logically connected by their proximity to one another, and their

established socio-economic ties. Over time, those localizations came to distinguish individual spheres within the greater *ρώγη ηέεη* community; each had its own star performers, repertoires, and performing styles, and in some cases saw its center of activity migrate from island to the mainland. Ultimately, the identification of *ρώγη ηέεη*'s spheres of influence helps us make better sense of how *ρώγη ηέεη* circulated, how the handful of remaining groups came to be what they are, where they are, and—since their history is still being written—how they are affected by cultural forces in the present day.

## CHAPTER 5. MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF THE *ΡÓΧΗ ΗΈΕΗ*

### ENSEMBLE

This chapter examines the principal musical instruments of the *ρόχη ηέεη* ensemble, namely the violin, a pair of unequal-sized frame- or barrel drums (*rammánaa*, *rebana*, or *berana*), the less-frequently used, vertically suspended gong, various idiophones including wooden or bamboo clappers, and small pairs of cymbals. In sections dedicated to each, I provide an overview of the instruments—through descriptions of their physical forms, construction materials and methods, manners of distribution from maker to performer, approaches toward tunings, timbre production, amplification, and ritual aspects—and situate those instruments in a context of diverse regional genres.

### THE VIOLIN

The violin has several roles in the *ρόχη ηέεη* ensemble. It loosely parallels the sung melody in loose unison, diverging usually to perform some type of rhythmic, drone-like fill on two open strings. Where the singer is absent, the violinist fills in with drone, *ostinati*, or other figures.

*Ρόχη ηέεη* violins are predominantly Western-style violins or violas. Malay speakers call them *biola* and Thai speakers call them *สอ* or *สอ wajoolin* (*สอ* is a general term for bowed string instruments in Thailand that include several types of bowed spike fiddle). Other than *ρόχη ηέεη*, the violin in south Thailand is played for Western classical music, but is not typical to any other folk genre. There are examples of bowed stringed instruments in regional ensembles, but they are all some type of spike-fiddle *สอ*, such as those played in *líkee paa* or central Thai classical ensembles. Similarly, in Malaysian folk

music, the violin is mostly associated with *ronggeng*.

Ever since the first *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* groups appeared on Lantaa, they have been playing either of two violin types: (1) European, or more recently Chinese-made instruments, or (2) homemade ones that replicated the features of the former. In the past, commercially produced violins were ordered from Penang and delivered by charcoal barges that plied the coast. Today, less expensive Chinese-made violins, available in Kràbii, Traaŋ, and other cities, have replaced the European ones completely.

Homemade violins were coarser versions of the European models, typically constructed of jackfruit, *cempedak*, or cashew woods, and with unbraided automobile brake cables for strings. A number of violinists first learned on these instruments, and two were particularly well-known for their craftsmanship: Mid, one of Lantaa's first-*ruun* performers, and Madiyya, from Râamàad. Today, with the availability of low-cost Chinese violins, the practice of making one's own has disappeared, although there is one *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* musician, Baaw Shem of Bâan Khuan (near Râamàad), who makes his own two-string *sɔɔ uû* bowed-spike fiddles with a long wooden neck, and fish-skin/coconut shell resonator. He is also the only performer of this kind that I encountered.

Violins are tuned with the same relative pitch intervals (perfect fifths) as their Western counterparts, though different performers use actual pitches that are, by and large, lower than the Western standard tuning—G3 D4 A4 E5. From performance to performance, I have found that violinists tend to tune their instruments at or very near the same pitches, and that this accords with personal preference, rather than to an external reference pitch. (They also will retune violins belonging to others before playing them to 'their' pitch range.) See Appendix E for a comparison of tunings among active violinists

today.

Violinists have been amplifying their instruments since the 1950s and 60s. The most common manner uses a transducer from the mouthpiece of an old desktop telephone, attached to an unbalanced audio cable and 3.5mm ‘tip-sleeve’ connector (mono phono jack) which is fed directly to the main amplifier and speakers (*tîu lamphooη*). The transducer is placed face down near the violin’s sound hole near the chin rest and fastened by a rubber strap that encircles the instrument’s lower bout. It produces a sound with some limited frequency range, and a harsh timbre, but is sufficiently loud when heard among a loud singer and two unamplified drums.

Violins are often adorned with *jan* ‘amulets’ that players believe enhance the instrument’s sound and their abilities. They are produced by local shamans, and come in various shapes and sizes. Typically, they are small pieces of paper inscribed with Arabic or Pali texts and/or symbols, containing religious verses or supplications, that are wrapped up with small twigs, cotton yarn, and foil, and imbued with perfume and/or *námtaa dujoη* ‘dugong tears’ (as seen in Figure 32). *Jan* are attached to different parts of the violin—tied to the pegbox or scroll, stuffed inside the f-holes, or wound around the bow’s frog.

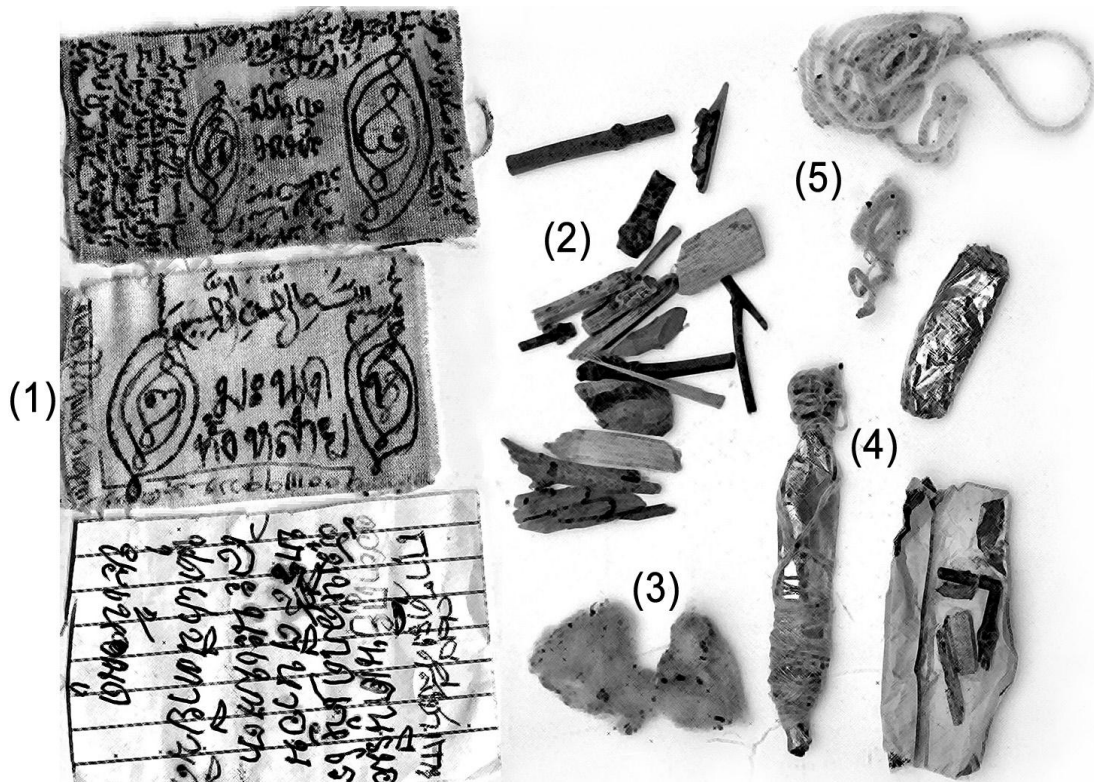


Figure 32. *Jan* includes texts on cloth and/or paper (1), pieces of wood (2) and cotton (3), wrapped in foil (4) and twine (5)

The most common playing position for a *ῥόνη ηέση* violinist is seated with one leg crossed over the other, on a chair or mat spread upon the ground (see photos in Figure 136). Most players hold their instrument with the tailpiece pressed against the chest and the scroll pointing at their raised knee. It is uncommon, but not unheard of, to see them play in the standard Western manner with the violin held under the chin. Their explanation is that it is more fatiguing to hold a violin in that manner for many hours on end. Several violinists play with the back of the instrument resting on one shoulder, with the body roughly parallel to the ground and one sound hole close to the ear. This was how Abu Qasim held his instrument, and how Dεεη Mat-Oosòd does today—both of whom were/are hearing impaired.

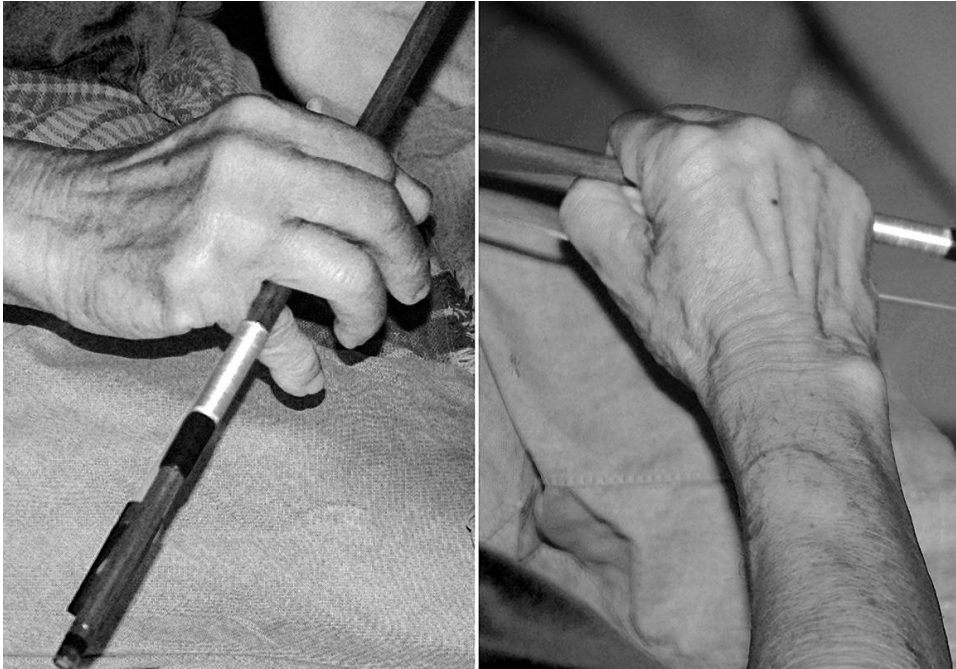


Figure 33. Two views of a violin bow grip

Bows are typically gripped several inches from the frog with the thumb providing leverage to increase tension on the bow hair (see two views of this bow grip in Figure 33). Violinists play mostly in the instrument's first position, advancing beyond—into the second or third—only with the occasional slide, such as when emphasizing a long cadential note by performing it as an enharmonic double stop with the neighboring string (seen in the last measure of the second system in Figure 198). They play with either three or four fingers, with little or no vibrato, and tend to bow each note separately with short strokes in the middle of the bow that are neither close to the bridge (*sul ponticello*) nor the fingerboard (*sul tasto*). The most common ornamentations are drone or ostinato textures formed by playing two open strings simultaneously (typically the first and second, or second and third), though more adept players in the past used long glissandi, turns, legato bowing, and left-hand pizzicato—most of which are only found today in the playing of Khloṅ Pîṅ's Hâamá Cìtryya.

## RHYTHM AND TIMEKEEPING INSTRUMENTS

### *Rammánaa*

Single-sided hand drums are the most typical drum type found in folk performance genres of the Malaysia-Thailand border region, where they are referred to as *rebana* in Malay, *rammánaa* in Thai, and *berana* in Orak Lawoi. Other common regional drum types that are not found in *róṁṁ ḡééṁ* include two-headed barrel drums used in local dance, folk theater, martial arts, and funeral rituals (*klṁṁ khèeg*, *thoon*, *gendang panjang*, *gendang silat*, *gendang terinai*); a short barrel drum, played on one side with wooden sticks in folk theater ensembles (*klṁṁ chatrii*, *taphoon*, *klṁṁ thád*, *geduk*); and a goblet-shaped, single-headed drum typical to folk theater (*tháb*, *klṁṁ jaaw*, *gedumbak*). (See comparison of drum types and genres in Table 1 below.)

	Drum Type			
	Frame Drum	Long Barrel Drum (played on two heads)	Short Barrel Drum (played on one head)	Goblet-Shaped Drum
Borderland performance genre	<i>beduan</i>	<i>berana</i>	<i>likee paa</i>	<i>manooraa</i>
	<i>berana</i>	<i>gendang silat</i>	<i>manooraa</i>	<i>wayang kulit</i>
	<i>dikir barat</i>	<i>makyung</i>	<i>wayang kulit</i>	
	<i>hadrah</i>	<i>taa jaaj/bageh</i>		
	<i>kompang</i>	<i>terinai</i>		
	<i>likee paa</i>	<i>wayang kulit</i>		
	<i>mek mulung</i>			
	<i>ronggeng</i>			

Table 1. Drum types and folk performance genres in the Malaysia-Thailand border region

*Rebana* have been played in the region for centuries, if not longer. They are mentioned by name in Malayan and Sumatran historical chronicles since the 1620s;<sup>93</sup> and appear in the early nineteenth century writings about eastern Sumatra by John Anderson, who noted a “gundang, a drum” and “*rabana*, a tambourine” (Anderson 1826: 292).<sup>94</sup> On the Malayan Peninsula, the *rebana* was “the earliest Malay drum” played in the nascent *bangsawan* theater of late-nineteenth century Penang (Matusky and Tan 2004:65). In the

93. See for example, *Bustan al-Salatin, Hikayat Aceh, Sejarah Melayu* (Siti Hawa 1992, Teuku Iskandar 1958, A. Samad 1979).

94. Anderson also witnessed a *ronggeng*-like performance featuring a female singer, “a violin and several drums” at a royal household in Siak, East Sumatra; located across the Straits of Malacca from Malaya.

same era, rural folk ensembles in the neighboring countryside, and all the way up to Phuukèet, have played single-sided hand drums as accompaniment to storytelling, healing rituals, and for various entertainment genres.

In Thailand and Malaysia, the terms *rammánaa* and *rebana* encompass membranophones of diverse sizes and shapes that are played in several musical genres. Considering that these drums are more associated with Malay music forms than Thai, the term *ramánaa* may very well come from the Malay *rebana*, defined as “a type of drum with skin on one side only” (Noresah 1996: 1113). Or perhaps these two terms both have a common source in South Asia, Persia, or Arabia.<sup>95</sup> At the very least, they are cognates, as is the Orak Lawoi name for these instruments, *berana*, which also refers to their principle festival song and dance genre (known variously as *berana*, *main berana*, and *pusing berana*).

*Rammánaa rʻɔŋ ηέεη* are specific to the *rʻɔŋ ηέεη* genre and are typically short wooden cylinders, often with slightly tapered, conical shapes, roughly 25 to 35 centimeters in diameter and 22 to 26 centimeters deep.<sup>96</sup> They have a membrane covering one side, which is bound to the shell by rattan straps or string. These drums are played seated using both hands, with the instrument resting in the drummer’s lap or held on one side with a forearm and upper leg. They are played in pairs consisting of a larger *jyn* (standing) drum and a smaller *lâk* (fundamental)—known to Malay speakers in Thailand

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95. The instruments correspond in name to, and may share a common origin with the Sri Lankan *rabāna* which has two forms: the smaller *at*, a “hand-held frame drum (...) about 25-30 centimeters in diameter,” and the larger *banku raban*, a drum about twice the diameter placed on the ground and played by several female drummers. (see Sheeran 2000:964-965)

96. The depth of *rammánaa rʻɔŋ ηέεη* is said to have increased in recent decades, moving from sizes that would normally be equated with frame drums to become stout barrel drums. The former are less common today.

and Malaysia, as *ibu* (mother) and *anak* (child).<sup>97</sup> The *jyn* are distinguished by a wider diameter relative to height as compared with the *lâk*, which have narrower diameters but smaller diameter to height ratio. The relative sizes of the two drums are not standardized and are sometimes difficult to distinguish on sight alone (for example, see photograph of two similarly sized drums in Figure 34).

Although *rammánaa* are not tuned to specific pitches, they are, by nature of their sizes and shapes, pitched low (*jyn*) and high (*lâk*), relative to one another. Ensembles typically employ two drummers, although sometimes they will use just one player who is proficient at playing two drums simultaneously.



Figure 34. Rammánaa *róççη ηέεη*, *lâk* (left) and *jyn* (right)

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97. Phongsathon recorded Thai equivalents of the Malay drum names among the Orak Lawoi of Phuukèet as *mêe* ‘mother’ and *lûug* ‘child’ (Phongsathon 2548). Central Thai *mahōorii* and *khryyyη sǎaj* ensembles also use a single *rammánaa*, played as part of a gendered pair and referred to as *phûu* (male), while its counterpart is called *mia* (female). (Miller 1998: 266)

Drum shells (*fàg*) are fabricated with hand tools from a single piece of hardwood, most commonly that of the Jackfruit tree (*Artocarpus heterophyllus*) or related Cempedak (*Artocarpus polyphema*). Both of these are abundant (as they are grown locally for their fruit), are easy to carve, produce lightweight and strong drum shells that resist pests, and have attractive, even, light-brown or reddish colors. *Ramánaa* are also made from other common fruit, jungle, or mangrove forest woods such as *máj krâthóon* (*Sandoricum indicum*), *máj tâkhian* (from the *Hoppea* genus), or ‘black’ and ‘white’ varieties of *máj buun* (*Xylocarpus moluccensis* and *Xylocarpus granatum* respectively). In recent years, deforestation has made suitable forest and mangrove timber increasingly scarce.

Traditionally, *ramánaa* membranes were made from animal hides—tanned goatskin (*kulit kambing* or *năŋ phé*) or monitor lizard skin (*kulit biawak* or *naŋ lêen*)—but in the past decade, have been replaced with vinyl-coated tent fabric (*phâa ten*). This innovation—said to have been started by (Kò Cam violinist) Awang sometime during the past decade<sup>98</sup>—has, for practical, economic, and aesthetic reasons, become the norm among drum makers. *Phâa ten* is more durable (withstanding humidity and maintaining its tautness for an entire evening), has a consistent sound, and is less expensive and easier to procure than animal hide—costing less than one U.S. dollar to cover a drum. One drawback is that it becomes loose and unplayable when exposed directly to the hot sun. Detractors of *phâa ten* find its appearance unattractive (it looks synthetic and comes in various inorganic shades of solid blue or green) and deem it ‘untraditional.’

Animal hides, which some players believe sound better, are more sensitive to changes in temperature and humidity and, as performances typically take place in cooler

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98. Personal correspondence from Phỳyg Khĩausòd

and more humid evenings, they quickly lose their tautness, requiring repeated applications of heat (from a candle or lamp) and increased tension on their bindings to maintain an acceptable pitch. Animal skins are often difficult to procure. Monitor lizards have become a protected species under Thai law, and goats—while slaughtered for rituals—are not typically parts of everyday local diets.<sup>99</sup> They require extensive preparation and considerably more maintenance than *phâa ten*. The tanning process involves the removal of fur (for goatskins), soaking the hide in an infusion of water and herbs (such as galangal root, *Alpinia officinarum*) to remove foul odors, and burial in the ground for several days. It is then dried and stretched over the wooden shell, and treated again with herbal preservatives to provide durability and suppleness.

The rattan straps that traditionally bound a drum's membrane to its shell have mostly been replaced by woven polyester cord or nylon fishing line in recent years. Like rattan, this cord runs the length of the drum and attaches to rattan rings, approximately even with the circumference of the drum shell, at both ends. The top ring, that some refer to as *plòɔg sàdeung hûum rammánaa* 'the embroidery frame that holds the *rammánaa*,' is made of thin rattan or metal that is several millimeters in diameter. It encircles the outside of the shell, several centimeters from the rim, holding the membrane in place.<sup>100</sup> The thicker bottom ring—about two centimeters in diameter—is made from rattan and is called *plòɔg sàlàg rammánaa*, or the 'frame holding the *rammánaa* wedges.' It is

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99. Goat meat is consumed at religious events such as feasts (*kaan nuri*) held on the two 'Eid (*rajɔɔ*) holidays, Eid al-Adha and Eid ul-Fitr, or private celebrations or memorials (*nuri*). Traditions among local Muslims dictate that skins of goats slaughtered for these events, along with any uneaten remains, must be buried in the earth and may not be used for other purposes. Cow or buffalo meat is part of the local quotidian diet but their thick skins are not used for *rammánaa* because they do not produce as sharp a timbre as goat, monitor lizard, or synthetic skins.

100. In Malay, fastening rings on a drum are also referred to as frames (*bingkai*).

separated by a centimeter or more from the drum shell by six or more evenly spaced, wooden wedges (*sàlàg*) that, when hammered into the gap, increase tension upon the membrane (see exploded view of drum in Figure 35).

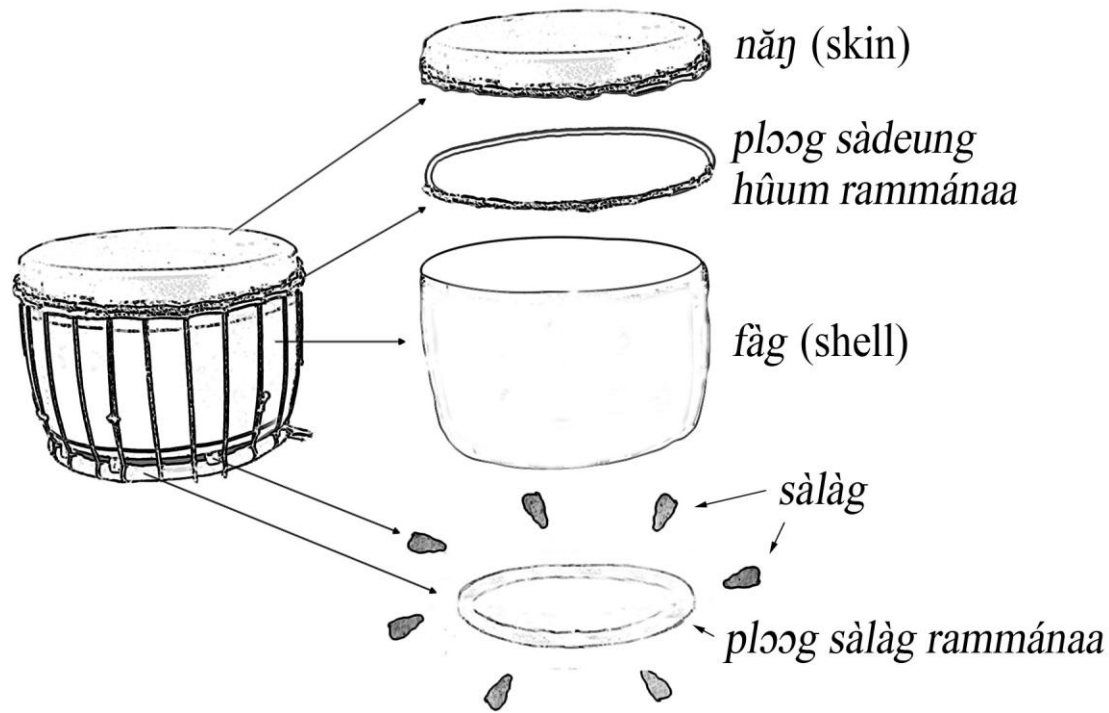


Figure 35. Exploded view of *rammánaa* drum

*Rɔ̀ɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* musicians prefer a drum membrane that is *tyŋ* ‘tight’ rather than one that is *jɔ̀ɔn* ‘loose.’ To tighten the skin for performance—to *tèɛŋ* ‘dress’ or *khÿn* ‘raise’ the drum sound—a *saada*, or length of rattan one or two centimeters thick and slightly longer than the drum’s diameter (or more recently, a similarly sized length of electrical wire or rope) is inserted inside the drum in the narrow groove between the membrane and the top edge of its wooden shell. It is hammered in with a hand-sized, wedge-shaped piece of wood called *máj saada* (literally ‘*saada* wood’).<sup>101</sup> The *máj saada* is an indispensable

101. In Thai, *saada* has no meaning. It is a borrowing from a Malay word, *sedak* (to choke), used to describe the same drum part. In Malay, a *sedak* functions to ‘raise’ (*naik*)

accessory for all types of *rammánaa* and is also used to hammer the *sàlàg* deeper into their seats. A ‘dressed’ drum produces a clear sound with no buzzing from a loose *saada* or other fixtures (see Figure 36).<sup>102</sup>



Figure 36. Malaysian *rebana* with *sedak* (*saada*) and *kayu sedak* (*máj saada*)

*Rammánaa* craftsmen are also typically musicians. They build one or more pairs of drums at a time during their spare time (when not fishing or doing agricultural work), subject to availability of wood. The *rammánaa*-making process uses hand tools like those shown in Figure 37. A section of tree trunk is turned into a drum shell by first removing its bark, then drawing a rough outline of the circumference on the sawn cross-section,

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the drum’s sound. In Central Thailand, wedges on a *ramánaa lam tàd* are called *lîm* (shim), and a *sedak/saada* is called *sànàb*.

102. Malaysian *ronggeng* musicians also favor tight (*cekang*), rather than loose (*kendur*) drum skins.

shaping the exterior with a small axe, hand boring a hole through its pith, and chipping out the inner wood until the shell has taken form. The body is smoothed with a plane before the skin is ‘pulled’ over, secured, and (if animal hide) seasoned. While many drum makers express pride that their drums are completely ‘handmade,’ some tell me that they would prefer to use power tools for the more laborious task of rough shaping the shell.



Figure 37. Drum-making tools

When a pair of *rammánaa* is ready, a drum maker peddles his product to the local community of musicians, frequently offering the drums for sale as a package with a violin and/or gong. The practice of bundling instruments in sets is common in both Malaysia and Thailand. In December 2007 I purchased a set of *ramánaa* and *ꠘꠘ* from a drum maker in Khlóꠗ Thôꠗm district for 4,500 Bàat (approximately US\$128). For comparison *gendang silat* makers in Kedah and Perlis may bundle pairs of two-headed barrel drums with a *serunai* (a double-reed aerophone) and steel gong as a complete set for

accompanying local martial arts (*silat*), selling them for around RM1,200 (US\$325), or roughly RM700 (US\$190) for the drums alone.

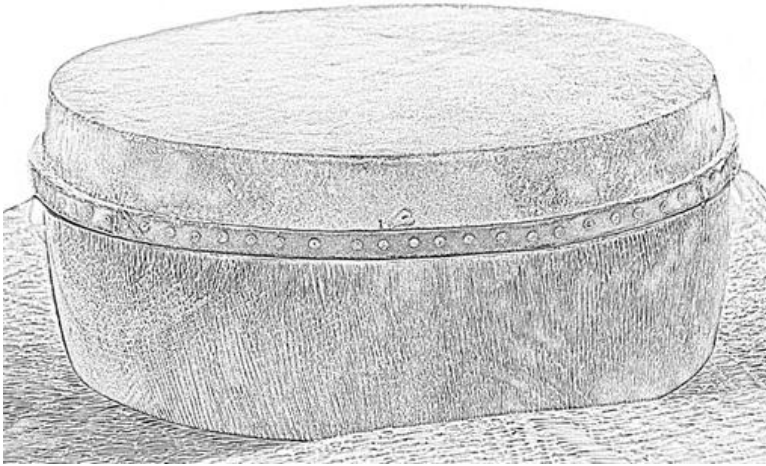


Figure 38. *Rammánaa likee*, Traaṅ Province

#### *A Brief Survey of Rammánaa and Rebana in the Region*

Islamic praise songs, such as *rodat*, *kompang*, *marhaban*, and *hadrah*, performed in Arabic or Malay by large frame-drum ensembles, are quite popular in Malaysia and the Malay-speaking regions of south Thailand. They are commonly performed at weddings and official functions; perhaps even more so in recent decades, since the greater region underwent an Islamic revival.

There is a type of *hadrah* (or *daará*) in Kedah, Perlis, and Sàtuun, performed by several remaining ensembles. They also use frame drums, but have more in common with local folk theaters such as *mek mulung*, *jikey*, and *likee paa*, than with praise song genres. Corresponding forms, *likee paa* and *jikey*, use two or more large frame drums called *rammánaa likee* or *gendang jikey*. The one shown in Figure 38 is fairly typical. It is a tacked-head frame drum with a wide diameter (approximately 50 or 60 centimeters) and

relatively shallow depth (generally 25 centimeters or less).

In the southern border region, two *likee paa/jikey* origin stories that I heard, described connections between the creation of a *rammánaa/rebana* drum and the creation of a genre, and presented those events as a metaphor for community cooperation. Kràbii folk performer Trýyg Plóðaryt told me how *likee paa* theater originated among a group of early Kràbii pioneers who obtained a wooden shell from clearing the jungle of trees and a skin from a cow slaughtered for a feast. At the feast they recognized that those materials produced a rhythm when the skin (which lay across the wooden shell) was struck by falling raindrops, and took turns adding their singing voices.<sup>103</sup>

Long Teh, also known as Pak Long “Jikey,” explained that *jikey*’s origins mirrored the harmony existing among northwest Malaysia’s diverse ethnic groups. His tale was about music and traditional healing; a sick woman’s daughter learns how to build and play a *gendang jikey* in a dream to cure her mother’s illness. Once healed, the mother and daughter play their music in public, attracting the attention of an Indian, a Chinese, and a Siamese man who, together with the two women, form the first *jikey* group.<sup>104</sup>

Other examples of *rammánaa/rebana* in the region include the Orak Lawoi *berana* festival songs, played on at least a half dozen laced-head *berana* encompassing a mix of sizes from frame to stout barrel: the same instruments they use to play *róçη ηέεη*. A frame-drum accompanied song genre called *beduan* is nearly extinct in Perlis, where it is played by a few remaining old men who sing *pantun* (Malay quatrain), while playing large, laced-head *rebana*. In the Pattaanii region and Kelantan on the east coast of the Malayan Peninsula, *rebana* are played in vocal and percussion genres *likee hulu* and *dikir*

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103. Personal correspondence from Trýyg Plóðaryt.

104. Personal correspondence from Long Teh

*barat*. In Malaysia and North Sumatra, *ronggeng* is played on *rebana* called *gendang asli*, *gendang ronggeng*, or *rebana joget*. Their shells are typically shallower and more tapered than *rammánaa róojη ηέεη*, with depths usually less than twenty-five centimeters and diameters ranging between thirty and forty-five centimeters.

Central Thailand's geographical location has made it receptive to musical influence from all directions including the Indian Subcontinent, Malayan Peninsula, China, and Cambodia, and several examples of *rammánaa* are found there.

*Rammánaa* have been played in central Thai *mahōorii* and *khryaη sāaj* court/classical ensembles since the Ayutthaya period. The drum, called *rammánaa mahōorii*, is a small, tacked- or laced-head frame drum, approximately twenty-five centimeters wide and five to seven centimeters deep, played in conjunction with the goblet-shaped *thoon mahōorii*—both instruments are held in the drummer's lap and played with one hand each.

Phladisai believes that Persian Islamic missionaries singing *zikir* (chants and praises) introduced the drums to the Siamese capital Ayutthaya, sometime prior to 1767, and that their *zikir* is the antecedent of *líkee*, the Thai folk theater that became popular in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Phladisai 2002).<sup>105</sup>

Although Persians may have indeed introduced frame drums to the Àjútjaa court, a more recent rural courtship song and social dance genre called *lam tàd*, connects the use of *rammánaa* in central Thailand to Pattaanii immigrants from the Malayan South. Both *líkee* and its contemporary *lam tàd* use larger laced-head drums called *rammánaa líkee*

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105. Notwithstanding its perceived origins, *líkee* bears little resemblance to *zikir* or to Malayan *zikir*-like praise song forms like *hadrah*, *rodat*, and *kompang*. *Líkee* and *líkee paa* share some common features, including an opening monologue sung by an Indian trader, and may have a common history, but are otherwise stylistically distinct

and *rammánaa lam tàd*. These two genres were often paired together in performances, as likee *paa* and *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* were in the south; and their popularity in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries may have had some influence upon the introduction of frame drums to the central Thai *ram thoon*—courtship song, dance, and *ramwoŋ* precursor—during the Second World War, engendering a dance called *ram rammánaa* ‘*rammánaa* dance’ (Samnakngan Wathanatham Changwat Chainat 2004:99).<sup>106</sup>

### *Gong (khóɔŋ)*

Gongs are integral to many musical genres in southern Thailand and northern Malaysia. They may be constructed from bronze or welded-steel, ranging from several inches to several feet in diameter. Some are vertically suspended instruments, like those played in *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*, *ronggeng*, *berana*, *gendang terinai*, *kaalǎɔ*, *makyung*, or Buddhist ritual-music ensembles. Others are small pairs (twenty centimeters or less in diameter) of high- and low-pitched brass pots (*moon* in Thai, *canang* in Malay) that are suspended horizontally, housed in a wooden case and played with a single mallet as accompaniment to *nǎŋ tàluŋ*, *likee paa*, and *manoora*.<sup>107</sup>

In the middle twentieth century, Penang was a main source for *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* gongs (as it was for imported violins).<sup>108</sup> Some immigrant *makyung* and *silat* performers, including *kamnan* Yakob in Kò Sǐi Bóɔjaa, and Sàtuun native Hóɔj Waŋsabuu who settled

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106. Miller and Jalernchai (1979:305, 311) mention a folk melody entitled “Ram Ramánaa” (“Rammánaa Dance”) found in a northeast Thailand form of *nǎŋ tàluŋ*; however, it is not clear whether the song is performed with a frame drum—in its other regional variants it is not.

107. A *moon* player in those ensembles often uses his or her other hand to play a small pair of *chin* cymbals (described later in this section).

108. Musicians refer to old imported gongs as ‘Penang’ gongs as they were purchased there, but their place of fabrication is uncertain.

in Râamàad, brought large bronze gongs with them which served multiple functions: they accompanied folk performances for rituals and entertainment, and provided signals that communicated certain matters among villages in a particular area (often separated by large distances but within hearing range of the gong).<sup>109</sup> They were also believed to be conduits for their owners' magical powers and abodes of supernatural spirits and were subject to special rituals.

Gongs used in the past were several feet in diameter, made from bronze, and were very heavy. Carrying them required two people and a thick wooden pole for support. Even during *róʔŋ h́ééŋ*'s peak of popularity, only a handful of ensembles had them—including those in Tanjung, Kò Pòʔ, Thîŋraj, Râamàad, Kò Sîi Bòʔjaa, and Lanɗaa. Their use gradually declined and many were sold for scrap metal as groups in those areas ceased performing. None of those gongs remain today.

Malay-speaking *róʔŋ h́ééŋ* groups and one Thai-speaking one (Râamàad's revivalist ensemble) all perform with a single gong in various sizes. *Ramwoŋ*-style groups do not use a gong. The cost of buying one and paying an extra musician to play it (who would earn roughly five percent of a group's total fee) has led to a different type of *róʔŋ h́ééŋ* sound and aesthetic. However, even in its absence, the instrument is regarded by *róʔŋ h́ééŋ* musicians as emblematic of an 'original,' older form.

At present, there are four *róʔŋ h́ééŋ* groups that still use gongs: Thîŋraj musicians led by (violin player) Lat Khlòʔŋdii, Sireh Island and Săŋkaa-ûu Orak Lawoi ensembles, and Râamàad's *Phýyn Phátthánaa* group. All except the latter use bronze gongs, between

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109. Gongs, and other instruments (such as the large *beduh/beduk* barrel drum found in many regional mosques) were commonly used by Muslims in the past to signal deaths, prayer times, breaking of the fast in Ramadan, and other matters, but are less so today as mosques broadcast with loudspeakers.

eight and ten inches in diameter, forged in Nákhoon Sîithammárâad (NST) City in southern Thailand,<sup>110</sup> that are much smaller, lighter, and thinner than the old gongs. The cost of buying a gong today in NST roughly equals one week's earnings for a self-employed rubber tapper.<sup>111</sup>

While in Malaysia some violin players favor gongs whose fundamental pitches complement their unstopped strings (usually pitches G, D, or A), *róoy ηέεη* violinists (whose tunings often vary) choose gongs based upon the clarity of their sound and a general relative pitch range. They prefer gongs with long sustained tones—like the large bronze 'Penang' gongs of the past, whereas many northwest Malaysian musicians (performers of *ronggeng* and *gendang silat*) prefer the timbre and short sustain of welded sheet metal steel gongs.

NST gongs (an example is shown in Figure 39) are made of unpolished bronze and are slightly convex shaped. They range in diameter from several inches to several feet with a depth of about two inches, and raised bosses approximately one inch high. Simple floral-like designs, scratched on their black oxidized finish, radiate out from the boss and around the perimeter to reveal the underlying bronze color. They are played with a padded mallet or wooden rod that has one end wrapped with rubber bands to form a raised knob. They produce a clear, resonant sound and have a long sustain.

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110. NST is a major regional source for gongs. These instruments, produced in Muslim-run foundries and supplying a market that caters to Buddhist rituals, regional music performers, and tourists, are sold mainly in a popular market for brass and bronze wares on the grounds of NST's ancient Buddhist reliquary, Wád Phrá Thâat. The market is well known to musicians in the South and has several vendors who specialize in instruments and accessories for *manoora* and *năy tâluη*.

111. Depending upon the size, a ten to fourteen inch diameter gong of the variety pictured in Figure 39 currently costs between 1,000 and 4,000 Bàat (roughly \$29-115 U.S.), not including transportation costs for the approximately four-hour round-trip car or bus ride between Kràbii and NST.



Figure 39. Fourteen-inch diameter bronze gong from Nákhᵇᵇn Sîithammárâad

Phÿyn Phátthánaa’s Kelantan-made gong (Figure 40) was purchased as a bundle together with a pair of East Coast-style *gendang asli* (*rammánaa*) from a Malay *runggeng* musician from Náraathíwâad (a border province in southeast Thailand). It is about eighteen inches in diameter, and has a typical construction of present day gongs from that area: made of welded-steel and painted gold to deaden its resonance and appear bronze.<sup>112</sup> The other gong in that figure is a welded-steel instrument from Kedah that has been painted black and decorated with the image of the state flag.

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112. *Gendang silat* ensembles in Kedah also use steel gongs (in sizes roughly two feet in diameter and four inches deep). These are made from 5 millimeter gauge steel sheets or empty oil drums and painted, usually black or gold, with additional designs such as state flags, rice stalks, or other symbols painted on the face (see Figure 40).



Figure 40. Welded-steel gongs from Kelantan (l) and Kedah (r)

#### *Other Idiophones*

Some *róng ηέειη* groups use small hand-held percussion instruments. That may include two types of brass cymbals (*cìη*, a small and thick pair, about five centimeters in diameter, with a clear high-pitched ringing tone, and *càab*, made of thinner metal, with a diameter around fifteen centimeters, a coarser sound, and indefinite pitch), and wooden or bamboo clappers (*kràb*). *Cìη*, *càab*, and *kràb* are found in many regional music forms, including Central Thai court/classical styles, *ramwoη* social dance, southern Thai and Malaysian folk theater, and in processional music.

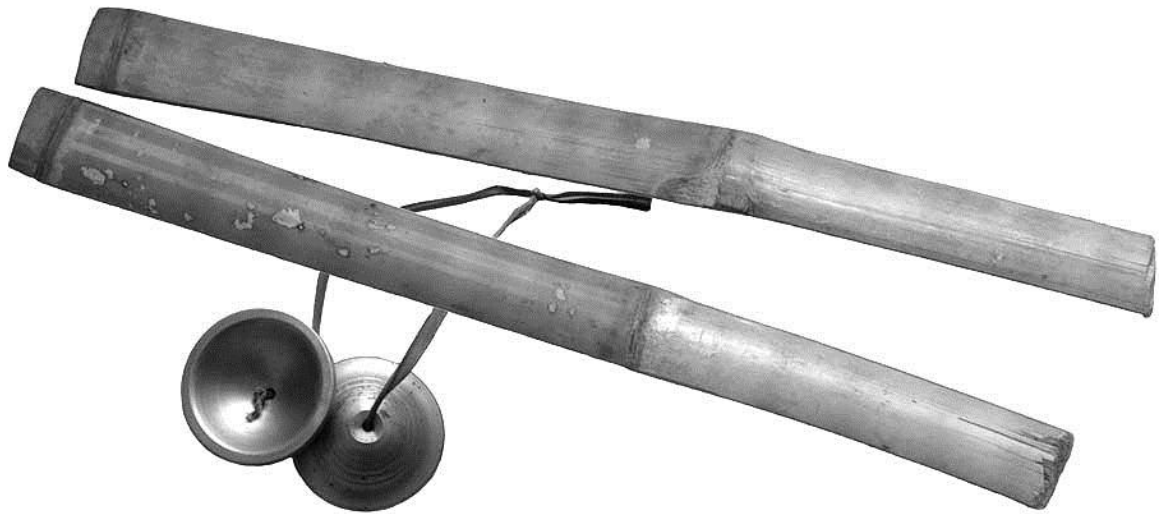


Figure 41. Idiophones *cìη* (bottom) and *kràb* (top)

Small percussion instruments are found in Orak Lawoi and Râamàad *róηη ηέεηη* ensembles—groups that feature greater community participation—but not in the commercially oriented *ramwoη*-style groups that do not employ musicians specifically to play them. Percussion players in the former also commonly contribute *chia* ‘secondary vocal exclamations’ in response to the main singer—a common feature of *ramwoη*.<sup>113</sup> While chorus singing was the role of gong and *rammánaa* players in early *róηη ηέεηη* groups, the use of small idiophones and ‘cheering’ among *róηη ηέεηη* ensembles first began during *ramwoη*’s height of popularity in the 1960s.<sup>114</sup>

#### SUMMARY

The *róηη ηέεηη* ensemble has the quality of being both of foreign origin and an icon today of Southern Thai culture. Its particular set of instruments—violin, frame drum, gong—are, in most respects, similar to those of Malayan *ronggeng*, and have no analog in

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113. Background singers are called *phûu chia* (literally a ‘cheering person’). Their singing functions to enliven the dance occasion.

114. Personal correspondence from Lat Khlóηηdii, 17 May 2008

other southern Thai performance genres (or anywhere else in Thailand, as far as I am aware, other than in Pattaanii *runggeng*).

Unlike Malay(si)a, where *runggeng* added accordions, flutes, and other western instruments, the *ρώχη ηέεη* ensemble changed little since its formation. Some changes that did occur, such as the absence of a gong in the *ramwoη*-style group, reflected economic priorities, meaning ensemble leaders in the past could not afford a gong, or chose to not hire an additional player to keep expenses low, until not having a gong became commonplace. While their musical texture decreased by one factor, groups with large community participation and little concern for making money from *ρώχη ηέεη* (such as Orak Lawoi and Râamàad) have created thicker musical textures, having more hands available to play *cìη*, *càab*, and *kràb* idiophones.

Changes in the *ρώχη ηέεη* instruments themselves appear to have been motivated by economic concerns, that is, musicians were looking for cheaper materials and/or finding substitutes for that which was unavailable. Thus economics has to a great extent determined changes to ensemble textures over *ρώχη ηέεη*'s history. For example, violins have changed little, other than the fact that violinists rarely make their own instruments today or buy European models. Instead, they prefer to buy less expensive China-made models, and amplify them with parts cannibalized from old telephones, in a very cost-effective manner.

The switch, by many drummers, to vinyl membranes and polyester cords was a practical solution for the higher cost, lower availability, and inconsistent sound of animal hide. The deeper, barrel-shaped shells that they came to favor for their louder and more resonant sound distinguished *rammánaa* *ρώχη ηέεη* from their shallower *rebana*

counterparts played in *ronggeng*, and could be made from smaller tree trunks. The gong has lost its past utility as a communication medium, signaling important information over long distances, and its supernatural associations have disappeared along with the gongs themselves. The smaller sizes and cheaper materials of today's gongs alone points to priorities of cost over aesthetics.

Thus having provided descriptions of *ρώχη ηέεη* ensembles, we now move on to explore the genre's music at a deeper level, through the following two chapters of inventories, descriptions, and analyses of *ρώχη ηέεη* repertoire, beginning with its rhythms.

## CHAPTER 6. *CADWÀ RÓCΩ DÉED: RAMMÁNAA RHYTHMS*

*RócΩ ηέεη* drumming is typically performed by two people, each playing a separate interlocking rhythm on a *rammánaa* drum, to accompany the melodies, songs, and dances of a *rócΩ ηέεη* ensemble. *RócΩ ηέεη* drummers are led by an ensemble's violinist, who provides cues as to tempo, melody, and form. Drummers play distinct, repetitive stroke patterns with both hands to form interlocking textures, and specific patterns that highlight cadential moments within the tune.

*RócΩ ηέεη* rhythms are collectively known as *caηwà rócΩ ηέεη* (henceforth *caηwà*). *Caηwà*, Thai for 'rhythm,' has multiple meanings. It may refer to specific elements such as cyclic *rammánaa* patterns and cadences, or it may encompass interactions of all rhythmic elements in a *rócΩ ηέεη* song—in a similar sense to how Curt Sachs describes rhythm “as an element of art, as an esthetic experience” encompassing a player's knowledge of melody and form as well as technical facility with the instrument (Sachs 1952:387). This chapter attempts to show *caηwà* in both senses of the word; to describe shared rhythmic features found among certain types of *rócΩ ηέεη* tunes, and highlight elements that distinguish individual ones.

Being that *rócΩ ηέεη* migrated from northwest Malaya, it is not surprising that its *caηwà* are closely tied to the rhythms of *ronggeng* and *canggung* found in northwest Malaysia. But its history since that time has been one of separation from those roots, new interactions with drumming styles of Andaman folk theaters and social dance, and the development of some idiosyncratic characteristics. This is an attempt at a broad explanation of *rócΩ ηέεη* drumming, looking at its origins and transformations, which situates it within a regional continuum spanning multiple languages, cultures, and

performance genres.

The early part of this chapter contains basic information on how performers play *rammánaa* drums and the language they use when talking about or teaching *róçñ ηέεη* drumming. It explains common formal elements found in drumming accompaniment, such as principal accompaniment patterns, beginnings and endings, interlocking textures between two drums, cadential patterns, improvisation, and drumming techniques in a one-drummer, two drum ensemble. I organize the various *cañwà* *róçñ ηέεη* into four categories based upon discrete rhythmic patterns (the narrower sense of *cañwà*), and analyze relationships between tempo and these categories among Malay- and Thai-speaking groups, as well as their *ronggeng*-style counterparts in Malaysia, to show how tempo distinctively marks each individual style.

A lengthier section that follows looks at individual rhythms in the four previously mentioned categories and provides an inventory of extant *cañwà*. Through examinations of each category through transcriptions and analyses, we may better understand commonalities shared among *róçñ ηέεη* rhythms, or with *ronggeng* or other forms. To explain the diverse nature of each rhythm when seen in a larger regional context, I provide multiple examples of patterns and expressive styles, from different communities, and compare the *cañwà* of Malay- and Thai-speaking drummers on both sides of the Thailand-Malaysia border.

*Róçñ ηέεη* musicians speak of each song as possessing its own *cañwà*, but also acknowledge that certain *cañwà* accompany more than one song. They may refer to *cañwà* by the names of the tunes that they accompany (for example, *cañwà mak inang* for the song “Mak Inang” and *cañwà che minah sayang* for the song “Che Minah Sayang”),

or group them according to a particular rhythmic style (for example, referring to the accompaniment for both aforementioned tunes—which share the same fundamental pattern—as *caṅwà mak inang*, the most frequently played song with that rhythm).

Their language about rhythms is used as a pedagogical device, such as when communicating the appropriate rhythm for an obscure melody. For example, when playing “Mas Merah” (a rare tune today), an inexperienced drummer could be asked to “*tii caṅwà siti payuṅ*” (strike the “Siti Payung” rhythm—a better-known tune that uses the same rhythmic type), or could be given directions with qualitative terms that convey a similar meaning, “*peen caṅwà cháa, peen caṅwà nuan*” (it is a slow rhythm, a gentle rhythm).

*Róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* songs are, by convention, fixed to a particular *caṅwà*. Contrast that with Malaysian *ronggeng* songs, which can appear in multiple rhythmic styles, sometimes in a single song. *Ronggeng* tunes could begin as a slow four-beat *asli* and then modulate to a quick-tempo two-beat *inang* or tuplet-division *joget*. Or they could substitute one lively rhythm for another (such as *inang* for a *masri*), or play a popular melody in a wide range of rhythmic styles (such as “Dondang Sayang,” which has been rendered variously as *asli, inang, joget, mambo, swing foxtrot, and cha cha chá*).

## RAMMÁNAA PLAYING TECHNIQUES AND STROKE NAMES

Of the two drummers in a *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* ensemble, one plays fundamental rhythms on the *jyn*, and the other plays accented upbeats, improvisatory fills, and embellishments on the *lâk*. A few drummers are proficient at playing *jyn* and *lâk* simultaneously (heretofore, the two-drum style) and adapt important elements of both to one-drummer ensembles. Even though troupe leaders tell me that a one-drummer ensemble saves some of the cost

of hiring an extra person (though in practice a two-*rammánaa* drummer is typically paid a little more than a single player), and violinists and singers say that one drummer provides a more stable accompaniment, they are scattered exceptions rather than the norm.

Drummers in general learn through observation and in performance, rather than through formal instruction. Novice drummers typically play the *jyn* and those who are more experienced play the *lâk*. At the outset of a performance, one may observe the two drummers humbly offering the *lâk* to each other as demonstrations of respect.

The act of striking the drum is referred to as *tii* (*rammánaa*) in Thai and *pukui* (*rebana*) among Malay speakers (a vernacular pronunciation of *pukul* ‘to strike’ also typical to northwest Malaysia). Both *tii* and *pukui* also have temporal connotations; *tii* is a prefix for the hours of the 1 to 5 A.M. watch, while *pukul* is a prefix for any hour of the day or night (e.g., *tii sāam* and *pukul tiga pagi* which both mean ‘three in the morning’).

Local musicians speak of drums and drumming techniques in a variety of ways, and within a single community there may be a variety of descriptive terms and playing styles. There are no codified drum practices such as those found in central Thai *mahōorii* or *khryyy sāaj* court/classical ensembles (nor do those forms have any bearing upon *rammánaa* performance or pedagogy). Instead, *rammánaa* playing is a folk style with strong roots in the music of neighboring northwest Malaysia.



Figure 42. Positions for holding *jyn* (left) and *lak* (right) drums



Figure 43. One drummer playing two *rammánaa*

In a two-drummer ensemble, *jyn* and *lak* are each played with two hands, but with different stroke patterns and playing techniques. Both drummers hold the instrument in their laps with the membrane oriented toward the dominant hand. A right-handed *jyn* player holds his or her dominant hand at approximately a nine- or ten-o'clock position—

as seen on the left in Figure 42—using this hand to perform fundamental rhythms. The non-dominant hand rests on the drum shell at around a twelve- or one-o’clock position (for a right-handed player), with the fingers draped loosely over the membrane. For a left-handed player, this would be reversed with the player’s dominant hand held at a two- or three-o’clock position and the non-dominant hand at eleven- or twelve-o’clock. In a one-drummer / two-drum ensemble, a right-handed performer holds the *jyn* between both legs with the drum head facing upward and away from the body, striking it with the right hand, and the *lâk* under the left arm, striking it with the left hand (see Figure 43).

Dominant-hand *jyn* strokes may be described: (1) by their location on the drum, for example *klaaη* ‘in the center’ (of the drum) or *khâaη* (on the side or rim); (2) using non-specific, qualitative terms such as *sîaη jàj* (large sound) for the center stroke, or *sîaη léeg* (small sound) for the rim stroke; or (3) with mnemonic devices.

The mnemonic syllables used among *róoη ηέεη* musicians resemble, to some degree, their counterparts in Malaysian *ronggeng*, which I compare below. For the latter, center and rim strokes are commonly spoken and written as *dung* and *tak* (see example of hand positions in Figure 44), and some performers add *tang*, which is similar to *tak* but sounded with the hand striking roughly in between the other two strokes. In southwest Thailand, there is a corresponding nomenclature, but its usage is neither uniform nor circulated widely. For example, veteran performer Lat Khlóoηdii, who learned *rammánaa* in Tanjung Village prior to the Second World War (see Chapter 3), does not use mnemonic terms for *rammánaa* stroke. His only counsel is to make the music ‘rise,’ by playing the rim stroke sharply, making it ring like the sound of a gong.<sup>115</sup>

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115. The concept of a drum stroke having a relationship to the gong stroke is also found



Figure 44. Hand positions for *dung* (l) and *tak* (r) strokes on *rebana ibu*

For consistency, I will use the following mnemonic syllables used by *róꝓη ηέεη* musicians in reference to *rammánaa* strokes, but also note that experienced players assert that the full spectrum of *rammánaa/rebana* sounds that they produce cannot be fully described with this limited technical vocabulary:

1. *Thyη* (the Malaysian *dung*) is played as a rebounding strike of the fingertips, just off-center of the drum head, the wrist joint roughly even with the rim and the hand slightly cupped with the fingers closed. The tone resonates with the drum's lower fundamental frequencies. This stroke is also referred to as *klaaη* 'center,' *sĩaη jàj* 'large sound,' or *sĩaη tàη* 'low sound.'
2. *Týη* (the Malaysian *tang*) is played by striking the drum with fingers spread slightly, the joint where the fingers meet the palm even with the rim, producing a tone with higher-order frequencies. This stroke is also referred to

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in northeast Sumatra where, in contrast to *róꝓη ηέεη* drumming, *rebana* players refer to the center tone as 'gong.' In northeast Sumatra, the center tone is also called *indung* (mother), the rim tone *anak* (child), and the muted stroke *cal*, the former played with the left (presumably the non-dominant) hand, and the latter two strokes with the right hand (Goldsworthy 1979: 432-34). See Table 2 for a comparison of regional *rammánaa/rebana* mnemonics.

as *khâaŋ* ‘side,’ *sǎŋ léeg* ‘small sound,’ or *sǎŋ sǔuŋ* ‘high sound.’

3. *Tỹŋ* (the Malaysian *tak*) is played similarly to *týŋ* but using only the two extreme finger segments to sharply strike the rim, producing a sharp tone, rich in upper harmonics.
4. *Càb* (the Malaysian *cekup* ‘to catch with one’s palm’) are muted strokes played with either hand, as sharp or dull timbres, where the hand comes to rest on the drum head (rather than rebounding off) to prevent it from vibrating.
5. *Nóɔg* or *laaj caŋwà* is a decorative stroke played by the *jyn*’s non-dominant hand. In Malaysia, some refer to this stroke also as *tak*; others call it *bunga-bunga* (‘flowers’ or ‘decoration’). A drummer plays this hand with less force than the dominant-hand strokes, in a light manner, either by turning the wrist so that the finger tips strike the drum head in an upward sweeping motion towards the player’s body, or by tapping the fingers in a rebounding motion downward upon the drum head. *Nóɔg* comes from the English word ‘knock,’ while *laaj caŋwà* means ‘the distinctive marking of the rhythm.’ This stroke fills in the empty spaces where the main rhythm does not sound (*hâj teem caŋwà*), in order to enhance the rhythm’s ‘beauty’ (*hâj phajró*). This non-dominant hand also controls the resonance of the dominant hand strokes by damping the drum head’s vibrations.

The dominant hand of a *lâk* player is held in a similar position to the *jyn*’s (either at nine- or three-o’clock) and strikes off-center from the drum head. The opposing hand is held in a more or less similar position across the drum, around the two- or ten-o’clock position, and strikes slightly closer to the rim than the dominant hand. Unlike the *jyn*’s

non-dominant-hand stroke, both hands strike with similar force. The *lâk* plays sharp accents, referred to as *chá*, that emphasize off beats—in most cases the second and fourth beats in a cyclic rhythmic unit. Unaccented strokes are called *pá*. The *lâk* also highlights musical cadences and interacts with the melody in an improvisatory manner.

	Large Drum ( <i>jyn, ibu</i> )					Small Drum ( <i>lâk, anak</i> )	
	low tone	rim tone	near rim	ornament	muted	accented	unaccented
Malaysia	<i>dung</i>	<i>tak</i>	<i>tang</i>	<i>tak,</i> <i>bunga</i>	<i>cakup</i>		
N. Sumatra	<i>gong,</i> <i>indung</i>	<i>anak</i>		<i>bunga-</i> <i>bunga</i>	<i>cal</i>		
S.W. Thailand	<i>sǎŋ jàj,</i> <i>sǎŋ tàŋ,</i> <i>thŷŋ,</i> <i>dỳŋ</i>	<i>sǎŋ léeg,</i> <i>sǎŋ sǔŋŋ</i> <i>tỳŋ,</i> <i>dỳŋ</i>	<i>tỳŋ</i>	<i>nóŋ</i>	<i>càb</i>	<i>chá</i>	<i>pá</i>

Table 2. Some local *rebana/ramánaa* mnemonics and stroke names in Malaysia, Sumatra, and Thailand

The similar practices uniting *ronggeng* and *róŋŋ h́ééŋ* contrast with other regional drumming mnemonics. For example, In Malaysian *kompang* (a tacked-head frame-drum-accompanied music genre), center and rim (low- and high-pitch timbres) are *pak* and *bum*. In *gendang silat*, the low- and high-pitch mnemonic syllables on the two-headed barrel drum are *cang* and *pam*. Central Thai *ramánaa mahōorii* strokes use mnemonic syllables *ting*, “an undamped stroke on the center of the (...) drum's head by closed right-hand

fingers,” and *jo*, “an undamped stroke on the (...) drum's rim by two or three left-hand fingers” (Miller 1998:266).

## CATEGORIES OF *CAḤWÀ RÓḶḶ ḤÉÉḤ*

There are twelve distinct types of *caḥwà róḶḶ ḤÉÉḤ* in the region, but most groups' repertoires contain between five and nine. They may be separated into four theoretical categories based on rhythm type:

1. Two-beat, tuplet-based *caḥwà*
2. Two-beat *caḥwà* that emphasize downbeats
3. Two-beat syncopated *caḥwà*
4. Slow four-beat *caḥwà*

This classification system has a special correspondence to the formal opening and closing repertoire of a *róḶḶ ḤÉÉḤ* performance. Those pieces—described in Chapter 7—comprise a three-song ritual opening set called *wâj khruu* (one of the most important features in a *róḶḶ ḤÉÉḤ* performance), and a single closing tune, “Lagu Tabik.” Together, they are fixed ‘bookends’ to an otherwise varied collection of performance tunes. Each *wâj khruu* song uses one *caḥwà* category: the first song, “Lagu Dua,” has a Category 1 rhythm; the second, “Mak Inang,” a Category 2 rhythm; the third, “Burung Putih,” a Category 3 rhythm; while “Lagu Tabik” is accompanied by a Category 4 rhythm.

Combinations of *caḥwà* are found in three extant *róḶḶ ḤÉÉḤ* songs, all of Malayan provenance (see Chapter 7): “Siapa Itu,” which alternates between fast and slow, Category 2 and 4 *caḥwà*, ending with a fast-tempo extended Category 3 coda; “Siti Payung,” which is performed as a slow Category 4 *caḥwà* and ends with a fast Category 1 coda; and “Cinta Sayang”, a Kedah folk melody that is nearly extinct in southwest

Thailand, which alternates between Categories 2 and 4 rhythms.

Figure 45 and Table 3 show different distributions of *caṅwà* categories in performances by Malay- and Thai-speaking groups (in which songs are often played multiple times), as well as in relation to the repertoire as a whole for both Malay- and Thai-speaking groups.<sup>116</sup> The data illustrate how Category 3 rhythms comprise the largest share for both Malayan and Andaman Coast songs. Of those, over eighty percent are *caṅwà paarii*, the predominant rhythm found in both prewar Malayan and postwar *tanjon* repertoires. They also show differences in percentage of Category 4 (slow) rhythms between the two groups' repertoires, an issue that is addressed later in this chapter.

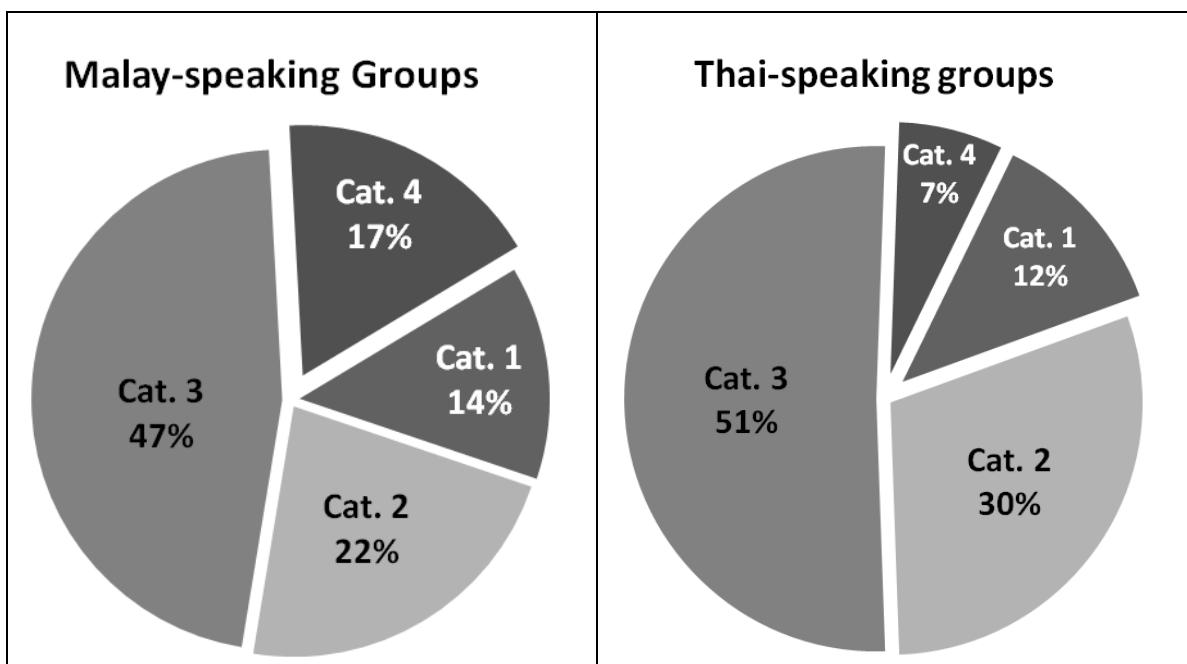


Figure 45. *Caṅwà* distribution in performances by Malay- and Thai-speaking groups

116. These data are based on a sample of 222 *róṅṅ ḡééḡ* songs recorded at live performances and in private demonstrations (see an explanation of this sample in Transcription Methods below).

Category	Malay-speaking groups		Thai-speaking groups	
	# of songs (26)	% of total repertoire	# of songs (21)	% of total repertoire
1	3	12	2	10
2	5	19	4	19
3	12	46	13	62
4	6	23	2	10

Table 3. *Caṅwà* distribution in repertoires of Malay- and Thai-speaking groups

Table 4 shows *caṅwà* subtypes for each category, roughly divided equally between multiple-song and single-song specific *caṅwà*. Each subtype is examined individually later in this chapter.

Cat.	Characteristics (emphasis)	<i>Caṅwà</i> sub-types			
1	2-beat (tuplet-based)	<i>dua</i>	<i>dua sǝṅṅ</i>	<i>dua pàlíd*</i>	
2	2-beat (downbeats)	<i>mak inang</i>	<i>jaaṅṅooṅ*</i>	<i>tarok tok tek*</i>	<i>tàluṅ*</i>
3	2-beat (syncopated)	<i>paarii</i>	<i>sǝṅṅ khaam</i>	<i>sinaadooṅ*</i>	
4	slow 4-beat	<i>cháa/nuan</i>	<i>kayuh sampan*</i>	<i>gamboi*</i>	

Table 4. Subtypes for each *caṅwà* category (asterisks indicate single-song specific *caṅwà*)

## THE FORMATION OF *RÓṂṂ* *DÉÉṂ* DANCE RHYTHMS

Malayan *ronggeng* rhythms constitute the greater portion of *caṅwà* *rǝṅṅ* *ḡééḡ*. Although their precise origins cannot be pinpointed, in the 1930s they encompassed popular dance hall and rural folk rhythms that were pan-Malayan in character, as well as influenced by local or regional styles of northwest Malaya and northeast Sumatra.

*Ronggeng* also changed considerably after the war, but those changes did not bear upon *ρόση ηέση*, or the significant changes it was going through. Thus to understand *ρόση ηέση*, we need to focus on *ronggeng*, as it existed during prewar period, and look at how the two regional styles diverged from that point onward.

Major changes took place in how each nation dealt with culture. Overbearing forces of standardization and commercialization from the state, left strong imprints on music in both Thailand and Malay(si)a. From Malaya's independence movement, and through decolonization from British rule, culture has been contested among Malay, Chinese, and Indians (the three largest ethnic groups), with the former being the most dominant. Ultimately, in forming a Malay-dominated state, its ruling elite appropriated multicultural forms such as *ronggeng* dances, and re-inscribed them as icons of a modern Malay identity. In nationalism's wake, *ronggeng* rhythms came to exist as essentialized forms, through mass media, scholarly writings, and state cultural institutions, belying their diverse roots and practices.

At their heart, *ronggeng* rhythms are collective in the same manner that Malays(ia)n society has been. Their origins are obscure, but they circulated widely enough to become part of a common idiom for a large part of the Malay-speaking world. This was especially true for the dance rhythms that were general dance hall fare, such as *joget*, *inang*, *asli*, *masri*, and *zapin*. As *ronggeng* became a common idiom, it forged many local adaptations. Those forms, in turn, became new dances within the *ronggeng* cannon, with songs and rhythms such as *canggung* from Perlis, *cinta sayang* from Kedah, *dondang sayang* from Malacca, *ulek mayang* from Terengganu, and numerous others.

Northeast Sumatra had a significant influence upon Penang's music and dance

scene, as well as the Kedah and Perlis countryside, through what was often called the *deli* style of *ronggeng*. The close affinity between these two places, by virtue of proximity, and cultural and commercial ties, made them two regional pillars of *ronggeng* and *bangsawan*. Late-nineteenth-century, northeast Sumatran *bangsawan* audiences were “cosmopolitan,” with “Malay speakers (...) more inclined to share the tastes of Malaysians than Indonesians in Malay popular theater” (Cohen 2006: 263). One local ruler, Sultan Sulaiman Shariful Alamshah of Serdang (r. 1879-1946), was a significant benefactor of *ronggeng*, *bangsawan*, *zapin* and other forms. He was, according to his son, “the only Malay ruler (...) to have an interest in the promotion of Malay performance traditions” (Mohd Anis 1993: 26). During his reign, the aforementioned *deli* style—characterized in part by dances played at quick tempi, and distinctive singing style—became fashionable in prewar Penang and northwest Malaya.<sup>117</sup>

Northeast Sumatra’s rich *ronggeng* tradition is delimited to three fundamental rhythms styles, *sinandung*, *inang*, and *rentak dua*, which correspond to the Malaysian *asli*, *inang*, and *joget* (Goldsworthy 1979:349-50), whereas Malaysian *ronggeng* is much more inclusive of other styles. *Zapin*, for example, which in Malaysia is often played in *ronggeng*, is considered a separate genre in northeast Sumatra. In Malaysia, localized dances and song forms, such as *canggung* and *dondang sayang*, are also considered to be part of the *ronggeng* canon, whereas in northeast Sumatra they would not. Table 5 provides a brief comparison of *caḡwà rǒcŋ ḡéēŋ* and their counterparts in Malay(si)an and Sumatran *ronggeng*.

*Zapin* is an interesting case in southwest Thailand because it provides some

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117. Deli and Serdang are two former neighboring sultanates in northeast Sumatra.

evidence of how cultural flows with Malaya changed from the prewar to postwar eras. It began as a folk song, dance, and music introduced by Hadramaut Arabs to the Malay-speaking world, developed into an Arab-Malay hybrid among rural Malay performers, and subsequently became a nationwide fad in postwar Malaya (see Mohd Anis 1993). Southwest Thailand did not have significant immigrant Arab populations; consequently it had no indigenous *zapin*-like traditions.

The Lantaa repertoire included a tune called “Lagu Gamboi,” which seems to be from a related style. *Gamboi* refers to the ‘*ud*-like *gambus* (pronounced *gamboi* in the Andaman and Perlis) that is a fixture of *zapin* ensembles. The period in which “Lagu Gamboi” was introduced suggest that it was a contemporary of a *zapin*-like song style listed on various Malayan gramophone recordings as *gamboos*; a proto-*zapin* in the sense that the two shared musical features, and an implicit Arab-ness.

If the prewar era may be characterized as a time when culture circulated between Malaya and Siam without strong countercurrents opposing it, the postwar saw greater separation along their national borders; a closed door, in certain respects. Each country, during that time embarked on separate projects to forge individual national identities. Thais, in some instances, were compelled to conform to national stereotypes of a model citizen, and discard antithetical ‘anachronistic’ practices—in this case, meaning anything related to rural and Malay culture. In that environment, and in a region that was not strongly connected to mainstream Malayan culture, *zapin* could make no inroads.<sup>118</sup>

The relative absence of the *asli* rhythm from *ร้อจ ηέεη* is another interesting case, one that is related to different preferences among Andaman performing communities,

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118. *Sampéerj* (*zapin*) did become popular among the Malay-speaking majority in Pattaanii. See “*Sampéerj*” in *The Encyclopedia of Thai Culture (The South)*.

rather than social and political separation. The name *asli* has two meanings today in Malaysia: a particular slow rhythm, as well as the broad corpus of so-called ‘traditional’ Malay songs. In the past, songs of that rhythm style accompanied various genres, such as *dondang sayang*, and *tarik nasib*, and were some of *ronggeng*’s most popular songs prior to, and during the war era, such as “Dondang Sayang,” “Seri Mersing,” “Bunga Tanjung,” and “Tudung Periok.” Some of those tunes migrated to southwest Thailand and were part of the early island repertoires, but their relatively long and melodically complex song forms may have discouraged would-be students.

Mainlanders, on the other hand, preferred up-tempo dances, and *asli* did not become a significant part of their repertoires. Not being Malay or Malay-speakers, perhaps they did not have connections to the encapsulated cultural knowledge found in the Malay song texts. If that was indeed the case, then *tanjung* song, which seems to have certain areas in common with *asli* (flowing poetic texts, evocations of natural beauty, et cetera), could be considered its replacement.

Rhythm Category	Southwest Thailand	Northwest Malaysia	North Sumatra
1	<i>dua</i>	<i>joget</i>	<i>rentak dua</i>
	<i>dua pàlíd</i>		
2	<i>mak inang</i>	<i>mak inang</i>	<i>mak inang</i>
	<i>jaanjoon</i>	<i>canggung</i>	
	<i>tarok tok tek</i>		
	<i>tàluη</i>		
3	<i>paarii</i>	<i>inang</i>	<i>inang</i>
	<i>sôj khaam</i>		
	<i>sinaadoon</i>	<i>senandung sayang</i>	
4	<i>cháa/nuan</i>	<i>asli</i>	<i>sinandung</i>
	<i>gamboi</i>	<i>zapin (gambus)</i>	<i>zapin</i>

Table 5: *Róωη ηέεη* rhythms and their corresponding Malayan and Sumatran *ronggeng* names or styles.

#### NOTATING RHYTHMS: RAMMÁNAA/REBANA AND GONG

Figure 46 through Figure 48 are keys to rhythm transcriptions in this chapter. Strokes names are given in Thai or Malay, depending upon their source and each given a position within the four spaces of a five-line staff. The positions within the staff represent relative timbres rather than actual pitches. For example, the lower-pitched and resonant *thyη* stroke occupies the lowest space, while sharp, high-pitched *tŷη* lies two spaces higher. For transcriptions that show *jyn* (or *ibu*) and *lâk* (or *anak*) parts, the former always occupy the top staff and the latter the lower.

A player's dominant-hand strokes are notated in one of three hand positions,

occupying one of three bottom spaces in the staff with full note heads, or ‘x’ note heads for lightly played strokes. Non-dominant-hand strokes occupy the top space and are always notated with an ‘x’ note head. *Lâk* accompaniment is transcribed like the *jyn*. There is no indication in this notation whether a player is left- or right-hand dominant, but this detail may be mentioned in the text. Gong strokes, mostly occur on the downbeat beginning each measure (in certain cases every two measures) and are notated with a capital letter G below the staff, under the beat where they sound.

Thailand:	{	<i>klaaŋ</i>		<i>khâaŋ</i>		<i>laaj caŋwà</i>
		<i>s̄iaŋ tà̄m</i>		<i>s̄iaŋ s̄iunŋ</i>		
		<i>s̄iaŋ jà̄j</i>		<i>s̄iaŋ léeg</i>		
		<i>thyŋ</i>	<i>t̄yŋ</i>	<i>t̄yŋ</i>		<i>n̄c̄c̄g</i>

Figure 46. Key for *jyn* transcriptions

Thailand:		<i>caá</i>	<i>pá</i>
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Figure 47. Key for *lâk* transcriptions

The additional symbols shown in Figure 48 may appear with any drum stroke. Other common notational elements that appear in this section (e.g., repeats, caesura, and crescendo) follow standard Western notational conventions.

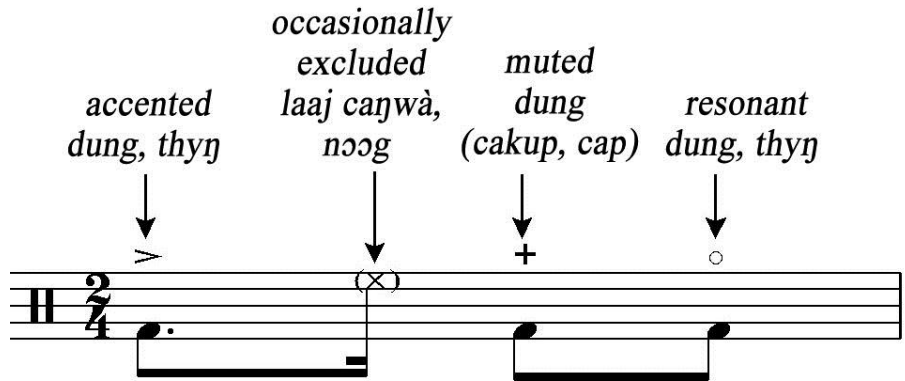


Figure 48. Additional notational symbols

To simplify the notation rather than to reflect actual durations, rests are rarely used except where they fall at the beginning of a measure or major subdivision of a measure.

Figure 49 is a comparison of linear representations of one-measure *dualjoget* patterns. The first half of Pattern A (strokes 1-3) is a triplet division of the quarter beat, the second half (strokes 4-5) is a symmetrical division into two eighth beats. Pattern B's two halves are both asymmetrical divisions in 2:3 and 3:2 ratios. Figure 50 shows these two figures rendered in Western notation.

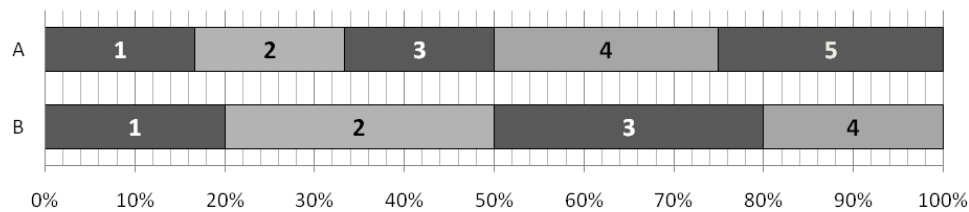


Figure 49. Some example stroke timings

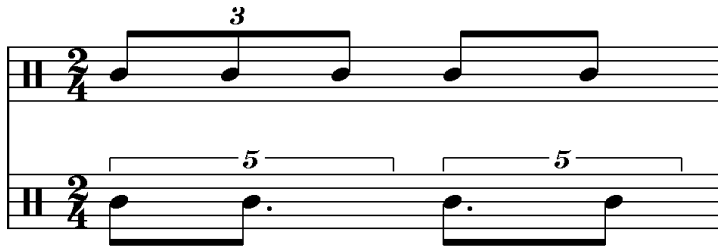


Figure 50. A rendering of the previous example in western notation

## TRANSCRIPTION METHODS

I produced the transcriptions, descriptions, and analyses of *caḡwà rǒcḡ ḡéey* in this chapter from digital video and audio recordings that I made in Thailand and Malaysia between 2006 and 2010, as well as some other recorded and printed sources that facilitate comparisons with styles outside of my research area. The entire corpus that forms the data for this chapter includes over 200 recordings of live performances and private demonstrations. Most of the transcriptions are reductions of data collected from several cycles of a particular melody that provide opportunities to discern elements that constitute norms or variations in a performance (in many cases, reflecting performances of one or several players over multiple occasions) and understand the rhythm accompaniment’s relationship to other elements in a song.

I used linear-based, computer-software media editors to obtain minute levels of detail and reveal complex beat-timing ratios—particularly those found in *joget* and *dua* rhythms. These tools facilitate comparisons of formal elements in different sections of a recording or among multiple recordings, and provide a better look at playing techniques, particularly when analyzing quick passages, such as the subtle differences in the way players generate timbre.<sup>119</sup> To represent these data I use two transcription methods: (1)

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119. Digital audio recordings here refer to either 16- or 24-bit sound files sampled at

standard Western musical notation, which provides a common format for comparing general aspects of timbre and beat subdivisions; and (2) linear bar graphs (shown in Figure 49), which allow for a finer representation of slight timing variations. The latter appear exclusively in the discussion of *joget/dua* rhythms.

## RHYTHMIC FORM

*Canwà rócñ ηέεη*, using the broader of the two definitions mentioned earlier, have four formal structures that take place within a three- or four-minute dance round:

### 1. *Entrances*

After a few opening notes of the violin melody signal a song's style and tempo, *jyn* and *lâk* enter separately. The *jyn* (drummer) first plays several sparse versions of a main pattern that gradually becomes the full periodic unit. The *lâk* enters about one rhythmic cycle later, often with a brief, clear 'statement' of its entry, such as a short sequence of loud accented strokes (e.g., "AND FOUR AND").

### 2. *Fundamental Accompaniment*

Fundamental accompaniment comprises the repetitive, non-cadential patterns played by both drummers in the main body of a song that combine to create interlocking textures and reinforced accents. The *jyn* primarily plays continuous repetition of a single pattern, while the *lâk* (when it is not improvising) plays accented upbeats (e.g., one TWO three FOUR). The *lâk* may also play additive or subtractive variations of the *jyn* pattern, and emphasizes significant melodic events. Fundamental *jyn* and *lâk* patterns for all

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either a 44.1 or 48 kHz sample rate. Digital video was recorded at thirty frames-per-second in an interlaced 1080 vertical resolution format.

*caŋwà* are examined later in this chapter.

### 3. *Loŋ Lôug*

*Loŋ lôug* ‘laying down a riff’ either (a) refers to contrasting rhythmic figures that precede or coincide with cadential moments or other melodic events, creating emphasis and breaks in pattern repetitions, or (b) is a general term for improvisation.<sup>120</sup> In the former type of *loŋ lôug*, *jyn* and *lâk* drums play different patterns which—depending upon the song—may occur simultaneously, in adjacent measures, or in just one drum (this area is addressed in the following chapter, in context with *róŋŋ ŋéŋŋ* melodies). Type (b) *loŋ lôug* are generally performed by skilled drummers, in most cases on the *lâk* drum and rarely on the *jyn*. Properly executed *loŋ lôug* provide singers and violin with a strong foundation for building melodies and rhymes. The most common type-a *loŋ lôug* are the *jyn* and *lâk* patterns shown in Figure 51a, and its variation in Figure 51b that is essentially the same but with increased stroke density.

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120. This type of playing is called *goreng* ‘fried’ in northwest Malaysia, connoting an invigorated variation of the main pattern.

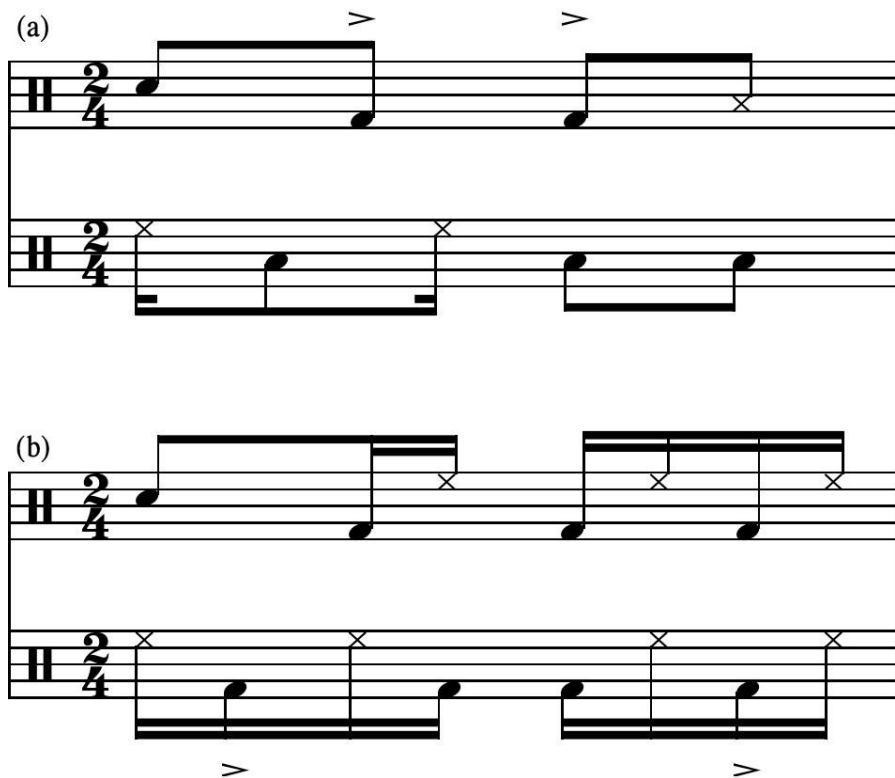


Figure 51. *Loy lûug* figures, *jyn* (top) and *lâk* (bottom)

4. Endings.

Song endings are brief. Both *rammánaa* play a three-stroke, half-time, non-syncopated figure in unison with the last three violin downbeats, as a substitution for the final measure of a melodic cycle. The most common sequence consists of *tÿÿ thyÿÿ tÿÿ* strokes, shown in Figure 52.

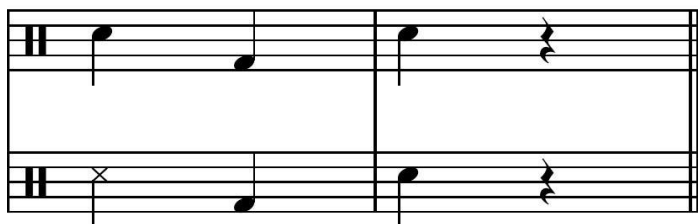


Figure 52. Common ending figure for *caÿwà rócÿÿ ñééÿÿ*, *jyn* (top) and *lâk* (bottom)

## TEMPO

Tempos for each *caṅwà* are expressed here as beats per minute (BPM). For two-beat rhythms (Categories 1 through 3, transcribed in 2/4 metre), one beat equals half the duration of a single, one-measure *jyn* pattern, and for four-beat rhythms (Category 4, transcribed in 4/4 metre) *caṅwà*, a beat equals one quarter of a *jyn* pattern.

Variations in tempo for a single *caṅwà* type (among different groups or in different performances by one group) typically span a tempo range of roughly 10 BPM and may be influenced by indeterminate factors such as venue, time of night, or emotional reactions of the participants. Figure 53 shows a comparison of median tempos of eleven *caṅwà*, separated into Thai- and Malay-speaking groups' styles. Each *caṅwà* accounted for here may be seen to occupy a discrete position in an array of tempos ranging from slow to fast. Thai-speaking groups generally play faster than Malay-speaking groups playing the same tunes. For example, the average tempo for *caṅwà paarii* when played by Malay-speaking groups is 97 BPM; for Thai-speaking groups it is 102 BPM.

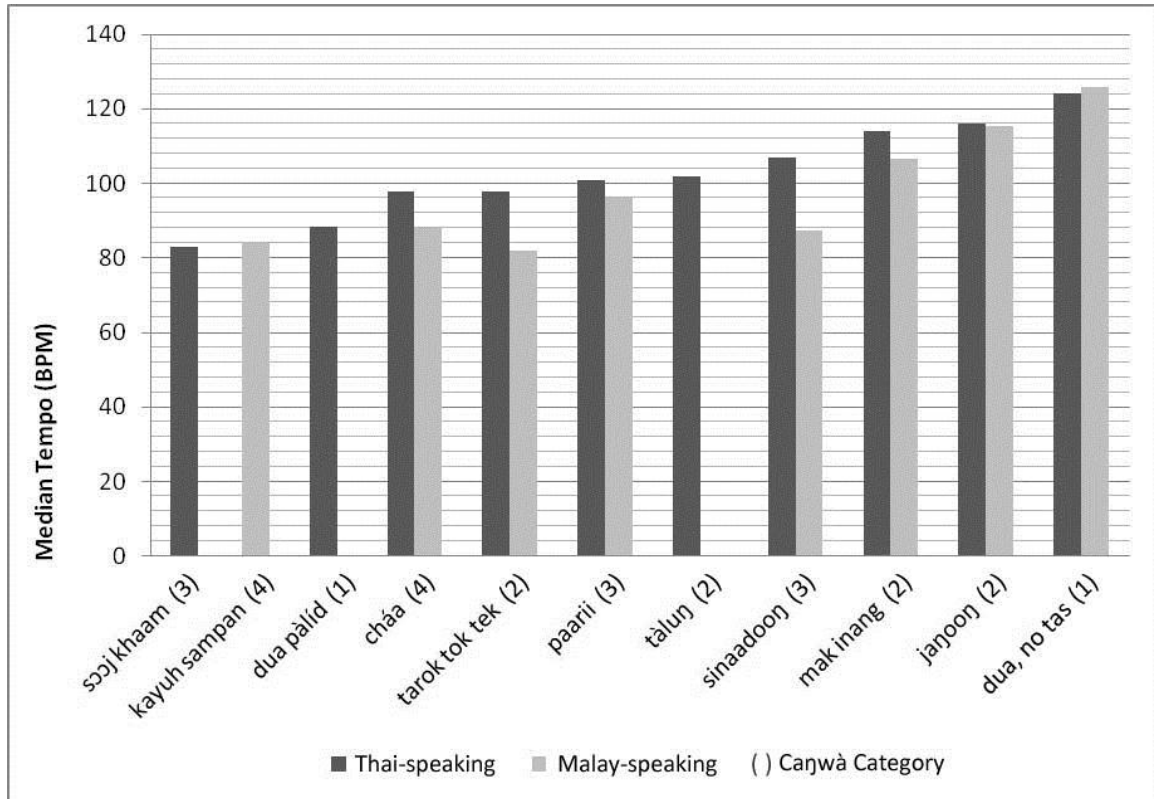


Figure 53. Median tempos of *canwà rɔɔŋ hɛɛŋ*

Figure 54, using the same song sample, looks exclusively at the *paarii* rhythms that constitute the majority of *canwà rɔɔŋ hɛɛŋ* (comprising nearly half of the songs that form the data for this and the previous figure). As in the previous example, Thai-speaking groups are shown to perform at quicker tempos than Malay-speaking groups—on average, five beats-per-minute faster.

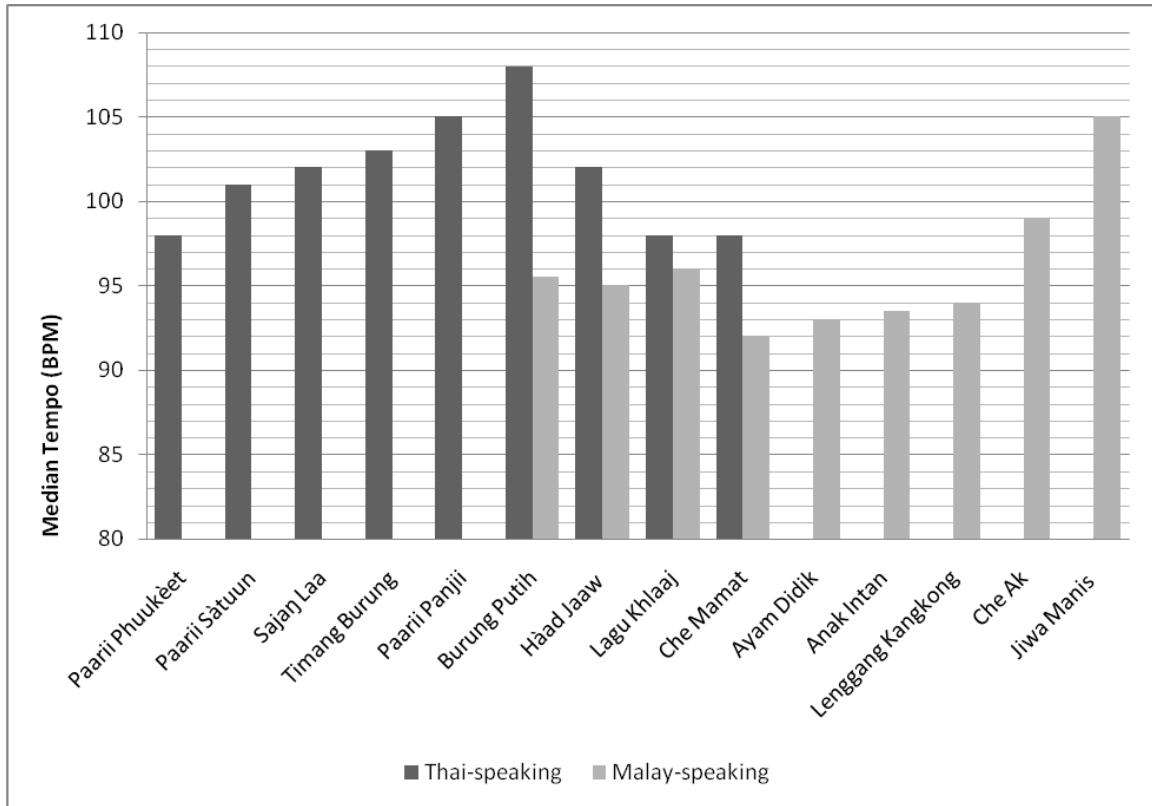


Figure 54. Median tempos of *caṅwà paarii*-accompanied *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* songs

Figure 55 puts tempos of certain *caṅwà róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* into perspective with their Malaysian *runggeng* counterparts (the latter derived from a sample of thirty-five songs from a variety of Malaysian sources).<sup>121</sup> Several useful points emerge. First, the three styles have identical slow to fast relationships among the four rhythm types. In other words, the Malay(si)an performances are consistently the slowest of the three groups in each of the four categories, Malay-speaking *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* groups are intermediate, and Thai-speaking groups play the quickest—except for the *dua* where the difference among the three is negligible. Second, rhythm types follow the same relative order in Malaysia and

121. This sample includes eight *asli* tunes, twelve *inang*, twelve *joget*, and three *mak inang*, from 78 RPM gramophone recordings of the 1930s and '40s and recordings of *gendang terinai*, *gendang silat*, and *asli* ensembles in Kedah, Perlis, and Kuala Lumpur that I recorded during 2007 and 2008.

Thailand (i.e., *asli/cháa* are slowest, followed by *inang/paarii*, et cetera). Third, there is a very large discrepancy between slow (*asli* or *cháa*) tempos in Malaysia and Thailand, which shows Malaysian performers are the only ones (among the three) that play at *largo* or *lento* tempi.<sup>122</sup>

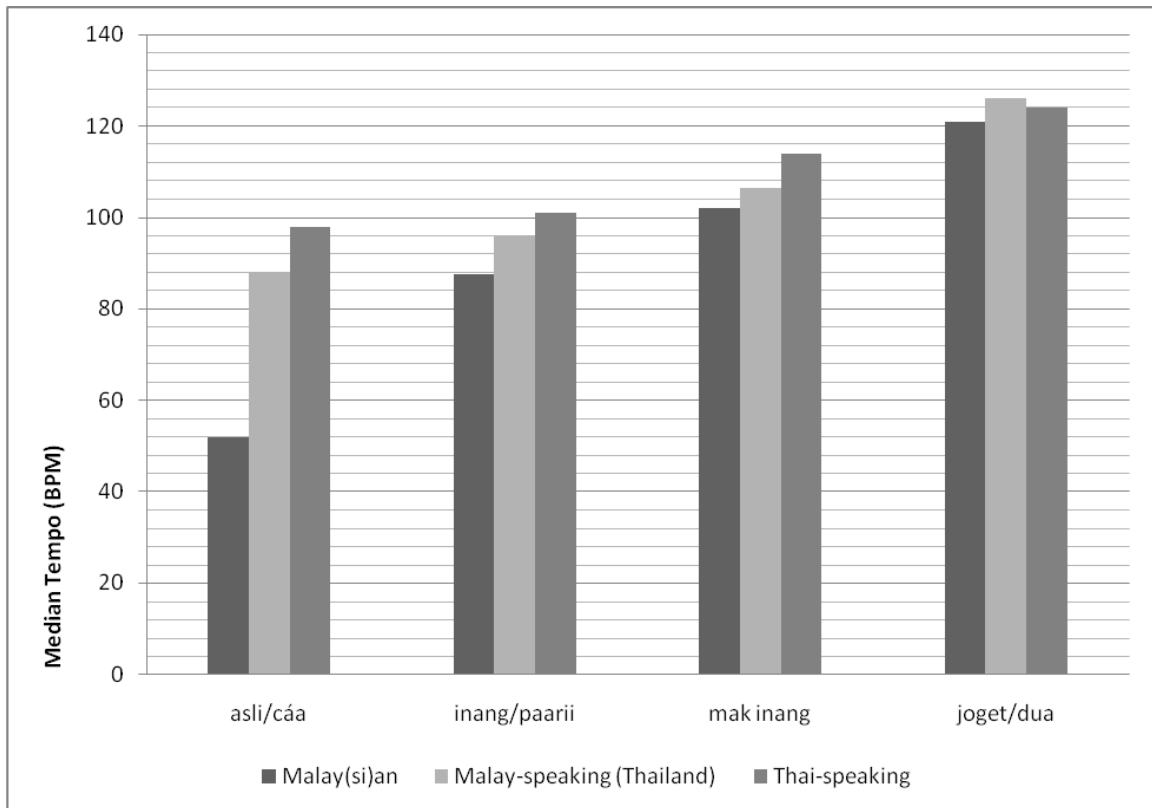


Figure 55. Median tempos for Malaysian, Malay-speaking, and Thai-speaking groups

The above data suggest that, from *ronggeng*'s introduction to southwest Thailand and its transformation into *róṅṅ ḡééḡ*, the tempos of each class of *caḡwà* experienced a speeding-up, especially for the *tanjoḡ* style that developed in Thai-speaking communities. *Róṅṅ ḡééḡ* evolved into a form dominated by medium- to quick-tempo *paarii* rhythms. An

122. One example of a quick *asli* is the 1930 recording of “Dondang Sayang Budi” by singers Etam and Timah which is played at around 100 BPM. While the tempo may appear uncommonly fast for an *asli*, “Dondang Sayang” has been treated to numerous stylistic adaptations.

alternative hypothesis is that, by virtue of its geographical proximity, *róḳḳḳḳ ḡḡḡḡ* had a closer affinity from early on with the characteristically upbeat Perlis *canggung* than it did with the Penang *ronggeng* that was replete with *asli*-style rhythms. The answer probably lies in a combination of the two, as *róḳḳḳḳ ḡḡḡḡ* repertoire initially possessed some *asli* songs, but for various reasons mentioned earlier, did not retain the slow, reflective style that was such an important part of ‘Malay traditional’ repertoire. Today it is left with almost none; the closest extant song of this type is the Orak Lawoi version of “Kayuh Sampan,” which at around 83 BPM is still played faster than *asli*.

As with other Malayan songs that were transformed into the *tanjong* style, Thai speakers had every opportunity to sing *asli* songs in Thai but—apart from the very rarely played “Siti Payung”—they did not. In the local imagination, a slow *tanjong* song is the *paarii*-style “Paarii Hàad Jaaw” which, at an average 102 BPM, is approximately in the middle of the tempo spectrum. It is sometimes characterized as *cháa* or *nuan* (slow, soft), though not performed as a *caḡwà cháa*. That perception is most likely due to its longer overall length and broad feeling provided by the ample space between its sung phrases.

## TRANSCRIPTIONS AND ANALYSES OF *CADWÀ RÓḳḳḳḳ ḡḡḡḡ*

### *Category 1*

#### ***Joget and Caḡwà Dua***

Thai-speaking *róḳḳḳḳ ḡḡḡḡ* groups typically have one or two *dua*-type songs. Malay-speaking groups may have several more, though many of the popular *dua* songs from the 1940s and ’50s are no longer extant, except in the memories of older, retired

performers.<sup>123</sup> In comparison, Malaysian *joget* continues to encompass a large repertoire of songs, many of which entered popular culture in the postwar era (through Malayan films and *joget moden* ‘modern *joget*,’ *ronggeng*’s successor) but had little or no exposure in Thailand.

Every *róŋŋ n̄éŋŋ* group plays “Lagu Dua” (called “Lagu Dua Chǎəj Chǎəj,” the “Regular Lagu Dua”).<sup>124</sup> It is the first of three *wâj khruu* pieces, and the song that by convention begins each performance. In longer performances lasting several hours, groups will often play this “Lagu Dua” a number of additional times. Some Thai-speaking groups also play “Lagu Dua Pàlíd” (“The Perlis Dua”) which uses a distinct *dua*-type rhythm.

A typology of *dua/joget* rhythms (Figure 56) shows twenty seven, one-measure *dua/joget* patterns collected from transcriptions of live performances, audio recordings, and examples found in recent literature. Each pattern consists of two equal halves, with each half containing between one and three strokes. I have arranged them as six pattern types (roman numerals I through VI), according to the number of sound events (strokes) appearing in each half measure. For each type, there are between one and ten subtypes (*a* through *j*) based on various beat divisions. Two caveats should be mentioned: this typology is not intended to be definitive for all *dua/joget* patterns but to illustrate the diversity of rhythm styles played in this genre, and highlight some of the more common ones (it does not, however, distinguish variations in drum and hand strokes as explained earlier). Furthermore, this is a narrow focus upon individual elements rather than the total

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123. Some of the *dua* songs played in the past include “Lagu Dua Cantik,” “Lagu Che Siti,” “Lagu Dua Si Kota Bharu,” and “Lagu Buah Sukun.” These were mostly played by Malay-speaking groups.

124. *Chǎəj-chǎəj* (၇၈၅ ၇) literally means ‘indifferent.’ ‘Regular’ is a colloquialism.

gestalt of drumming in a *joget* performance which, in practice, is a free combination of different patterns with addition or subtraction of strokes, or interpolation of contrasting figures.

	I 1+2	II 2+1	III 2+2	IV 2+3	V 3+2	VI 3+3
(a)						
(b)						
(c)						
(d)						
(e)						
(f)						
(g)						
(h)						
(i)						
(j)						

Figure 56. Typology of *dua/joget* patterns in Thailand and Malaysia

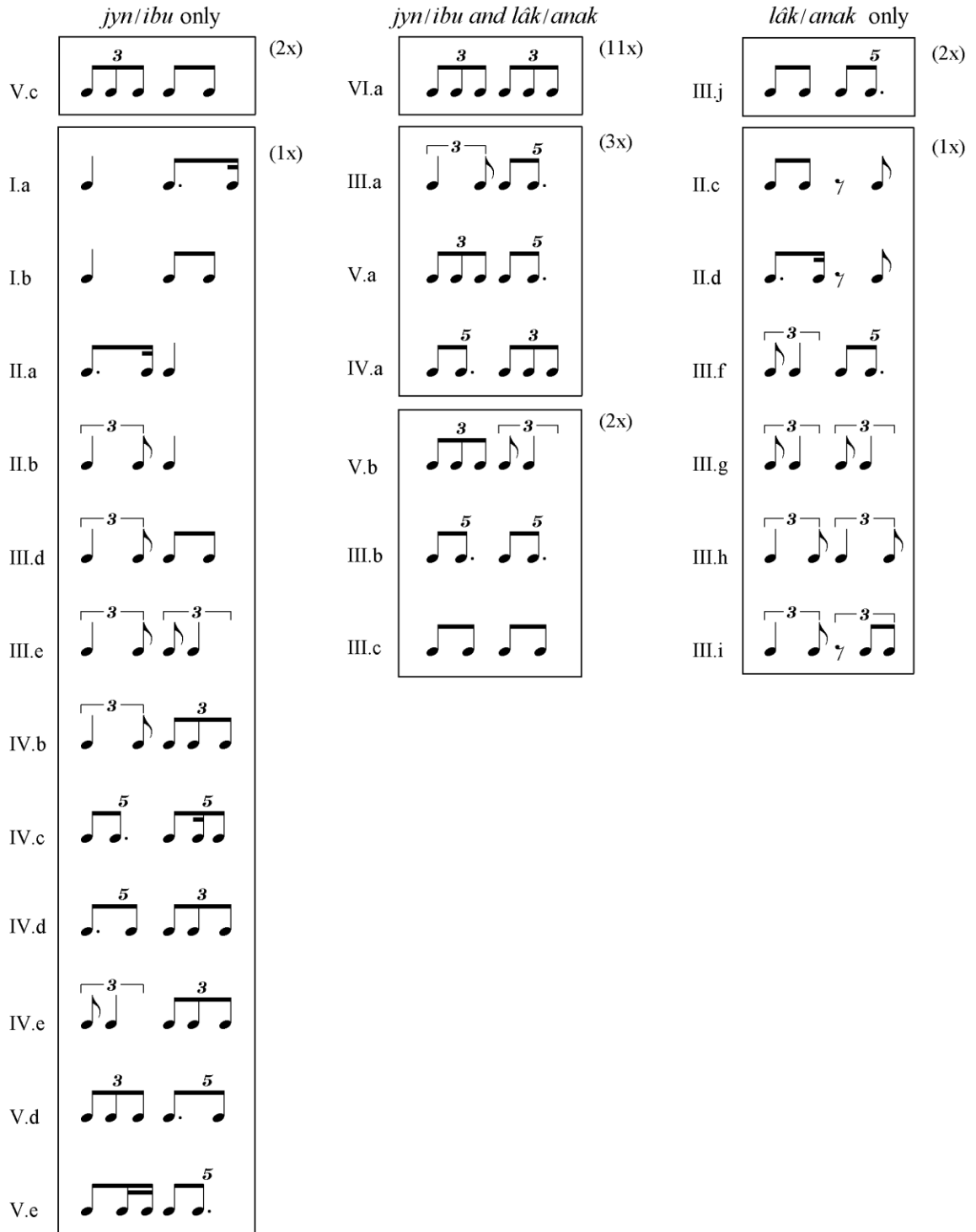


Figure 57. *Dual/joget* subtypes arranged by drum type and frequency

Figure 57 shows the subtypes sorted by drum—*jyn/ibu* only, *jyn/ibu* and *lâk/anak*, *lâk/anak* only—and grouped by the frequency of each subtype’s appearance within the

sample (that is, how many players use that figure, shown in parentheses next to the pattern). Figure 58 presents only the subtypes that appear most frequently.

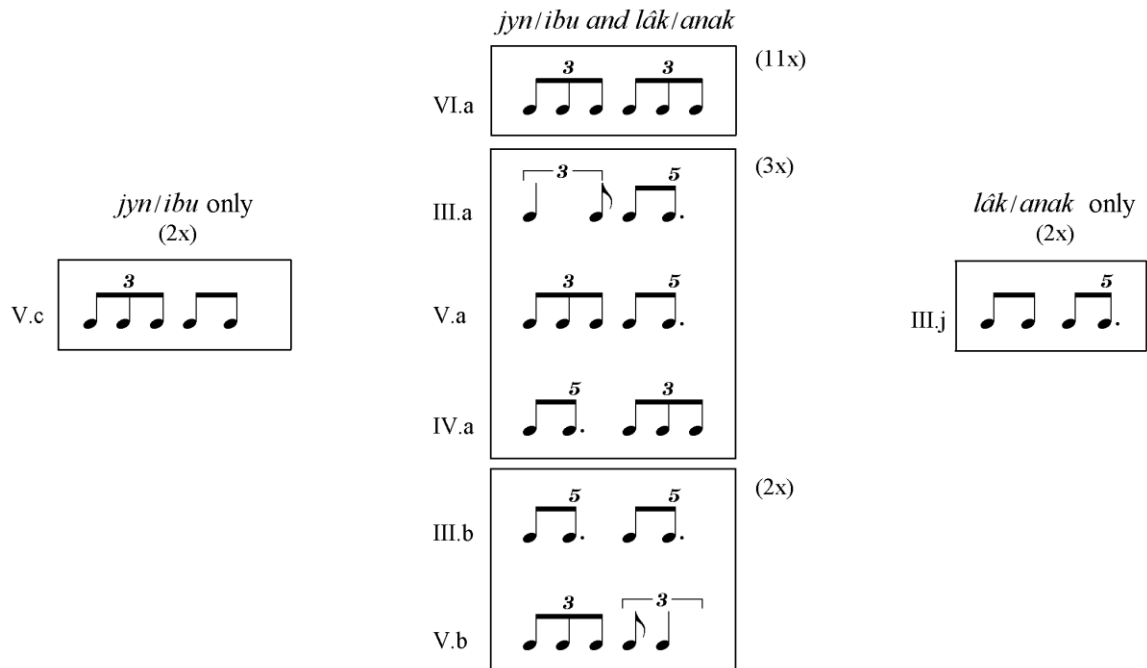


Figure 58. The most commonly performed *dual/joget* subtypes in the Figure 56 typology

Each subtype may be subject to any of the following three variables (of which only the third is represented in the Figure 56 typology):

1. Hand order (e.g., *left, right, double right*, etc.)
2. Timbre of drum stroke (in mnemonic terms: *dung, tak, thyη, t'η, t'ŷη*, etc.)
3. Timing (e.g., symmetrical, asymmetrical, expressive, etc.)
4. Tempo

*Hand order* indicates the sequence of hand strokes within a particular pattern.

*Alternating-hand* describes a playing style in which a drummer alternates hands for each stroke (e.g., *right left right left*). For a *double-stroke* style, a drummer plays two successive beats with the same hand in one cycle (this is usually the player's dominant

hand, e.g., *right right left right right left* for a right-handed player). A *dua* accompaniment often combines alternating-hand and double-stroke styles.

*Timbre*, defined as “that which distinguishes the quality of tone or v[oice] of one instr[ument] or singer from another” (Timbre 2009), here refers specifically to a set range of drum strokes, represented by the mnemonics described earlier in this chapter.

*Timing* refers to the way sound events are performed across time, specifically in contexts of short (typically recurring) patterns of one or two measures in length for which each beat constitutes a subdivision of the whole. These patterns may be integral to the rhythm, idiomatic to a player’s style, or result from technical aspects of *rammánaa* playing (such as momentary delays induced by hand movements). There are three ways to look at patterns of subdivisions: as simple divisions into two, three or four parts (e.g., quarter, eighth, sixteenth, or triplet beats), as slight anticipations or delays called *expressive timings*,<sup>125</sup> or as pronounced and regularly recurring arithmetic relationships, such as ratios of 2:3, 3:2, 3:4, called *aksak*, or *limping* rhythms by Brăiloiu (1984:136). Altogether, about one quarter of all *dua/joget* half patterns transcribed here are simple subdivisions (e.g., 1:1, 2:1:1, 3:1, etc.), half are triplet divisions (i.e., 1:1:1, 2:1, and 1:2) and the remainder are *aksak* ratios. The most common *dua/joget* rhythms are combinations of triplets (or 2:1 or 1:2 divisions thereof), evenly distributed pairs of eighth beats, or 2:3 *aksak* beats.

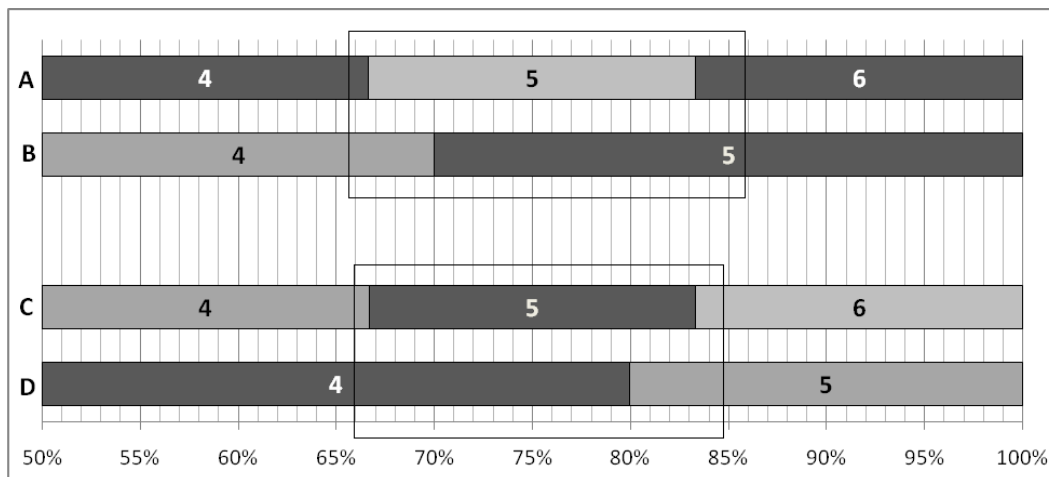
*Tempo* affects how a player is able to perform beat subdivisions, accents, and expressive timings. *Dua/joget* tunes typically have two tempo sections, a main section

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125. Honing (2002:229) defines expressive timing as “the timing deviations in a performance (e.g., accentuating notes by lengthening them for a bit, or playing notes ‘after the beat.’”

played at around 130-140 BPM, and an optional faster coda section called *tas* in Malaysia and *tarai* in southwest Thailand.

Mixed-tuplet textures are a prominent feature of *dua* rhythms (shown in Figure 59 using linear representations and western musical notation). While to the ear, these may sound like imprecision on the part of the drummers, they are inherent to the polyrhythmic nature of this rhythm. They form when *jyn* and *lâk* play different types of tuplets or combine tuplets and even divisions on the same beat—for example, where triplets combine with 2:3 or 3:2 divisions. Depending upon where these divisions fall within a measure, the effect may be a flam (a quick succession of drum beats, such as between A4 and B5, or D4 and C6 in boxes below), an asymmetrical triplet (such as A4/B5/A6 or C4/C5/D5), or other variations formed by accents or subtraction of beats.



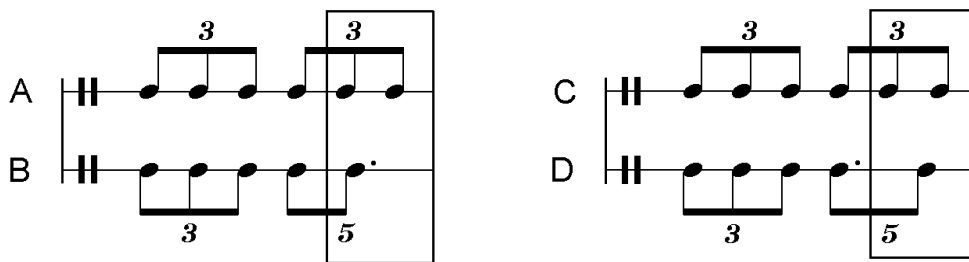


Figure 59. Two representations of mixed tuplet interlocking patterns in *dua/joget*

### Malay(si)an *Joget* Rhythms

The *joget* encompasses a diverse number of playing styles—including stroke patterns, accents, and timbres—much more than is acknowledged by existing musical literature. It is a musical icon found in a wide range of Malaysian repertoire, including a variety of non-*ronggeng* settings such as theater, film scores, contemporary popular songs, television and radio orchestras, *gendang silat* and *terinai* barrel drum and reed ensembles, *wayang kulit* shadow-puppet theater, and *hadrah* and *kompang* frame drum groups. With such a diverse and abundant number of sources available, the sample chosen for comparison with southwest Thailand’s *cajwà dua* focuses on three areas, to illustrate *joget*’s relationship to folk and national forms:

1. *Joget* drum styles performed in various northwest Malaysian musical ensembles, documented in my field recordings, interviews, and personal communications.
2. Popular *joget* songs recorded in the 1930s and ’40s that were contemporaneous with those that early *ronggeng* pioneers brought to southwest Thailand.
3. A couple of perspectives on Malaysian *joget* rhythms found in scholarly literature.

Abdul “Dun” Abdullah (1923-2009), a professional drummer with *ronggeng*, *bangsawan*, *joget moden*, and *ghazal pati* groups in Kedah, Penang, and Perlis from 1945 until his death, characterized northwest Malay(si)an *joget* as having three distinct pattern types which he called *joget asli arab*, *joget asli*, and *joget asli asal*, each of which he said can be played individually or in combination with one another.<sup>126</sup> His categorization is the most specific that I have encountered. While other players use the same or similar *joget* styles, they do not define them with comparable nomenclature. The distinctions between the three *joget* types—enumerated below—are based on beat order, hand order, and beat timings. For all three types, the gong coincides with the first *tak* stroke.

### Joget Asli Asal

*Joget asli asal* ‘original native *joget*’ is a triplet of *tak* strokes followed by a pair of *dung*, with the latter typically played in 2:3 or 3:2 ratios (shown in Figure 60 and in linear form in Figure 64.17).

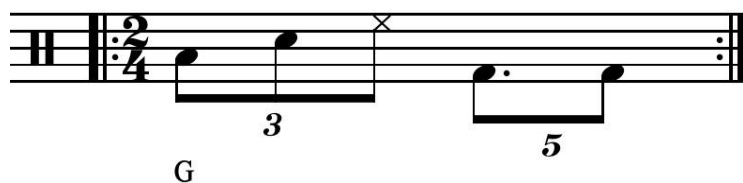


Figure 60. *Joget asli asal* rhythm, Dun Abdullah

Pak Non, a rural Perlis folk artisan and musician who does not use Dun’s nomenclature, plays three variations (shown in Figure 61) of the *joget asli asal* type—a combination of a triplet and 2:3 ratio elements, or just triplet figures. Non’s patterns, which show variation in hand order and timbre, are similar to Dun’s in that they oscillate between high and low, but his transition from *tak* to *dung* occurs on the last, rather than

126. Personal correspondence, Abdul Abdullah

on the penultimate stroke. The first example (a) is his primary accompaniment pattern while the second and third (b and c) occur at cadential moments.



Figure 61: *Joget* rhythm, Non (see also linear transcriptions in Figure 64.5, Figure 64.11, and Figure 64.7)

*Joget* rhythms that appear in two ensemble recordings led by well-known Malaysian violin player Hamzah Dolmat show *joget asli asal* with duple, triple and asymmetrical beat subdivisions. In “Rentak Seratus Enam,” the primary rhythm (Figure 62a), like Dun’s, combines *tang* and *tak* timbres in the first half, and *dung* on beat two, with divisions of each beat played as 2:3 ratios. A secondary pattern that appears occasionally, Figure 62b, has an added non-dominant *tak* stroke which introduces a metrical (rather than timbral) contrast to the main pattern.

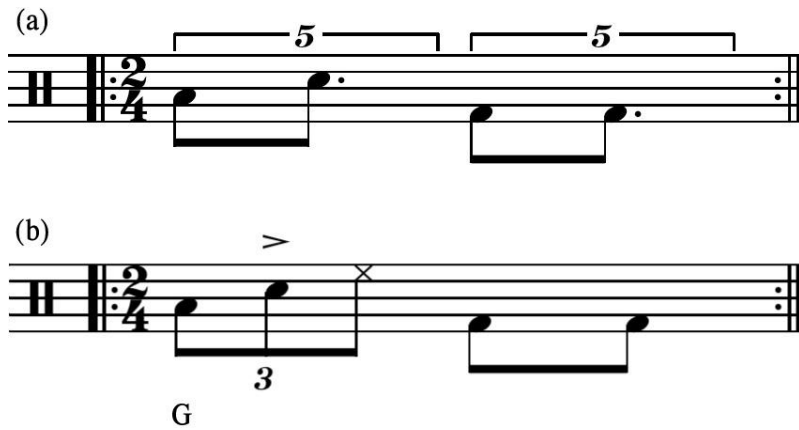


Figure 62. “Rentak Seratus Enam,” primary and secondary *rebana* patterns

In “Che Abang Songkok Miring,” the *rebana* plays a *joget asli asal* pattern that is similar to the previous example, though at a faster tempo (124 BPM as compared with between 97 and 105 BPM) but does not have an accent on the second stroke. At cadential moments, the drummer omits the second stroke to create contrast, and varies the second half’s double-hand *tak* strokes (Figure 63a) with symmetrical eighths and strokes in a 2:3 ratio. In the *tas* ‘coda’ pattern (Figure 63b)—played at around 151 BPM—the first-half triplet is ‘evened out’ into an eighth and two sixteenths, and the two *dung* strokes are played in a 2:3 ratio.



Figure 63. “Che Abang Songkok Miring,” cadential and *tas* patterns

The contrast between “Che Abang Songkok Miring” and “Rentak Seratus Enam”

illustrates how tempo increases may lead to beat-timing variations in *joget*. At slower tempos, accents and expressive timings are easier to perform and a drummer's body often may be seen to move or 'gallop' along with the rhythm, whereas at quicker tempi, there are corresponding decreases in exaggerated movements, rhythmic accents, and in some instances, an evening-out of triplets into even divisions.

Figure 64 compares beat timings among the several drummers whose examples are presented in this section, including one example from Thailand (Lat 15) that is discussed later and is nearly identical to Non 11.

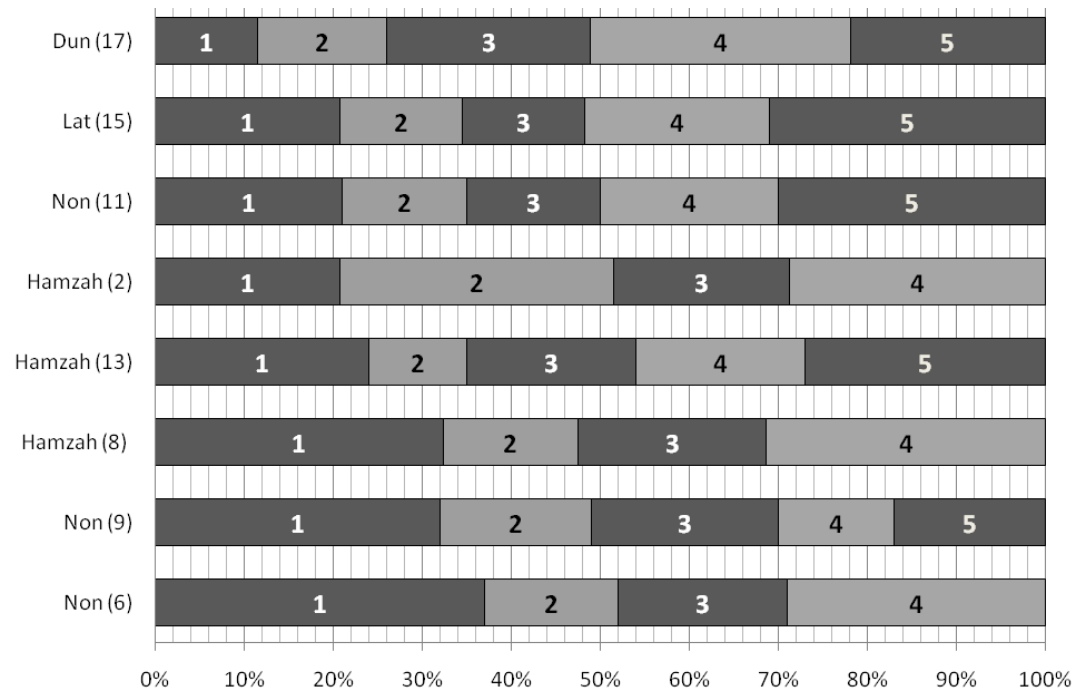


Figure 64. Linear representations of *joget asli asal* beat timings (120-124 BPM)

### *Joget Asli Arab*

*Joget asli arab* is played as an alternation of *tak*- and *dung*-based triplet figures using two quick dominant-hand strokes followed by a non-dominant hand upbeat (Figure 65).

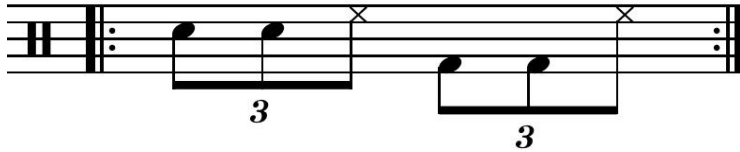


Figure 65. *Joget asli arab*

Romli Mahmud—a rural folk performer with some national recognition—plays several variations of *joget asli arab* as his primary pattern, including that in Figure 65, as well as two distinct 2+3 variations (shown in Figure 66a and b) in which he omits a first-half stroke, resulting in asymmetrical 2:3 or 3:2 ratios. Romli’s triplet figures are distinctive, with stroke timings that all have a similar ‘medium-short-long’ asymmetry (see linear representations in Figure 68.10 and Figure 68.12).

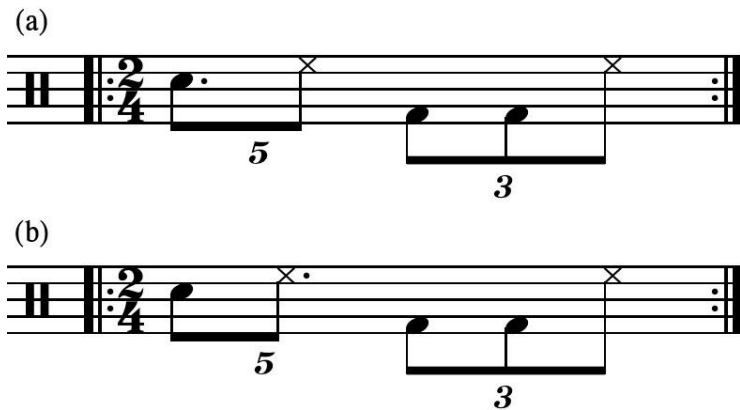


Figure 66. *Joget asli arab*, two variations, Romli

A *joget* played by a *gendang silat* ensemble that I recorded in Kedah in 2007 (Figure 67) exhibits similarities with some of the previous examples. The *ibu* plays a 2+3 stroke combination with double low strokes in the second half, while the *anak* moves from high to low, like Non’s *joget* pattern, making the transition in the last upbeat.<sup>127</sup>

127. Two additional observations on this pattern: when the *ibu*’s double low strokes are played as one (as sometimes occurs), the pattern becomes a 2:3 3:2 rhythmic palindrome.

Idiomatic to the northwest Malay(si)an *gendang silat* style, the *ibu* provides the strong low timbre and the *anak* a sharp, contrasting high one whose first stroke of the pattern coincides with each gong stroke.

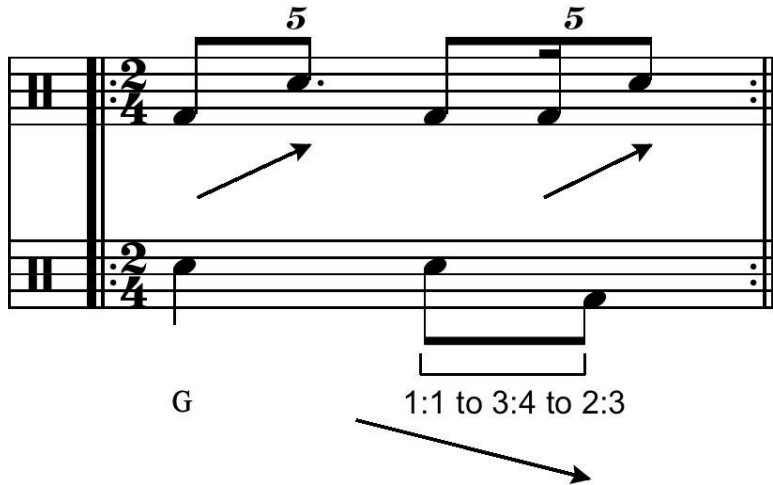


Figure 67. *Gendang silat joget* pattern, *ibu* (top) and *anak* (bottom) two-headed barrel drums, Alor Setar

Figure 68 shows linear representations of *joget asli arab* by three players.

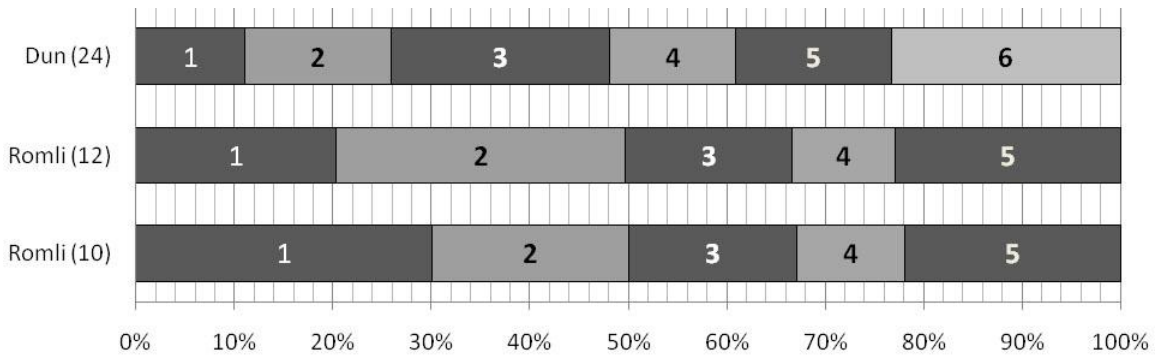


Figure 68. Linear representations of *joget asli arab* beat timings

### Joget Asli

The *joget asli* rhythm (shown in Figure 69) is a two-measure, alternating-hand

Also, beat timings on the *anak* fluctuate in the second half from an even 1:1 to 3:4 and 2:3 ratios.

pattern consisting of three, roughly even, dominant-hand strokes that alternate with non-dominant-hand strokes or rests. The pattern oscillates from *tak* to *dung* over a two-measure gong cycle. A comparison of beat timings among several players in Figure 70 shows slight variations.

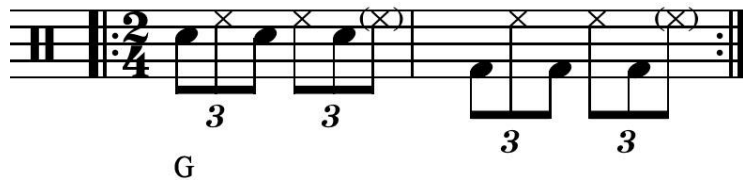


Figure 69. *Joget asli* rhythm

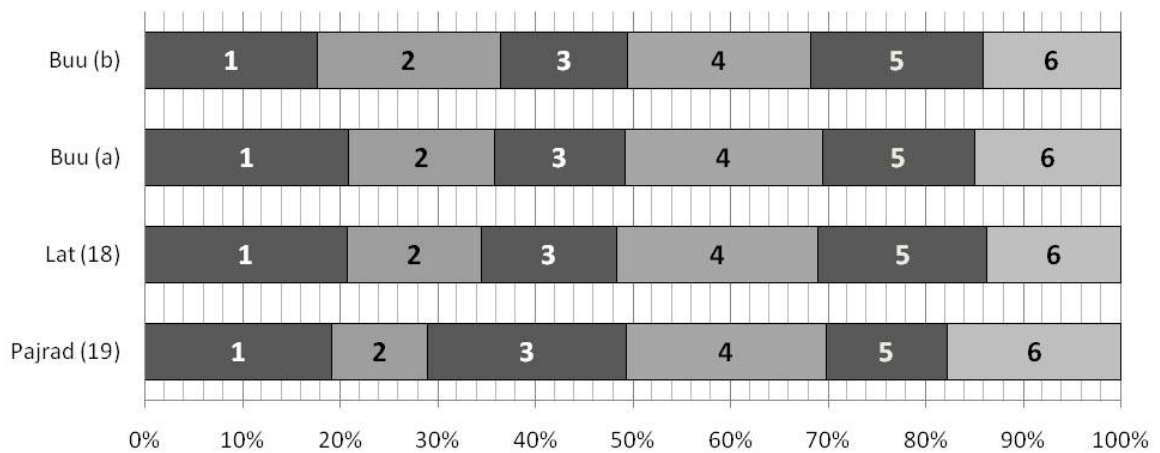


Figure 70. Linear representations of *joget asli* beat timings

### Joget in Scholarly Literature

Scholars of Malaysian music have not given much attention to diversity in *joget* playing styles and tend to present the rhythm in a narrow scope. Separate transcriptions by Chopyak and Tan portray *joget* as having a characteristic alternation “between duple and triple meter” (Chopyak 1986: 125), or, “three notes against two” (Tan 1993:149), but neither delves into aspects such as pattern subtype variety or asymmetrical subdivisions.

Tan’s “basic” *joget* rhythm is a two-measure pattern (Figure 71a) from which

players “improvise variations and complex patterns” (Tan 2005:293), with the “left hand usually improvis[ing] ‘tak’ sounds in between the pattern” (Tan 1993: 148). Chopyak’s example is a transcription of a rhythm (not specifically for *rebana*) that he extracted from a *joget* melody (Figure 71b), in order to illustrate combinatorial processes of different pattern types.

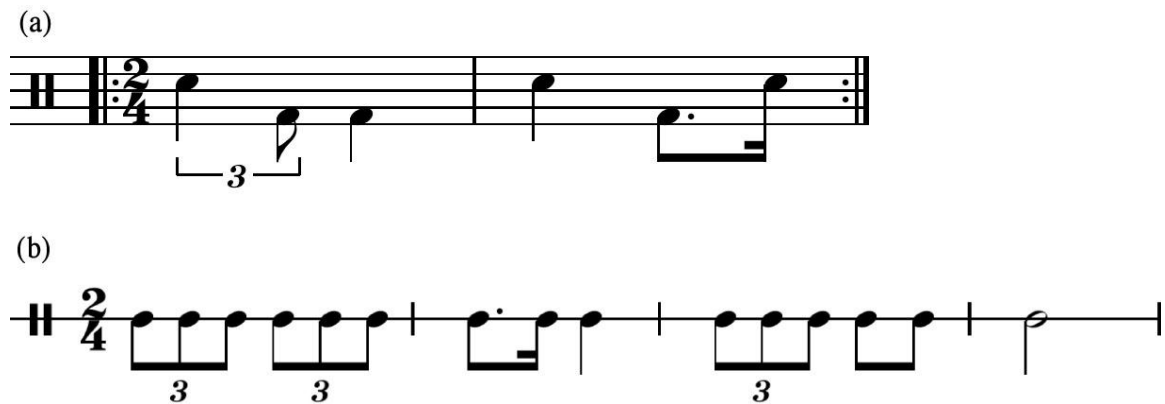


Figure 71. Transcription of *joget* rhythm patterns (from Tan 2005 and Chopyak 1986, re-notated to match style)

### ***Dua* Rhythms in Southwest Thailand**

Lat Khlṵṅḍii, who was born in Tanjung Village and grew up among Lantaa’s first-*ruun rṵṵḡ ḡḡḡḡ* performers, plays a single *jyn* pattern for “Lagu Dua” that is a two-measure, hemiola-like compound combining a first-half *joget asli* pattern (identical to Non’s *asli asal* in Figure 61) with a second-half *joget asli asal* pattern. His *lāk* accompaniment contains six pattern variations (labeled A through F in Figure 73) that form a dynamic counterpart to the two *jyn* measures, interlocking with and reinforcing significant *jyn* beats.

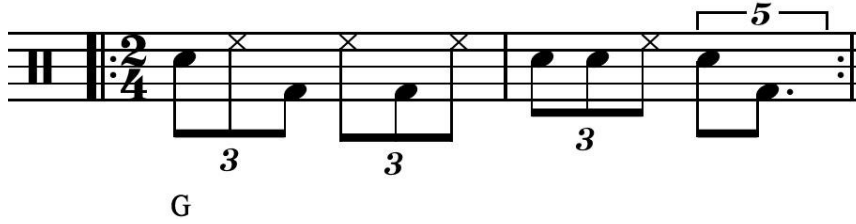


Figure 72. *Jyn dua* pattern, Lat

*Lâk* pattern A is an entrance figure. Patterns B and C are played either as B-C sequences or as independent patterns. These are always followed by a one-measure three-beat hemiola-like figure (D, E, and F). His sequences of these patterns vary—AABBCCCBCECDBEBECDBCECBBBF—and, in combination with the two *jyn* patterns, form ten different rhythm combinations/textures: A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2, D1, D2, E1, F1. Counted together, B and C—which are quite distinct from one another—occur in nearly 66 percent of these *lâk* measures and in nearly equivalent amounts. Patterns D and E, which emphasize three strokes in the measure as if it were in 3/4 metre, differ only in stroke types; D is played high-low-low, and E is played high-high-low.

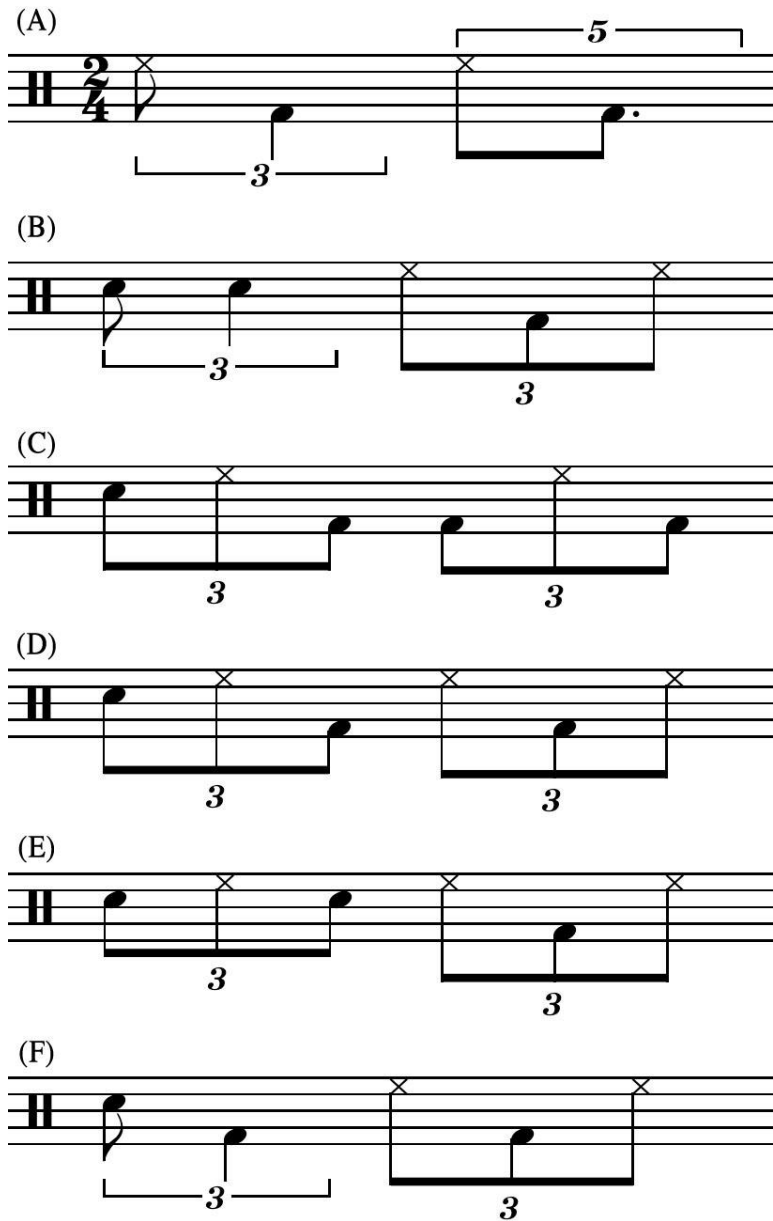


Figure 73 *Lâk* patterns A through F, Lat

Figure 74 shows the *jyn* with *lâk* figure, which appears only at the beginning of the performance. The two drums interlock (*i*) and reinforce certain beats (*r1-3*), creating mixed timbres, and producing a flam (at *r1*). The combination emphasizes the second stroke of each tuplet, in particular the latter of each pair (*r1, r3*).

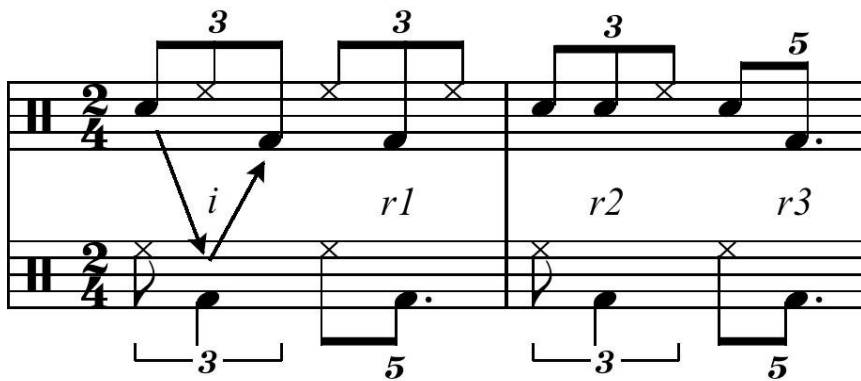


Figure 74. *Dua* rhythm *lâk* entrance figure A, Lat

Following the entrance, two B patterns form a loose unison texture with the *jyn* (Figure 75), and create contrast through two mixed tuplets—an asymmetrical triplet (*i*), and two flams (*r4* and *r5*).

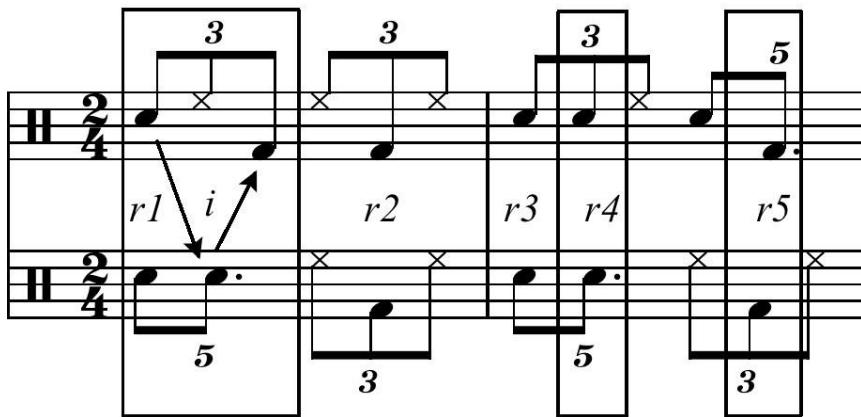


Figure 75. Rhythmic texture of *lâk* figure B with *jyn* patterns

Following B are three iterations of figure C—a shuffle-like series of triplets followed by one D pattern—a three-beat, hemiola-like rhythmic modulation that echoes the previous *jyn* measure. The overall effect of this four-measure sequence is a rolling series of interlocking strokes, propelled to a strong emphasis at *r4*. Lat also plays a similar sequence of three B figures, followed by F later in the performance.

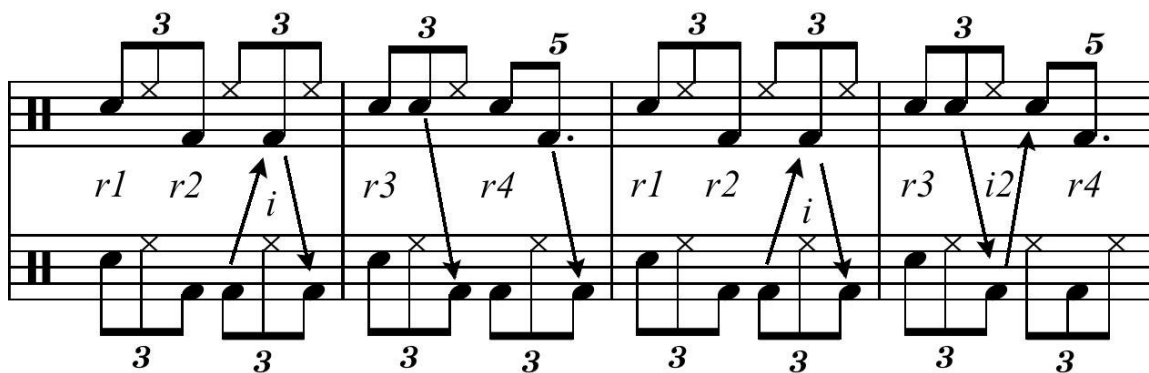


Figure 76. Sequence of *lâk* figures: three C and one D, Lat

Orak Lawoi *rammánaa* player Másii Tháléelýg of Sǎŋkaa-ûu plays a fundamental *dua* pattern on *jyn* that alternates between high and low strokes in a 2:1, 1:2 rhythmic palindrome (shown in the top staves of Figure 77).

His partner, Sǎmraan Tháléelýg, plays a *lâk* accompaniment that consists of two patterns. The first (bottom staff, Figure 77a) occurs eleven or twelve times in the course of each a twenty-measure melodic cycle—typically sprinkled between sung phrases or during moments that do not conflict with the singing. The second pattern (bottom staff of Figure 77b) occurs eight or nine measures per melodic cycle, and emphasizes significant moments in the sung melody.

In combination, these two drum parts create alternating textures of unison downbeats and jagged off-beats that contain two types of flam in the general accompaniment (see boxed areas in Figure 77a), and just one at points where the drums emphasize the melody (Figure 77b). As the latter contains less stroke density, it distracts less attention from the melody.

Figure 77. *Dua* patterns a and b (boxes indicating flams), *Másii* and *Sămraan*

In the *tarai* section, the tempo rises from approximately 115 to around 123 BPM. The *jyn* continues the same pattern, while the *lâk* changes in two manners. It (1) introduces a different four-beat figure for which both halves are 2:3 divisions of the beat (Figure 78), and (2) plays several iterations of a four-measure sequence in ABAC form (Figure 79) that consist of a string of 2+3 or even eighth patterns, and quarter-beat triplet *loŋ lûug*.

Figure 78. *Tarai*-section *lâk* pattern, *Sămraan*

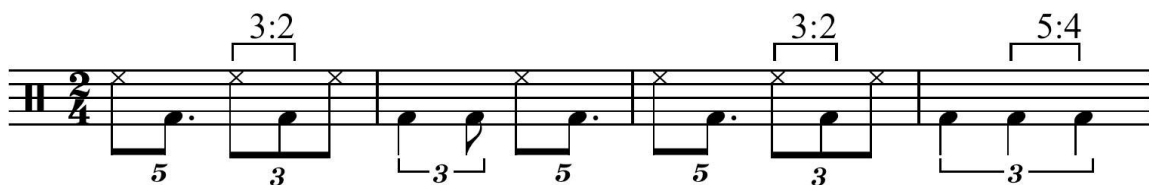


Figure 79. Sequence of *tarai*-section *lak* patterns, Sămraan (asymmetrical stroke patterns are sometimes played as even eighths)

The next examples of *dua* rhythm, transcribed from performances by Khlóṅ Pîṅ's Săm Phîi Nóṅ group, show still more diversity in the rhythm style. Buu plays an alternating-hand *jyn* pattern that is similar to *joget asli*. It appears as two variations (Figure 80a and b, also Figure 70a and b), that differ only in the last beat of their first triplets. In three iterations of a sixteen-measure “Lagu Dua” melody, the first occurs twenty nine times and the second nineteen. Unlike the previous Săṅkaa-ûu examples, the variations introduced by the second pattern do not support specific melodic events. Instead they are sprinkled around, alternating occasionally with the first pattern for five- or eight-measure sequences. As the song progresses, the second pattern occurs with more frequency and eventually predominates. These changes, according to Buu, occur by whim (*taam caj*) but also follow the melody (*taam thamnṳṅ*).

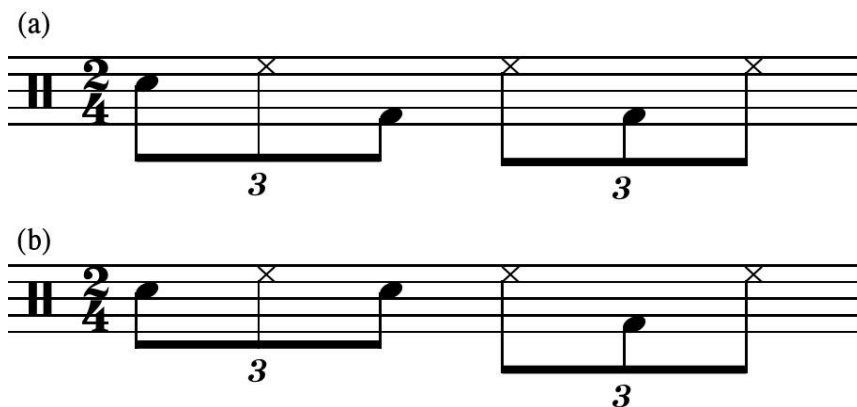


Figure 80. *Dua* pattern, *jyn* drum, Buu

Săn plays fairly consistent sequences of three one-measure *lak* patterns (Figure

81) which he varies occasionally with breaks and restarts, but which does not accentuate important melodic events, such as phrase or period endings. Flams occur at the *lâk*'s 2:3 beat division in the second half of each measure, and in the first measure when the *jyn*'s triplets combine with the *lâk*'s even eighths.

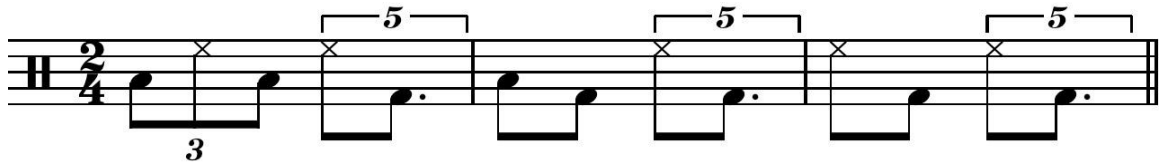


Figure 81. *Dua* pattern, *lâk* sequence, Săn

Râamàad drummers play three styles of *caŋwà dua*: *dua nỳn*, *dua sǎŋ* (the first and second *dua* patterns, respectively), and *dua pàlíd* (the Perlis *dua*).<sup>128</sup> The *dua nỳn jyn* pattern (Figure 82) is a distinct triplet rhythm that begins with an uncommon two-timbre double stroke (*thyŋ/tỳn*) in the first half and an alternating-hand triplet with a syncopated *thyŋ* in the second half. The *lâk* part (Figure 83) is a two-measure sequence consisting of three iterations of alternating, quarter-beat/eighth-beat triplets, separated by a one-measure *loŋ lûug* every fourth occurrence. A larger period forms every fourth iteration when the *loŋ lûug* is not played.

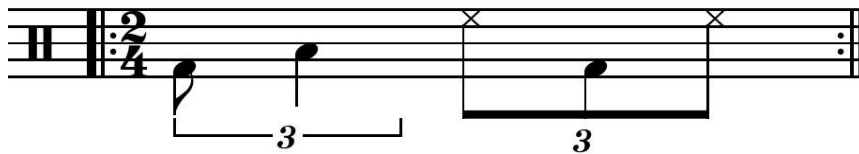


Figure 82. *Dua* pattern, *jyn*, Kaseem Butsaman

128. *Dua*, in Malay means ‘two,’ as does *sǎŋ* in Thai. Together they mean ‘the second *dua* pattern.’

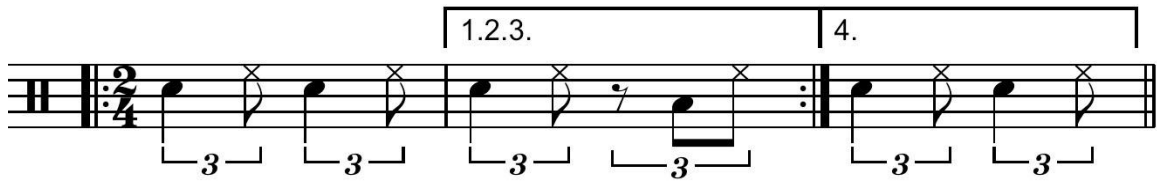


Figure 83. One period of a dua pattern, *lâk* drum, Phajrád Sònràg

The *dua sǎŋ jyn* pattern is similar to *joget asli* in that it oscillates between low and high timbres, in alternating-hand style. In the first measure, (shown in Figure 84) the two drum parts play in unison, then interlock (*i*) on the first beat of measure two, and return to unison in the second half of the measure (*r4*).

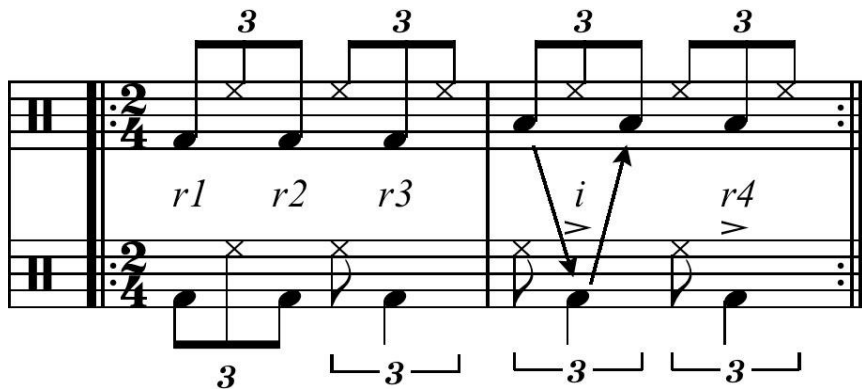


Figure 85. *Dua sǎŋ jyn* and *lâk* patterns, Suchaat Ɔn-nuan and Phajrád

*Caŋwà dua pàlíd* (Figure 86) accompanies the infrequently played “Lagu Dua Pàlíd.” The double-hand strokes in the *jyn*’s first-half triplet are similar to the *joget asli arab*. The *lâk* accompaniment consists of even eighth beats.

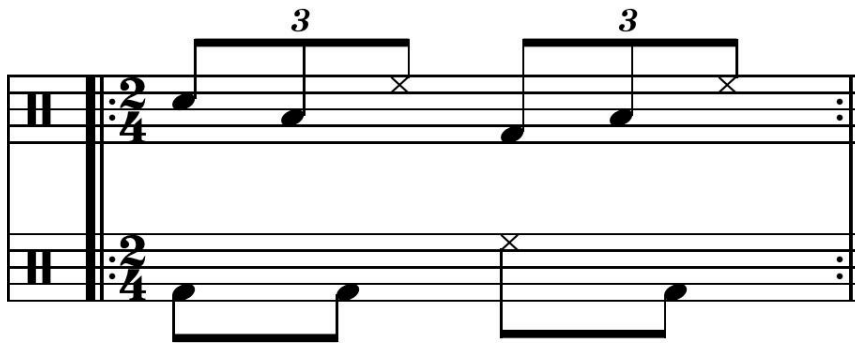


Figure 86. *Caḡwà dua pàlíd*, Suchaat and Phajrád

Figure 87a shows a two-measure *dua* pattern (occasionally shortened to just the first measure) performed in the two-drum style by Dεεη, a drummer with central Kràbii *tanjonj*-style ensembles. He plays the *lâk* with his left hand and strikes it with more force than he does the *jyn*. The syncopation at (s) provides contrast between otherwise identical measures. Dεεη does not improvise on two drums as a one-*rammánaa* player might, and tends to play even divisions rather than the characteristic *dua* tuplets. Figure 87b shows Dεεη's two-drum ending figure, played homophonically with the violin.

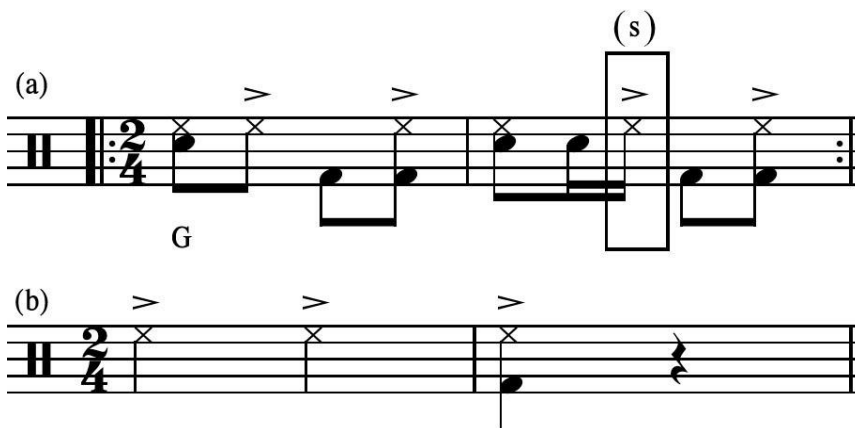


Figure 87. Two-drum (one drummer) *dua* pattern and ending figure, Dεεη

Category 2

***Caṅwà Mak Inang***

*Rentak mak inang*, also known as *rentak inang asli* (the ‘original’ *inang* rhythm) or *rentak mak inang tua* (after the song “Mak Inang Tua”), is a quick, two-beat rhythm that accompanies several northwest Malaysian social dances. It is one of at least two distinct rhythms known as ‘*inang*’ in Malaysian *ronggeng* (the other is a Category 3 rhythm discussed in the following section). Its counterpart and namesake in southwest Thailand is *caṅwà mak inang* which accompanies three tunes: the *wâj khruu* song “Mak Inang,” “Che Minah Sayang,” and part of the multiple-rhythm song, “Siapa Itu.”

*Inang Asli in Malaysia*

In the Malaysian *inang asli* rhythm, *ibu* and *anak* drums have a timbral and temporal interrelationship for which one cycle of the *ibu* pattern—one gong cycle—equals two cycles of the *anak*, and oscillates between high (*tak*) and low (*dung*) timbres, moving in opposite directions (see arrows in Figure 88).

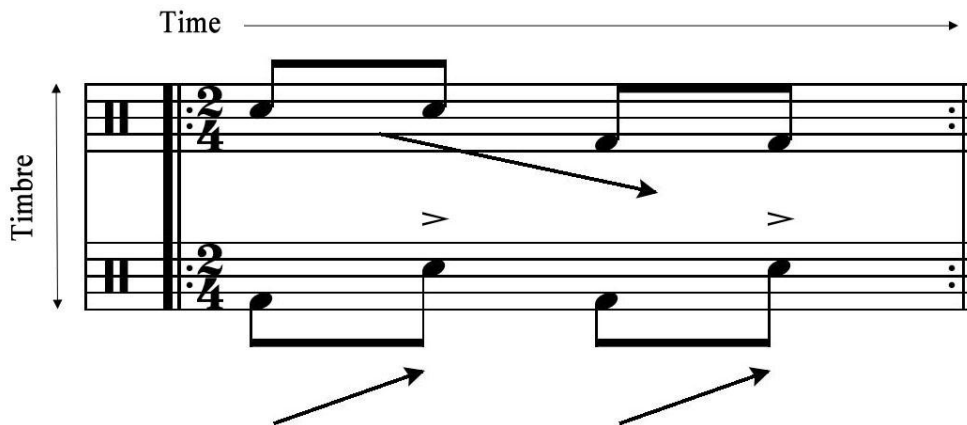


Figure 88. Time/timbre relationships between *ibu* and *anak* in *rentak inang asli*

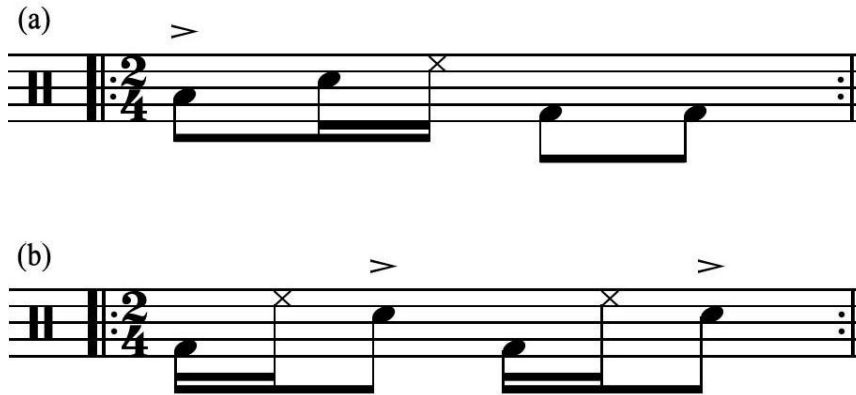


Figure 89. *Inang asli, ibu* (a) and *anak* (b) figures, Non

The Figure 89a example from Perlis shows an *inang ibu* part that is very similar to *joget asli asal* (i.e., *tang* and *tak* followed by two *dung* strokes), but with even subdivisions and a first-beat accent. The lower staff of Figure 88 shows a common low to high *inang asli anak* accompaniment where off-beat *tak* accents interlock with the *ibu* figure. Figure 89b shows a variation of the *anak* pattern with increased density introduced through the addition of non-dominant *tak* strokes.

The transcription in Figure 90 shows how Non plays variations of *ibu* patterns in four-measure phrases. Following the first line playing the standard pattern, he develops variations that begin in the line's second measure. They appear as alterations of the main pattern's second half, formed by (1) omission and/or delay of strokes as in (a) and (b), and (2) in (d) which is a one-hand reduction of (b) and its restatement as a triplet figure. Second and third lines both end with a denser version of the main pattern containing an altered accent (on beat two) and a muted *dung* stroke, (c).

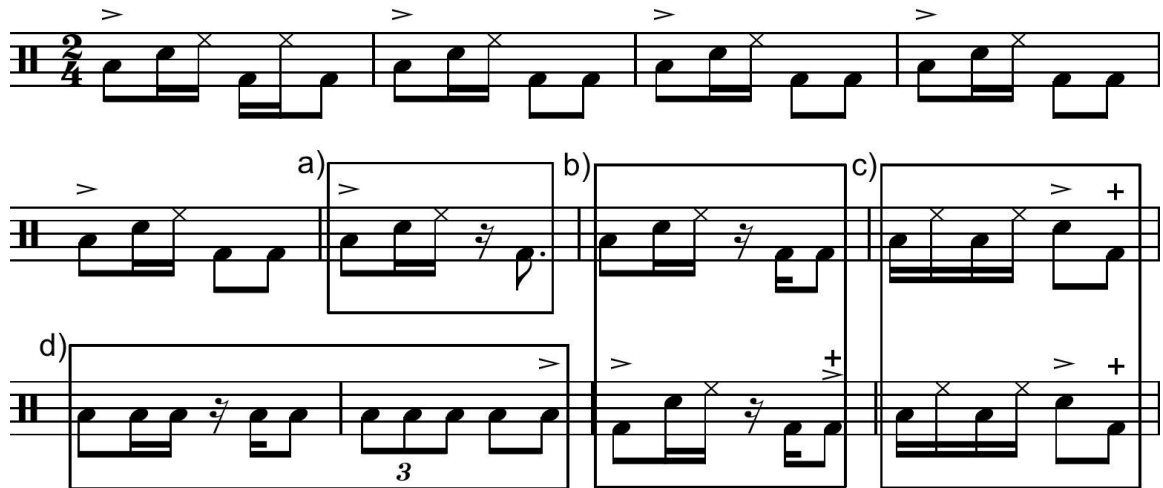


Figure 90. *Inang asli*, improvised *ibu* patterns, Non

*Mak Inang* Rhythm in Southwest Thailand

*Caṅwà mak inang* in Thailand is played like the Malaysian *inang asli/mak inang*, with some minor variations. In the example below (Figure 91), Râamàad drummer Suchaat Ɔn-nuan plays a galloping dotted eighth/sixteenth beat *jyn* entrance figure, followed by a high-low oscillating rhythmic unit, played as even sixteenths or eighths. Phajrád enters immediately with the common, alternating-hand *lâk* pattern.

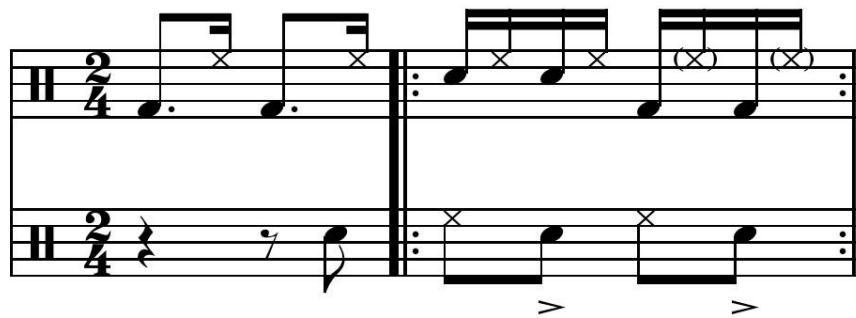


Figure 91. *Caṅwà mak inang*, opening figure and main patterns, Suchaat and Phajrád

In a *mak inang* pattern played in Khlɔŋ Pîŋ and Hat Sămraan, the movement from high to low *jyn* strokes is delayed until the last eighth—producing two internal 3:1 relationships: one in the subdivision of the first quarter beat, and the other in the

movement from high to low over the whole measure (Figure 92). This is one of three *caṅwà* that share a similar internal structure—each having different timbral orders. The other two, also Category 2 rhythms, are *caṅwà jaanooṅ* and *tarok tok tek*.

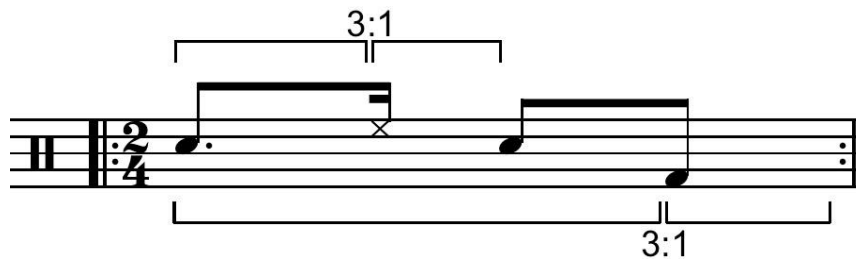


Figure 92. *Mak inang jyn* variation with internal 3:1 asymmetries

In separate two-drum styles of *mak inang*, by different drummers,<sup>129</sup> both play the sixteenth note before beat two is played as a low *thyy* tone in order to facilitate playing the two subsequent *thyy* strokes (Figure 93a and b).

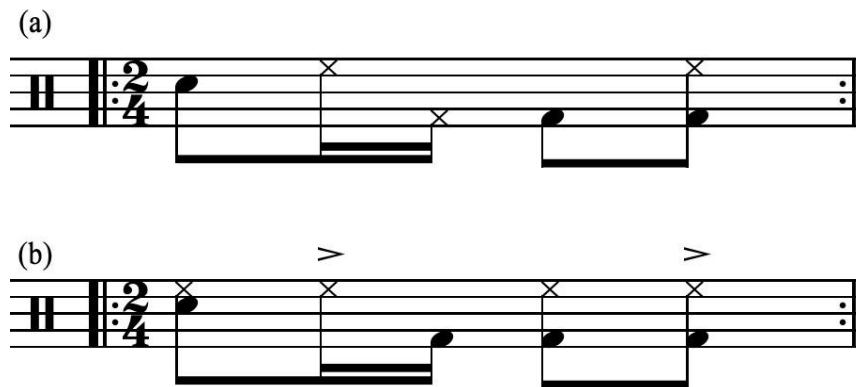


Figure 93. *Caṅwà mak inang* two-drum patterns, Man (a) and Dεεṅ (b)

*Loṅ lûug* in *caṅwà mak inang* are only played on the *lâk*, and most commonly with the pattern shown earlier in Figure 51. Thîṅraj *ramánaa* player Εε Kimbaasîi plays a *loṅ lûug* pattern that is more syncopated and emphasizes each sixteenth-note upbeat

129. The first example is from Man Mat Diah a Tanjung-born *ramánaa* player, the son of Itam, an early singer-dancer student of Bunga in the 1940s. The second was performed by Dεεṅ.

(Figure 94).

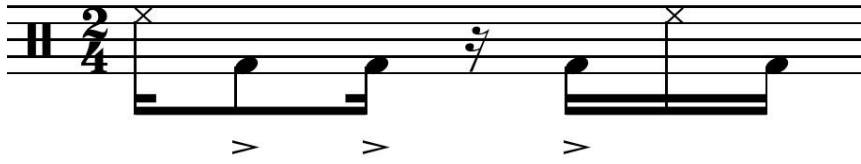


Figure 94. *Caŋwà mak inang, loŋ lûug, lâk, Εε*

Figure 95 (a and b) show how both two-drum-style *loŋ lûug* clearly articulate the standard *lâk* pattern.

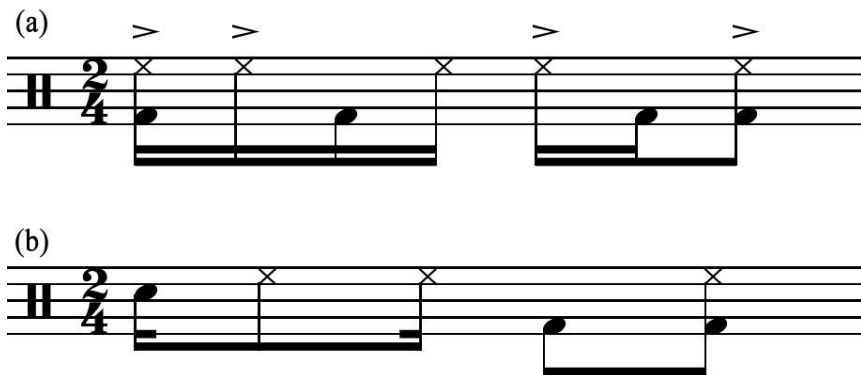


Figure 95. *Caŋwà mak inang, loŋ lûug*, two-drum style, Dεεŋ (a), Man (b)

### *Caŋwà Jaaŋooŋ*

*Caŋwà jaaŋooŋ* is closely related to the drum accompaniment for “Canggung”; both are distinct within their respective genres (i.e., they each accompany just one song) and have an analog in *lîkee paa / jîkey* theater. *Róŋŋ ŋéεŋ* and *lîkee paa* appear in the same geographical region, and *róŋŋ ŋéεŋ* drummers are often proficient in both genres. There are numerous instances where those two styles have been intermingled. The *jaaŋooŋ/canggung* rhythm and one character-specific *lîkee paa* rhythm—accompanying the entrance of a principal character, Kheεg Dεεŋ—are similar if not identical. (*Lîkee paa* and *róŋŋ ŋéεŋ* also share one additional character rhythm; the Category 3 rhythm, *caŋwà*

*sôj khaam*.) “Jaaŋooŋ,” “Canggung,” and “Phleeŋ Khèeg Dèeŋ” all have binary forms comprised of muted strokes played during verse sections, and resounding, undamped strokes played during instrumental or chorus sections. Figure 96 shows both sections of *rammánaa* accompaniment for the latter.

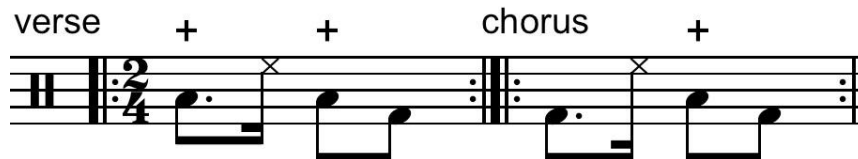


Figure 96. *Caŋwà khèeg dèeŋ* (from *líkee paa*), verse and chorus patterns

The *canggung* rhythm is comprised of separate and interlocking *ibu* and *anak* drum parts that drummers vary by increasing or decreasing density through even divisions or concatenations of strokes. Tuplet rhythms are uncommon. The two drums emphasize different parts of the rhythmic figure: the *anak*'s *dung* strokes fall on the first beat and its anacrusis—stressing ‘and One’ (Figure 97a), while the *ibu*'s falls on the ‘and’ of one (Figure 97b). This *ibu* rhythm may also be seen as a timbral inversion of the *inang asli* (the two are northwest Malayan folk rhythms) that moves from low to high rather than the inverse, shown earlier in Figure 88.

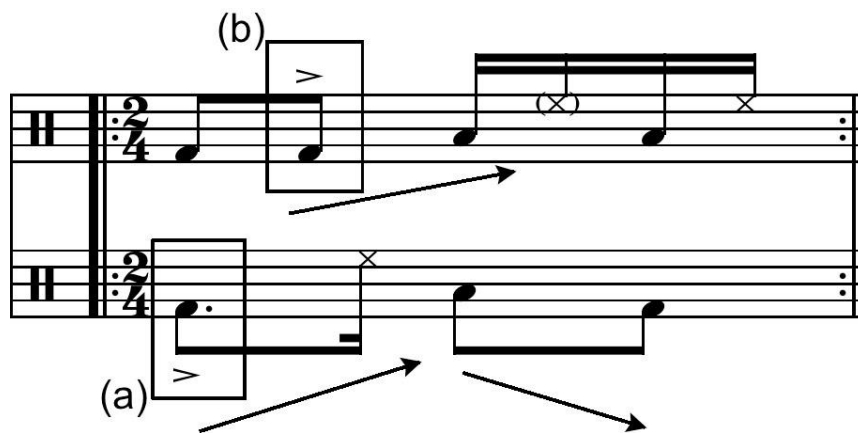


Figure 97. Perlis *canggung* rhythm, *ibu* and *anak*

The *caṅwà jaṅṅooṅ* played by Khlṅṅ Pîṅ drummers Săn and Buu, is similar to the *canggung anak* part but has three emphatic *thyṅ* strokes on beats ‘one, two-and’ (Figure 98a), rather than mixed timbres in the verse section. Prior to the arrival of the *loṅ lûug*, the two play similar figures but, because they mix variations (created by subdividing the first and second upbeats to increase stroke densities—shown in Figure 98 b and c) it is not a strict unison.

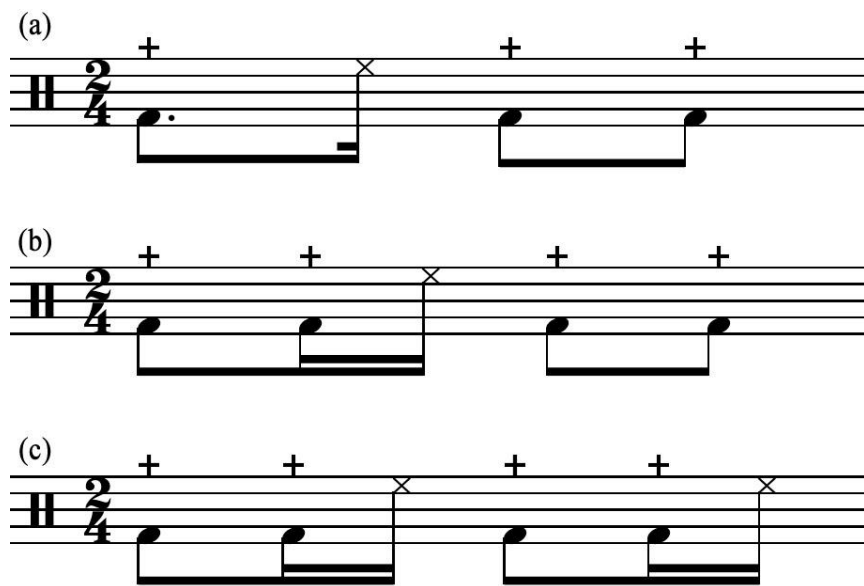


Figure 98. *Caṅwà jaṅṅooṅ* verse section patterns, *jyn* and *lâk*, Săn and Buu

Figure 99, shows a two-measure verse-section *loṅ lûug* containing a standard *lâk* figure (highlighted with a box) followed by a crescendo of even, muted low strokes.

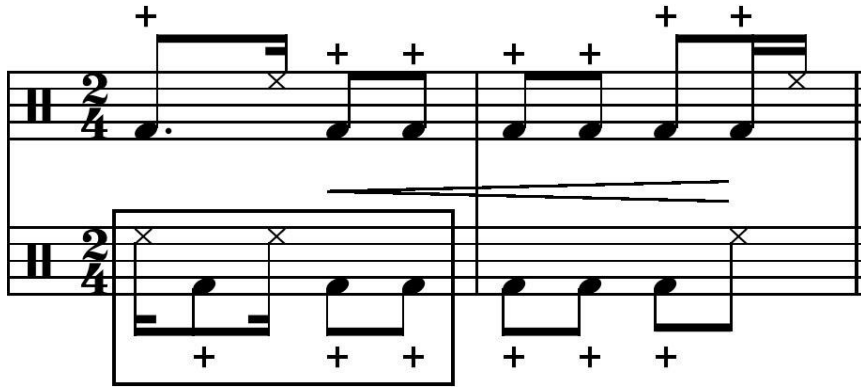


Figure 99. *Caḥwà jaḥḥooḥ*, verse-section *loḥ lûug*, Săn and Bui

Following the verse to chorus transition, both drummers replace the previous section's muted timbres with resonant *thyn* strokes (Figure 100), emphasizing 'and ONE,' in a manner that resembles the *canggung anak* pattern in Figure 97.

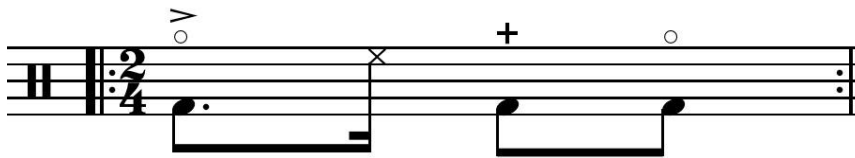


Figure 100. *Caḥwà jaḥḥooḥ*, chorus section pattern, Săn and Bui

A second *loḥ lûug* (Figure 101) accompanies a return to the verse section. Here the *lâk* plays its previous verse pattern while the *jyn*—reversing roles with the *lâk*—emphasizes upbeats before concluding with an accent on the last downbeat before the transition.

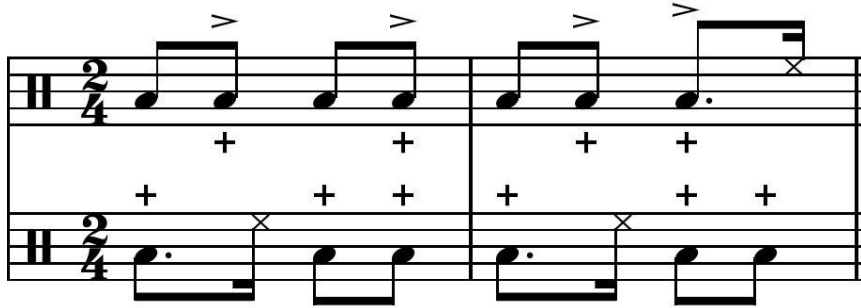


Figure 101. *Caṅwà jaṅooṅ*, chorus section *loṅ lûug*, Săn and Buu

For the two-drum style, Dεεṅ plays the verse pattern in a high timbral range with two hands on the *lâk* (Figure 102). His *loṅ lûug* (Figure 103) is a re-ordered variation of the *Khloṅ Pîṅ* example in Figure 99 in which even eighths precede the syncopated figure.

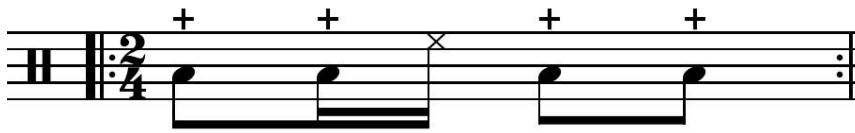


Figure 102. *Caṅwà jaṅooṅ*, two-drum style verse section *lâk* pattern, Dεεṅ

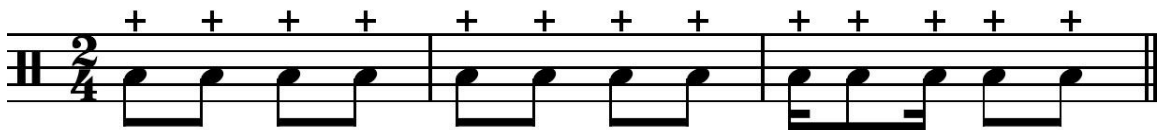


Figure 103. *Caṅwà jaṅooṅ*, two-drum style chorus-section *loṅ lûug*, *lâk* sequence, Dεεṅ

For the chorus section, Dεεṅ plays a mix of timbres and subdivisions in three chorus-section variations (Figure 104). He emphasizes ‘and One’ for each by simultaneously striking both drums.



Figure 104. *Caṅwà jaṅṅoon* chorus section, three variations in two-drum style, Dεεη

### *Caṅwà Tarok Tok Tek*

*Caṅwà tarok tok tek*, accompanies the Andaman version of the Malayan *bangsawan*-era tune “Trek Tek Tek,” which is almost exclusive to Malay-speaking groups’ repertoires. In Malaysia the song generally has *inang* or *mak inang* style rhythm accompaniment or, in the case of one *bangsawan*-style recording from the 1930s—sung by Miss Tijah and SM Al-Idrus—a four-beat stop time rhythm for the melody and a quick tempo fox-trot for the coda.

For the main rhythm pattern of *caṅwà tarok tok tek*, Εε and Hamid Kimbaasii play *jyn* and *lâk* parts that are timbral inversions of *caṅwà mak inang*. The *jyn* accents the low stroke on the first beat and moves to the high timbre on the second. Over the same period, the *lâk* plays two high-low iterations that move in opposite directions of the *jyn* (indicated by arrows in Figure 105). Characteristic to the *lâk*, the accents fall on each up-beat, but unlike the *caṅwà mak inang lâk* pattern, they are low strokes.

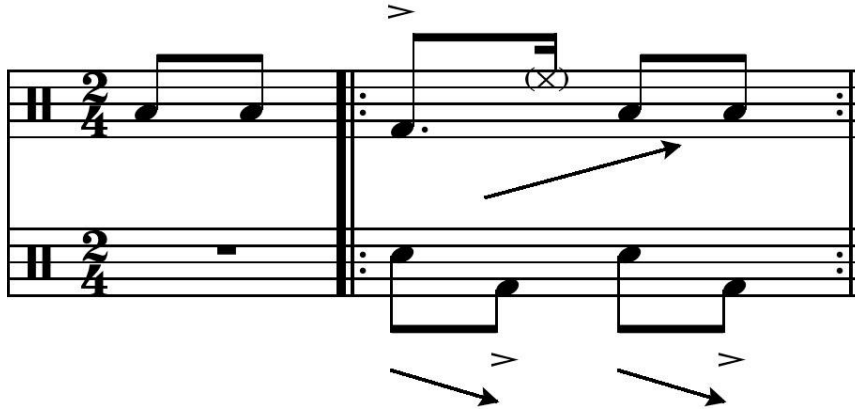


Figure 105. *Caṅwà tarok tok tek*, beginning and main pattern, Εε and Hamid

The song’s signature moment appears at the end of each strophe when the *rammánaa loṅ lûug* pattern sounds in homophony with the violin and vocal melodies (Figure 106).

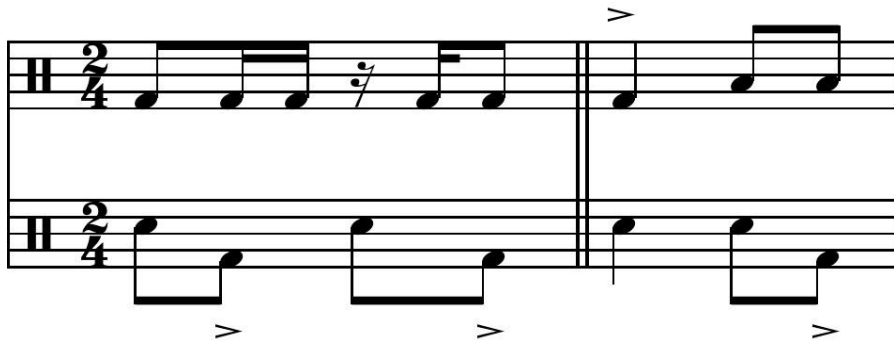


Figure 106. *Caṅwà tarok tok tek*, *loṅ lûug*, Εε and Hamid

### *Caṅwà Tàluṅ*

*Caṅwà tàluṅ* is a 1950s ballroom and *ramwoṅ* dance credited to Central Thai composer Lúan Khwantham who is speculated to have modeled it on a Southern Thai rhythm (“Luan Khwantham,” *Wikiphidia Saranukrom Seri*).<sup>130</sup> It is played by a few Thai-speaking groups as accompaniment to “Champhían” (“Champion”), a tune

130. *Tàluṅ* could take its name from the southern Thai shadow play (*nǎṅ tàluṅ*) or southern Thailand’s town/province, Phátthaluṅ, both of which invoke The South.

introduced to *ρώγη ηέεη* by Aalaj Khrajbut (see Chapter 7).



Figure 107. *Caḡwà tàluḡ* from Aalaj’s “Champhían” (“Champion”)

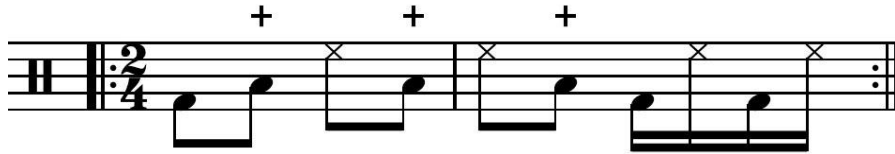


Figure 108. *Caḡwà tàluḡ*, Phajrád

### Category 3

#### ***Inang* Rhythms in Malaysia**

The syncopated two-beat *inang* rhythm has accompanied Malayan music since the *bangsawan* era or earlier. *Inang*, meaning ‘nursemaid,’ primarily in a royal or noble context, is the most common rhythm type found in both *ronggeng* and *ρώγη ηέεη*. In northwest Malaysia, it is known by several names including: *rentak inang rumba* (from the Cuban dance rhythm), *rentak inang dangdut* (from the popular Indonesian dance), and *rentak bayun*. It is the same rhythmic pattern described by Goldsworthy (1979), Chopyak (1986), and Tan (2005). In southwest Thailand this rhythm style is called *caḡwà paarii*.

*Inang* is played evenly in a recurring 3:3:2 pattern (two dotted eighths followed by an un-dotted eighth) that resembles the Cuban *tresillo* rhythm (Figure 109). This syncopated *inang* is perceived by Malaysian musicians to be a newer rhythm than its non-syncopated namesake, perhaps because of its associations with music of those areas. It

could have entered Malayan musical repertoires from globalized Latin-American, Indian, or Arabian media that were propagated widely throughout southeast Asia during the *bangsawan* era, when Arabian and Indian tales and music were popular theater (and later film fare), and *rumba*—which arrived in the early 1930s—was a new dance trend. Appropriation of foreign styles continued in later decades. By the 1950s, Malayan film and popular dance were replete with rhythms, melodies, and arrangements in *rumba*, *mambo*, *samba*, *bolero*, and *cha-cha-chá* styles; and during the 1960s and '70s Arabian and Indian-inspired electric *ghazal pati* bands were the preferred form of wedding entertainment.

Figure 110 shows a common *inang ibu* pattern that, like *inang asli*, moves from high to low, but does not sound on the second downbeat. In contrast with timbral motions in *inang asli*, the *anak* moves between high and low in a similar manner to the *ibu*.<sup>131</sup>

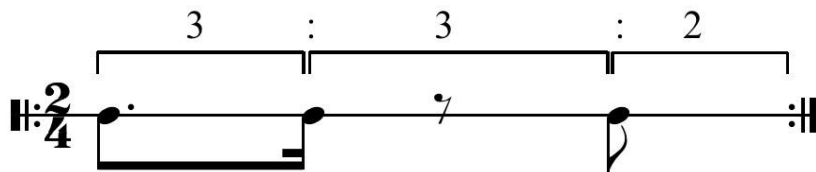


Figure 109. Cuban *tresillo* rhythmic unit

131. While most Malaysian *rebana* drummers assert that *ibu* and *anak* drums should play separate *inang* patterns, I have found that in practice this is rarely the case and that today, both drummers typically play variations of the *ibu* pattern.

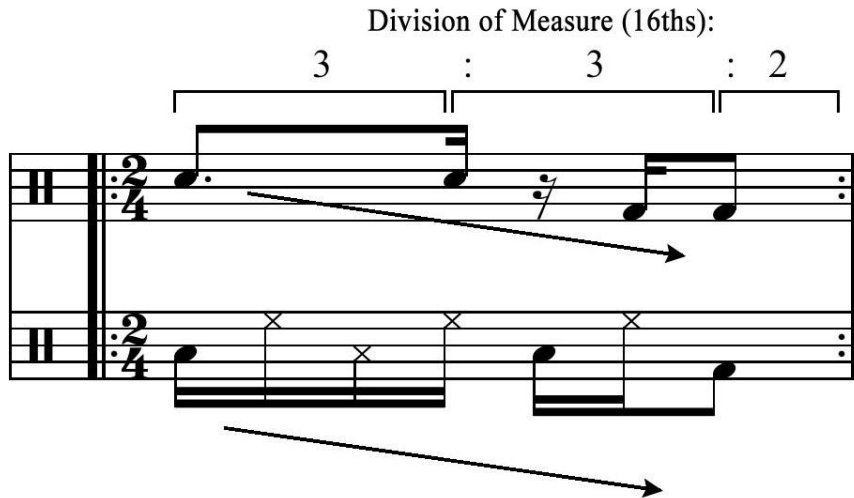


Figure 110. *Inang*, *ibu* and *anak*, Non

Romli Mahmud plays an esoteric *inang* variation (Figure 111) that employs muted timbres to highlight the *inang* syncopation. He credits the rhythm style to one local Perlis performer of his grandparents' generation, Tok Semilu.

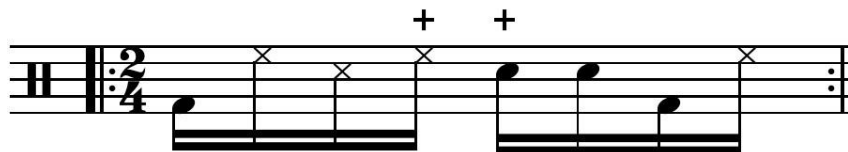


Figure 111 Tok Semilu *bayun* rhythm, Romli

*Inang* songs may be played at fast or slow tempi with the level of variation or improvisation inversely proportional to the tempo. Two variations (Figure 112a and b) of *inang lambat* (slow *inang*) patterns are similar to the archetypical *ibu* pattern shown in Figure 110 but with slightly increased rhythmic density. Another *inang lambat* rhythm (Figure 112c), played by East Coast border region *ronggeng* musicians, resembles a local form of *cha-cha-chá*—another indication of influence from a globalized form.



Figure 112. *Inang lambat*, Romli (a), Dun (b), and East Coast Malaysia/Thailand (c)

Figure 113a and b show two drummers' *goreng* figures (improvisational fills) and two additional correspondences to Latin-American rhythms. In the former example, Romli's five *dung* strokes produce a five-beat Cuban *cinquillo*-like pattern (sixteenth beats in 2:1:2:1:2 ratios, shown above the staff), while in the latter, Dun makes a strong, first-half 3:3:2 *tak* statement with the same ending as Romli, creating an analog to the Cuban 3-2 *son clave* rhythm.

(a) *cinquillo pattern*

(b) *3-2 son clave pattern*

Figure 113. *Inang goreng* figures, Romli (a) and Dun (b)

*Gendang silat* groups' repertoires are, in large part, comprised of *inang*-style pieces—generically referred to as *lagu* 'song'—which encompass entertainment tunes that are distinct from their accompaniment to *silat* dance or combat. Figure 114's top staff shows a common *gendang ibu inang* pattern that uses a two-hand ending stroke. The *anak* (bottom staff) plays a common *dua lapis* (two-layer) pattern that accompanies a variety of medium to quick tempo *gendang silat* rhythms. Arrows highlight points where the two rhythms coincide and form the characteristic *inang* 3:3:2 accent pattern.

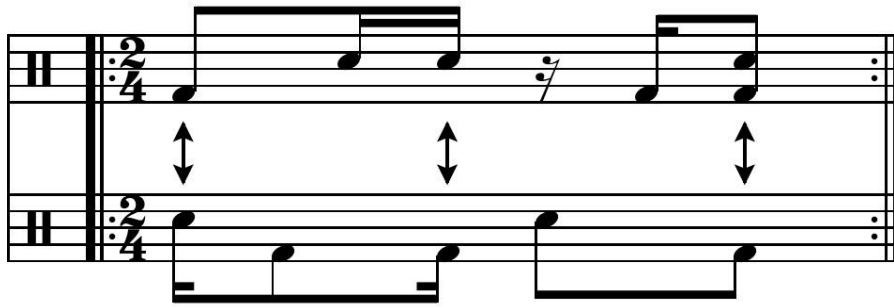


Figure 114. *Gendang silat* style of *inang* accompaniment

### ***Paarii* Rhythms in Southwest Thailand**

In *róçŋ ɳéey*, *caŋwà paarii* corresponds to the syncopated Malaysian *inang*. As previous data have shown, it is the most common *rammánaa* accompaniment for both Thai-speaking and Malay-speaking styles. The origin of the term *paarii*, which has become synonymous with the *tanjoŋ* sub-style of *róçŋ ɳéey*, is not clear. While Andaman musicians see it as Malay, in Malaysia it does not appear in musical vocabularies except in a very few cases: in *hadrah* folk theater in Perlis, where there is an unrelated song/rhythm entitled “Pari Melayang”; and in two 1920s gramophone recordings with *pari* in their titles: “Pari Dzat” and “Nelam Pari”—ostensibly songs of Hindustani provenance. (In Malaysia *pari* is typically used in combination with other words, as in *ikan pari* (a skate or ray) or *pari-pari* ‘fairy,’ from Persian.)

*Caŋwà paarii* accompany songs of Andaman provenance—some with *paarii* in their titles such as “Paarii Hàad Jaaw,” “Paarii Sàtuun,” “Paarii Phuukèet,” “Paarii Panjĭi,” “Paarii Dèeg,” “Lagu Khlaaj,” and “Lagu Màj”—as well as Malayan *inang*-style tunes that include “Burung Putih,” “Che Mamat,” “Timang Burung,” and “Layang-Layang.” Some musicians refer to it as *caŋwà burung putih*—after the *wâj khruu* song played with that pattern—or with prescriptive terms as *khâaŋ sçŋ khráŋ*, *klaŋ sçŋ khráŋ*

(two on the side, two in the middle).

The top staff of Figure 115 is a standard *jyn* figure for *caṅwà paarii*. It is essentially identical to the Malaysian *inang*, with a 3:3:2 pattern of accents and a high-to-low stroke motion, although with less timbral variety than the latter. The *lâk* plays a high-high low-low pattern with accents on the upbeats.

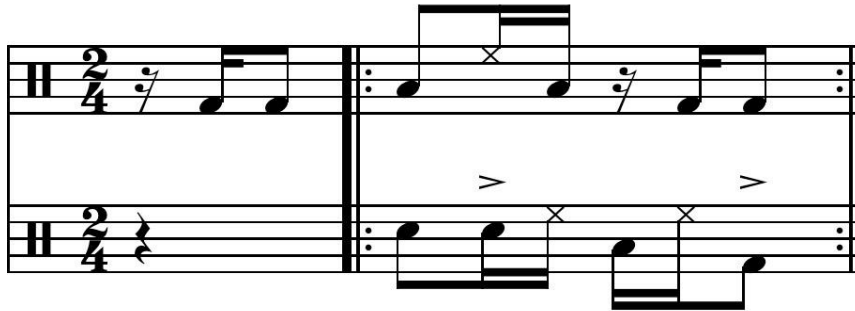


Figure 115. *Caṅwà paarii*, *jyn* and *lâk*

A transcription of one Orak Lawoi performer's *lâk* accompaniment for the *caṅwà paarii*-style song "Che Mamat" (Figure 116a) reveals a mirror of the song's AAB formal structure. In a melody composed of sixteen measures and four measure phrases, the rhythm accompanies in four-measure sequences (shown in a reduction in Figure 116b) that diverge at only two points (indicated with boxes).

(a)

(b)

Figure 116. *Lâk* accompaniment for *Che Mamat* (a) and four-measure reduction (b), Sämraan

Dëej’s two-drum style *paarii* has the same timbral movement and double *thyn* strokes of other *inang/paarii* styles, but does not contain the characteristic syncopation in its first half, giving priority to the accented *lâk* strokes instead (Figure 117).

Figure 117. *Caḡwà paarii*, main pattern in two-drum style, Dëej

### *Caḡwà Sḡj Khaam*

*Caḡwà sḡj khaam* accompanies two *rḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ* songs, “Sḡj Khaam,” and the

rarely played “Kapal Masuk” (“The Ship Enters”), as well as a local rendition of the Thai folk tune, “Phámâa Ram Khuăan” (“Burmese Axe Dance”), that once existed in some *róɔŋ h́ééŋ* and local *ramwɔŋ* repertoires.<sup>132</sup> The *tresillo*-like rhythm is said to have originated in the *líkee paa* song “Jaajii Khâo Maa Ram”, or “Jaajii Dances In,” where it accompanies the entrance of a female character. “Sôɔj Khaam,” which first appeared in *róɔŋ h́ééŋ* repertoires in the postwar era, is believed to have come from Râamàad, a village with a vibrant *líkee paa* performing community since the 1920s. The song and rhythm are played primarily by Thai-speaking groups, and while there is no counterpart in Malaysian *ronggeng*, it is found in Malayan *jikey* theater (which is believed to have originated among Thai-speakers in the Andaman).

“Sôɔj Khaam” has a twelve-measure AAB form with three melodic periods that have durations of four, three, and five measures, respectively (the melody is discussed in Chapter 7). The main one-measure *jyn* pattern (Figure 118a) is a syncopated three-stroke figure consisting of a downbeat *thyŋ* followed by two *ṭyŋ* strokes—or ‘low-high-high,’ a timbral inversion of *caŋwà* paarii. Occasionally, it is played as a two-measure pattern with an added measure of even eighths (shown in Figure 118b).



Figure 118. *Caŋwà sôɔj khaam jyn* patterns, Dɛɛŋ

132. Personal correspondence from Lat Khlóɔŋdii

The *lâk* either plays an interlocking syncopated figure (shown in the lower staff of Figure 119), or in unison with the *jyn*. Dæŋ (in a two-drummer ensemble) begins the twelve-measure cycle with the *lâk* pattern, maintains it until measure eleven (breaking it up with two measures of *loŋ lûug* shown in Figure 120), and concludes in unison with the *jyn*. He occasionally accompanies a full melodic cycle in unison with the *jyn*, excluding the two *loŋ lûug* measures.

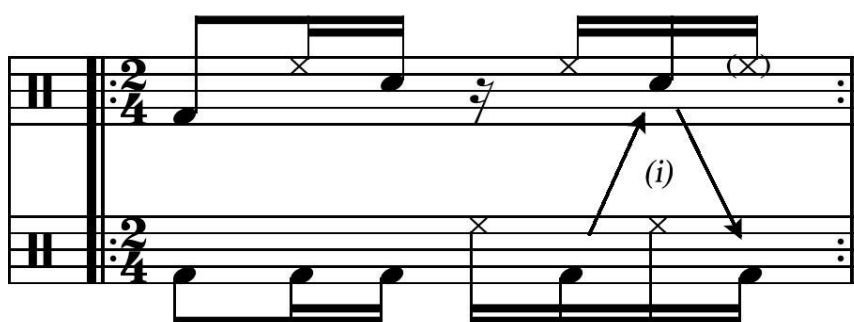


Figure 119. *Caŋwà sôŋj khaam*, *jyn* and *lâk*

*Loŋ lûug* appear as two variations: (1) as even eighths (Figure 120a) or (2) a syncopated pattern (Figure 120b) that occurs in the song's second, tenth, and (occasionally) twelfth measures.

(a)

(b)

Figure 120. *Caŋwà sôɔj khaam, loŋ lûug, jyn* and *lâk*, Dɛɛŋ and Jan (a), Suchaat and Phajrád (b)

### *Caŋwà Sinaadooŋ*

Malay-speaking drummers play *caŋwà sinaadooŋ* as a *paarii* while Thai-speaking drummers play it as a distinct yet *paarii*-like rhythm. According to Dɛɛŋ and others, its active *jyn* part makes it the one *róɔŋ ɲéɛŋ* tune that cannot be played in a two-drum style.

Figure 121 shows the changing *jyn* part over one cycle of the “Sinaadooŋ” melody (consisting in this example of fifteen measures divided into four melodic phrases) and its incorporation of *paarii* and non-*paarii* material. In the first phrase (a), Dɛɛŋ plays alternating eighth-note ‘high-low’ figures (similar to the *lâk* part in *caŋwà tarok tok tek*) and concludes at (b) with a high-low syncopated *loŋ lûug*. The second and third phrases (c) and (d) are *paarii*, and the last phrase is an extended *loŋ lûug* that begins with all low *thyŋ* beats in the first two measures (e)—syncopated at first, then becoming even

eighths—that come to alternate between higher timbres *tʸŋ* and *tʸŋ* in the last two measures (f). Less frequently, *paarii* patterns appear in place of (a) and (f). The *lâk* plays either a two-measure pattern (Figure 122), or just its first measure.

Figure 121. *Caṇwà sinaadoṇ*, one melodic cycle of *jyn* patterns, Dεεŋ

Figure 122. *Caṇwà sinaadoṇ*, *lâk* pattern, Jan

Săn and Buu (Khlɔṇ Pîŋ) play syncopated, interlocking figures as their primary “Sinaadoṇ” accompaniment. Figure 123 shows how both drums move in upward timbral motions with the *jyn* sounding like an inverted *paarii*, and the *lâk* like an inverted *mak inang jyn* pattern. *Loŋ lûug* appear as either (1) one-measure, nearly unison patterns

found at the end of internal phrases (Figure 124a), or (2) slightly varied series of eighth-beat accents—with the *lâk* emphasizing downbeats—at the end of each melodic cycle (Figure 124b).

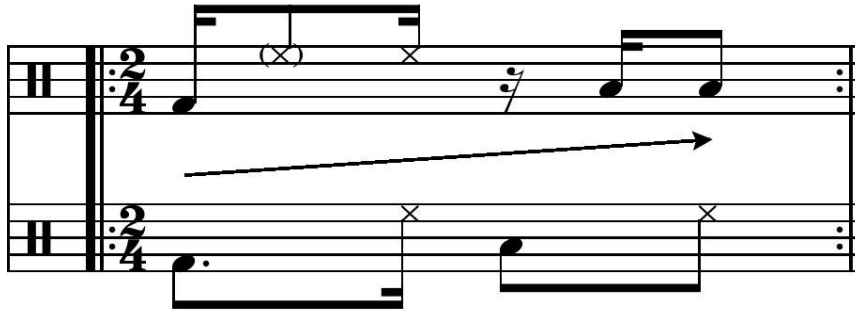
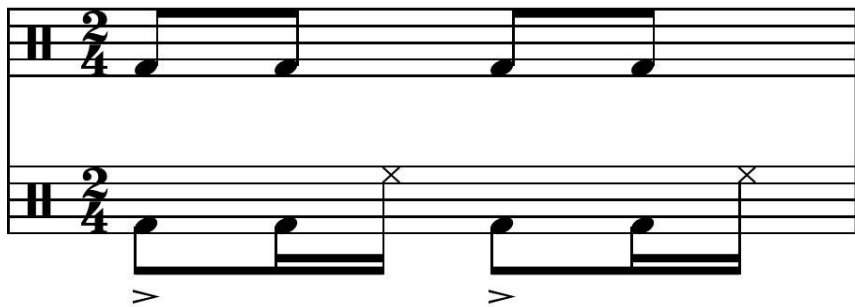


Figure 123. *Caḡwà sinaadooḡ*, main pattern for *jyn* (top) and (*lâk*) bottom, Săn and Buu

(a)



(b)

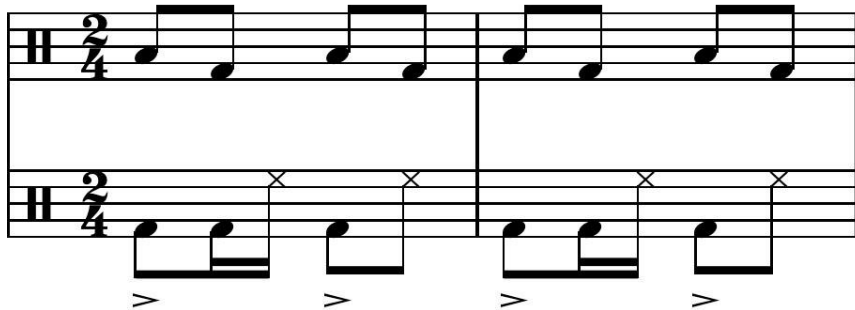


Figure 124. *Caḡwà sinaadooḡ*, one-measure *loḡ lûug*, Săn and Buu

#### Category 4

#### *Caṅwà Cháa*

*Caṅwà cháa* are slow four-beat rhythms derived from the Malayan *asli* or *nasib* styles that were a major part of popular twentieth-century *ronggeng* repertoire. As *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* appears to have been most influenced by the faster *canggung* style of the Siam-Malaya border region, its repertoire of slow-tempo tunes is rare.

In Malayan popular song, slow *asli* or *nasib* melodies were sung as courtship exchanges (like *dondang sayang*) or lamentations, as well as containers for Malay cultural history, filled with legends and quasi-historical tales (for example, “Laksmana Mati Dibunuh,” “Damak,” and others) retold numerous times through Malay theater and cinema. In southwest Thailand, however, *caṅwà cháa*, the ‘slow rhythm’ (analogous to the *asli* in terms of the types of repertoire it accompanies and the relative slowness of its tempos in comparison with other *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* rhythms) has become an anachronism; it does not convey meaningful stories to Andaman folk who have resided outside the reach of much of twentieth-century Malaysian media, and the surviving tunes are just not popular anymore.

#### Malay(si)an Rentak Asli

*Asli* songs from prewar *bangsawan*-era recordings and Malaysian *ronggeng* ensembles share the same fundamental rhythm pattern. The archetypical *asli* rhythm (*rentak asli*) contains two sections: a measure of even quarter beats followed by a measure that combines downbeats and syncopated sixteenths (shown in Figure 125). An *asli*-style song typically begins with a partial or full solo rendering of the melody that is

joined later by the *rebana* in the second measure of the song’s cycle. Improvisations by the drummer occur mostly in the first measure of the pattern where the rhythm is most sparse—often as triplet eighths or eighth and sixteenth subdivisions. The conclusions of each melodic phrase are signaled early in the second measure with (a) two *tak* strokes that are echoed by (b) two *dung* strokes played in unison with two gong beats, and (c) a phrase-ending *dung/gong* stroke (at the beginning of the first measure).

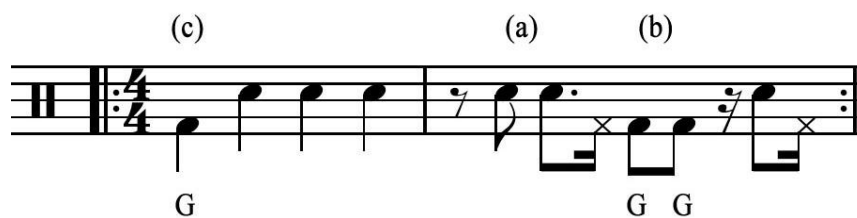


Figure 125. A common *rebana* accompaniment for Malaysian *asli*

### Slow Rhythms in Southwest Thailand

In southwest Thailand, *cháa* rhythms (sometimes called *caṅwà nuan* ‘soft rhythms’) are rare and found mostly in repertoires of Malay-speaking groups. Among Thai-speaking communities, their declining use—mainly for their lack of appeal to audiences—means that the song style is near extinction, and few drummers know how to play it.

Figure 126a shows the *caṅwà cháa* that ƐƐ Kimbaasii plays as accompaniment to “Siti Payung” and “Mas Merah.” Figure 126b, played by Lat, shows a one-measure variation *cháa* pattern that resembles the first half of the first example.



Figure 126. *Caywà cháa*, Eε (a) and Lat (b)

In Malaysia and southwest Thailand, *asli* and *cháa* rhythms both cycle around a similar timbral ‘journey’ from low to high to low, but while *asli*’s activity and syncopation are greater in the second measure, for *cháa* these occur in the first measure. A comparison of the two patterns in Figure 127 shows that (a) both begin on the *dung/thyη* beat, (b) move to the sharper *tak/tŷη* beat on beat two—remaining there until the second half of the second measure—and (c) return to *dung/thyη*, emphasizing the ‘three and’ eighth beats, which, in *rentak asli*, are accentuated with gong strokes. *Cháa* does not have the asymmetrical gong rhythm of *asli*.

The figure displays three staves of music in 4/4 time, divided into three sections labeled (a), (b), and (c).  
 - The top staff (Asli) shows a melodic line with notes and rests. Section (a) has a quarter note G. Section (b) has a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. Section (c) has a quarter note G followed by a quarter note G.  
 - The middle staff (cháa) shows a rhythmic pattern with 'x' marks above notes. Section (a) has a quarter note G. Section (b) has a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. Section (c) has a quarter note G followed by a quarter note G.  
 - The bottom staff (rhythmic reduction) shows a single line with notes. Section (a) has a quarter note G. Section (b) has a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. Section (c) has a quarter note G followed by a quarter note G.

Figure 127. *Asli* (top) and *cháa* (middle) rhythms, with rhythmic reduction (bottom)

Másii and Sámraan’s *rammánaa* accompaniment to “Cerai Kasih” (Figure 128) is a sequence of two slightly varied two-measure patterns, played in a *cháa* style. In the first measure, *jyn* and *lâk* parts reinforce beats ‘one,’ the ‘and’ of two, and ‘four’ (labeled *r1* through *r3*) and interlock (indicated with arrows) to propel the rhythm forward. In the second measure, the two drums reinforce downbeats in groups of strokes (*r4* and *r5*)—correlating to significant *asli* events at a similar point—and anticipate the beginning of the next rhythmic cycle with a syncopated sixteenth beat (*r6*).

Figure 128. *Caŋwà cháa* accompaniment for “Cerai Kasih,” *jyn* and *lâk*, Másii and Sámraan

A reduction of these parts (Figure 129) shows this to be a slightly different journey than the *asli* and *cháa* described previously. Measures labeled (a) and (c) as well as (b) and (d) are analogs, if not identical pairs. For the *jyn*, the movement from (a), where the phrase begins, through (b) is a descent from highest, to middle, to lowest timbre. The second section begins with (c), a transposition of (a) at the level of the lower two timbres, followed by a repeat of the (b) pattern in (d). The isolated *tŷŋ* at the first beat of (a) may be seen as marking a new cycle (similar to the first-beat *dung* in the *asli* rhythm). The *lâk*'s accented *chá* stroke in the beginning of the third measure has a similar colotomic function, marking the half-way point in the cycle. The *lâk* in measures (b) and (d) is a timbral inversion of the *jyn*, and changes in both parts occur simultaneously.

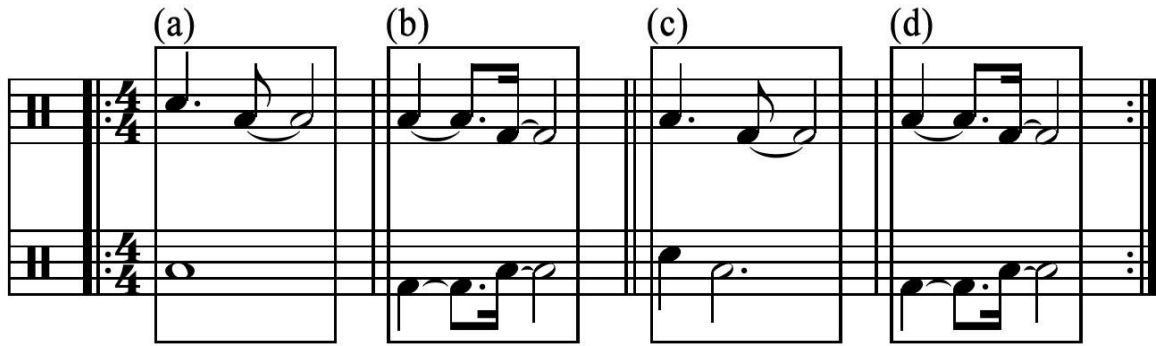


Figure 129. Rhythmic reduction of Figure 128, *jyn* (top) and *lâk* (bottom)

### *Caŋwà Kayuh Sampan*

“Kayuh Sampan” is a version of the Malayan folk melody “Dayung Sampan” (both meaning ‘row the boat’), the latter of which appeared in numerous forms during the *bangsawan* era—around the same time it entered southwest Thailand—and engendered a couple of parody recordings including “Apek Tua dan Nyonya Manis” (“Old Chinese Uncle And Sweet Young Woman”), and a section of the medley “Rampai Rampaian” (“Diverse Assortment”). Where the Malayan recordings are theatrical and rather upbeat, performed in a lively 100 BPM march-like rhythm and an 80 BPM *asli*, the Orak Lawoi of Săŋkaa-ûu turn the tune into an emotive portrait of plodding great distances across the sea in a rowboat (see a description of the melody in Chapter 7).

Throughout the verse, the rhythm is a recurring pattern (Figure 130), played by *jyn* and *lâk* drummers, which sounds homophonically with the sung text in resonant *thyŋ* tones (a) and a muted *tʻyŋ* on the last downbeat (b).



types in Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei. In southwest Thailand it may be seen as having originated in an idiomatic northwest Malayan version of *zapin* whose manner of presentation contained several *zapin*-like characteristics—including certain dance movements—but in terms of rhythm, appears to have more in common with *asli*.

Lat Khlɔŋdii was a member of an ensemble that performed *gamboi* and several other *ṛóŋŋ ḡééŋ* dances to entertain the Thai monarch (*naaj lǔaŋ*) when he visited Kràbii in the late-1950s.<sup>133</sup> The rhythm accompanied their opening piece, “Lagu Tabik” (“Salutations Song”).<sup>134</sup> As the music started, seated male and female dancers gradually rose to their feet with hands pressed together in a *wâj* and held in front of their foreheads in a common Southeast Asian gesture for greeting kings. Lat’s description of that performance is very similar to Mohammad Anis’s depiction of *zapin* dances accompanying royal Malay court scenes in *bangsawan* theater, where dancers performed “in a linear formation” (Mohammad Anis 1994: 12), “assuming the half-kneeling, half-squatting salutation posture of the *sembah* (homage) or *salam* (greetings)” (ibid:23), in which “the dancers’ hands are held together with the palms touching each other and (...) raised in front towards the forehead, the nose, or the chest” (ibid:25). According to the author, the “salutation dance” was “mandatory in *Zapin Melayu* but optional in (...) contemporary performance” (ibid: 18).

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133. This performance most likely took place in June, 1959. The performance was attended by the King Phumíphon Àdunyàdèed, who first visited southwest Thailand in June of that year (Arak lae Somsari 2005). The dancers were Kràbii school children, trained and led by Tanjung performers including: violinist/group leader Berani Butmǐn, dance instructor Halui, and *ramánaa* players Lat and Pendek. There was no gong player.

134. The traditional *ṛóŋŋ ḡééŋ* closing song among Malay-speaking groups, “Lagu Tabik,” is similar in name and function to the common *ṛóŋŋ ḡééŋ* closing song, “Lagu Tabik Encik” (see the following chapter) and both share the same rhythmic accompaniment, *caŋwà cáa*.

*Caṅwà gamboi* (Figure 133a) does not share strong characteristics with *rentak zapin* (Figure 133b), to which it is loosely related by name and function. A comparison of the two in reduced form (Figure 134) shows that, apart from their similar downbeats on ‘one’ and ‘four,’ they differ in terms of their internal subdivisions as well as the directional movements indicated with arrows in (a) and (b).



Figure 133. *Caṅwà gamboi* (a), *rentak zapin* (b)

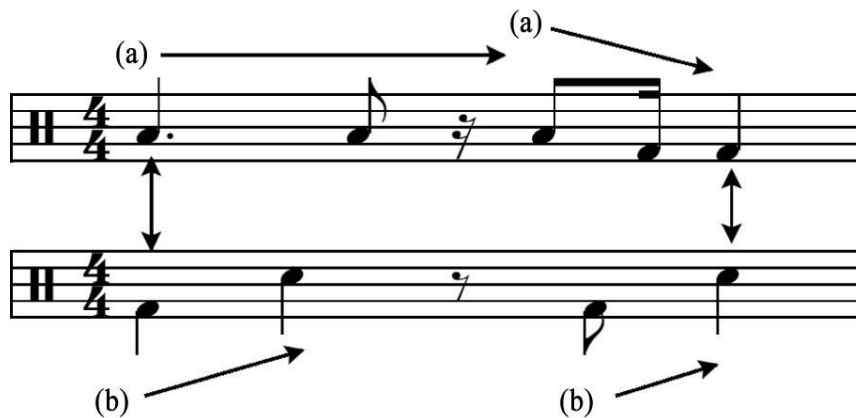


Figure 134. A comparison of reductions of *caṅwà gamboi* (top) and *zapin* (bottom)

A comparison of *caṅwà gamboi* (Figure 133) with *caṅwà cháa* from the first measure of the example in Figure 135, shows that the two rhythms share similar accents, particularly in their initial downbeat (a), the ‘and’ of the second beat (b), the syncopation in beat three (c), and the downbeat of ‘four’ (d).

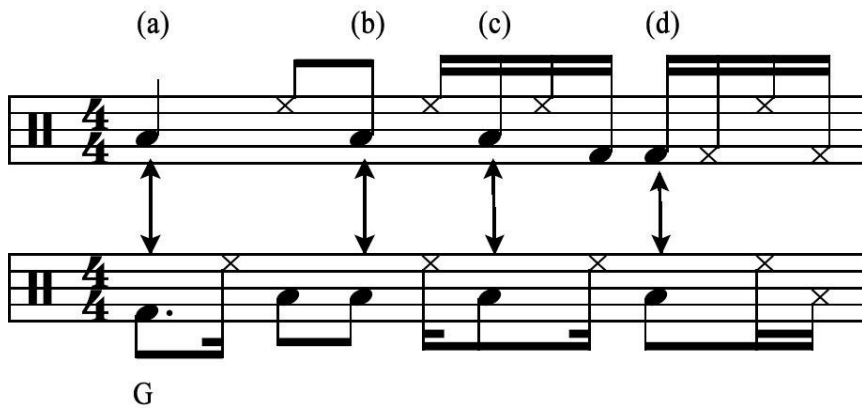


Figure 135. A comparison of *caṅwà gamboi* (top) and *caṅwà cháa* (bottom)

### SUMMARY

Aspects of this study of *caṅwà* reinforce my broader demonstration of *rṓṓṓ ḡḡḡḡ*'s origins in Malayan popular and folk tunes. They point to relationships between extant rhythms on both sides of the border, and mnemonics and other devices that drummers use to discuss music. They also raise several questions about those connections.

One question concerns tempo. I recall seeing *rṓṓṓ ḡḡḡḡ* for the first time and being struck by how quick the tempos were in comparison with Malaysian *rōḡḡḡḡ*. The distinctions of tempo, I found, existed on another level as well, between the quicker-tempo Thai-speaking groups, and the noticeably slower Malay-speaking ones. In almost every case, and for every rhythm, there was a neat alignment of my data where the slowest tunes were from Malay(si)a, those at a slightly quicker tempo were the (Malay-speaking) island *rṓṓṓ ḡḡḡḡ* troupes, and the fastest were the Thai-speaking, or *tanjōḡ* groups (see Figure 55). The local explanation for this is that people in the region prefer up-tempo songs. In neighboring Perlis, we have a similar example, where slower *rōḡḡḡḡ* from Penang was reinterpreted as quicker *cāḡḡḡḡḡ*. In that manner, the Andaman forms the northern part of that continuum ranging between slow and fast.

In this transformation to quick tempi, *ρόχη ηέεη* discarded *asli*, the slowest form of *ronggeng*. There is evidence that *asli* tunes existed in greater numbers (Abu Qasim played many of them!), and there are a few *asli*-style tunes, such as “Siti Payung” and “Mas Merah,” still played to *caηwà cháa* accompaniment; but they are rare, and rarely requested. On top of that, at between 90 and 100 BPM, those tunes are still played considerably faster than their Malayan counterparts. *Asli* tunes appear to have lost favor because they were too slow for local tastes, or perhaps they never truly became popular because the expressive texts in the Malay ballads had less relevance locally.

It was surprising to find that all of the rhythmic ‘fixtures’ of *ronggeng* since the *bangsawan* era existed in *ρόχη ηέεη*, except for one, *zapin*. *Joget* became *caηwà dua*, *inang* became *paarii*, *asli* became *caηwà cháa*, but *zapin*—a major presence in Malay(si)an music and dance culture since the film era—did not appear in the Andaman. The nearest analogue appeared to be an obscure tune, called “Lagu Gamboi,” performed by Lantaa musicians and dancers. *Gamboi*, whose name refers to the *gambus*, or Malayan lute, played typically for *zapin* (though there was no such instrument on Lantaa), was performed as a dance that could have been lifted straight out of Malayan *zapin*. However, in terms of rhythm, the extant *caηwà gamboi* was closer to the *cháa* rhythm. I suggest that *zapin*’s absence is tied to the declining circulation of Malayan culture in the Andaman during the postwar era. Simply put, *asli* (and other rhythms) migrated before that closure, while *zapin*, which became popular later, did not have the same opportunity to migrate.

With *ronggeng* no longer guiding *ρόχη ηέεη*’s development, the latter became its own idiom, acquiring a new poetic style and tune repertoire. Performers abounded, and

drumming practices, which were not formalized, diversified into village styles. That is not to say that formal elements did not exist. Whereas Malayan performers might accompany individual *runggeng* tunes with any style of rhythm (e.g., a “Dondang Sayang” played to *asli*, *inang*, *zapin*, or even *cha-cha-chá* accompaniment), in southwest Thailand, *ร้องเหยง* rhythms and melodies have always been immutable. And perhaps one of the more esoteric connections found in *ร้องเหยง* is the microcosm of fixed rhythms that is the *wâj khruu*, in which three ritual songs align with three rhythms—*caṅwà dua*, *mak inang*, and *paarii*—and the fourth, *cháa*, appears in the farewell song.

I would like to imagine that a matrix of drum patterns might develop from this research that could be expanded to other local, and related drumming styles, such as those found in *likee paa*, *makyung laut*, *gendang silat*, and *manoora*. A starting point might be the inverse timbral relationships found in *caṅwà jaanooṅ*, *tarok tok tek*, and *mak inang*, or in other words, looking at how a simple drum pattern might be played with different emphasis or timbre to create different rhythms. Thus the categories I defined, based upon repetitive pattern type, are starting points: frameworks for further exploration of regional drumming.

## CHAPTER 7. *ῤῶῆ ἠέει* MELODIC REPERTOIRES

*ῤῶῆ ἠέει* melodic repertoire is a heterogeneous collection of folk and popular tunes that formed in Malay- and Thai-speaking communities in maritime southwest Thailand over the course of the middle decades of the twentieth century, and, other than a decline in the number of tunes performed, it has remained largely unchanged since then. The repertoire took shape first on Lantaa Island in the 1930s under the tutelage of Abu Qasim and Pak Mat. A few songs probably arrived in the late '30s and early '40s, carried either by a couple of islanders who had learned *ronggeng* while living on Langkawi, in Malaya (Bunga and Jan, who appear in Chapter 3), or at the onset of the war, with the arrival of a couple of Malayan refugees (Wan Hussein and Bang Mi),<sup>135</sup> who also joined the early island *ῤῶῆ ἠέει* community.

The first repertoire formed at a time when people on Lantaa had a very different perspective on popular culture than the average person does today. They did not hear Malayan contemporary songs through mass media, but rather heard them as mediated through Abu Qasim and the other local performers. They were familiar with *manoora*, *makyung laut* and other traveling folk theaters, and perhaps they had favorite songs from those genres that, to them, sounded similar to *ῤῶῆ ἠέει* tunes.

Within several years, a young performer named Isāw started a new style by singing *ῤῶῆ ἠέει* in Thai (see Chapter 3), and in several years' time, it had become a widespread trend in Kràbii and Traaη. Throughout the 1940s and '50s, new songs were created in that style, and became part of a common Thai-speaking *ῤῶῆ ἠέει* repertoire called *tanjoη* song. It is somewhat perplexing that even the eldest and most experienced

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135. Personal correspondence from Lat Khlῶῆdii

surviving performers cannot say for sure when those songs appeared; the evidence we have is mostly anecdotal. The prevailing explanation among lay people and academics (e.g., Klin, Sathaphon) is that *tanjong* melodies and poetry already existed in the form of lullabies and courtship songs, and were simply adopted by *róng ηέηη* groups. Yet in local minds, those tunes were not quite *róng ηέηη*; so in some ways, small or large, things must have changed.

*Róng ηέηη* tunes are organized here into four discrete categories—*wâj khruu*, northwest Malayan folk, *bangsawan*, and *tanjong*—based upon ritual function (Category 1) or provenance (Categories 2 through 4). These classifications are identified and explored later in this chapter. The idea of sorting tunes according to provenance is partly a local idea. Seasoned *róng ηέηη* veterans are well aware that their music came from multiple sources, but in their minds, the distinctions are simply Malay or Thai. I did not find anyone who perceived the Malayan-provenance repertoire as multiplex. I examine some of these perceptions of repertoire below.

The repertoire examined here encompasses the two principal *róng ηέηη* styles that took shape over the 1930s, '40s, and '50s: the island style, which encompassed a wide repertoire of Malayan tunes, and the mainland *tanjong* style combining Malayan and local Thai tunes. This musicology digs into the past for clues to *róng ηέηη* history hidden in the provenance of once-popular songs, texts, and graceful and symbolic dance movements. It draws out contextual elements that have given both styles local characteristics, to show how they developed the way they did. These are stories that need to be told because knowledge of *róng ηέηη* exists in such disparate parts, and is spread over a large region and aging community.

## PERCEPTIONS OF REPERTOIRE

Locals see *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* repertoire as essentially having come from either of two sources: (1) a ‘traditional’ (*dâŋ dəəm*), ‘authentic’ (*tôn càbàp*) collection of songs and dances from Malaya; and (2) a postwar indigenous song style called *phleeŋ māj* (new song) or *phleeŋ tanjɔŋ*. In simple terms, these coincide with perceptions of their past as more Malay, and the present as Thai, founded in the postwar separation of Malay and Thai cultures. They do not have detailed understandings of Malayan repertoire, or recognize that *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* itself came from multiple sources. The *bangsawan* theater is unknown to them, and they are unfamiliar with folk performance genres across the border.

With the Malay islander identity quickly disappearing (absorbed into a greater Southern Thai identity), the Orak Lawoi, as the few remaining Malay speakers in the Andaman, are elevated to being guardians of the old repertoire. It seems that locals have reasoned this backwards, because the Orak Lawoi are now perceived as *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*’s ‘original’ propagators (and believed to have first played it at Săŋkaa-ûu, no less, which did not even exist at the time of *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*’s introduction). Perceptions of *tanjɔŋ* song’s roots are, for the most part, similarly nebulous. Many see it as having arisen spontaneously, without connection to a particular location, individual or time; even though it developed well within the cognizant years of many surviving performers and patrons.

There are parallels between how members of the Andaman *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* community perceive their musical past and how Langkawi villagers, in Janet Carsten’s study of kinship and memory, perceive relationships within their community. She notes that

“[v]ery few people could recall genealogies beyond two or three generations” (...) and “[t]here is no systematic attempt to maintain traditions or memories of ancestors who have come from elsewhere.” For them, the issues of where one (or one’s antecedents) originated were less significant than coexistent relationships, and they placed little emphasis on their own, or their neighbors’, immigrant backgrounds as “[i]t simply seemed that this was not knowledge which was important to preserve or remember” (Carsten 1995: 319-20). For *ρώνη ηέση*, knowledge of tune provenance and history of the genre’s introduction and dissemination (or “vertical” relationships, to borrow from Carsten) appear to be less relevant (that is, less discussed) than the socializing role of “horizontal” communities. As with Carsten’s subjects, the historical details of *ρώνη ηέση* seem to have faded considerably after a couple of generations until they became an ahistorical form of folk knowledge.

These perceptions are not novel to *ρώνη ηέση*; other regional musical forms offer similar examples. For example, *gendang silat* performers of northwest Malaysia—whose heterogeneous repertoires of *ronggeng*-like entertainment tunes encompass music from *bangsawan* theater, film, postwar *joget moden*, *ramwoj*, 1960s and ’70s electric Western-style *kugiran*, Arabic/South Asian-style *ghazal pati* bands, Malay rock, Indonesian *dangdut*, and Western pop, among others—tend to ahistoricize their prewar repertoire as ‘old,’ or ‘traditional,’ though many of their tunes were introduced through *bangsawan*. Similarly, *ramwoj*’s Western accretions over the years have blurred the distinctions between Thai dances and the *cha cha chá*, *mambo*, or *off-beat*.

This study does not aim to explore these fuzzy perceptions further at this point. They have become what they are for various reasons. In certain ways, the past holds

meaning for people, it links them to an identity, a location, a family line, a religion; but it is remembered informally, and is ephemeral. Instead, the task at hand is to provide a fuller accounting from available sources.

## METHODS

I examine a heterogeneous collection of *ρώχη ηέεη* tunes in order to understand their provenance and musical characteristics. My focus here is on melodies and song forms, and draws from musical transcriptions to find comparisons and contrasts with corresponding Malayan and Andaman tunes. As *ρώχη ηέεη*'s constituent styles are from a variety of backgrounds, I employ several different approaches. First, I compare certain *ρώχη ηέεη* tunes with their counterparts found on 78 rpm Malayan gramophone recordings, mostly from the 1920s and '30s. Second, I compare another group of *ρώχη ηέεη* tunes to northwest Malayan folk melodies found in extant recordings or those that I have collected in recent fieldwork. Third, I explore common characteristics among Andaman *ρώχη ηέεη* melodies.

These investigations became descriptions and analyses after several steps. I transcribed each example from an audio or video recording to Western staff notation. I identified melodic phrases, formal sections, cadences, ornaments, and other features, and then reduced each piece to its significant notes. The last step helped to bring some clarity to the transcriptions, showing connections between songs with similar titles, but which sounded differently, and fundamental correspondences among song structures.

I thank the reader in advance for indulging me the use of Western music terms such as 'tonic,' 'dominant,' 'subdominant,' to refer to the first, fourth, and fifth pitch levels in a scale, and other marked terms such as 'cadence.' These words are not intended

to infer harmonic functions in the Western sense, but have a more universal connotation of any musical aspect that can be analyzed as moving among scale levels in an organized manner. I suggest that Western analytical methods do have utility for *róçŋ ħéēŋ*, being that a major component of the repertoire (*bangsawan* tunes) are, in part, derived from Western musical traditions. Western staff notation works quite well for the objectives I have set with two caveats: (1) in terms of pitch, I do not suggest that *róçŋ ħéēŋ* melodies perfectly align with a Western tempered scale; and (2) the notated melodic reductions presented here are designed to seek the simplest and most effective manner to illustrate my analyses, rather than “channel” the music theoretician Heinrich Schenker.

Having mentioned melodies and Western temperament, it should be mentioned that there is no effort here in this study to compare standard Western pitch frequencies and those of *róçŋ ħéēŋ*, other than a brief discussion of violin tunings in Chapter 5 (and a small chart comparing several violinists’ general tuning ranges in Appendix E), though it could be worthwhile to explore tunings in a regional context of various instrumental and vocal performance.

In these notations, capital Roman letters indicate phrases and formal sections (e.g., A, B, C), with slight changes among similar sections indicated with a superscript (e.g., A', B'). The middle C pitch is referred to as c4 and all pitches within an octave above it share the same numerical suffix; the following octave begins with c5 and follows the same scalar sequence. The letter ‘L’ stands for the cadential rhythmic figure *loŋ lûug* (described in Chapter 6) and is placed above the staff in the measure where it typically occurs (though there is some disagreement among performers as to the ‘correct’ placement of this figure in relation to the melody). Melodic transcriptions are presented

in their closest discernable keys to an A440 tuning standard, while gramophone recordings are transposed to facilitate comparisons with *ρώχη ηέεη* tunes (their original keys are indicated in the captions).

In order to account for deviations in performances that result in small to significant differences in a melody's rendering with every melodic cycle, I have assembled 'mean' versions from numerous iterations, extracting elements that violinists play most frequently on a measure-to-measure basis, and confirming the integrity of those compiled versions through feedback from their original performers (I played them on violin and asked my informants questions about the suitability of my renditions). Thus, the transcriptions do not show every possible way that one might play or hear a melody, nor do they accurately reflect the performance aesthetic in which precise reproduction is given little emphasis, but they are identifiable to their own practitioners.

## SOURCES

Descriptions and analyses in this chapter are based in three principal sources: (1) digital audio or audiovisual field recordings of approximately 387 songs performed publically and in private that I collected in southwest Thailand and northwest Malaysia between 2006 and 2010; (2) approximately two dozen Malayan gramophone recordings from the 1920s and '30s; and (3) cassette recordings, including a two-volume commercially produced set by Aalaj Khrajbut's Halai Gorsai Band made in the 1990s, and a couple of archival recordings of northwest Malayan folk music. I have also used newspaper articles and advertisements from that period to obtain, among other things, song titles, names of singers and performing troupes, types of performances and their locations, in order to gain a better understanding of popular music and media in the

*bangsawan* era and contextualize *ronggeng* within early twentieth-century Malayan society. For the latter area, a few secondary sources have also been of value to this study including writings on gramophone recordings, *bangsawan* theater, and *ronggeng* by Tan (Tan 1993, 1995, 1996, 2005), Cohen’s 2001 and 2006 studies of *Komedie Stamboel*, and Laird’s ongoing discographic work with Malayan gramophone recordings (Laird nda, ndb).

### *Field Recordings*

My field recordings comprise performances by *róçŋ* *ŋéey* musicians at weddings, village and municipal festivals, informal gatherings, commercial recording sessions, and private homes. For the transcriptions in this chapter I chose those of six well-known violinists—all of whom possess knowledge of a wide number of Malayan and *tanjoŋ* tunes. They include (in order of age):

1. Lat Khlóçŋdii (b. 1927) of Lěem Phoo, Kràbii, who has been involved with *róçŋ* *ŋéey* since childhood, having learned and toured with Tanjung’s first generation of musicians and dancers beginning in the late 1930s. During the postwar years, he was a well-known performer in Malay-speaking communities, Semut Tanoi, Kò Múg, and Thîŋraj. His violin repertoire comprises over fifty Malayan tunes—many of which have disappeared from *róçŋ* *ŋéey*—and the full repertoire of locally created *tanjoŋ* tunes. In recent years he has performed for cultural festivals and taught *róçŋ* *ŋéey* in his village school.
2. Khamé ‘Dam’ Haphon (b. 1934), who began during the early 1950s as a self-taught violinist in the Thai-speaking village, Kò Khiam Tâj where he learned

by observing performances by a local *róçŋ ɣéey* violinist/leader from nearby Panjii Island, Marob ‘Nùad’ (see *Phuukèet and Phanŋaa* in Chapter 4). Dam moved to Thîŋraj in the late 1950s to join (and marry) the eminent singer Jimliá, where he learned *róçŋ ɣéey* repertoire from Orak Lawoi musician Awang, and performed with Jimliá’s troupe for over two decades. He retired after Jimliá passed away in the 1980s.

3. Maan Lèemǎn (b. 1934), a Malay-speaking performer from Pulau Mutia (Kò Múg) was that island’s first native *róçŋ ɣéey* violinist, a skill he learned as a young man during the 1950s while working on Lantaa. He rarely performs anymore as the island no longer has an active *róçŋ ɣéey* community.
4. Phỳyg Khĩausòd (b. 1937), who was raised in the Thai-speaking mainland village Thûŋ Khaa Khəj, learned violin with first-*ruun* performers in Tanjung, where he lived for ten years (ca. 1954-64). In the 1960s he played with popular *tanjong* singers Taadam and Jaamiiá, and established Khlóçŋ Pîŋ’s first group. He continues to be an active performer with Duandii, the group he founded.
5. Hâamá Citryya (b. 1940) learned to play in Hûaj Nám Khăaw and later founded Khlóçŋ Pîŋ’s second and arguably best-known mainland group, Săam Phîi Nóçŋ. He is known for his distinctive playing style, and is the most active performer among surviving *róçŋ ɣéey* violinists.
6. Máwii Tháleelýg (b. 1946) of Săŋkaa-ûu Village, Lantaa Island, learned violin from early Tanjung performers at age ten. He is one of two surviving Orak Lawoi *róçŋ ɣéey* violinists (five others passed away in the 2000s) and

performs several times each year or more. He is a native Orak Lawoi and Malay speaker with a repertoire composed primarily of Malayan songs and a small number of *tanjong* pieces.



Figure 136. (Top row, left to right) Lat Khlǝŋdii, Khamé Haphon, Maan Lèemǎn; (bottom row left to right) Phýyg Khǎusòd, Máwii Tháleelýg, Hámá Cìtryya

*Gramophone and Other Recordings*

Transcriptions of Malayan 78 RPM recordings from the 1920s and '30s that

appear here allow for comparisons with corresponding song titles in Andaman *róḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ*. According to Tan, *bangsawan* theater songs (which came to comprise a large part of *róḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ* repertoire) were the most popular of all gramophone recordings in the 1930s and, even though discs and players were not affordable to most people during that time, they were “accessible to the general population” through public presentation at entertainment parks (Tan 1996:14-17). While it is speculative to suggest that those recordings directly influenced *róḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ*’s pioneers (such as Abu Qasim and Che Mat), they likely had some influence upon popular tastes among northwest Malayan folk performers.

The nexus between gramophone recordings and *róḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ* repertoire most likely took place in Malaya as popular music disseminated to rural areas, and prior to the latter’s migration/introduction to southwest Thailand. The small number of gramophone records that existed on Lantaa in the prewar years does not appear to have influenced the development of *róḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ* in any way. The only known ones during the 1930s were the private collection of one Chinese shopkeeper in Sriraayaa, “Pek” Kijaa, who is said to have purchased them through agents in Penang (in those days charcoal barges often carried back consumer goods after delivering their cargo from the Andaman). However, his collection and *róḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ*’s concurrent appearance on Lantaa are indications of the new musical style that was taking hold among receptive audiences during that period.

The gramophone recordings used for this study come from several sources: the Malaysian National Archives, private collections, regular radio broadcasts of the “Klasik Nasional” (National Classic) program on the government-run Radio Television Malaysia (RTM), and internet sources. The earliest *róḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ* recordings I encountered were a pair of cassettes by Aalaj Khrajbut’s *tanjong*-style group (see Figure 137). These were

produced in Bangkok in the 1990s in small quantities and sold locally in the Andaman region. I found no evidence of *rǒwɰ ɳéɛɳ* recordings made prior to that time. Today, most groups produce their own video compact discs (VCDs), though these differ little in content from my own fieldwork recordings.

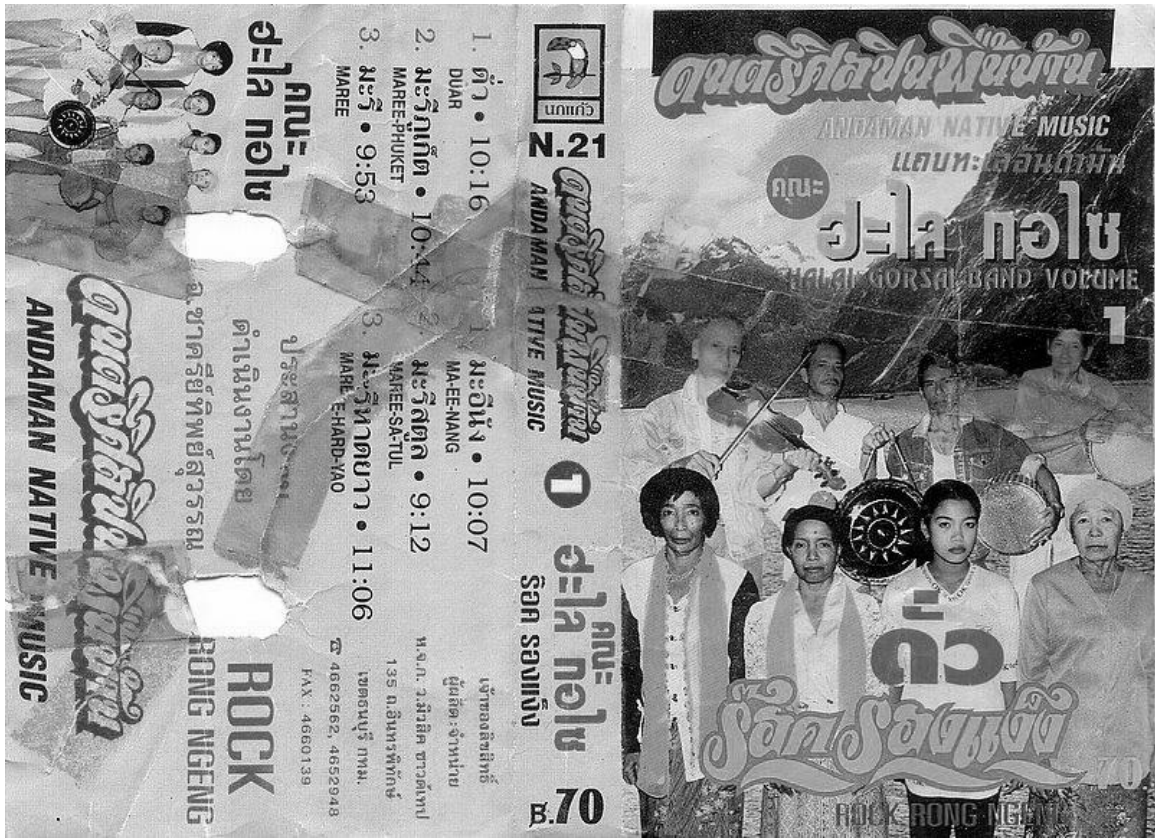


Figure 137. Cassette cover from 1990s commercial recording by Aalaj Khrajbut (note the transliteration by its Bangkok publisher that renders *paarii* as “Maree,” and refers to the style as “Rock Rong Ngen”) )

## PAIRINGS OF SOCIAL DANCE AND FOLK THEATER

*Rǒwɰ ɳéɛɳ* repertoire has numerous connections to regional theater forms, drawing from *bangsawan*, *likee paa*, and *makyung laut*, as shown, for example, by the tunes and rhythms of “Sǒwɰ Khaam” and “Jaṅṅoṅ” (discussed in this and the previous chapters). As a number of past ensembles played both *rǒwɰ ɳéɛɳ* and *likee paa* theater, those two

performances were often paired, typically with an open-ended *róçŋ ȳéey* dance taking place after the theatrical show.<sup>136</sup> Today, it is common to find *líkee paa* groups that incorporate *róçŋ ȳéey* tunes into their scenes in various ways. This ‘pairing’ of social dance and theater is a phenomenon that may be observed elsewhere in Southeast Asia where genres have shared repertoires and/or communities of performers. The relationship between *rōggeng* social dance and *bangsawan* theater is one clear example. *Bangsawan* engendered numerous *rōggeng* tunes, and during the early- to mid-twentieth century its troupes often performed both genres, whether as *extra turns* in stage shows or as ancillary dances that took place after theater performances. In central Thailand, *líkee* folk theater and *lam tàd* social dance were often paired together in the past, and have similar roots in Islamic *zikir* ‘praise’ songs. Rejab (1962), along with my informants in Perlis and Kedah, have described relationships between *makyung laut* folk theater and *canggung* social dance, seeing the former as a primary source for the latter’s repertoire and perhaps its dance styles, which could be evidence that, at one time, the two were also performed in pairs.

### *RÓÇŊ ȳÉEY* DANCES

*Róçŋ ȳéey* dance rounds begin with a patron approaching a prospective dance partner and either handing her (or him, as a number of groups have male transvestite dancers) a dance ticket or making a small bow or *wâj* gesture as salutations. They end in the same manner with both partners bowing (or *wâj*-ing) to each other. The dances include general motions that are common to most songs and movements that are particular to certain tunes. Song-specific dances are associated with approximately twelve

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136. This practice has been revived by the Râamàad ensemble for some occasions.

tunes, of which eleven are of Malayan provenance and one is local—they are described in later sections in this chapter that explore individual tunes.

The general motion for a two-beat rhythm appears somewhat as follows: a female dancer stands with her feet a couple of inches apart, raises one foot an inch or less off of the ground, and touches its heel next to the other foot's instep on beat one, and returns it to its original place for beat two. This step is repeated with the opposite feet for the two subsequent beats. Her arms alternate between being extended downward and bent forward, with the palms gently turning up and down and fingers opening and closing like flower petals. Men may dance in a similar manner, or they might raise their elbows to the side in alternating patterns. *Rόχη ηέεη* dance today is difficult to characterize in a single manner. It is typical to see performers and patrons dancing many variations of these motions concurrently, and in *ramwon*-style events, their movements may even resemble those of a modern rave or discotheque.

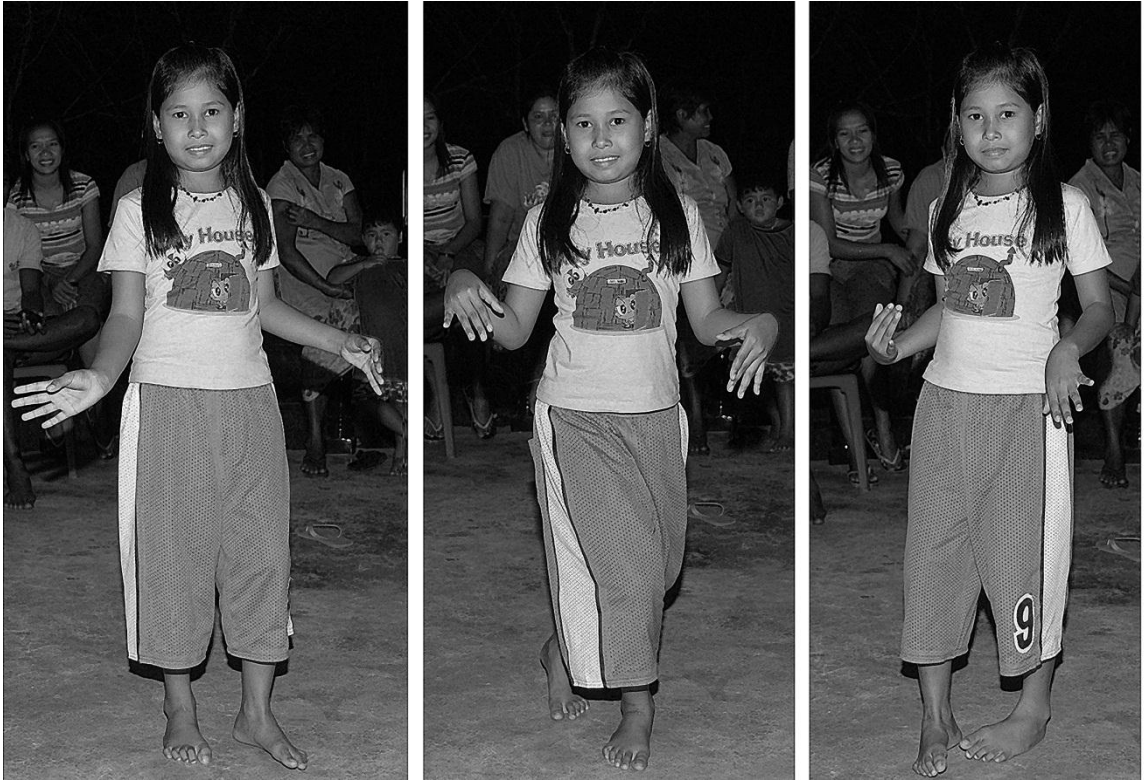


Figure 138. A young *róoη ηέεηη* trainee-dancer showing some basic movements



Figure 139. Râamàad dancers in rehearsal

### TANJOD SONG TEXTS

The *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ tanjoŋ* style is sung in a regional variant of *phâag tâj* ‘Southern Thai,’ that is replete with Malay loan words, though they are not always recognized as such by native speakers. It uses a variation of Thai *klɔɔn*, a poetic genre that appears in numerous forms throughout Thai literature, theater, and religious texts. In the standard form of one common type—the four-line *klɔɔn sîi*—a *bòt* (strophe) has four *bàat* (line) that each have two *wâag* (half lines), that are made up of four *kham* (words) apiece. *Róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* performers use a modified and simpler version of this nomenclature for the formal elements of *tanjoŋ* verse, referring to each strophe as a *tɔɔn*, and its constituent lines as *wâag*. Malays sing in a four-line *pantun* form using familiar Malayan texts that I will not examine here.

*Tanjoŋ* verses may be sung to any tune, though a number of choruses or refrains have fixed Malay texts. To accommodate verses that have different formal structures and phrase lengths, singers rework texts in several possible ways. Figure 140 through Figure 142 are examples of how the same text appears in verse melodies of three different songs. They adjust the number of poetic feet (in those examples, poetic feet are shown as dashes above syllables that receive emphasis), use repetition (“like the chili pepper plant” in Figure 140), increase or decrease the number of words (no “see the young woman” in Figure 141), or add local speech and speech-like vocables (such as “əj” in Figure 142).<sup>13</sup>

buu-ŋaa tan-joŋ— kam-phoŋ læ nōŋ jaŋ tōn dii - phlii  
 nít-caa ram dii— phii ràg nōŋ níi baŋ màj dâj kreeŋ  
 word repetition: “jaŋ tōn diiphlii”

jaŋ tōn dii - phlii jaŋ tōn dii - phlii khâw maa  
 baŋ màj dâj kreeŋ baŋ màj dâj kreeŋ loŋ ràg nōŋ

ram thîi bâan níi ràg nōŋ khon dii sǎj sȳy - a dēeŋ  
 sǎaw sǎj sȳya dēeŋ baŋ màj dâj kreeŋ baŋ læŋ ryyŋ ciŋ

Figure 140. An example of *tanjoŋ* verse text in “Jaŋŋoŋŋ”

A gloss of the text in Figure 140 (and that of the next two notated examples) is as follows:

<i>bunaa tanjoŋ kamphoŋ</i>	<i>Bunga tanjung kampong</i>
<i>lɛɛ nɔːŋ jaŋ tɔn diiplii</i>	see the young woman, like the chili pepper plant
<i>khâw maa ram thîi bâan nîi</i>	come dance in this village
<i>ràg nɔːŋ khon dii sǎj sŷya dɛɛŋ</i>	love the fine young woman in the red dress
<i>nídcaa ram dii baŋ</i>	alas, you dance well
<i>phîi ràg nɔːŋ nîi</i>	I love this young woman
<i>màj dâj kreeŋ</i>	I am not afraid
<i>loŋ ràg nɔːŋ sǎaw sǎj sŷya dɛɛŋ</i>	falling in love with the girl in the red dress
<i>baŋ màj dâj kreeŋ</i>	I am not afraid
<i>baŋ lɛɛŋ ryyŋ ciŋ</i>	I speak the truth

word subtraction: no “lɛɛ nɔɔŋ”

buu - ɲaa tan - joŋ kam-phoŋ jaŋ tɔn dii - phlii buu-  
 nít caa ram dii phii ràg nɔɔŋ níi baŋ màj dâj kreeŋ níi

ɲaa tan - joŋ kam - phoŋ jaŋ tɔn dii - phlii khâw  
 caa ram dii phii ràg nɔɔŋ níi baŋ màj dâj kreeŋ loŋ

maa ram thii níi ràg nɔɔŋ khon dii nɔɔŋ sǎj sȳa deeŋ  
 ràg nɔɔŋ sǎj sȳa deeŋ baŋ màj dâj kreeŋ baŋ lɛeŋ ryyŋ ciŋ

ràg nɔɔŋ khon dii nɔɔŋ sǎj sȳa deeŋ

Figure 141. An example of *tanjoŋ* verse text in “Lagu Mạj”

buu - ŋaa tan - joŋ kam - phoŋ læ nɔŋ  
 nít - caa ram dii phîi ràg nɔŋ ní  
 local speech/vocables: “nɔŋ səaw əj”  
 jaŋ tɔn dii - phlii nɔŋ səaw əj  
 baŋ məj daj kreeŋ nɔŋ səaw əj  
 jaŋ tɔn dii - phlii khaw maa ram thîi ní  
 baŋ məj daj kreeŋ loŋ ràg nɔŋ syya deŋ  
 ràg khon dii ràg nɔŋ khon dii  
 nɔŋ səj syya deŋ  
 səj sy - a de - eŋ  
 baŋ læŋ ryyŋ ciŋ

Figure 142. An example of *tanjoŋ* verse text in “Paarii Hàad Jaaw”

*Tanjoŋ* songs are traditionally improvised courtship verses, sung between a female troupe member and a young man. The man sings ‘inquiry’ verses, *thăam*, using poetic euphemisms to discover personal information of the woman such as her marital status, or her village, or to gauge her interest in him. The woman’s reply verses, *tɔɔb*, answer his questions. She may also sing *thăam* of her own for him to *tɔɔb*. Malay-speakers refer to the *thăam* as ‘selling’ a verse (*menjual*) and *tɔɔb* as its ‘purchase’ (*membeli*). This *kîaw*



*kamphon*). The Thai half of this example, *lɛɛ nɔ̀ɔŋ jaŋ dɔ̀ɔŋ rɛ̀e*, may be glossed as “see the young woman, like the rhododendron flower.”

Together, the two halves produce a rather awkward translation. However, the *wâag* is not meant to be interpreted literally. Taken as a whole it is a metaphor of Thai-Malay hybridity; it is indexical of Malay-ness for the first half and evocative of a local Thai identity (through the use of local idiom and references to local flora) in the second. More abstractly, these words may be seen to inscribe the diachronic progression from a predominantly Malay to Thai culture that characterized regional social transformations in the twentieth century, which coalesced when *rɔ̀ɔŋ ŋɛ̀ɛŋ* was a central entertainment form.

Several additional points regarding interchangeability can be made about this *wâag* and the remainder of the *tɔ̀ɔn*. The final two words that give the plant name—in this case *dɔ̀ɔŋ rɛ̀e*—are variables that may be replaced with the name of any local plant or flower, which then forms the rhyme scheme for the remainder of the *tɔ̀ɔn*. This is where a singer’s skill in improvising is often displayed and measured, with the greatest acclaim given to those who create multiple *tɔ̀ɔn* from a single type of flora before proceeding to a new one. Singers today still improvise in this manner, though it is mostly done by older generations who grew up when *rɔ̀ɔŋ ŋɛ̀ɛŋ* was still a popular social medium. Some frequently heard first *wâag* examples include names of plants that grow commonly around Andaman villages such as:

“*Buŋaa tanjɔŋ kamphon lɛɛ nɔ̀ɔŋ jaŋ tɔ̀n khrá*”...like the lemongrass

“*Buŋaa tanjɔŋ kamphon lɛɛ nɔ̀ɔŋ jaŋ tɔ̀n diipli*”...like the chili pepper plant

“*Buŋaa tanjɔŋ kamphon lɛɛ nɔ̀ɔŋ jaŋ dɔ̀ɔŋ kɛ̀ew*”...like the orange jasmine

The following illustrates a complete *tɔ̀ɔn* with the continuation of the rhyme

scheme in the second *wâag*, which may be glossed as, “...I am willing to love the sea girl [but] there is no boat to take me to find my dear.” Typically, the second *wâag* are sung in *phâag tâj*, though, depending upon the singer, they could incorporate Malay terms as well.<sup>139</sup> The underlined syllables show that the rhyme, in typical fashion, does not extend to the final syllable of the *thɔɔn*.

“*Buŋaa tanjoŋ kamphoŋ læe nɔɔŋ jaŋ dɔɔg rêe*

*Sàməg ràg khon thálee, màj mii ryya cà khee, paj hãa nɔɔŋ”*

*Thɔɔn* are typically sung in pairs with the second *thɔɔn* often beginning with *nídcaa* ‘alas’ (*nítcaŋ* in standard Thai) or some other type of exclamation. The following example shows the second *thɔɔn* seen in the earlier three transcriptions, which may be glossed as “...alas, you dance well, I love this girl, I am not afraid...falling in love with the girl in the red dress, I am not afraid, I speak the truth.” (The rhymes in this *thɔɔn* are underlined: *dii níi | kreeŋ deeŋ kreeŋ | ciŋ*—to rhyme with the subsequent *thɔɔn*.)

*Nídcaa ram dii phii ràg nɔɔŋ nii baŋ màj dâj kreeŋ*

*Loŋ ràg nɔɔŋ sãaw sãj sŷya deeŋ baŋ màj dâj kreeŋ baŋ læeŋ ryyŋ ciŋ*

## CLASSIFICATION OF *RÓŬŬ ĐÉÉĐ* TUNES

I identify thirty-three tunes of the *rɔɔŋ ñééŋ* repertoire (a list appears in Appendix B) and separate them into four categories based primarily upon their function (Category 1) or geographical sources (Categories 2 through 4). These include:

1. Ritual tunes comprising the three-song *wâj khruu* opening set and one closing tune, “Lagu Tabik;”
2. Northwest Malayan folk tunes from Perlis and Kedah;

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139. For a closer look at *tanjoŋ* poetry see Klin 1995

3. Early-twentieth-century pan-regional Malay-language theater tunes (from *bangsawan* and/or *komedie stamboel* genres), referred to here as *bangsawan* tunes;
4. Andaman region *tanjoŋ* tunes

The reason for defining Category 1 tunes with different criteria (as they are Malayan in provenance, just as Categories 2 and 3 are) is based in their distinctive ritual status that sets them apart from Malaysian *ronggeng*, which does not have this ritual practice, and the reverence that performers and audiences hold for these tunes. The provenance of *wâj khruu* tunes is somewhat ambiguous.<sup>140</sup> The first tune, “Lagu Dua,” (known as “Serampang Laut” in Malaysia and Indonesia) likely predates *bangsawan* theater, perhaps by centuries; the second, “Mak Inang,” corresponds, in name, to several northwest Malayan and Sumatran dances; and the third, “Burung Putih,” has a namesake in both the *asli*-style as well as the *bangsawan* era.

#### *Distinctions between of Malay- and Thai-speaking Repertoires*

Malay and Thai-speaking *ρώχη ηέεη* communities have somewhat different musical repertoires, partly based in the different tunes that they play, but mostly in the frequency and distribution of particular tunes among the aforementioned category types. Groups today do not play the complete inventory of *ρώχη ηέεη* tunes in a single performance, and a number of them do not possess even half of the total number of extant tunes. The following two graphs—based in my field recordings—illustrate some of these differences. Figure 144 compares the average number of songs for Malay- and Thai-

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140. Provenance, in this context refers to a tune’s source just prior to its entry into *ρώχη ηέεη*, rather than its often indiscernible origins that may have been in Malaya, Indonesia, or elsewhere.

speaking groups (shown as dark bars), and the average number of songs performed only once on a given occasion (shown as lightly shaded bars), based in my field recordings. These data only account for (extended) performances of between eleven and thirty-three tunes (the *ῥόχη ηέεη kaalāa* type mentioned in Chapter 1) and exclude the brief three-to-five-song cultural shows (*ῥόχη ηέεη weethii*) which provide fewer insights into the breadth and nature of *ῥόχη ηέεη* repertoires.

Malay-speaking groups may be seen to average around sixteen songs per performance, of which fifteen are discrete tunes. In other words, they rarely repeat tunes in an evening. Thai-speaking groups average around twenty-two songs per performance, of which approximately eleven are discrete tunes, meaning that in any evening, about half of their performance consists of repeated tunes. Later in this chapter, I will show that their repeated tunes are limited to a few popular ones.

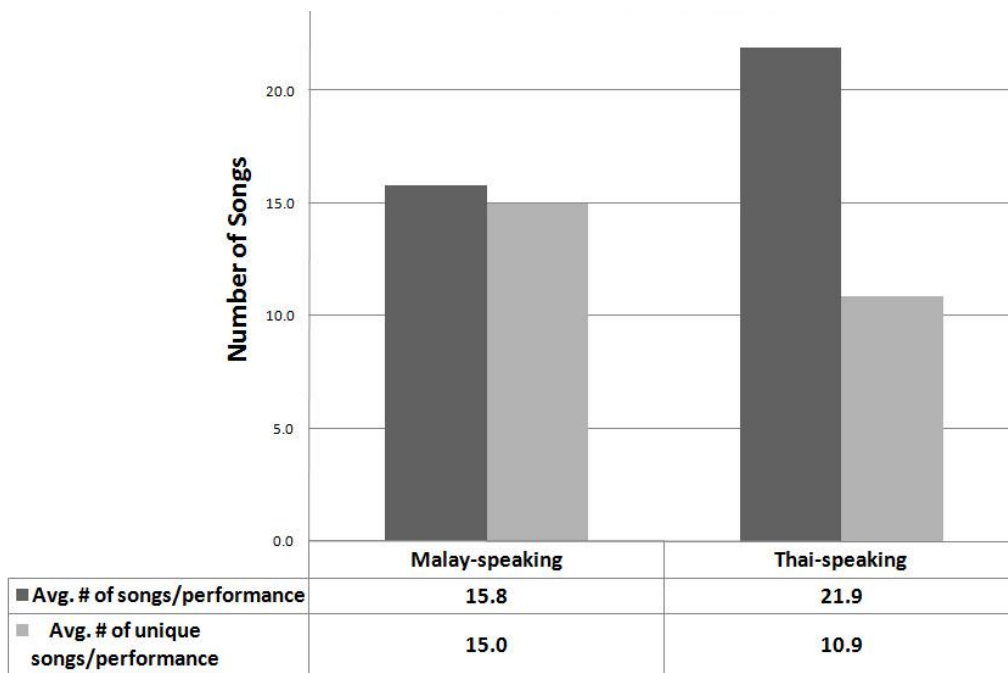


Figure 144. Average number of songs and songs performed once in a (long) performance:

## Malay- and Thai-speaking groups

The frequency of occurrence for a particular *tanjōn* tune may be seen as belonging to either a *first-*, *second-*, or *third-*tier. First-tier tunes are played multiple times in a performance, second-tier tunes appear at least once in a performance, and third-tier tunes are those that appear less than one time per performance. Appendix B carries indications of the tiers of certain songs among Thai-speaking groups.

Figure 145 shows that *bangsawan* and *tanjōn* tunes comprise the largest respective percentages of either Malay- or Thai-speaking groups' repertoires. Malay-speaking groups have predominantly *bangsawan*-style repertoires and only a few *tanjōn* tunes; whereas Thai-speaking groups have an almost inverse relationship, with a repertoire that is nearly half composed of *tanjōn* tunes.

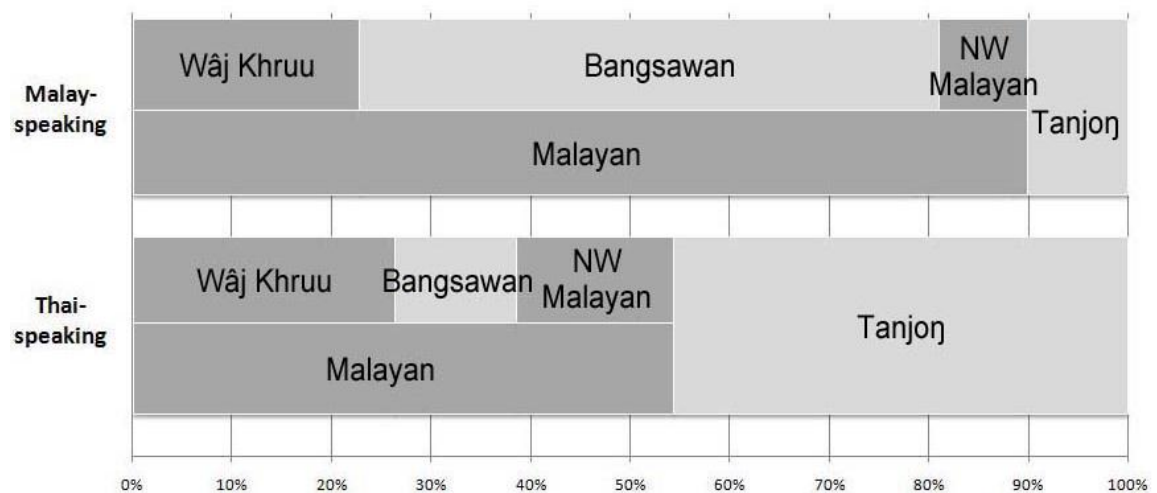


Figure 145. Average presence of four song types in *rōḥn ḡēēn* performance: Malay- and Thai-speaking groups

## RITUAL REPERTOIRE: *WĀJ KHRUU* AND “LAGU TABIK”

Each *rōḥn ḡēēn* performance begins with a ritual instrumental set called *wāj khruu*

(‘saluting the teacher,’ also called *buka panggung* ‘opening the performance space’ in Malay). This set comprises three tunes—“Lagu Dua,” “Mak Inang,” and “Burung Putih,” played in that precise order—and is performed by musicians and dancers who are not allowed to sing or dance with patrons. Also included in this category is “Lagu Tabik,” a closing song performed at night’s end—also without patron participation—in which performers bid farewell. As briefly mentioned in *Categories of Carḡwà Róḡḡ Déeḡḡ* in Chapter 6, these three *wâj khruu* tunes and “Lagu Tabik” are differentiated by their rhythms, with each one belonging to a discrete category. Figure 146 illustrates these differences, showing side-by-side transcriptions of parts of those tunes and their rhythm accompaniments (closer looks at these tunes follows below).

“Lagu Dua”

violin

jyn

lāk

2/4

3

3

3

3

5

Detailed description: This musical score is for the piece "Lagu Dua". It consists of three staves. The top staff is for violin, the middle for jyn, and the bottom for lāk. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The violin part features a melody with several triplet markings. The jyn part has a rhythmic accompaniment with triplet markings. The lāk part has a rhythmic accompaniment with triplet markings and a final note marked with a '5'.

“Mak Inang”

violin

jyn

lāk

2/4

Detailed description: This musical score is for the piece "Mak Inang". It consists of three staves. The top staff is for violin, the middle for jyn, and the bottom for lāk. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The violin part features a melody with a dotted note. The jyn part has a rhythmic accompaniment. The lāk part has a rhythmic accompaniment with accents.

“Burung Putih”

violin

jyn

lāk

2/4

Detailed description: This musical score is for the piece "Burung Putih". It consists of three staves. The top staff is for violin, the middle for jyn, and the bottom for lāk. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 2/4. The violin part features a melody with a dotted note and a slur. The jyn part has a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs. The lāk part has a rhythmic accompaniment with accents.

“Lagu Tabik”

violin

jyn

lāk

4/4

Detailed description: This musical score is for the piece "Lagu Tabik". It consists of three staves. The top staff is for violin, the middle for jyn, and the bottom for lāk. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The violin part features a melody with a slur. The jyn part has a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs. The lāk part has a rhythmic accompaniment with slurs and accents.

Figure 146. Examples of melody and rhythm in the *wâj khruu* and “Lagu Tabik”

While the origins of the *wâj khruu* songs lie in Malayan folk music and theater, their aggregation as part of a reverential opening ritual is distinctive to Andaman *róŋŋ* *ŋééŋ*. *Ronggeng* in Malaysia and Sumatra is occasionally performed with fixed or semi-fixed opening piece or pieces, but not in a ritualistic manner or with proscriptions on singing or dancing. In Perlis and Sàtuun for example, *canggung* groups in the past often began with “Canggung” (also called “Ala Canggung”), known as their *sembah guru* song (a direct translation of *wâj khruu*), while in Kedah and Penang, *ronggeng* groups played “Serampang Laut” (the source of “Lagu Dua”) to *buka panggung*, or ‘open the stage.’ In North Sumatra, *ronggeng* groups play a three-song opening set of mixed styles called *bismillah lagu* (*bismillah* ‘in the name of God,’ being a common Islamic invocation spoken at the start of any type of action). However, none of those openings has an equivalent ritual dimension to the *wâj khruu róŋŋ* *ŋééŋ*, which is closer in practice to other ritual openings in Thailand such as those found in folk theater forms, *ramwoŋ* social dance (which also has a *wâj khruu* opening set), and Buddhist performances (see Wong 2001).

The *wâj khruu* is the first musical, but second actual event in a performance, following the blessing ceremony called *bàək rooŋ* ‘the opening of the performance space.’ The *bàəg rooŋ* is conducted by a male troupe member, usually its leader or violinist, in a discrete manner, somewhere within the *rooŋ*. Preparations for the *bàək rooŋ* begin about fifteen minutes prior to the performance, when the host assembles several items for the group leader that commonly include a candle, cigarettes or loose tobacco, several pieces of betel leaf and areca nut (*màag phluu*), and one or two hundred *bàat* (equivalent to a few U.S. dollars) as an honorarium for the ritualist. These items are placed on a small

plate as shown in Figure 147.



Figure 147. An offering plate for *bàək rooŋ*

In the *rooŋ*, the *ramánaa* drums are set side-by-side on a pair of chairs or on a mat spread upon the ground, with the violin laid across the top of one or both drums (see Figure 148). The ritual leader sits facing the instruments with the offering plate placed directly in front of him. He lights the candle and entreats the local *câuthîi* ‘guardian spirits’ and/or God, to protect the performers and patrons from malevolent forces that evening with an invocation, such as the following directed at Kò Cam’s avian *câuthîi*, Tok Burung: “*Tok Burung maa raj nɔɔ, maa chûaj khon dîawkan dîaw ràgsǎa, yàhâj panhǎa kàədkhÿn,*” meaning roughly, “Tok Burung [bird spirit] come here, come help and protect us, do not allow troubles to arise.”<sup>141</sup>

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141. Personal correspondence Aalaj Khrajbut



Figure 148. Violin and *ramánaa* arranged for the *bàək rooŋ*

Following this recitation, he glides his hands upward along the outside of the drums, and lightly strikes both membranes simultaneously, repeats the motion two more times, then concludes with a quick wave of his hand to extinguish the candle (using one's breath is proscribed). If there is a gong, he strikes it several times. Some ritualists briefly bathe the instruments in smoke from the flame as well. The instruments are then taken by their respective players to prepare for the *wâj khruu*.

*Wâj khruu* tunes are briefer than the average social dance round. Each one usually lasts about one minute or three melodic cycles, with only a short pause between songs. The dancers perform separate routines for each tune characterized by three movements: they dance side to side, in place for "Lagu Dua," step forward and back in "Mak Inang," and lower their bodies toward the ground with bended knees in "Burung Putih."

Most *tanjong* dancers are not acknowledged for their dancing skills as much as they are for their costumes. In the *wâj khruu* they wear a 'traditional' Malay-style costume (*chúd khèeg*) consisting of a long-sleeved lace blouse and long, floral-printed

batik sarong. Upon completion of the three tunes, they return to their seats at the back of the *rooy*, disrobe their outer layers, and emerge in revealing attire (the photos in Figure 149 show the three steps in their costume change).

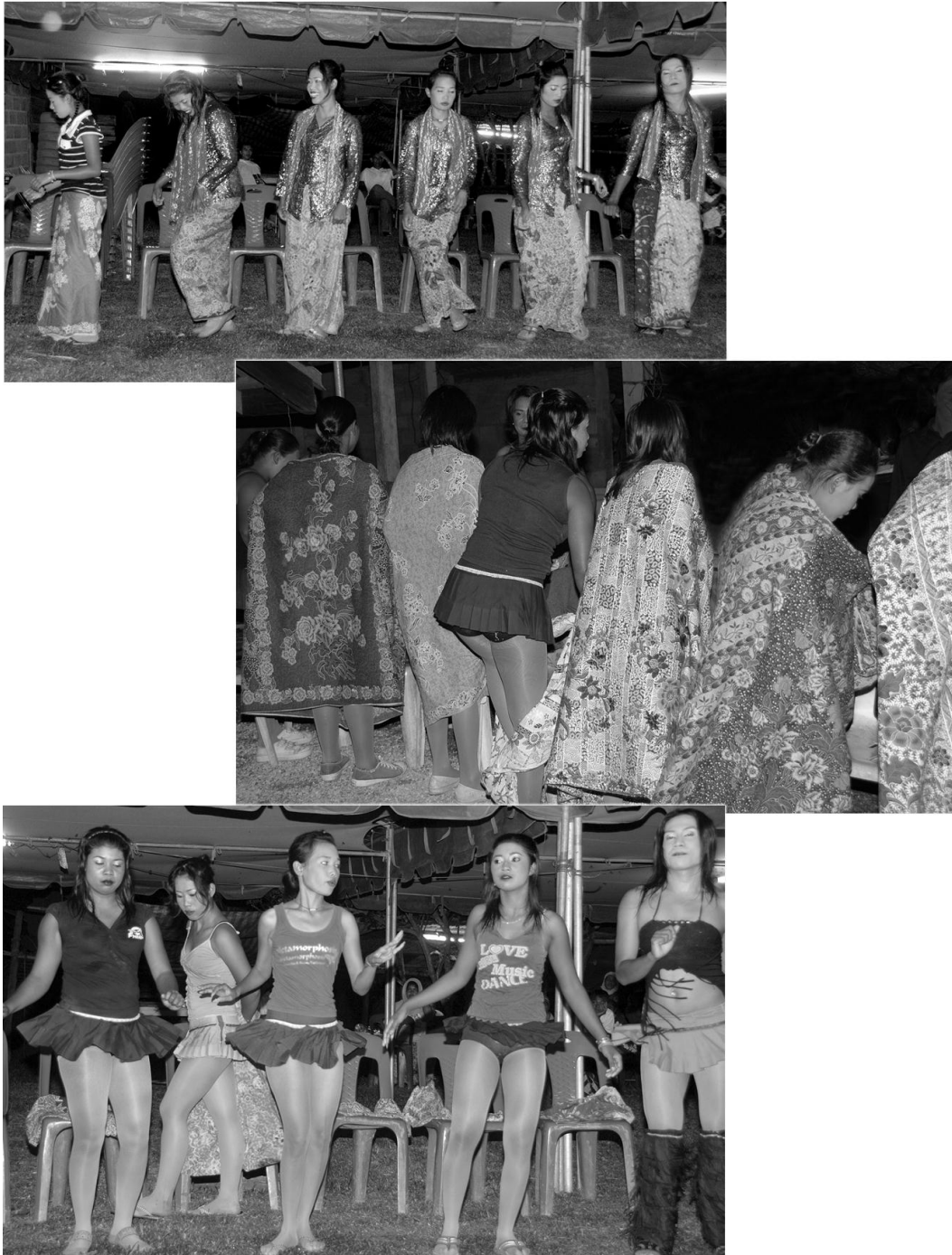


Figure 149. Modern *róoy* *héeey* dancers in *chúd khèeg* ‘Malay-style costumes’ (top),

changing clothes after the *wâj khruu* (middle), and in their social dance attire (bottom)

### *Lagu Dua*

“Lagu Dua” is the first *wâj khruu* melody and an occasionally played social dance tune. As one of several songs with *lagu dua* in their titles, this melody is sometimes called “Lagu Dua Chəəj-Chəəj,” the *regular* “Lagu Dua.” In Malaysia and Sumatra *lagu dua* (*lagu* meaning ‘song’ and *dua* meaning ‘two’) is a general term for any melody accompanied by a particular ‘two beat’ or ‘two step’ dance rhythm, and is synonymous with the *joget* (see the description of *caŋwà dua* in Chapter 6). The title predates the twentieth century; John Anderson encountered a song by that name (“Lagudua”) during his travels through eastern Sumatra in 1813 (Anderson 1826:291). However, common titles separated by over a century are no indication of a common melody, as numerous examples of similarly titled, yet melodically distinct *bangsawan*-era recordings confirm.

Extant recordings, newspaper articles/advertisements, films, and oral accounts from the pre-war years show that *lagu dua/ronggeng/joget* songs were propagated widely in Malaya and the Dutch East Indies; and in the Andaman, oral accounts tell us that many more *lagu dua* tunes arrived than have survived into the present. Abu Qasim is said to have played and taught dozens of them to Lantaa’s first *ruun*, including songs that have not only disappeared from *róəŋ ŋéəŋ*, but are rarely heard in Malaysia today, such as: “Lagu Dua Thêet” (“Indian Lagu Dua”), “Lagu Dua Singapore,” “Lagu Dua Si Kota Bharu” (named for the royal capital of Kelantan), “Lagu Dua Buah Sukun” (“The Breadfruit Lagu Dua,” typical to Perlis), and “Saliwai” (a Hindustani themed song). Ultimately, the overall narrowing of *róəŋ ŋéəŋ* repertoires saw a corresponding decrease in the diversity of *dua* melodies, leaving the average group with just two or three.

The following compares a common version of “Lagu Dua” (performed by Phỳyg Khĩausòd) with a northwest Malayan rendition of “Joget Serampang Laut” from a 2008 field recording in Perlis (a version that is also heard on a couple of mid-twentieth-century gramophone discs). The two melodies are similar and at times identical, performed in the same key signatures and violin positions. They have identical binary forms (AA’BB) that end with a quick tempo coda (*tarai* or *tas*), except in the *wâj khruu* where “Lagu Dua” is not performed with a coda. The dance involves general side-to-side, two-step motions (as described earlier in this chapter) until the *tarai* when dancers have a springier step, almost hopping on one foot, while the other foot’s toes tap the ground slightly to the rear on beat one, and then the foot crosses the body in front to tap the heel on beat two, reversing feet each measure.

“Lagu Dua” begins with a violin ostinato lasting two or more measures (Figure 150), which cues the *rammánaa* drummers to the song’s tempo and metre and, as the first musical event, alerts the audience to the beginning of the performance. The triplet-eighths figure is a shuffle-like rhythm played as an alternation between unstopped first and second strings and a stopped c#4 on the second string (i). This produces a drone-like texture not heard in “Joget Serampang Laut,” which instead begins with an ascending-descending pair of triplets that rise in a tonic major arpeggio, and descend stepwise (see first measure in bottom of Figure 151).

The first A phrases of “Lagu Dua” and “Joget Serampang Laut” (Figure 151) contain pairs of falling intervals that frame their beginnings and endings, and imply progressions from subdominant to dominant levels of an A Major scale: the first descends from f#5 to d5 (i), and the second falls a perfect fifth or perfect fourth to e5 (ii). The

second A phrases (Figure 152) also begin with downward major third skips (i) and, after lengthier periods, they end with a stepwise descent to the tonic (iii). B section melodies (Figure 153) oscillate between tonic and dominant pitch levels, with less melodic complexity, and within a narrower note range.

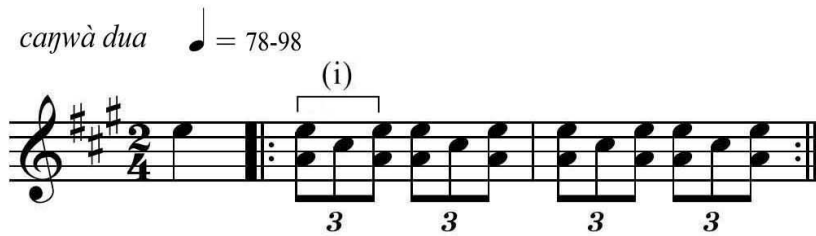


Figure 150. Violin introduction to “Lagu Dua,” Phỳyg Khĩausòd

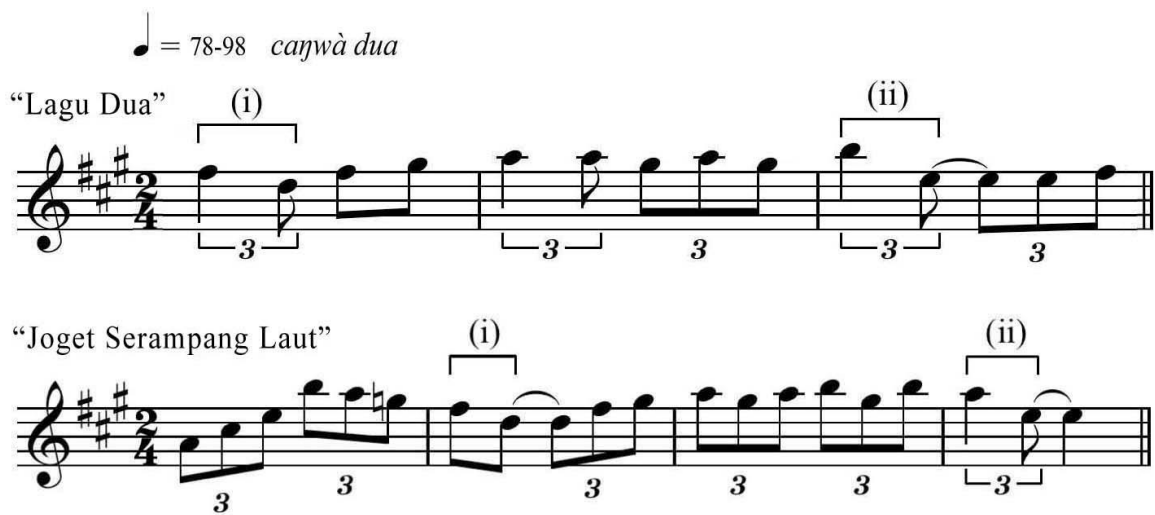


Figure 151. First phrases (A) of “Lagu Dua” and “Joget Serampang Laut”

“Lagu Dua”

“Joget Serampang Laut”

Figure 152. Second phrases (A') of “Lagu Dua” and “Joget Serampang Laut”

“Lagu Dua”

“Joget Serampang Laut”

Figure 153. B-section phrases of “Lagu Dua” and “Joget Serampang Laut”

## *Mak Inang*

“Mak Inang” (or “Mak Inang Chəəj-Chəəj,” the *regular* “Mak Inang”) follows “Lagu Dua” as the second *wâj khruu* song with no intervening break. It is an audience favorite that Thai-speaking groups frequently perform as many as two or three additional times during social dance sections. *Mak inang*, which is Malay for ‘nursemaid’ or ‘female attendant,’ typically in a royal or noble context, has no other meaning in Thailand than being the title of three *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɳéɳɳ* tunes (the third is an infrequently played “Mak Inang Lembut”—“The Soft Mak Inang,” (see Appendix C). Malay- and Thai-speaking groups play different versions of this tune, both of which have the same name: the former play a tune known in Malaysia as “Mak Inang Tua,” whereas the latter play a distinct melody that has no Malaysian counterpart.<sup>142</sup>

The “Mak Inang” dance is a general movement as described earlier, but instead of a side to side motion, the dancer moves each foot forward on beats ‘one’ and ‘two,’ then back in the same rhythm.

The two *wâj khruu* “Mak Inang” tunes are common in terms of their style: their melodies are almost constantly in motion, and both are driven by a quick, non-syncopated *caŋwà mak inang* rhythm. However, the following analyses show their melodic forms to be distinct.

The *tanjong*-style “Mak Inang” melody (Figure 154, transcribed from a performance by Phỳyg Khĩausòd) is comprised of two approximately equal sections separated by a two-measure ostinato. These consist of two descending motions: an A

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142. The late Kedah musician Abdul Abdullah told me that the Andaman “Mak Inang” melody sounded like a postwar-era tune he knew as “Mak Inang Perlis,” information that I was unable to corroborate elsewhere.

section that moves from the tonic to dominant levels, and a B section that descends an octave from the upper to lower tonics. Its A major scale contains both g# and g natural—the former providing a ‘leading tone’ to tonicize the upper octave, while the latter facilitates descending movements to the dominant or tonic levels. The two phrases are separated by a drone-like ostinato played on unstopped first and second strings, indicated by (i), whose duration is determined by the violinist when performed as a regular (i.e., non-*wâj khruu*) dance tune in conjunction with the singer’s entry. A four-measure interlude follows the B section that briefly settles on b4, the second scale level, then returns to the upper-octave tonic where it oscillates among upper and lower neighbors (ii), prolongating the final cadence.

Máwii Tháleelýg’s “Mak Inang (Tua),” Figure 155, is played like its Malaysian counterpart. It has a binary form melody for which the B section loosely transposes the A section a perfect fourth below. (Transposed-melody songs in *tanjong* repertoire are discussed later in this chapter.) The melodic reductions in Figure 156 compare the two *róonj héej* versions of “Mak Inang” to show how they differ: “Mak Inang” has two descending melodic contours that contrast with the  $\hat{2} - \hat{5} - \hat{1}$  sequences of “Mak Inang Tua.”

*caṅwà mak inang* ♩ = 118-120



**A**

**B**

**Interlude**

Figure 154. “Mak Inang,” Phỳyg Khǎusòd

*caywà mak inang* ♩ = 102-104

**A**

**B**

Figure 155. “Mak Inang (Tua),” Mávii Tháleelýg

**A**                      **B**

“Mak Inang”

“Mak Inang” (Tua)

D:                      A:

Figure 156. Reductions of “Mak Inang” and “Mak Inang (Tua)” melodies

*Burung Putih*

“Burung Putih” (“White Bird”), an abbreviation of the Malay title “Burung Putih Terbang Melayang” (“White Bird Glides in Flight”), is the third and final *wâj khruu*

piece, and one that is infrequently performed outside of the *wâj khruu*. Unlike the more common *asli*-style version of “Burung Putih” found in Malaysia today, the one performed in *róçŋ ηέεη* more resembles a 1926 or ’27 Malayan gramophone recording of the tune by Amat Pahlawan and Singapore’s Merry Opera. There are of a couple of Central Thai classical/court melodies with ‘white bird’ (*nóg khăau*) in their titles, but otherwise they have no relationship to the *bangsawan* or *róçŋ ηέεη* tunes.

Its Malay lyrics, though not sung in the *wâj khruu*, carry an implicit message, “*burung putih, bangkit menari*” (white bird, rise up and dance), which as the third and final *wâj khruu* tune, invites patrons to “rise up” and join in the forthcoming social dance. The “Burung Putih” dance begins with a general side-to-side movement as described earlier, following which—at approximately the end of (ii) in Figure 157—male and female dancers plant one foot forward and lower themselves until their shins are parallel to the ground and their posteriors come to rest on their raised heels. Their torsos remain erect and arms still make the same motions until they rise at the end of the melodic strophe.

Although the *róçŋ ηέεη* version is played to a moderate to quick *caŋwà paarii*, its melody and accompanying dance are referred to as *nîm nuan* (soft, gentle)—likely a reflection of prolonged tones that imbue it with a slower feel than the two preceding *wâj khruu* tunes, and the fact that it resembles another slow tune in the *róçŋ ηέεη* repertoire, “Siti Payung.”

A comparison of Hâamá’s version of this tune (Figure 157) with the aforementioned gramophone recording (Figure 158) shows several corresponding areas. Even though Hâamá’s rendition might appear distinct to the casual listener, both tunes

have A sections that oscillate between a tonic pitch and lower neighbor, and B sections comprised of four different phrases (indicated as i-iv in both examples) whose melodic contours are nearly identical in the two recordings (if not in style).

As mentioned above, the *róŋŋ h́ééŋ* version corresponds to certain areas of “Siti Payung” (examined in the *Bangsawan* category later in this chapter): both omit a cadence on the fourth degree of the scale (d5, which appears at the end of the second B phrase in the Merry Opera example); they share prolonged tonic pitches in their A sections; and pivot on a flattened seventh degree in transition to their B sections. “Siti Payung,” however, is performed with *caŋwà cháa* rather than *paarii*.

*caywà paarii* ♩ = 112-114

The musical score consists of six staves of music in treble clef, 2/4 time, with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 112-114. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The score is annotated with four bracketed sections labeled (i), (ii), (iii), and (iv). Section (i) is a slur over a sequence of eighth notes. Section (ii) is a slur over a sequence of eighth notes, with two triplets marked with a '3' and a bracket. Section (iii) is a slur over a sequence of eighth notes. Section (iv) is a slur over a sequence of eighth notes, with some notes marked with a slash and a dot, possibly indicating a specific articulation or performance instruction. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Figure 157, “Burung Putih,” Hâamá Cìtryya

Figure 158. “Burong Puteh,” Amat Pahlawan and Merry Opera (transposed from F major)

*Lagu Tabik*

“Lagu Tabik,” also known as “Lagu Tabik Encik,” is a standard *ρώση ηέση* closing song for a *ρώση ηέση* occasion. Its provenance is unidentified. The song text, provided below, expresses “farewell” with a parting sentiment common to this region, begging the patrons’ forgiveness.

*Tabik la encik, tabik la tuan*

*Farewell mister, farewell sir*

*kami berdeengan tuan la sekelian*

*we (bid farewell) to all*

*Kita la bermain kawan berkawan*

*We delight together in friendly rapport*

*yang mana salah minta meampunkan*

*and beg forgiveness for any*

*faults*<sup>143</sup>

The Orak Lawoi “Lagu Tabik” dance is a line dance that begins with all of the dancers making a long stride forward with their left feet and bended knees, while their right hands rotate and push forward in the same motion, ending on the gong beat (or absent a gong, the first beat of a two-measure section). The second motion is a return to the first position with the opposite hands still held in front, and the opposite feet stepping backwards in the same long stride. They conclude the song (and evening) with a *wâj* and slight bow to the patrons.

The eight-measure melody comprises two sections that, in reduction, may be seen to have similar repeated descending motions,  $\hat{3}$  to  $\hat{2}$ , that end on the dominant level in the first section, and the tonic in the second (i.e.,  $\hat{3} \hat{2} \hat{3} \hat{2} \hat{5} | \hat{3} \hat{2} \hat{3} \hat{2} \hat{1}$ ).

---

143. Transcription of “Lagu Tabik ” song texts with my translation

*caywà cháa* ♩ = 90

Ta-bik la en\_ cik ta-bik la tu\_ an ka-mi ber-de-  
ngan tu - an la se - ke - lian ki - ta la ber - ma -  
in ka - wan ber - ka\_ wan yang ma - na sa -  
lah min - ta meng-am - pun\_ kan

Figure 159. “Lagu Tabik,” Lat Khlōṅdii

#### NORTHWEST MALAYAN FOLK REPERTOIRE

In the early decades of the twentieth century, northwest Malayan folk music was an amalgamation of styles introduced by immigrant communities and modern media that over time developed into distinct local forms. Musical influences arrived from Malaya’s east coast with *makyung*, which inspired a local form known as *makyung laut* (a significant antecedent for subsequent local forms such as *canggung* and *hadrah*), *bangsawan* troupes from Penang, and traveling and immigrant *nāṅ təlun*, *manoora*, and *likee paa* practitioners from Siam.

Five extant *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* tunes may be seen as derived from that region: “Jaṅṅṅ,” “Sinaadoṅ,” “Sayang La,” “Lagu Dua Pálít,” and “Ayam Didik.” Though these as a group do not constitute a common style, they have contemporaneous counterparts in

northwest Malaya, and are not melodically or formally similar to music of the *bangsawan* theater. The following examines these tunes and their Malayan counterparts.

### *Jaanoon*

“Jaanoon” (yaa-ngong) is a distinctive variation of the iconic Perlis song and dance, “Canggung” (see Chapter 1), and one of the most popular *róonh* *héeh* songs, often played or requested several times during an evening. In its modern form (by *ramwoh*-style groups) it often elicits controversy because of its sexually suggestive dances in which scantily clad female performers shake and gyrate wildly, often within inches of their male patrons—a relatively recent innovation that locals attribute to the influence of *ramwoh*. In the past (and among more reserved troupes today, such as those in Râamàad and on the islands), dance movements were less exaggerated, and brief moments of proximity between men and women during each melodic chorus were playful moments when the man attempted to catch a whiff of his partner as they danced by each other.

The “Jaanoon” melody has a verse and refrain section, which may be seen to unfold in five parts—indicated by i through v in Figure 160 through Figure 163 and described below. Those figures also show how violin and voice follow a common melody in loosely similar fashion, and how melodies and rhythmic elements (including main patterns and *loh lûug*, as described in Chapter 6) combine. The five sections of “Jaanoon” include:

- (i) The melody begins with an ostinato within a narrow ambit (a major third interval) centered on a tonic e5 and upper and lower neighbors, f#5 and d5. During this part, and continuing in (ii-iv), dancers shake their hips with their feet planted firmly on the ground, arms held straight or bent,

moving along with their torso. Among *ramwoŋ*-style groups this movement is often greatly exaggerated, with dancers' miniskirts rising up to reveal their undergarments. The vocalist enters after several measures and the *rammánaa* mute their resonance by not rebounding the dominant hand with each stroke and by resting the non-dominant hand on the membrane.

- (ii) A stepwise figure—d5-c#5-d5-e5-f#5—expands the ambit to a perfect fourth. Through two or more iterations, it generates tension in approach to the climax. Drummers and dancers continue in the previous manner;
- (iii) A series of eighth-notes within an ambit of a minor seventh interval dip and rise to a prolongation at a5 and a brief melodic climax where the violin melody reaches up to b5. The *rammánaa* play with increased density, adding even subdivisions to their patterns (see *caŋwà jaŋŋooŋ* in Chapter 6), just before a rhythmic climax in the following measure;
- (iv) The melody descends to the lower tonic and concludes with a signature cadential figure (a4-c#5-d5) that returns to e5. This coincides with a *loŋ lûug* rhythmic climax and crescendo that begins as a syncopated figure in the *lâk* drum and becomes even eight strokes in both drums. On the last eighth beat, the dancers kick one knee up in front of their bodies. The *ramwoŋ*-type female dancer makes this kick an aggressive rebuff to her male partner, coming quite close to his pelvis or abdomen. Dancers of other group types only raise their knees slightly;
- (v) The refrain is sung with a fixed text, “*jaŋŋooŋ, jaŋŋooŋ, ala jaŋŋooŋ la*

*laa la laa læj*” (see Figure 163 and Figure 163), which apart from dialectical differences, is identical to the Perlis refrain “*ala canggung*” (shown in Figure 165). The violin plays a rough unison with the sung melody. Following the kick, dancers walk in a short forward and backward ‘stroll.’ Drummers return to the first stroke pattern, but play with undamped strokes on the first and last eight beats of each measure. Following the sung part, the violin and drummers return to the ostinato and muted rhythms of (i).

A 1952 recording of “Ala Changgong” (sung by Aman Belon, Zaleka, and Thamby Chik and transcribed in Figure 164 and Figure 165) provides an early comparison to the *ρώχη ηέεη* version, though one that appeared more than a decade after the latter was established in Thailand. It shares a similar verse-refrain form with “Jaanooṅ” though the two differ somewhat melodically and in singing style. Unlike in “Jaanooṅ,” where one person sings an entire verse, in “Canggung” a singer exchanges phrases with a partner or a chorus. The standard “Canggung” dance is often performed as part of Malaysia’s traditional dance repertoire and does not have any of the bawdy features of its *ρώχη ηέεη* counterpart.

Though “Jaanooṅ” and “Ala Changgong” differ melodically, they share similar stylistic characteristics: (1) they generate tension through repetition confined to a narrow note range; (2) reach their climaxes as that range expands upward; and (3) descend and then return to their tonic pitches from below. Each melody, however, transits through these processes in a different manner. Whereas the fundamental structures of A and B sections in “Ala Changgong” may be reduced to movements between  $\hat{2}$  and  $\hat{1}$ , with slight

internal variations, “Jaaṅooṅ” ascends (in a retrograde of that movement) from  $\hat{1}$  to  $\hat{2}$ .

“Jaaṅooṅ” and “Ala Changgong” differ in terms of their pitch content and melodic figures. Both begin with three-note sets of pitches, expand to four-note sets in subsequent phrases, and then expand further—the former encompasses a heptatonic set, while the latter grows to a pentatonic one. The two tunes each have stepwise three-note melodic figures that appear in their verses and refrains, but in “Jaaṅooṅ” those notes are separated by two whole tones (d5 e5 f#5, appearing at the point labeled ii in Figure 160 and Figure 161), and in “Ala Changgong,” they are separated by half and whole tones (b4 c#5 d5 e5, Figure 164 and Figure 165). In “Jaaṅooṅ,” the tonic pitch’s lower neighbor lies a whole tone below at d5, whereas in “Ala Changgong” it is a half tone below at c#5.

The areas that most distinguish “Jaaṅooṅ” from “Ala Changgong” are their pitch contents, the ostinato in “Jaaṅooṅ,” and their different singing and dance styles. It is not clear when the former developed into a distinct tune; whether this occurred as *rṓṓṅ ḡḡḡṅ* became performed in Thai-speaking communities (as some informants have suggested), or whether it originated in *makyung laut* (as suggested by Rejab), and thus appeared in a varied form in southwest Thailand prior to *rṓṓṅ ḡḡḡṅ*.

caηwà jaηooη ♩ = 108-110

(i)

A (i)

buu - ηaa tan - joη      kam - phoη læε ncoη  
 nít - caa ram dii      phîi ràg ncoη níi

Figure 160. “Jaηooη,” introduction and verse, with *jyn* drum

(ii)

jaŋ tòn dii - phlii  
baŋ màj dâj kreeŋ

(ii)

jaŋ tòn di - phlii  
baŋ màj dâj kreeŋ

(iii)

jaŋ tòn dii - phlii khâw maa ram thîi bâan ní  
baŋ màj dâj kreeŋ loŋ ràg nõoŋ sǎaw sǎj sȳya dæeŋ

Figure 161. “Jaanoon,” verse (continued)

(iii) (iv)

ràg nɔoŋ khon dii sǎj syŷ - a  
 baŋ màj dâj kreeŋ baŋ læeŋ ryyŋ

+ + + + + + + +

**B**

(refrain)

dæeŋ jaa - ŋooŋ jaa - ŋooŋ a-la jaa-  
 ciŋ

> + o > + o > + o > + o

Figure 162. “Jaanooŋ,” verse and refrain

ŋooŋ la laa laa leej

o x + o x + +

C

+ x + + x + +

Figure 163. “Jaanooŋ,” refrain and interlude

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of six staves:

- Staff 1:** Starts with a boxed 'A' above the first measure. It contains a first ending marked with a double bar line and repeat dots, with a '2' and an accent (^) above the second measure.
- Staff 2:** Continues the melodic line with rests in the first and third measures.
- Staff 3:** Labeled 'singer #2', it provides a vocal line with a melodic pattern.
- Staff 4:** Continues the melodic line with rests in the first measure.
- Staff 5:** Continues the melodic line.
- Staff 6:** Labeled 'refrain', it features a melodic line with a '1' and an accent (^) above the fourth measure. The lyrics 'a - la cang -' are written below the staff.

Figure 164. A section of “Ala Changgong”

gung a - la cang-gung a - la cang-gung

gung la la la la lei a - la cang -

gung a - la cang-gung a - la cang-

gung cang-gung la la la la lei

Figure 165. Refrain section of “Ala Changgong”

### *Sinaadoon*

“Sinaadoon,” from the Malay term for a ballad-like melody, *senandung*, does not have a literal meaning in Thai, but to the *ρώνη ηέση* community it connotes a soft and mellifluous *nîm nuan* style. It is usually played at least once in Thai-speaking groups’ performances.

The dance consists of graceful movements performed standing in place or with the feet moving. Male and female dance pairs conclude each strophe—in tandem with the fixed refrain lyrics “*sinaadoon sajan*”—by bending their left legs to the rear, torsos upright, right legs relatively straight, and toes touching the ground to their left rear, to lower themselves to the ground, while gently waving both of their arms to the right and left sides (one side for each measure) and bending their heads sideways.

The refrain lyrics point to the tune’s origin in a nearly forgotten Perlis folk melody called “Senandung Sayang” (“Love Ballad”), which bears no relationship to a pre-war gramophone recording of “Sinandong Sayang” (or other tunes with “Sinandong” in their titles, such as “Dayang Sinandong”).

The Figure 166 transcription of “Sinaadoon” (performed by Máwii Tháleelýg) shows a melody comprised of two sections that do not have a strong cadence to separate them. The A section begins as a three-note stepwise ascent to g5 and then makes two gradual descents, each emphasizing the same three structural pitches g5-f#5-d5, or  $\hat{4} \hat{3} \hat{1}$  in a D major scale (see reduction in Figure 167). Section B moves toward a final cadence on the tonic:  $\hat{2} \hat{6} \hat{2} \hat{1}$ .

Romli Mahmud of Perlis learned “Senandung Sayang” from his father Mahmud, who told him that this tune originated in *makyung laut*.<sup>144</sup> He remembers the melody as essentially the same as what he heard in my field recordings of “Sinaadoon” and referred me to a similar melody performed by Mahmud (with *gendang terinai* ensemble and a singer) in the 1959 Malayan film “Mashuri,” for a scene depicting a Malay *berendoi* ‘lullaby’ ritual in a nineteenth-century Langkawi village (transcribed in Figure 168 with correspondences to “Sinaadoon” shown with same numbering). Similarities between “Sinaadoon” and Mahmud’s *berendoi* melody are evident in their beginning ascending melodies (i), their emphasis of upper range notes before tailing downward at the end (ii), and the appearances of upper neighbors to the most prominent high pitches (iii). Although the *berendoi* melody appears somewhat late in the chronology of *róçŋ h́éŋŋ*’s development, it offers some evidence of a nexus between lullabies and popular/folk tunes

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144. Romli’s father, Mahmud bin Wahid was the subject of “Awang Belanga: Penglipur Lara Dari Perlis” (Mustafa 1987).



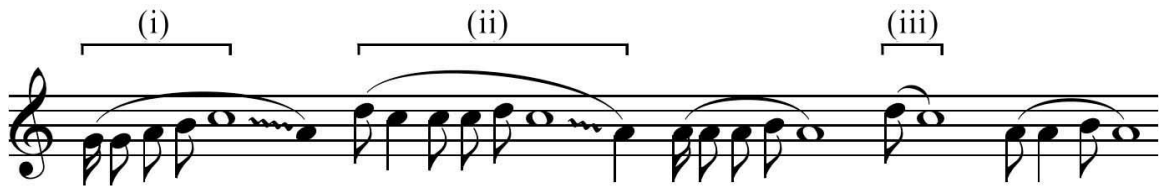


Figure 168. Sung *berendoi* melody from film *Mahsuri* (1959)

### *Sayang La*

“Sayang La” (“My Love”), according to Lat Khlōṅdii, originates in a prewar Malayan song, “Layang-Layang” (“Crested Treeswift”),<sup>145</sup> which was once performed on Lantaa but has since disappeared from Andaman repertoires. Phỳyg Khĩausòd, who has never heard of “Layang-Layang,” says that he first heard “Sayang La” in the 1960s, performed by two Orak Lawoi performers, Bunterm and Sen. It is very popular among Thai-speaking performers, who typically played it at least once per evening and believe it to be of local provenance. It does not have a standard dance.

Lat’s melody (Figure 169) and Hâamá’s rendition of “Sayang La” (Figure 170) generally correspond in their alternation between dominant and tonic levels, as (i) through (v) in both transcriptions indicate. The hallmark of the tune is the refrain that concludes each strophe: “*sayang la la la la...*” (“my love, la la la...”), which was adapted from the ending of “Layang-Layang,” “*layang la la la la...*” The remaining notes of the refrain may be sung as either ‘la’ or with a reiteration of the immediately preceding *pantun* or *tanjoṅ* verse.

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145. *Hemiprocne coronata*

*caṅwà paarii* ♩ = 93-98

(i) (ii)

(i) (ii)

(iii) (iv)

(v) la-yang

la la la\_ la la la

Figure 169. “Layang-Layang,” Lat Khlōṅdii (transposed from D major)

*caṅwà paarii* ♩ = 108-112

(i) (ii)

(i)

(ii)

(iii, iv) (v)

L sa-yang la la la la la

la

Figure 170. “Sayang La,” Hâamá Cîtryya

*Ayam Didik*

“Ayam Didik” (“Mother Hen Teaches Her Young”) was part of the early Lantaa repertoire in the 1930s, and has remained a standard piece among Malay-speaking *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* performers. It is nearly identical to a widely performed tune by the same name found in Kedah and Perlis where it accompanies various functions (such as wedding processions, receptions, and *silat* martial arts contests). Although it is rarely played by Thai-speaking groups today, the fact most violinists know the tune indicates that it was once more commonplace. Unlike in Malaysia, the *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ* version is not performed

today with specific dance movements. The following two transcriptions are versions from Sāṅkaa-ûu (Figure 171) and Perlis (Figure 172), with a melodic reduction that shows their common skeletal structures (Figure 173).

[A] ♩ = 90-96 *caṅwà paarii*

Figure 171. “Ayam Didik,” Mávii Tháleelýg

[A]

Figure 172. “Ayam Didik,” Romli Mahmud



Figure 173. Reduction of “Ayam Didik”

*Dua Pàlíd*

“Dua Pàlíd” (“The *Dua* of Perlis”) has no clear counterpart in northwest Malayan repertoire, but Andaman musicians assert that its title is an indication of its origin. The tune is not commonly performed throughout the region; many performers recognize its name but play it infrequently. It has no specific dance accompaniment.

The “Dua Pàlíd” melody has certain characteristics common to folk tunes of that region, such as the three-note anacrusis (indicated as *i* in Figure 174) and tonic and dominant cadences (ii). Each of its four phrases (shown in reduction in Figure 175) descends to finish on one pitch of a tonic major triad:  $\hat{1} \hat{5} \hat{3} \hat{1}$  (d5 a4 f#4 d4). It has a distinct rhythm accompaniment, *caṅwà dua pàlíd*, described in Chapter 6.

*canwà dua pàlid* ♩ = 88-89

A musical score for a piece in 2/4 time, key of D major. The score consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps (D major), and a 2/4 time signature. It features a melodic line with several phrases marked with fingerings: (i), (ii), and (i). The second staff continues the melody, including a triplet of eighth notes marked with a '3' below. The third and fourth staves further develop the melodic line, with additional fingering markings (i) and (ii). The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Figure 174. “Dua Pàlid,” Khamé Haphon

A melodic reduction of the piece, presented as four staves of music. Each staff is connected to the others by a large bracket on the right side. The fingerings for each staff are indicated by a caret (^) and a number: the top staff is marked with ^ 1, the second staff with ^ 5, the third staff with ^ 3, and the bottom staff with ^ 1. The notation shows the essential notes and rests of the melody in a simplified manner.

Figure 175. Melodic reduction of “Dua Pàlid”

## MALAYAN BANGSAWAN REPERTOIRE

In this study, the term *bangsawan* tunes refers to the part of *róççŋ ħééŋ* repertoire that originated in the heterogeneous collection of early-twentieth-century pan-regional Malay-language theater songs that provided accompaniment to (1) a variety of story types based on Malay, Javanese, Chinese, Indian, Arab, and European tales (among others), or (2) *extra turns*, songs played during scene changes before a closed curtain, often to showcase a popular singer (cf Tan 1993). These songs were typically more complex than regional folk music, comprised of contrasting tempos, catchy melodies, and piano or other Western-style instrumental accompaniment (ibid: 73:82). Many tunes of this genre were stylistically similar to those of contemporaneous Western theater such as the North American “Tin Pan Alley” repertoire. They were introduced to rural areas of northwest Malaya by traveling *bangsawan* and *ronggeng* troupes, and through recorded media (gramophone discs) that disseminated from neighboring Penang—one of the Malayan Peninsula’s most important fountainheads for prewar urban theater.

*Róççŋ ħééŋ*’s extant *bangsawan* tune repertoire accounts for just a small selection of what the form’s pioneers introduced in the 1930s. It includes commonly played songs found in Malay- and Thai-speaking repertoires, and several rare pieces that survive only in retired performers’ memories. When those tunes migrated to new social and linguistic environments in rural areas of Malaya and Thailand and were adopted by folk ensembles, they retained certain formal and melodic aspects, but accrued stylistic differences in folk ensembles and among new socio-linguistic settings: (1) their fixed texts were replaced by interchangeable strophes of *pantun* or *tanjong* poetry, (2) their harmonically based piano accompaniment was replaced with a violin (or *serunai*) and *rammánaa* (or barrel-drum)

ensemble, and (3) tempo changes within songs (such as quicker introductions or codas) ceased to be performed for the most part. This section compares versions of seven of *róçñ ηέεñ*'s *bangsawan*-provenance tunes to corresponding prewar Malayan gramophone recordings to better understand those transformations.

### *Siapa Itu*

“Siapa Itu” (“Who Is That?”) is an important tune in Malay-speaking *róçñ ηέεñ* repertoires that players revere for its challenging form, numerous dance steps, violin ‘improvisations,’ and *tarai* coda. Knowing how to perform this tune is viewed as a mark of talent among musicians and dancers. In the past, troupes played it to generate enthusiasm among the patrons if they appeared disinterested or were not spending enough money. It was accompanied by a distinctive practice where men would lay coins on the ground during the song for the female dancers to pick up during the *tarai*. The latter would slowly lower their bodies with bended knees, gracefully waving both arms to one side until they reached the ground. They then lay upon their sides, folded their legs behind them—keeping their arms in motion—and picked the coins off of the ground with their mouths.

In Malaysia, “Siapa Itu” was once a popular *bangsawan*-era song, but it has mostly disappeared from the canon of popular music. A 1932 gramophone version (transcribed in Figure 176) by *bangsawan* star Che Norlia is characteristic of Western-style *bangsawan* theater music in several ways. It has a heptatonic, diatonic-major melody, simple triadic major harmonies (shown in under-staff analysis), Western-style piano accompaniment, and a relatively complex three-part form (played AABBC'CC'AAB) that is sufficiently brief to fit on a three-minute, 78 RPM disc.

Máwii Tháleelýg's version contrasts with this recording in form and tempo variations, with his having more variation in tempo than the Che Norlia recording (unlike most *róçη ηέεη* versions of *bangsawan* tunes). He plays "Siapa Itu" as two iterations of an ABBCC'D (where D is the *tarai*) form, in which the first is played as *caηwà mak inang* at approximately 104 BPM, the second is a *caηwà cháa* that begins at around 85 BPM, then returns *a tempo* to *caηwà mak inang* at section C. The piece concludes with a 112 BPM *tarai* played as *caηwà paarii* (Figure 177 through Figure 179). His *tarai* violin solo (Figure 180) is a vigorously played sequence of single-measure figures formed of rapid eighth- and sixteen-notes, syncopated clusters of neighboring tones (i), octave jumps between the first and open second string (ii), sixteenth-note triplet turns (iv), open string ostinati (v), and an arpeggiated quarter-note ascent to the final dominant-level pitch (vi). These figures, for the most part, appear in the same manner for each performance, and are common to a number of other violinists' renditions, suggesting that they have a shared origin, most likely among early Lantaa *róçη ηέεη* performers.

♩ = 64-74 (96 for intro)

**A**

C: I V

V I

**B**

IV I

*fine* 1. 2.

IV V I

**C**

V I V

D.S.  
D.C. al fine

1. 2.

V I

Figure 176. "Siapa Itu," Che Norlia (transposed from C major)

♩ = 102-106 *cajwà mak inang*

**A**

**B**

**C**

Figure 177. “Siapa Itu,” first iteration of melody (sections A, B, and C), Mawi Tháleelýg

♩ = 83-87

**A**

The musical score consists of six staves of music in G major (one sharp). The first staff is labeled 'A' and contains two measures with chords I and V. The second staff continues the melody with chords V and I. The third staff is labeled 'B' and contains two measures with chords IV and I. The fourth staff contains two measures with chords IV, V, and I. The fifth staff contains two measures with chords IV and I. The sixth staff contains two measures with chords IV, V, and I, and includes the marking 'accel.' at the end.

I V

V I

**B**

IV I

IV V I

IV I

IV V I

accel.

Figure 178. “Siapa Itu,” second iteration of melody (sections A and B), Mawi Tháleelýg

C ♩ = 94-107

Musical score for "Siapa Itu," second iteration of melody (section C). The score consists of four staves of music in G major. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a melody with notes G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. Chords V and I are indicated below. The second staff continues the melody with notes D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. Chords V/V and V are indicated below. The third staff continues with notes D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. Chord V is indicated below. The fourth staff continues with notes D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4, C4. Chord I is indicated below. A "rit." marking is placed above the final measure of the fourth staff.

Figure 179. "Siapa Itu," second iteration of melody (section C), Mawi Tháleelýg

Tarai ♩ = 112

Figure 180. “Siapa Itu,” *tarai* section, Mawi Tháleelýg

*Che Mamat*

The *róçh* *héeh* version of “Che Mamat” (“Mr. Mamat”) originates in the prewar

Malayan theater tune “Che Mamat Parang Tajam” (“Mr. Mamat Sharp Machete”), the latter of which appears as the title of a 1920 “Special New Play (...) Inchek Mamat Parang Tajam” by Singapore’s International Opera Company (International Opera Co. 1920), and was recorded later in that decade as “Tjik Mamat,” a B-side gramophone recording by Indonesian singer Siti Amsah. “Tjik Mamat” provides comparisons here with island and mainland styles of *ρώχη ηέεη* by Mawii Tháleelýg and Hâamá Cìtryya.

The gramophone version (transcribed in Figure 181) has a verse-chorus (AB) form, composed of three pairs of antecedent/consequent phrases including: a repeated A section pair (indicated as i and ii) followed by a chorus section of two B phrases (iii and iv) that begin with the anacrusis at the end of the second line. The two *ρώχη ηέεη* versions do not have distinct verse and chorus sections. Instead they contain two variations of the first phrase and conclude with a four-measure refrain in an AA'B form (indicated in Figure 182 and Figure 183 as i, ii, and iii). The juxtaposition of phrases from “Tjik Mamat” and Hâamá’s version (shown in Figure 184, with the same numerals for identification) shows a close correspondence, even though they are rendered differently. In terms of tempo, Hâamá’s version is performed the fastest, at approximately 192 BPM as compared with the Orak Lawoi rendition at around 90 BPM. The gramophone recording has an introduction that is 125 BPM, followed by the main verse-chorus section which is about 85 BPM.

The Orak Lawoi refrain lyrics are like those of the contemporary Malaysian versions, sung “*aduhai Che Mamat, Che Mamat parang tajam*” (though different from the gramophone recording). For the *tanjoη* version, the refrain is sung with a vernacular pronunciation and with part of the preceding *wâag* substituted for *parang tajam*: “*cée duu*

*wăaj céé maamaàd, céé maamaàd nǎǎ dâj maa lâw*” (where, “*nǎǎ dâj maa lâw*” is the end of a *wâag* sung, “*phîi khǎǎ laa mâj ruu tǎǎ daj dâj maa lâw*”). The “Che Mamat” dance is performed with general dance movements, until the refrain when the dancers slowly turn counterclockwise once in their places.

♩ = 85 (125 for introduction)

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of seven staves of music. The first staff is labeled 'A' and contains a first ending bracketed '(i, ii)'. The second staff contains a second ending bracketed '(iii)' with first and second endings. The third staff is labeled 'B' and contains a first ending bracketed '(iii)'. The fourth staff contains a first ending bracketed '(iv)'. The fifth staff contains a first ending bracketed '(iv)'. The sixth staff contains a first ending bracketed '(iv)'. The seventh staff is the final line of the piece.

Figure 181. “Tjik Mamat,” Siti Amsah (transposed from F major)

♩ = 90 *caṅwà paarii*

**A** (i)

(ii)

**B** (ii)

a - du -

(iii)

hai Che Ma - mat Che Ma - mat pa - rang ta - jam

Figure 182. “Che Mamat,” Mávii Tháleelýg

♩ = 192 caṇwà paarii

(i)

(ii)

(ii) (iii)

cée duu wăaj cée maa

L (iii)

maàd cée maa maàd noo dâj maa lâw

Figure 183. “Che Mamat,” Hâamá Cîtryya



### *Kayuh Sampan*

“Kayuh Sampan” (“Paddle the Boat”) is a distinctive rendition of the *bangsawan*-era tune “Dayung Sampan” (which glosses in the same manner).<sup>146</sup> It is exclusive to Malay-speaking performing communities and is an audience favorite among the Orak Lawoi, who perform it at a lugubrious tempo and accompany it with a graceful dance that mimics rowing motions to suggest a journey across vast stretches of sea—a reflection of an important part of their environment.

Its *bangsawan* counterpart appears in a number of prewar gramophone recordings. In 1928 it was advertised to Singaporean audiences among “New Records Sung by Miss Mintek and Mr. Ratipin (...) The Very Well-Known Artists of Java” (D.T. Lim 1928), and appeared in several mid-century parodies including “Apek Tua, Nyonya Manis,” a playful repartee between an old Chinese “uncle” and “sweet” young woman, and “Rampai Rampaian” (“Hodgepodge”), a vaudeville-style medley. In the late 1950s it became Radio Singapore’s “signature tune” to some controversy regarding the Chinese- or Malay-ness of its melody (see Anon. 1958a and 1958b). The following compares the *ρώχη ηέεη* version with a circa-1930 recording of “Dajong Sampan,” sung by Miss Alang.

“Kayuh Sampan” and “Dayung Sampan” have the same principal sections. In both, the A section comprises an antecedent-consequent phrase that modulates between D and A pentatonic major scales, with a cadence on the former (the pentatonic melody is sometimes cited as ‘evidence’ of its Chinese character). The B section melody is a B minor pentatonic mode (the relative minor to D) that ends on a4—the dominant of D.

The “Dayong” C section is a simple four-measure closing melody on the

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146. While *kayuh* and *dayung* literally mean ‘oar,’ the song text, “*dayung sampan*” refers to the act of rowing.

dominant. In “Kayuh” that material is transformed through repetition into a crescendo and accelerando that culminates in a fermata, arrived at with an ascending f4 to f5 violin glissando. The arrival to this climax is exaggerated with louder playing, vocal acclamations, and faster rowing motions by the dancers. As the fermata’s din begins to fade, plaintive strains of the violin emerge to round off and close the melodic cycle with the *x* section melody. (The “melodic cycle” here refers to one iteration of the full melody, in contrast with the rhythmic cycles that are typically repeated one- or two-measure patterns.)

Figure 185 shows two significant formal differences between “Kayuh Sampan” and Miss Alang’s version—labeled as *x* and *y*—where they each differ by one section.

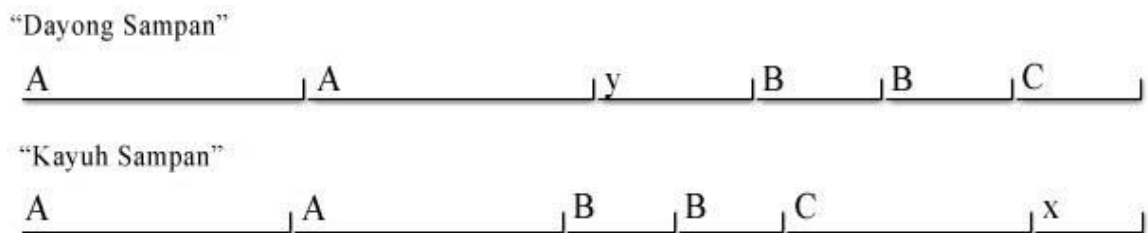


Figure 185. Comparison of formal sections: “Dayong Sampan” and “Kayuh Sampan”

♩ = 48-63

The musical score is written in treble clef, D major (two sharps), and 2/4 time. It features five staves of music. The first staff begins with a box labeled 'A' and contains two pentatonic scales: 'D pentatonic major' and 'A pentatonic major'. The second staff shows two endings, '1.' and '2.'. The third staff contains a melodic line with a box labeled 'y'. The fourth staff includes a 'B pentatonic minor' scale and two endings, '1.' and '2.'. The fifth staff contains a melodic line with a box labeled 'C'. A tempo marking of ♩ = 48-63 is placed above the first staff.

Figure 186. “Dayong Sampan,” Miss Alang (transposed from Bb to D)

♩ = 82-86 *caṅwà kayuh sampan*

[A] D pentatonic major

[B] A pentatonic major

1. 2.

[C]

♩ = 86-100  
*accel.*

[x] *a tempo*

Figure 187. “Kayuh Sampan,” Máwii Tháleelýg

### *Siti Payung*

“Siti Payung” (“Miss Siti with the Umbrella”),<sup>147</sup> which originates in a *bangsawan-era asli*-style tune of the same name that is still popular in Malaysia, is the best-known of the few remaining ballad-like *ρώνη ηέεη* tunes. Islander and mainlander ensembles play it in similar manners, but perform it rarely, mostly because audiences

147. *Payung*, literally ‘to protect,’ is an informal term of endearment. My gloss of the title is aided by a 1928 Tio Tek Hong record from Java titled, “Sitti Berpajoeng,” where the prefix *ber-* makes the translation “Sitti with the Umbrella.” In Thai, these words carry no meaning. Others have translated it as “Miss Umbrella” (e.g., Goldsworthy 1979: 412).

prefer songs with quick dance rhythms. As with “Siapa Itu,” it was accompanied by a playful interaction between male and female dancers over the exchange of money. A patron would sit on the ground, place a coin on his shoulder, and invite his partner to pick it up with her mouth. As she attempted to do so, he would try to plant a kiss on her cheek.

*Bangsawan* and *róωη ηέεη* versions of the melody (shown in Figure 188 and Figure 189 respectively) correspond in several areas. They begin and end in similar fashions, have A sections that omit the sixth degree of their major scales (Phỳyg also omits the third), and begin their B sections with a flattened seventh degree (g5), a modulation that is found in “Burung Putih” (shown earlier) and a number of Malayan *asli* melodies.

They differ in that the *róωη ηέεη* melody is an abridgement of the Malayan version (see Figure 190). The former contains three phrases per section (to the latter’s four), and does not move to the fourth scale degree—or subdominant level—as the latter does (this also explains Phỳyg’s omission of c#, a leading tone to that subdominant). Phỳyg’s B section is also more succinct, without a prolongation at the dominant level.

♩ = 68-78 (84 for intro)

The musical score is written in a single system with five staves. The key signature has three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo is indicated as 68-78 BPM, with a note that 84 BPM is used for the introduction. The first staff, labeled 'A', shows a melodic phrase starting with a quarter note G5, followed by eighth notes A5, B5, C6, and D6. The second staff contains a phrase with a first ending (marked '1.') and a second ending (marked '2.'). The third staff, labeled 'B', features a more intricate melodic line with many sixteenth notes and slurs. The fourth and fifth staves continue the melodic development with various rhythmic patterns and rests.

Figure 188. “Siti Payong,” Che Norlia (transposed from Bb)



**A**

Phỳyg      ^      ^      ^      ^      ^  
 1      7      1      5      1

Che Norlia      ^      ^      ^      ^      ^      ^  
 1      7      1      4      7      1

**B**

Phỳyg      ^      ^      ^  
 b7      5      1

Che Norlia      ^      ^      ^      ^      ^  
 b7      5      1      5      1

Figure 190. Reduction of A and B sections of “Siti Payung” melody: Phỳyg (top) and Che Norlia (bottom)

*Che Minah Sayang*

“Che Minah Sayang” (“Miss Minah My Love”) is a quick tempo tune accompanied by *cajwà mak inang* and a “Mak Inang” style dance. It is performed by most ensembles, and in Malaysia and Sumatra it is still a standard piece in *ronggeng* repertoires. In Malaysia, a number of gramophone recordings with the same or similar titles date to as early as 1905 (“Lagu Inche Mina”), and include several 1920s and ’30s discs such as “Che Baba Sayang” and “Chi Dara Sayang Chi Bulat” (“Miss Dara Loves Mr. Bulat”), the latter of which is transcribed in Figure 191 for comparison with two

representative *rʋɔŋ ŋéɛŋ* versions, performed by Maan Lèɛmǎn (Figure 192) and Hâamá Cĩtryya (Figure 193).

Maan’s version contrasts most noticeably with “Chi Dara” in formal and melodic areas: he plays the B melody only once (in “Chi Dara” it occurs twice), and the melodic contour of his C section is an inversion of the Malayan example. He also ends the first A section—in characteristic *rʋɔŋ ŋéɛŋ* fashion—with an extended ostinato (i). Hâamá’s version has a longer introduction, a distinct melodic rhythm, and an extended B section that ends with a prolonged ostinato on the tonic. His C section melodic contour is similar to Maan’s, suggesting another source for the *rʋɔŋ ŋéɛŋ* version—other than “Chi Dara” (very possible, considering that the tune circulated widely in Malaya), or that this variation took place in Thailand. The presence of a third section seems to have disappeared in later Malaysian renditions, such as one 1969 recording by Hamzah Dolmat and those heard elsewhere.

♩ = 58-68 (90 for intro)

Figure 191. “Chi Dara Sayang Chi Bulat,” Dara and Bulat (transposed from Bb Major)

♩ = 115-118 *caṅwà mak inang*

Figure 192. “Che Minah Sayang,” Maan Lèemǎn

♩ = 115-118 *caṅwà mak inang*

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of eight staves of music. The first staff begins with a quarter rest followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff continues the melody with eighth notes and a quarter note. The third staff features a repeat sign and a section labeled 'A' above the first measure. The fourth staff includes a section labeled 'B' above the final measure and contains two triplet markings (indicated by a '3' below the notes). The fifth staff has a section labeled 'L' below the first measure and a triplet marking. The sixth staff includes a section labeled 'C' above the final measure and contains several eighth-note patterns. The seventh staff concludes the piece with a quarter note and a final cadence.

Figure 193. “Che Minah Sayang,” Hâamá Cîtryya

*Tarok Tok Tek*

The *róçŋ h́éçŋ* tune “Tarok Tok Tek” (also called “Tarok Tok Tok”) is exclusive to repertoires of Malay speakers. It is a melodic and poetic quatrain comprised of four phrases of equal duration that all—except for the third—share the same rhythmic figure

(Figure 195). It is danced in a counterclockwise circle, with a hallmark unison hip shake to accompany the stop-time rhythm that concludes each strophe. The melody is essentially the same as its Malaysian counterpart, “Trek Tek Tek” (shown in Figure 194), which has appeared on gramophone and in postwar films, and is known today as a children’s melody. The onomatopoetic titles are representative of a knocking sound. *Bangsawan* star Miss Tijah begins her 1930s recording of the tune explains this aspect: “*inilah dia, selalu katuk pintu ‘trek tek’ ...baik saya mahu nyanyikan lagu Trek Tek Tek*” [“it’s like this...one always knocks on the door with the sound *trek tek*...so I want to sing a song, “Trek Tek Tek”].

♩ = 68-72 (126 for coda)

[A]

[B]

[C]

[D]

te-rek-a-tek-a - tek

Figure 194. “Trek Tek Tek,” Miss Tijah

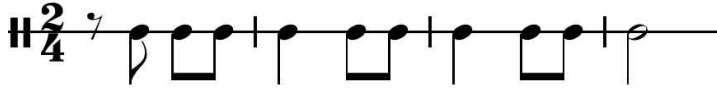


Figure 195. Rhythmic figure found in three melodic phrases of “Trek Tek Tek”

*Che Siti*

“Che Siti” (“Miss Siti”) is a rarely performed *dua* tune for which the lyrics are a repartee between Habashi (presumably from Habesha—Ethiopia or Eritrea—but a generic term for a dark-skinned Arabian man) and a Malay woman named Che Siti. Lat Khlōṅḍii recalls having watched Jan (Hassan Rasoojbut) and Bunga, two early *róṅḡ ḡéḡḡ* performers, sing it as a duet when he was a child. According to Lat, Habashi sang:

<i>Kalau Che Siti mao kesang intan (2x)</i>	If Miss Siti wants a diamond broach
<i>hai boleh lah Habasi nak bikinlah pinjam (2x)</i>	Habasi can borrow one
<i>boleh Siti bubuh di badan</i>	Siti can put it on
<i>kita rai ke pekan.</i>	[and] we can go to town
<i>Kalau Che Siti mao kereta kuda (2x)</i>	If Miss Siti wants a horse cart
<i>boleh Habasi nak bikinlah sewa (2x)</i>	Habasi can rent one
<i>boleh kita rai berdua</i>	we can travel together
<i>kita ‘railah dua</i>	we’ll travel together <sup>148</sup>

The form and melody of “Che Siti” (transcribed in Figure 196), as performed by Lat and others, corresponds to those heard on a 1930s Malayan gramophone recording, “Ayuhai Chek Siti” (“Alas Miss Siti”), though the lyrics on the latter are too faint for comparison. The song was reportedly danced in *dua* fashion, with a concluding *tarai*

148. Personal correspondence from Lat Khlōṅḍii

section.

♩ = 106-116 *rentak joget*

The musical score is written in 2/4 time with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). It consists of three sections, A, B, and C, each with two staves of music. Section A (measures 1-8) features a melody with eighth and quarter notes, accented by triplets. Section B (measures 9-16) features a more complex texture with chords and triplets. Section C (measures 17-24) returns to a melody with eighth and quarter notes, accented by triplets. The tempo is marked as 106-116 beats per minute, and the style is *rentak joget*.

Figure 196. “Ayuhai Chek Siti,” Munah Kecik, Ahmed

*TANJON* REPERTOIRE

*Tanjon*, in its general meaning, is a style of *ρώνη ηέεη* sung in the *phâag tâj* dialect. In more specific terms, it refers to a part of *ρώνη ηέεη* repertoire—also sung in Thai—that is comprised of local melodies. This section is concerned with the latter.

The name *tanjong* derives from the words *bunga tanjung*, mentioned earlier in the *Tanjong Song Texts* section, as they are characteristically the first words to begin many sung strophes. Unlike in Malaysia, where “Bunga Tanjung” is the title of *asli*-style and quick-tempo *bangsawan*-style tunes, *រ័ចន អ៊េង* has no corresponding melody or song title with that name. That *រ័ចន អ៊េង* and the earliest strains of *tanjong* arose in Tanjung Village (as described in Chapter 3) appears to be a felicitous coincidence.

Little information exists that points to the origins of *tanjong* repertoire. Locals suggest that it formed from regional lullaby, courtship, work, and folk theater melodies, but there are few specific details of who composed them and when. It is likely that they took form as *រ័ចន អ៊េង* tunes from those sources between the 1940s and '60s. *Tanjong* tunes are most commonly identified with Thai-speaking performers and, as shown earlier, they comprise about half of their performance repertoires. Malay-speaking performers are reported to have sung some of these tunes in Malay in the past; today they typically have only one or two *tanjong* pieces which they sing in Thai.

*Tanjong* tunes have a number of shared characteristics: they typically have two-part structures that feature repeated antecedent and consequent phrases (AABB) built upon dominant and tonic cadences respectively; are composed of four-measure phrases with stepwise melodies; have some syncopation, with *ល្ប ល្ប* that are most often played in the penultimate measures of each B phrase; and are played at moderate tempi. Four tunes have B-section melodies that are transpositions of their A sections, and several have features in common with Malayan folk melodies. All but two are accompanied by *canwà paarii* (described in Chapter 6). Other than “Sōj Khaam” (examined later in this section), *tanjong* tunes are not accompanied by specific dances.

Several tunes have the prefixes *paarii* or *lagu* in their titles, both of which may be glossed as ‘song’ (and in southwest Thailand are terms exclusive to *róṅṅ ḡéḡḡ*). *Paarii*, which defines a particular rhythm accompaniment, mostly appears in conjunction with place names. “Paarii Hàad Jaaw” (“Long Beach Song”) is the name of three Andaman beaches,<sup>10</sup> while “Paarii Phuukèet” (“Song of Phuukèet”), “Paarii Sàtuun” (“Song of Sàtuun”),<sup>11</sup> and “Paarii Panjǐi” (“Song of Panjǐi”) are named for islands or towns in the region. The one exception is “Paarii Dèeg” (“Children’s Paarii”). *Lagu*-named tunes include “Lagu Màj” (“New Song”) and “Lagu Khlaaj” (“Changed Song”).<sup>149</sup> Non-*lagu* or *paarii* named *tanjoṅ* tunes include “Sṅṅj Khaam,” “Burung Timang,” and “Champhían” (see Appendix C for transcriptions of the latter two).

As with the other song categories, certain *tanjoṅ* tunes are performed with more frequency than others. Figure 197 shows their average appearance in Thai-speaking groups’ performances.

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149. In Râamàad “Lagu Màj” is known as “Lagu Khlaaj.”

### Frequency of Tanjong Tunes in Performances by Thai-speaking Groups

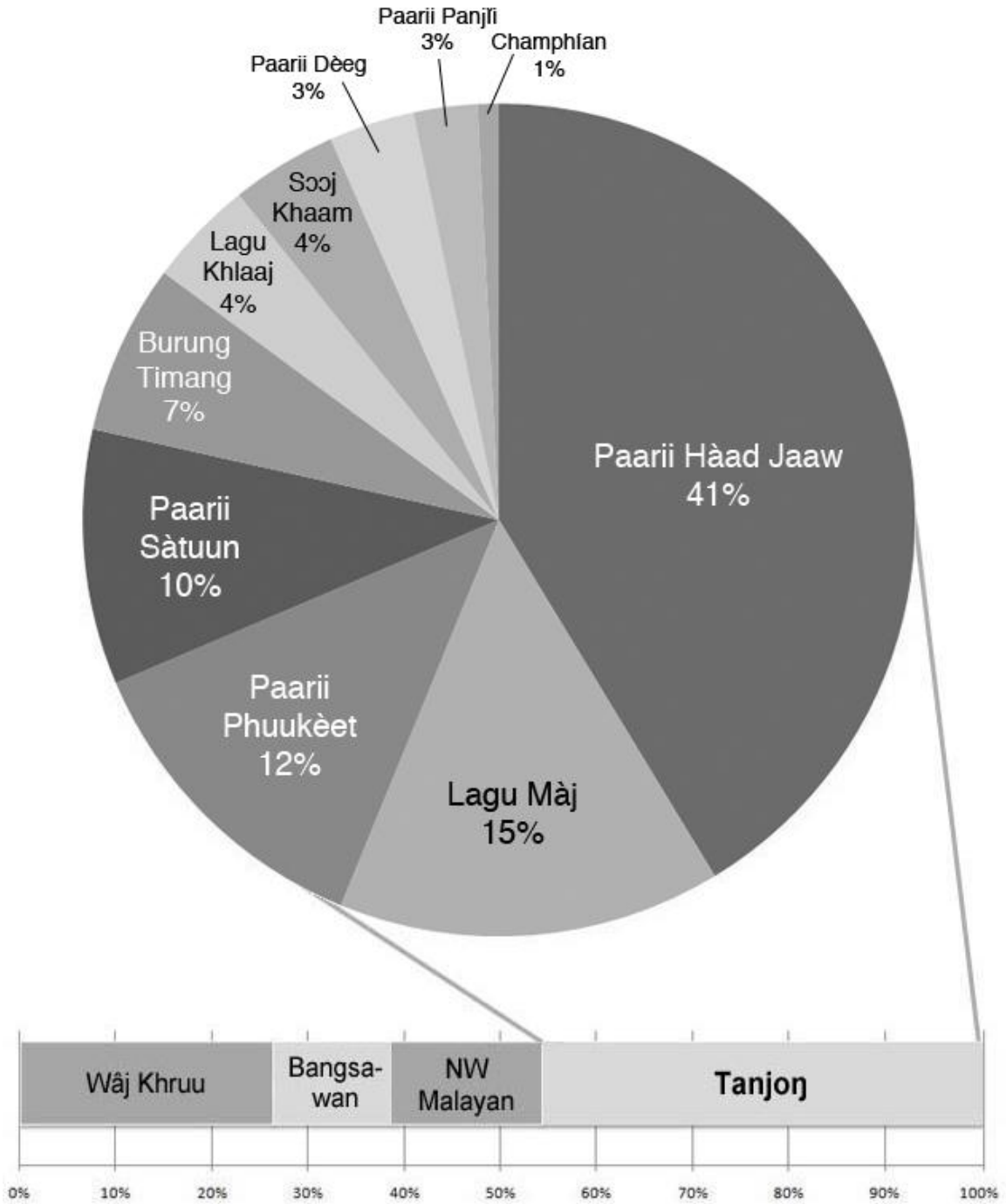


Figure 197. Average Frequency of *tanjong* tunes in performances by Thai-speaking groups

#### *Paarii Hàad Jaaw*

“Paarii Hàad Jaaw” (or just “Hàad Jaaw”) is unequivocally the most popular song

among Thai-speaking *róçŋ ηέεη* audiences and a veritable icon of *tanjŋ*. It is recognized by a wide section of the local population and generates the most audience participation of all *róçŋ ηέεη* tunes; dancers and audience members respond to poetic adumbrations of flower or tree names with acclamations, evoking anticipation of the forthcoming rhymes with rising “ooh?” inflections, and to the end of strophes with falling exhalations.

It is very often the first song to be played after the *wâj khruu*, and it is frequently repeated four or more times in a nighttime performance. It accounts for about eighteen percent of Thai-speaking groups’ total songs played, and more than forty percent of their *tanjŋ* repertoire (as illustrated by Figure 197).

No one is certain of this song’s origin. Performers today believe that it just emerged by itself (*khÿn maa eeŋ*) during *róçŋ ηέεη*’s postwar heyday, without attribution to a particular performer or community. Two of the earliest memories related to this tune belong to Lat Khlóçŋdii, who says that Isăaw first sang it in the early 1940s, and Aalaj Khrajbut, who recalls that in the early postwar years, he and his colleagues called it “Chaj Hâad” (“Beach”). There is no knowledge of the “Hâad Jaaw” melody among performers whom I interviewed in Kedah or Perlis.

“Paarii Hâad Jaaw” (transcribed in Figure 198) has a distinctive flowing form that is unlike other *róçŋ ηέεη* tunes. It is comprised of two unequal-length phrases that reach the first cadence after eight measures and the second after ten, with a couple of ostinato measures separating the two. The melody of the briefer antecedent phrase (A) is situated at the upper end of the song’s melodic compass and ends on the fifth scale level, while the consequent is a gradual descent to the tonic. It contains ascending melodic figures that appear at the beginning of the two phrases, and vary slightly toward their ends; the



A melodic reduction in Figure 199 shows the two-section contour of the antecedent phrase, encompassing upper (i), and then lower (ii) neighbors of dominant pitch. The consequent phrase descends in several stages (iii-vi), over the compass of one octave to the tonic. Each stage, ranging from perfect fourths and fifths, progressively expands the melody's lower ambitus until the arrival on the tonic (v) and its reinforcement through repetition of the end melody (vi).

Figure 199 consists of two musical staves, A and B, in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#).  
 Staff A (measures 1-8):  
 - Measure 1: A single note (A4).  
 - Measures 2-3: A melodic contour labeled (i) consisting of notes G4, A4, B4.  
 - Measures 6-8: A melodic contour labeled (ii) consisting of notes A4, G4, F#4, E4.  
 Staff B (measures 12-21):  
 - Measure 12: A single note (A4).  
 - Measures 13-14: A melodic contour labeled (iii) consisting of notes G4, F#4, E4.  
 - Measures 15-16: A melodic contour labeled (iv) consisting of notes D4, C#4, B3.  
 - Measures 17-18: A melodic contour labeled (v) consisting of notes C#4, B3, A3.  
 - Measures 19-21: A melodic contour labeled (vi) consisting of notes G3, F#3, E3, D3, C#3, B2, A2.

Figure 199. Reductions of antecedent and consequent phrases, “Hàad Jaaw,” Hâamá Cîtryya

### *Transposed-Melody Tunes*

Four binary-form tunes have antecedent and consequent phrases that are related by transposition at their fundamental, or skeletal melodic levels (rather than being transpositions of individual notes). They include:

1. “Paarii Phuukèet,” which transposes down a perfect fifth from A to B sections;
2. “Lagu Màj,” which also transposes down a perfect fifth;
3. “Lagu Khlaaj,” which transposes down a whole tone; and
4. “Paarii Panjji,” which transposes down a whole tone

Their formal sections each consist of repeated four-measure phrases and descending melodic contours. They are all performed at moderate tempi.

“Paarii Phuukèet,” also known as “Paarii Thûŋkhaa” (an old local name for Phuukèet), is the second most commonly played *tanjon* tune and is performed by ensembles throughout the region. It is often repeated two or more times during a performance, and accounts for about six percent of Thai-speaking groups’ total number of songs performed, occurring on average, once for every eight *tanjon* tunes played.

The A section (see Figure 200) has a melodic contour that descends from g5 to d5 (for two measures of each), comprised of notes that reinforce (i), or connect (ii) those pitches. The transposition in the B section appears as a diminution of the four-measure A section contour into a pair of two-measure descents from c5 to g4 (iii). The melodic reduction in Figure 201 shows these relationships.

♩ = 100-104 *caṅwà paarii*

The musical score consists of four staves of music in 2/4 time, with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 100-104. The melody is written in a treble clef and includes various rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes. Fingerings are indicated by (i), (ii), and (iii) above the notes. A box labeled 'B' is placed at the beginning of the third staff. A bracket labeled 'L' spans across the first two staves of the third system.

Figure 200. “Paarii Phuukèet,” Phỳyg Khĩausòd

The melodic reduction consists of two systems, A and B, in a treble clef with a key signature of two sharps. System A shows a single note with a downward arrow labeled 'P4' pointing to the next system. System B shows two notes with downward arrows labeled 'P4' pointing to the next system. A bracket labeled 'P5' spans across the two systems, indicating the interval between the notes in system A and system B.

Figure 201. “Paarii Phuukèet,” melodic reduction

“Lagu Māj” (“New Song”) is the third most frequently played *tanjōṅ* tune today and appears in repertoires throughout the region. Phỳyg Khĩausòd first heard it in the early 1960s performed by Bunterm (of Lantaa/Adang) and Sen (of Bubooj). In Râamàad it is called “Lagu Khlaaj” (the name for another distinct *róṅṅ ḡééṅ* tune) and is one of that

village’s most popular pieces, appearing approximately once in every five tunes. The melody (Figure 202) is less dense than other *tanjon* tunes and comprises four skeletal pitches for each section (see reduction in Figure 203).

♩ = 94-96 *caṅwà paarii*

A

B

Figure 202. “Lagu Màj,” Phỳyg Khĩausòd

A

B

Figure 203. “Lagu Màj,” melodic reduction

“Lagu Khlaaj” (“Changed Song,” Figure 204) is common to many *tanjon*

performing communities throughout the region. Its transpositional nature may be seen more clearly by overlooking each phrase's first measure, as demonstrated by the reduction in Figure 205. The likeness between the two phrases is obscured by a series of descending minor third intervals in the first two measures of the B section (i) that interpolate with the a5 and e5 that formed the preceding measure's cadence (ii).

♩ = 87-93 *caŋwà paarii*

**A**

**B** (i) (ii) L L

Figure 204. "Lagu Khlaaj," Phỳyg Khĩausòd

A measure: 2/6 3/7 4/8

B 10/14 11/15 12/16

Figure 205. “Lagu Khlaaj,” melodic reduction

“Paarii Panjii” (Figure 206), whose melody local violinists sometimes confuse with “Lagu Khlaaj,” also exhibits some transpositional characteristics when the final three measures of each section are reduced to their initial tones (Figure 207).

$\text{♩} = 104-106$  *caṅwà paarii*

A

B L

3 3 3

Figure 206. “Paarii Panjii,” Khamé Haphon

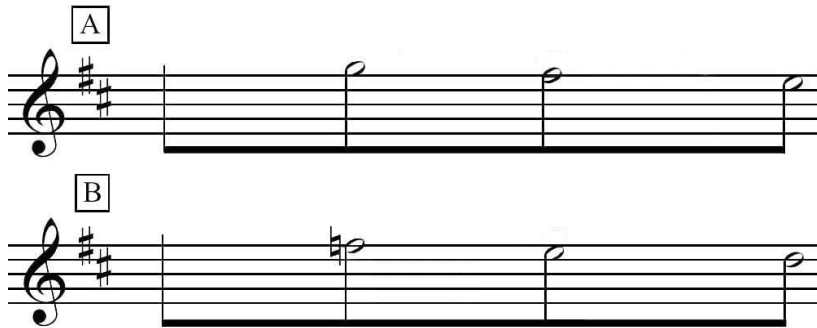


Figure 207. “Paarii Panjii,” melodic reduction

### *Paarii Dèeg*

“Paarii Dèeg” (“Child’s Song”) may be one of the earliest *tanjong* tunes. Aalaj Khrajbut, who simply calls it “Paarii,” says that it was the one song he learned from Abu Qasim during their time together in 1941. Figure 208 is a transcription of the melody. Figure 209 shows that its A section has a similar melodic style, contour, and phrase length to the previously examined transposed-melody tunes, juxtaposing its A section with corresponding phrases of “Lagu Mài,” “Paarii Phuukèet,” and “Paarii Panjii” (shown transposed to the same key as “Paarii Dèeg”). The “Paarii Dèeg” B section appears to be a variation of the antecedent phrase of “Mak Inang Cina,” a pentatonic Malayan melody (shown in Figure 210). They are identical for their first two measures (i), then move in contrary directions (ii), and conclude with stepwise descents (iii).

♩ = 120-124 *caḡwà paarii*

**A**

**B**

L

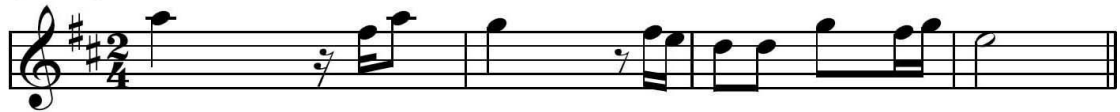
L

Figure 208. “Paarii Dèeg,” Phyyg Khĩausòd

“Paarii Dèeg”



“Lagu Màj”



“Paarii Phuukèet”



“Paarii Panjii”



“Lagu Khlaaj”



Figure 209. Comparison of A sections of “Paarii Dèeg” with “Lagu Màj,” “Paarii Phuukèet,” “Paarii Panjii,” and “Lagu Khlaaj”



Figure 210. Comparison of B sections of “Paarii Dèeg” and “Inang Cina”

### *Paarii Sàtuun*

“Paarii Sàtuun” (“Song of Sàtuun”) is the fourth most commonly played *tanjon* tune on average by Thai-speaking ensembles. Its name suggests that it may have originated in the border region. Though it does not appear in Malaysia in this melodic form, it does share similar melodies with two northwest Malayan folk songs, “Mak Inang Jawa” and “Ayam Didik.”

The “Paarii Sàtuun” melody (Figure 211) has a binary form (AA’BB’) in which the two A phrases follow similar contours until they diverge in their penultimate measures as they approach their cadences: the first ascends from below e5 (i) and the second falls from above (ii). The two B sections differ in their first measures (iii), and then follow similar paths to their final notes.

$\text{♩} = 102-104$  *caŋwà paarii*

**A**

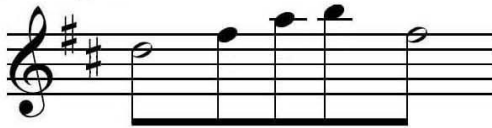
**B**

Figure 211. “Paarii Sātuun,” Phỳyg Khĩausòd

A comparison between melodic reductions of “Paarii Sātuun” and “Mak Inang Jawa” (Figure 212) shows similar ascending movements in the antecedent phrases of the two former tunes, though with different final pitches. A comparison of “Paarii Sātuun” and “Ayam Didik” show that they begin and end on identical pitch levels in their antecedent phrases and partly correspond in their consequent phrases

Antecedent Phrases

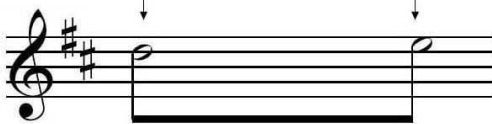
“Mak Inang Jawa”



“Paarii Sātuun”



“Ayam Didik”



Consequent Phrases

“Paarii Sātuun”



“Ayam Didik”

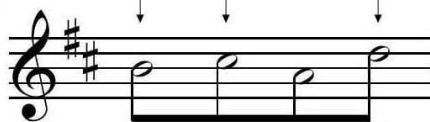


Figure 212. Melodic reductions comparing phrases of “Mak Inang Jawa,” “Paarii Sātuun,” and “Ayam Didik”

*Sōj Khaam*

“Sōj Khaam,” which emerged as a *rōj ηέεη* tune during the mid- to late 1950s, is attributed to a Râamâad singer named Săawbin. It borrows its rhythm and melody from a *lîkee paa* folk theater song “Jaajii Khâo Maa Ram” (“Jaajii Dances In”).

It is one of two *rōj ηέεη* songs to be danced in a circle (the other being “Tarok Tok Tek”). Dancers move counterclockwise to the song’s syncopated rhythm, making

jerky arm movements that resemble those of a *nǎŋ tàluŋ* (shadow puppet) character. Though the melody derives from *líkee paa*, this dance does not; and other than that it is a circle dance, it does not resemble the fluid motions of *ramwoŋ* (literally ‘circle dance’) either.

The “Sōj Khaam” melody (Figure 213) is based in a D pentatonic major scale. Its musical form comprises two iterations of an antecedent phrase, centered on tonic and dominant pitches of the scale’s second mode, and contained within the compass of an octave (shown in reduction in Figure 214). The B section is a four-measure answer in the major mode that expands the upper ambitus by a perfect fourth at the section’s beginning, and then descends stepwise to the tonic.

$\text{♩} = 83-88$     *caŋwà sōj khaam*

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of three staves of music. Above the first staff, there is a tempo marking  $\text{♩} = 83-88$  and the title *caŋwà sōj khaam*. The first staff is marked with a box containing the letter 'A' at the beginning and another 'A' at the end. Below the first staff, there are fingerings: 'E: 1' above the first note, '5' above the fifth note, and '1' above the first note of the second phrase. The second staff continues the melody from the first staff. Below the second staff, there are fingerings: '5' above the first note and '1' above the first note of the second phrase. The third staff is marked with a box containing the letter 'B' at the beginning. Above the third staff, there is a 'L' marking. Below the third staff, there are fingerings: 'D: 5' above the first note and '5' above the fifth note. The score ends with a double bar line.

Figure 213. “Sōj Khaam,” Hâamá Cítryya

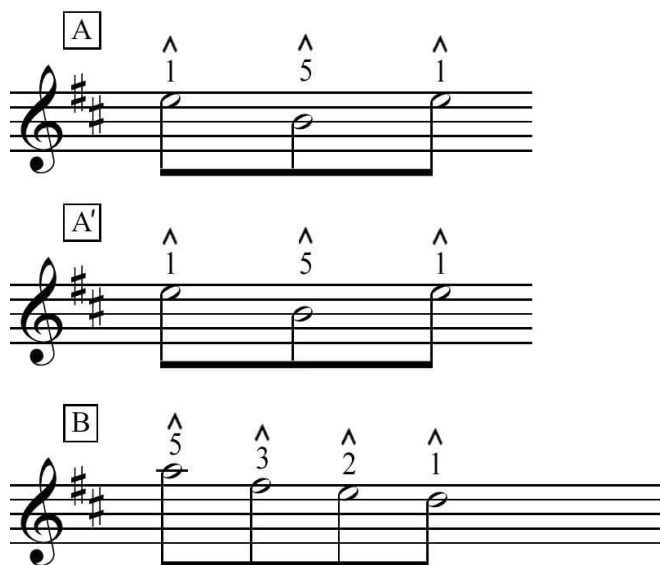


Figure 214. Melodic reduction of “Sōj Khaam”

#### SUMMARY

*Rōj ηέεη*’s repertoire tells a story of musical migration, accretion, and transformation in a border region. It is actually two stories that developed side-by-side: (1) the Malayan theater and folk music repertoire of the islands, and (2) the Malayan-Thai hybrid *tanjōη* repertoire of the mainland.

In the beginning, *bangsawan* tunes left Penang, and circulated through the Malayan countryside. They reached the Andaman in a considerably different state. While still maintaining their general melodies and principal forms, the songs were adapted to violin and frame drum ensembles, and shorn, in various manners, of their theatrical elements: introductions, codas, and tempo changes. Played by Malay-speaking violinists today, they are still recognizable when compared with gramophone recordings of the same tunes from the *bangsawan* era. In the hands of *tanjōη*-style violinists, however, they often sound like different songs.

On one hand, *rōj ηέεη* repertoire has become an archive of old Malayan songs

that are rarely heard in their own country anymore, such as “Siapa Itu,” and “Chek Siti,” and has preserved distinct versions of well-known tunes in Malaysia including “Che Mamat,” “Kayuh Sampan,” “Che Minah Sayang,” and “Siti Payung.” On the other hand, since its introduction to Lantaa, it has taken on many new tunes through the contributions of local Thai-speaking performers, who introduced new poetry, new melodies, and new movements to *róʔŋ h́ééŋ*.

To take *róʔŋ h́ééŋ* melodies and sing Thai songs to them, Thai-speaking performers used a local variation of the Thai *klɔɔn* poetic form. *Klɔɔn* of that style constituted a genre of poetry about rural life, love, the sea, and most explicitly, the flora, whose names became the basis for internal rhymes and metaphor. Any *klɔɔn* could be sung to any melody. It was a one-size-fits-all approach, and yet allowed a wide range of individual creativity. Yet, because of the heterogeneity of *róʔŋ h́ééŋ* music, each song required slightly different adaptations; they modified poetic feet, repeated phrases, added or subtracted words, and added speech-like vocables, to squeeze or extend the texts to the melodies. *Tanjonŋ* groups’ modified repertoires formed as much smaller collections than the initial *róʔŋ h́ééŋ* repertoire, and to stretch their entertainment across a night-long performance, they frequently repeated some of the more popular songs.

*Tanjonŋ* is perhaps the most enigmatic of *róʔŋ h́ééŋ* component repertoires. It is a native song style of the Andaman that probably has roots in melodies that people sung in the past to soothe their babies, as a call to love, or in the course of their chores; pounding rice, rowing boats, or digging fields. Strangely, there is very little local knowledge about the history of this form, even though it was created fairly recently in the postwar era, just as performers have no detailed knowledge of the musical landscape in Malaya that

produced *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*.

*Róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* melodies generally have some type of antecedent/consequent structure that appears within discrete sections—where two or more phrases provide melodic expositions and resolutions—or between sections where a first section resolves to a cadence on a non-tonic pitch level, and is resolved to the tonic in the second. Only a few do not have compound phrases within their sections (Mak Inang,” “Che Minah Sayang,” “Hàad Jaaw,” and “Sôɔj Khaam”), and there is “Jaŋŋooŋ,” a one-part form with antecedent and consequent phrases within a single strophe. The most complex song form is the three- or four-part “Siapa Itu,” which coincidentally, *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* musicians described as the most challenging.

The pitch content of *róɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* melodies may be distinguished in three approximate categories: (1) heptatonic major scales, (2) heptatonic major scales with an altered degree—in most cases a lowered seventh or raised fourth, or (3) hemitonic and anhemitonic pentatonic scales. A number of songs combine different categories, such as “Che Mamat,” “Ayam Didik,” “Paarii Déeg,” “Burung Putih,” and “Siti Payung,” which have pentatonic A-sections and heptatonic B-sections.

Only two tunes are wholly pentatonic: “Sôɔj Khaam” and “Kayuh Sampan” (the latter alternates between two pentatonic modes), both of which are anhemitonic. The pentatonic pitch content found in “Burung Putih” and “Siti Payung” is hemitonic.

Songs with heptatonic, diatonic major scales include “Sinaadooŋ,” “Siapa Itu,” “Che Minah Sayang,” “Tarok Tok Tek,” and “Lagu Tabik” (“Paarii Phuukèet” and “Lagu Mâj” have heptatonic pitch sets when their melodies are considered in full, each omitting notes in their first and second sections). The altered scale degrees that appear in some

tunes, such as “Lagu Dua,” “Mak Inang,” “Jaanjoon,” “Siti Payung,” “Dua Pàlíd,” “Hàad Jaaw,” “Paarii Déeg,” and “Paarii Sàtuun,” add reinforcement to certain pitch levels, or propel it to a new one.

I have not found a relationship between scale types and song provenance. Most *róon ηέην* melodies are two-part forms that end with a cadence on the first (or tonic) scale level (think “do,” in *do re mi*), after arriving at a previous cadence on fifth or second scale levels (these may be thought of as dominant cadences in the broad sense that they lead to tonics). The most homogeneous in this respect are *tanjoon* tunes, which all share this dominant-tonic formula. *Wâj khruu* and northwest Malayan folk tunes also generally conform to the dominant-tonic formula, though with certain differences, such as in “Burung Putih” and “Dua Pàlíd,” which begin on tonic levels; “Sayang La,” which alternates between the two; and “Sinaadoon,” which moves from the fourth scale level to the tonic. Of the entire *róon ηέην* repertoire, *bangsawan*-category melodies have the most internal diversity as far as cadential movements and prolonged tones on pitches other than dominant or tonic notes.

## CONCLUSION

In the 1930s, on the northern fringes of the Malay-speaking world, yet lying within the southern borders of the Siamese kingdom, a small maritime community of Malay-speakers learned songs and dances from just a handful of itinerant performers from Malaya. It was not remarkable that this occurred, as popular contemporary Malayan music—the type performed in urban theaters and dance halls—was spreading in all directions during that period, aided by new technologies and improved transportation. What is most interesting is what took place when *ρώχη ηέεη*—as the songs and social dances became known—was adopted and transformed by Thai speakers. With the new style flourishing alongside the original Malay-language one, *ρώχη ηέεη* spread widely, and was a popular courtship medium for several generations of young men and women, but it remained a primarily rural phenomenon.

## TRANSITION

As told here, the history of *ρώχη ηέεη*, from the 1930s to the present, as told here, is one of transition in several senses. In the broadest interpretation, the entire region has experienced a two-hundred-year process of transformation from a society loosely dominated by Malay politics, language, and culture, toward one becoming a fixture in the modern Thai state. Although modern boundaries were established in the first decade of the twentieth century, changes in local lifestyles, language, and culture did not accelerate until the post-Second World War era. Thus, *ρώχη ηέεη* bestrides two separate eras and two separate cultures. The best way to contrast these two paradigms is to compare *ρώχη ηέεη* groups at the diachronic extremes: the Lantaa groups of the late 1930s, and those of

Khlɔɔŋ Pîŋ today. Not only do they illustrate the transition of *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* from island to mainland, but each represents one of the two principal styles extant.

In the Lantaa case, performers came from highly mobile, Malay and Orak Lawoi fishing communities who were not, for the most part, educated in Thai schools. They practiced some agriculture, but relied mainly on the sea, and migrated according to the season. In their isolation on the island, they were not entirely unfamiliar with the cosmopolitan world, as they were situated in the middle of shipping lanes between Penang and Phuukèet.

A comparison of the early Lantaa groups with today's mainland groups in Khlɔɔŋ Pîŋ shows that, even though the distance between those two places is not great, the conditions under which they live and play have almost completely changed. First of all, the Thai-speaking, Muslim mainlanders are a distinctive group in the Andaman. For a hundred years they have been referred to as Samsam, just as people in northern Malaysia refer to local Thai-speaking Muslims. Whether or not that term is appropriate today, particularly in the wake of a large influx of migrants from other parts of Thailand, is somewhat beside the point. Local Muslims—who comprise the majority of *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɣéɛŋ* performers and audiences on the mainland—see themselves as culturally, perhaps ethnically distinct from the islanders, and many islanders feel the same way about themselves.

Mainlanders lived closer to regional markets than the islanders, and therefore were in closer contact with forms of media that arrived in the postwar era from Bangkok and its surroundings—the nation's cultural and political center. In time, a strong Thai influence filtered down into *rɔ̀ɔŋ ɣéɛŋ*, first through a folk-dance-turned-national-icon,

*ramwon*, and later through the ubiquitous flashy stage shows sometimes referred to as modern *lûug thûn*. In the end, *róonh hēēn* went from being a once-polite medium where men paid demurely dressed young women to dance, to today's raucous exhibition of women in t-shirts and miniskirts, which is what Khlóonh Pîh's groups have come to represent in local minds.

*Róonh hēēn* was also born in an era before engines, when islanders traveled by row- or sailboat. As a troupe could take a whole day (or more) to reach its destination in this manner, performers usually committed to spending longer periods away from home, and their subsequent travels brought them to multiple destinations along the way. As mentioned earlier, this was completely typical of their peripatetic lifestyle. When they traveled, often to remote rural communities, performers were propagating something never seen before in those parts—something that was novel and modern; but the isolation of rural communities was also coming to an end. In the postwar years, with the arrival of the engine to power their boats, those protracted tours ceased, and excursions became only one or several days long.

Today, even a multiple-day excursion is rare. Khlóonh Pîh's groups may travel in the afternoon as far as Phuukèet or Sàtuun to perform, but its members are still able to return in time to tap their rubber trees before daybreak. Where *róonh hēēn* performers once depended upon travel as a principal means of earning money during a particular season, now their principal earnings are made at home as agriculturists (most importantly rubber). Performing *róonh hēēn* has become a supplement to that income.

The transition to a rubber economy is another important story for the region and for *róonh hēēn*, which has witnessed both sides of this divide as well. Rubber, which has

been planted in Thailand since the early twentieth century, was tapped by the Orak Lawoi in Da-âu prior to the war, but became central to Andaman economies, and *ρώχη ηέεη* performers, beginning around the 1960s. Today it is a veritable monoculture over much of the region, and has brought a baseline prosperity to a large part of the population. Compare that with the past, where impoverished traveling performers would be grateful to earn their dinner, if nothing more.

Amid this global phenomenon of developments in media, agriculture, and transportation, some distinctly local changes occurred in uses of language and identity. A comparison of the average Malay-speaking Andaman islander of the 1930s with one today reveals a very different subject: one who has become Thai educated, speaks Thai at home rather than Malay, and in many cases uses a Thai name (often for specific areas of interaction). Today's subject is very much indoctrinated as a Thai national, but also maintains a southern Thai regional identity. *Ρώχη ηέεη* is among the many markers of that southern identity. The Malay language, and other Malay aspects of the past, have experienced the most loss, and are on the brink of disappearing. Elder Malay-speaking performers lament that loss, and have not had much success in getting their Thai-speaking children and grandchildren to show appreciation of the past.

Aside from the predictable misunderstandings among generations, mixed feelings exist among locals about the social changes that have taken place. *Ρώχη ηέεη*, since its inception, has been mostly found among Muslim communities, and affected by the significant transformations in how Islam has been practiced, propagated, and used as a guiding ideology in Southeast Asia. Some locals see the past as a time when religious knowledge was limited, life had little value, violence and death were commonplace, and

morality was in short supply. Thus, the arrival of the *dakwah tabligh* and other Islamic missionary organizations in the 1970s is seen by many in a positive light for having brought them to the “right path.” They may lament the loss of local folk practices—deemed incompatible with an austere version of Islam—but accept this as an acceptable trade. Others are less sanguine about the *dakwah* missions, as they see them as outsiders who have run roughshod over local traditions. In general, the Muslim community seems to be searching for an acceptable balance between religion—which has given little room for local cultural expression—and the often negative social connotations attached to entertainment.

Themes of transition may also be seen in creative areas of songs and dances as *róçh ηέεη* moved from island to mainland communities. The island form developed from a very small pool of initial teachers—including Abu Qasim from Malaya, and several others from Lantaa who had spent some time there in the 1930s—who conveyed a limited repertoire. *Róçh ηέεη* was subsequently isolated from its Malayan roots during the Second World War, and did not reestablish ties to *ronggeng* in the postwar era. Island performers carried on, playing the aging Malayan style as they had been. In the new *róçh ηέεη* communities that began to appear on the mainland, performers drew from local Andaman sources, to create a parallel mainland style of *róçh ηέεη*. They maintained the older tunes, but revised them in terms of their music, texts, and movements, and created tunes out of their own folk melodies, which to them were both ‘new’ (to *róçh ηέεη*), yet ‘old’ in the sense that they had been sung informally as lullabies, at work, and for courtship as long as they could remember. These changes all took place during a twenty-year period, from the early 1940s until the 1960s, following which the repertoires of Thai-speaking groups

remained basically unchanged as well, with no more local tunes added, and no new tunes introduced from Malaysia.

Between those two formulas lies the explanation for why the Lantaa groups of the past and Khlɔŋ Pɨŋ groups of today look and sound so different. In comparing the *rɔŋ ɣɛɛŋ* groups of the 1930s and early '40s (those on Lantaa, Cam, and Sireh Islands), to the Khlɔŋ Pɨŋ groups today, numerous transformations may be seen in areas of melody, rhythm, text, and presentation style; in the transition from the large, diverse Malayan repertoires of the islanders that became whittled down to the small fifteen-to-twenty song repertoires of the mainlanders. Songs disappeared; some changed substantially.

In short, 1930s Lantaa groups and their 2000s Khlɔŋ Pɨŋ counterparts sit at opposite ends of *rɔŋ ɣɛɛŋ* history and style: metaphors for Andaman society since the 1930s. These transformations did not occur all at once; it took several decades for *rɔŋ ɣɛɛŋ* to become defunct in most island communities and for the inexorable movement of *rɔŋ ɣɛɛŋ*'s center of gravity to be established on the mainland. Adaptation not only dictated the direction of *rɔŋ ɣɛɛŋ*—it kept it alive.

## KINSHIP AND TRANSMISSION

One does not have to look far in Malaysia to see the importance of kinship and social networks in rural Thailand and Malaysia. Enter into any rural home and you are likely to see a long, appended list of family and friends' names and telephone numbers, hand written conspicuously on the wall. Kinship has been a central factor in *rɔŋ ɣɛɛŋ*'s development since its earliest days, when first-*ruun* Lantaa performers introduced the genre to their relatives and neighbors in the region around Lantaa, Thîŋraj, and Phuukèet. *Rɔŋ ɣɛɛŋ* history teems with examples of pioneer performers who married along the way,

and settled into their new communities as teachers and troupe leaders for local performers. One of the more significant examples, described in Chapter 3, was the union of Isāaw and Ali, which established the earliest Thai-speaking *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* community on the mainland. But there were many more of that nature whose bonds transcended the Malay-Thai linguistic divide, and led to *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* doing the same.

One explanation for *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ*'s quick expansion is that, unlike its counterpart *rɔnggeng* in Malaya and Indonesia, Andaman communities did not attach negative moral associations to its performance, nor was *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* associated with the perceived existential risks of “selling one’s soul” to supernatural spirits to become a performer, as local folk theaters were. In fact, a distinctive feature of early *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* was that it was multi-generational, socially acceptable entertainment, and it attracted the participation of entire families and interrelated kinship networks of performers.

This is not meant to imply that marriage and kinship were the exclusive manners by which *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* was propagated. There were also a number of cases in which communities cajoled performers into moving to their villages to teach and lead their groups—such as with Abu Qasim during his journeys, or when Che Mat settled down to live and teach *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* in Semut Tanoi in the early 1940s. The genre also spread as performers traveled in search of work with commercial fishing vessels, charcoal kilns, or tin dredges. But kinship’s prominent position in the propagation of *róɔŋ h́éɛŋ* is illustrated through the many cases where it occurred. Readers who are interested in these interrelationships are encouraged to look at some examples in the Genealogical Chart of Prominent Island Performers in Appendix F, such as the seven performing children of Orak Lawoi matron Iteh, several of whom—including Sima, Mat Deh, and their younger

half-brother Sen—were principal *róççη ηέεηη* pioneers and propagators; Lat Khlóççηdii, who contributed so much to this study, and came from a family in which four of five siblings performed; the marriage of first-*ruun* performers Amewah and Yob, which produced a daughter, Bida, who became one of *róççη ηέεηη*'s biggest stars in the 1950s; and Yob's sister-in-law, Itam, a singer-dancer whose two sons, Saman and Rahman, were well-known *rammánaa*-players. Perhaps the best-known *róççη ηέεηη* family during the 1940s and '50s was Sireh Island's troupe led by ex-*makyung laut* performers, Ad and Champa Pramónkít, their two sons, and three celebrated daughters—Bida, Baya, and Ciu—the latter of whom still performs regularly.

#### FUTURE INQUIRIES

I did not realize at the outset of my research how deeply involved I would become with genealogical aspects of the *róççη ηέεηη* community. In retrospect it has made complete sense. *Róççη ηέεηη* was founded upon migrations and formation of kinship relations, and through a better understanding of those areas it became easier unravel the complex features found in its performance, recognize how people transmitted their cultural knowledge, which cultural aspects they saw fit to preserve, and which ones they opted to change. I see this as an area that has received relatively little attention in ethnomusicological publications to date, yet has the potential to yield many interesting studies.

In light of my experiences in the region, a few local examples come to mind. One could be a study of genealogies and performance practices of a vibrant community of *gendang silat* (martial arts accompaniment) performers in Kedah, Malaysia, whose traditions descend from late-nineteenth-century immigrants from within Malaya, and

further afield in Sumatra and Thailand, who arrived following the construction of canals that opened new agricultural land. As *gendang silat* is an icon of Malay performance, and reflects political, social, and religious values of rural communities, this study could be particularly useful in understanding the development of the often-contested Malay identity in the context of a multicultural Malaysia. A corollary to that study might examine extant musical styles, such as *gendang silat* and *lam tād*, and genealogies of Bangkok Malays. Many from that diasporic group descend from late-nineteenth-century Malayan canal builders (and in some cases still reside along the canals constructed by their forbears), and their backgrounds could shed light on migrations during that period and the current state of Muslim and Malay identity, far removed from the greater Malay world. Another study, looking at genealogies among performers of *manooraa*—a rural folk healing and storytelling folk theater in south Thailand that has become a widely popular, modern, revue-style stage show—could explore broader cultural changes introduced by modern lifestyles, new economies, and political ideologies in the latter twentieth century, not unlike what occurred in *ρώχη ηέεη*.

We may relate to *ρώχη ηέεη* for the perspectives it brings to our own social networks, and experiences with broad changes in society—how it provides a glimpse of many lives, yet a common zeitgeist. Beyond this work, which is only beginning to uncover deeper meanings, *ρώχη ηέεη* is a rich area of exploration, and still has much to teach us.

## APPENDIX

### A. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Abbreviations:

T — Thai

M — Malay

O — Orak Lawoi

<i>amphəə</i>	T. an administrative and commercial center
<i>anak</i>	M. literally ‘child,’ but commonly refers to the smallest drum of a pair or consort
<i>angin barat</i>	M. west wind season, lasts several months beginning around May and interrupts fishing and other outdoor activities. <i>Ῥόση ηέση</i> was less commonly performed during this period.
<i>angin timur</i>	M. east wind season, arrives in reduced strength after traversing south Thailand’s central range and brings milder weather than <i>angin barat</i> . This season saw the most <i>Ῥόση ηέση</i> activity.
<i>ànúrág</i>	T. to preserve, as in ‘preserve local culture’
<i>asal</i>	M, from Arabic, original
<i>asli</i>	M, from Arabic, original. In Malaysia the name for a specific slow rhythm ( <i>rentak asli</i> ) as well as, in broader terms, a term for the corpus of heterogeneous, so-called ‘traditional’ Malay songs ( <i>lagu-lagu asli</i> )
<i>awang belanga</i>	M. Perlis rhapsodist

<i>bàat</i>	T. a unit of Thai currency, equivalent to approximately US\$0.033 at present
<i>baba nyonya</i>	M. syncretic, typically urban Chinese-Malay culture often used in reference to food, architecture, songs, dress, et cetera. A male of Chinese-Malay heritage is referred to as <i>baba</i> , and the female counterpart is <i>nyonya</i> .
<i>bajcàag</i>	T. <i>nipah</i> palm leaf, an ubiquitous cigarette wrapper
<i>bangsawan</i>	M. pre-cinema era popular theater in Malay-speaking Southeast Asia
<i>ban</i>	T, from Malay ‘ <i>abang</i> ,’ meaning ‘elder brother.’ May also refer informally to non-avuncular adult men. The female counterpart is <i>cá</i> (see below)
<i>berana</i>	O. Orak Lawoi ritual/festive vocal and percussion music
<i>bingkai</i>	M. frame, ring that fastens membrane to drum shell
<i>bàəg rooŋ</i>	T. a ritual ‘opening of the performance space,’ see <i>buka panggung</i>
<i>biola</i>	M. violin, see <i>sɔɔ</i>
<i>bomoh</i>	M. shaman, also <i>tok moh</i>
<i>buka panggung</i>	M. see <i>bàəg rooŋ</i>
<i>bunga</i>	M. flower
<i>bunga tanjung</i>	M. a fragrant flowering tree, see <i>dəɔg phígún</i>
<i>cá</i>	T. elder sister in <i>phâag tâj</i> dialect
<i>caŋwà</i>	T. rhythm

<i>canggung</i>	M. Perlis folk song and social dance genre
<i>càb</i>	T. mnemonic for a muted stroke on <i>rammánaa</i>
<i>cari makan</i>	M. make a livelihood (literally, search to eat)
<i>câuthûi</i>	T. guardian spirits
<i>cekang</i>	M. taut, as in a drum skin
<i>cekup</i>	M. catch, a muted drum stroke
<i>Cempedak</i>	M. fruit-bearing tree whose wood is used for drum shells
<i>cháa</i>	T. slow
<i>chaawlee</i>	T. Thai exonym for Orak Lawoi and other sea-dwelling peoples
<i>champa</i>	M. <i>Michelia champaca</i> , a fragrant flowering tree
<i>Che, Chek</i>	M. Mister or Miss
<i>chəəj-chǎəj</i>	T. regular
<i>chəən khruu</i>	T. general term for rituals that summon supernatural spirits (literally, invite the teacher)
<i>chúd khèεg</i>	T. Malay-style dress
<i>Dakwah Tabligh</i>	M, from Arabic. an Islamic missionary organization
<i>damdεεŋ</i>	T. medium-brown complexion
<i>dammar</i>	M. a tree resin, see <i>námman jaan</i>
<i>daará</i>	T. a southwest Thailand folk theater genre, see <i>hadrah</i>
<i>dòog phígun</i>	T. a fragrant flowering tree, see <i>bunga tanjung</i>
<i>dâŋ dəəm</i>	T. ‘original’ or ‘traditional’
<i>Deli</i>	M. a northeast Sumatran sultanate with strong cultural ties

	to northwest Malaya
<i>dəən rooŋ</i>	T. travel from performance to performance, see <i>jalan bangsai</i>
<i>dii</i>	T. good, sincere or nice
<i>duaŋ</i>	T. a “poetic prefix giving a ethereal, circular, or celestial quality” (Duaŋ 2009)
<i>dujoŋ</i>	T. dugong, a manatee-like sea creature found along the Andaman coast whose ‘tears’ are seen as potent ingredients for love magic
<i>dung</i>	M. mnemonic for a resonant center stroke on <i>rebana</i>
<i>dỳŋ</i>	T. mnemonic for a resonant center stroke on <i>rammánaa</i> , also referred to as <i>thyŋ</i>
<i>dỳŋ</i>	T. mnemonic for a rim stroke on <i>rammánaa</i> , also referred to as <i>tỳŋ</i>
<i>fỳŋfuu</i>	T. revive, as in recreating traditional folk traditions
<i>gamboi</i>	M. from <i>gambus</i> , a plucked string instrument, in southwest Thailand it refers to
<i>gayung</i>	M. a form of Malayan <i>silat</i> martial arts
<i>gendang</i>	M. a general term for drum of various sizes and shapes
<i>gendang keling</i>	M. see <i>gendang terinai</i>
<i>gendang silat</i>	M. a general term for drum accompaniment to martial arts found throughout the Malay-speaking world. Kedah and Perlis ensembles consist of a <i>serunai</i> , a pair of two-

	headed barrel drums, and a gong.
<i>gendang terinai</i>	M. reed, drum, and gong ensemble typical to Perlis, named for being accompaniment to a Malay pre-marital henna ritual. Prior to the 1980s it was known as <i>gendang keling</i> (Tamil drum)
<i>ghazal pati</i>	M. an Arabic- and Hindustani-influenced style of Malaysian music that was popular during the 1960s and '70s, also <i>ghazal parti</i>
<i>goreng</i>	M. literally 'to fry,' connotes an drumming style that improvises upon the main pattern, often at cadential moments
<i>hadrah</i>	M, from Arabic. in Perlis, a musical folk theater form, elsewhere it is typically an Islamic praise song genre.
<i>hîŋ</i>	T. offering shelf
<i>ibu</i>	M. mother, name for larger drum in a pair or consort
<i>ilmu pengasih</i>	M. love magic, typically practiced by local shaman 'bomoh'
<i>inang</i>	M. a Malayan folk dance, also <i>tarian inang</i>
<i>jalan bangsai</i>	M. travel from performance to performance, see <i>dəən rooŋ</i>
<i>jikey</i>	M. northwest Malayan folk theater performed in Malay and Thai, related to <i>likee paa</i>
<i>jirai</i>	O, from the Malay <i>jirat</i> , meaning a non-Muslim cemetery
<i>joget</i>	M. a Malayan quick two-beat dance with triplet

	subdivisions, also <i>tarian joget</i>
<i>jyn</i>	T. literally ‘standing,’ common name for the larger of two <i>rammánaa</i> drums
<i>kabong</i>	O. a style of <i>makyung</i> theater particular to the Andaman region, sometimes synonymous with <i>makyung laut</i>
<i>kain sapu tangan</i>	M. handkerchief
<i>kain sarung</i>	M. sarong
<i>kaalǎa</i>	T. an occasion that takes place on the evening preceding a wedding
<i>kamnan</i>	T. district headman in Thailand
<i>kə̀</i>	T. island
<i>kebaya</i>	M. Malay-style, often lacy, long-sleeve blouse with buttons down the front. Typically worn with a sarong.
<i>Kedah</i>	Name of a Malaysian state and former independent sultanate
<i>kendur</i>	M. loose, as in a drum skin
<i>keramat</i>	M, from Arabic. Islamic saint or supernatural spirit
<i>ketua</i>	M. leader
<i>khâaŋ</i>	T. literally ‘side,’ referring to a type of drum stroke
<i>khanăam</i>	T. an ubiquitous multipurpose wooden or bamboo platform located outside the front of one’s home
<i>khεεg</i>	T. literally ‘guest,’ but a generic name for Malays, Indians, and Arabs. Commonly used by Thais in south Thailand

	to refer to Muslims there or in Malaysia.
<i>khəəj</i>	T. or <i>kûŋ khəəj</i> , a small variety of shrimp that is a staple in local cooking, prepared fresh or as a preserved paste (also called <i>khəəj</i> ), and was once a primary local commodity in much of the coastal region. In Malay the shrimp is known as <i>udang kepai</i> , and the paste as <i>belacan</i> .
<i>khruu</i>	T. teacher
<i>khruu mǝǝ</i>	T. powerful ancestral spirits that are revered as founders of folk performance genres
<i>khÿn</i>	T. raise, meaning ‘tighten,’ as in a drum skin
<i>kìaw phaaraasÿ</i>	T. exchange courtship verses
<i>klaaŋ</i>	T. literally ‘middle,’ referring to a type of drum stroke
<i>kləən</i>	T. Thai poetic form, <i>tanjon</i> texts represent one variation
<i>komedie stamboel</i>	M. an Indonesian contemporary to <i>bangsawan</i>
<i>kugiran</i>	M. a contraction of <i>kumpulan gitar rancak</i> , ‘lively guitar band,’ a form of popular Malaysian music in the 1960s and ’70s
<i>làgsùt thóŋ thìn</i>	T. local curriculum, a recent change to the Thai education system for which one result has been more older folk performers teaching in local schools
<i>lagu</i>	M. song
<i>lagu tanjon</i>	T. Andaman coast social dance songs sung in <i>phâag tâj</i>

<i>lagu nasib</i>	M. lament-like songs
<i>lâk</i>	T. fundamental, name of the smaller of two <i>rammánaa</i>
<i>Lantaa Ryynrom</i>	T. Biidá and Amewah's Lantaa group in mid-1950s
<i>lɔɔj ryya</i>	T. see <i>pelacak</i>
<i>líkee paa</i>	T. Thai-language folk theater found in southwest Thailand, see <i>jikey</i>
<i>lonj lûug</i>	T. laying down a riff
<i>lûugsit</i>	T. student or disciple
<i>lûug thûj</i>	T. popular postwar central Thai ballads
<i>màagphluu</i>	T. Areca nut and Betel leaf
<i>mak nɔɔj</i>	T. female chaperone, also see <i>mêe khób</i>
<i>makyung</i>	M. Malay-language folk theater originating in Pattaanii or Kelantan
<i>makyung laut</i>	M. a style of <i>makyung</i> theater particular to the Andaman region, see <i>kabong</i>
<i>manoora</i>	T. southern Thai folk theater, also <i>noora</i> (in Malay, <i>menora</i> )
<i>maatrathaan</i>	T. standardized
<i>mêe khób</i>	T. female chaperone, also see <i>mak nɔɔj</i>
<i>mia nɔɔj</i>	T. minor wife
<i>myaη</i>	T. nation or city
<i>námman jaan</i>	T. in Malay, <i>dammar</i> , a resin obtained from a forest tree, <i>Tôn Jaan</i> or <i>Tôn Jaan Naa</i> ( <i>Dipterocarpus alatus</i> ) that

	has been used in pre-fossil-fuel lamps and in boat building. In recent times its harvest has been restricted under Thai law.
<i>nǎŋ tàlun</i>	T. southern Thai shadow puppet theater
<i>nóɔg</i>	T. a non-dominant hand <i>rammánaa</i> drum stroke
<i>Orak Lawoi</i>	O. migratory, Malay-speaking maritime people inhabiting southwest Thailand's Andaman Coast
<i>orang laut</i>	M. see Orak Lawoi
<i>orang megah</i>	M. a glorified person believed to possess extraordinary powers
<i>pá</i>	T. mnemonic for unaccented <i>rammánaa</i> stroke on <i>lâk</i> drum
<i>paarii</i>	T. Andaman coast drum rhythm
<i>pantun</i>	M. a Malay poetic form used in many <i>ronggeng</i> song texts, commonly of four lines of four words apiece, with final syllables of each line having an ABAB rhyme pattern
<i>pelacak</i>	O. biannual boat launching ritual and festival
<i>penghulu</i>	M. village headman, see <i>phûujàj bâan</i>
<i>perahu</i>	M. narrow wooden row- or sailboat
<i>phâa chéed nâa</i>	T. handkerchief
<i>phâag tâj</i>	T. Southern Thai dialect
<i>phajró</i>	T. melodious
<i>phâa ten</i>	T. vinyl-coated tent fabric used for <i>rammánaa</i> membranes
<i>phíthii séek pêeŋ</i>	T. ritual donning of face powder

<i>phleen</i>	T. song
<i>phleen tanjoŋ</i>	T. see <i>lagu tanjoŋ</i>
<i>phleen klom dèeg</i>	T. lullaby
<i>phraan</i>	T. joker character in southern Thai folk theater
<i>phûujàj, phûujàj bâan</i>	T. village headman
<i>phíthii</i>	T. ceremony or ritual
<i>phûi nóŋ</i>	T. siblings, a common postfix found in names of performing groups and various commercial enterprises.
<i>phýynbâan</i>	T. folk, as in ‘folk music’ ( <i>dontrii phýynbâan</i> ), ‘folk culture’ ( <i>wáthánátham phýynbâan</i> )
<i>pulau</i>	M. island
<i>pûuteen</i>	T. political representative
<i>rammánaa</i>	T. ‘frame drum.’ see <i>rebana</i>
<i>ram fón</i>	T. a central Thai dance, precursor of <i>ramwoŋ</i>
<i>ram thawǎaj</i>	T. offering dance
<i>ram thoon</i>	T. a central Thai dance, precursor of <i>ramwoŋ</i>
<i>ramwoŋ</i>	T. central Thailand popular social dance that arose during the mid-twentieth century
<i>rebana</i>	M. frame drum
<i>rôob phísèet</i>	T. a special <i>rónŋ héeŋ</i> dance round for which one or more miniskirt-clad young women provide several minutes of provocative, private table dances at two to four times the price of the <i>rôob thammádaa</i> ticket

<i>rôḥb thammádaa</i>	T. a regular <i>rôḥḡ ḡééḡ</i> dance round, typically purchased by a patron for a token fee (equivalent to the price of a cup of tea) for one approximately three-minute dance with a professional dancer (see also <i>rôḥb phísèet</i> )
<i>ronggeng</i>	M. early twentieth-century Malayan social dance
<i>rooḡ</i>	T. literally a ‘building’ or ‘hall,’ used colloquially to mean a ‘performance space’ or ‘group’
<i>ruun</i>	T. ‘generation,’ used to describe peer groups and teacher-student relationships in <i>rôḥḡ ḡééḡ</i>
<i>saada</i>	T. see <i>sedak</i>
<i>Samsam</i>	M, T. a name for some Thai-speaking Muslims in south Thailand and Malaysia
<i>sataḡ</i>	T. unit of Thai currency, 1/100 <sup>th</sup> of a <i>bàat</i>
<i>sḥḥ</i>	T. a bowed string instrument, commonly used for violin
<i>sedak</i>	M. a rattan ring used to tighten a <i>rammánaa</i> membrane, in Thai, <i>saada</i>
<i>Semang</i>	M. an indigenous Malayan people, Anderson describes a sea-faring Andaman group as related to this group
<i>sembah guru</i>	M. see <i>wâj khruu</i>
<i>senandung</i>	M. a ballad-like melody (also <i>sinandung</i> , <i>sinandong</i> and <i>nandong</i> )
<i>senduduk</i>	M. a local flower, <i>Melastoma malabathricum</i> , or Straits Rhododendron

<i>serunai</i>	M. a reed instrument. In northwest Malaysia, there are two varieties with bell-shaped openings: <i>serunai gendang silat</i> which has seven-holes (plus a thumb hole) and <i>serunai terinai</i> which has six plus one. The six-hole Thai <i>pii</i> is a straight tube with a bulge in the middle. All three have folded palm-leaf reeds.
<i>si</i>	M. a name prefix added to show reverence
<i>Siam</i>	The former name of the Kingdom of Thailand
<i>sǎŋ jàj</i>	T. large sound, i.e., the drum stroke in the middle of the drum head
<i>sǎŋ léeg</i>	T. small sound, i.e., the drum stroke on the side of the drum head
<i>silàpin hèeŋchâat</i>	T. nationally recognized artist or performer
<i>sya 'ir</i>	M, from Arabic. an epic poetic song style
<i>tabik</i>	M. respectful manner of expressing a greeting or farewell
<i>tak</i>	M. mnemonic for a rim stroke on <i>rebana</i>
<i>tàluŋ</i>	T. a 1950s dance rhythm based on a southern Thai style
<i>tanjung</i>	M. cape, promontory
<i>tarai</i>	M, T. up tempo <i>رۆڤه ڤهههه</i> coda, see <i>tas</i>
<i>thăam</i>	T. an inquiry, as in a courtship verse
<i>thîi</i>	T. strike, as in a drum
<i>thɔɔn</i>	T. a poetic strophe
<i>tòɔb</i>	T. a reply, as in a courtship verse

<i>tèeη</i>	T. ‘dress,’ or prepare an instrument for performance
<i>Thûηkhaa</i>	T. former name of Phuukèet
<i>Tok Burung</i>	M. supernatural bird/guardian spirit of Kò Cam
<i>tok nujum (nuyum)</i>	M. fortune teller, a <i>makyung</i> character
<i>tok selampit</i>	M. Malayan rhapsodist
<i>thyη</i>	T. mnemonic for a resonant center stroke on <i>rammánaa</i> , also referred to as <i>dýη</i>
<i>týη</i>	T. mnemonic for a <i>rammánaa</i> stroke played near the rim
<i>tÿη</i>	T. mnemonic for a rim stroke on <i>rammánaa</i> , also referred to as <i>dỳη</i>
<i>wâag</i>	T. a line of poetic verse
<i>wâj</i>	T. Thai greeting made with one’s palms pressed together in front of the body
<i>wâj khruu</i>	T. ‘honoring the teacher,’ a general term for rituals performed at the beginning of a performance.
<i>weethii</i>	T. stage
<i>zapin</i>	M. Malayan folk dance, ostensibly of Arab origin, also <i>tarian zapin</i>

B. LIST OF EXTANT *RÓŃŃŃ ĐÉÉĐ* TUNES

(M' stands for Malay-speaking, T stands for Thai-speaking groups)

	Tune title	<i>Caŋwà</i> Cat. (Ch.6)	<i>Caŋwà</i> Type (Ch.6)	Tune Category (Ch.7)	Tier (Ch.7)	Performed by:
1.	Lagu Dua	1	<i>dua</i>	1	2	M, T
2.	Mak Inang	2	<i>mak inang</i>	1	1	M, T
3.	Burung Putih	3	<i>paarii</i>	1	3	M, T
4.	Lagu Tabik	4	<i>cháa</i>	1	—	M
5.	Lagu Dua Pàlíd	1	<i>dua pàlíd</i>	2	3	T
6.	Jaanŋoŋ	2	<i>jaanŋoŋ</i>	2	1	M, T
7.	Ayam Didik	3	<i>paarii</i>	2	—	M
8.	Cinta Sayang	3	<i>paarii</i>	2	3	M, T
9.	Sayang La	3	<i>paarii</i>	2	2	T
10.	Sinaadoŋ	3	<i>sinaadoŋ</i>	2	2	M, T
11.	Che Siti	1	<i>dua</i>	3	3	M, T
12.	Lagu Dua Terlilat	1	<i>dua</i>	3	—	M
13.	Che Minah Sayang	2	<i>mak inang</i>	3	2	M, T
14.	Tarok Tok Tek	2	<i>tarok tok tek</i>	3	—	M
15.	Aladom	3	<i>paarii</i>	3	—	M
16.	Che Mamat	3	<i>paarii</i>	3	2	M, T
17.	Lenggang Kangkong	3	<i>paarii</i>	3	—	M
18.	Mak Inang Lembut	3	<i>paarii</i>	3	—	M, T

	Tune title	<i>Caṇwà</i> Cat. (Ch.6)	<i>Caṇwà</i> Type (Ch.6)	Tune Category (Ch.7)	Tier (Ch.7)	Performed by:
19	Cerai Kasih	4	<i>cháa</i>	3	—	M
20	Kayuh Sampan	4	<i>kayuh sampan</i>	3	—	M
21	Mas Merah	4	<i>cháa</i>	3	3	M, T
22	Siti Payung	4	<i>cháa</i>	3	3	M, T
23	Siapa Itu	2,3,4	<i>mak inang, paarii, cháa</i>	3	—	M
24	Champhían	2	<i>tàluṅ</i>	4	—	T
25	Burung Timang	3	<i>paarii</i>	4	—	M, T
26	Lagu Khlaaj	3	<i>paarii</i>	4	2	M, T
27	Lagu Màj	3	<i>paarii</i>	4	1	T
28	Paarii Déeg	3	<i>paarii</i>	4	2	T
29	Paarii Hàad Jaaw	3	<i>paarii</i>	4	1	M, T
30	Paarii Panjii	3	<i>paarii</i>	4	3	T
31	Paarii Phuukèet	3	<i>paarii</i>	4	1	T
32	Paarii Sàtuun	3	<i>paarii</i>	4	1	T
33	Sôṅj Khaam	3	<i>sôṅj khaam</i>	4	1	M, T

### C. ADDITIONAL *ῥόδο δέει* TUNE TRANSCRIPTIONS

The following are transcriptions of some tunes that are limited to a few performing communities, infrequently played, or extinct.

The image displays a musical score for the tune "Aladom" in 2/4 time, written in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of two flats, and a 2/4 time signature. It contains a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff is marked with a square box containing the letter 'A' and a repeat sign. It continues the melodic line with similar rhythmic patterns. The third staff continues the melody. The fourth staff is marked with a square box containing the letter 'B' and contains a sequence of eighth and sixteenth notes. The fifth staff concludes the piece with a final note and a double bar line.

Figure 215. “Aladom,” Lat Khlōṅḍii

*caṇwà paarii* ♩ = 101-105

A

B

C

D

Figure 216. “Burung Timang,” Hâamá Cítryya

*caṇwà tàluṇ* ♩ = 78-98

Figure 217. “Champhían,” Aalaj Khrajbut



Figure 218. "Cinta Sayang," Phyg Khiausod

♩ = 92-95 *caṅwà paarii*

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of several staves. The first staff is labeled 'A' and contains a melodic line with a trill-like figure and a triplet. The second staff continues the melody with first and second endings, including a triplet. The third staff is labeled 'B' and features a triplet. The fourth staff shows a bass line with a triplet. The fifth staff has first and second endings. The tempo is marked as 92-95 beats per minute, and the piece is titled 'caṅwà paarii'.

Figure 219. “Mak Inang Lembut,” Khamé Haphon

♩ = 98-100 *caywà cháa*

The musical score consists of five staves of music in 4/4 time, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as ♩ = 98-100. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It contains a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, followed by a double bar line and a section with two triplets of eighth notes. The second staff continues with eighth notes and rests, including a triplet of eighth notes. The third staff features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes with some slurs. The fourth staff includes eighth notes, rests, and two triplets of eighth notes. The fifth staff concludes the piece with eighth and sixteenth notes, ending with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Figure 220. “Mas Merah,” Lat Khlōṅṅdii

D. 78 RPM MALAYAN GRAMOPHONE LABELS



Figure 221. "Serampang Laut" (top) and "Burong Puteh" (bottom)



Figure 222. "Tjik Mamat" (top) and "Chi Dara Sayang Chi Bulat" (bottom)



Figure 223. "Dajong Sampan" (top) and "Siapa Itu" (bottom)



Figure 224. "Siti Payong" (top) and "Trek Tek Tek" (bottom)



Figure 225. “Aladom” (top) and “Ayuhai Chek Siti” (bottom)

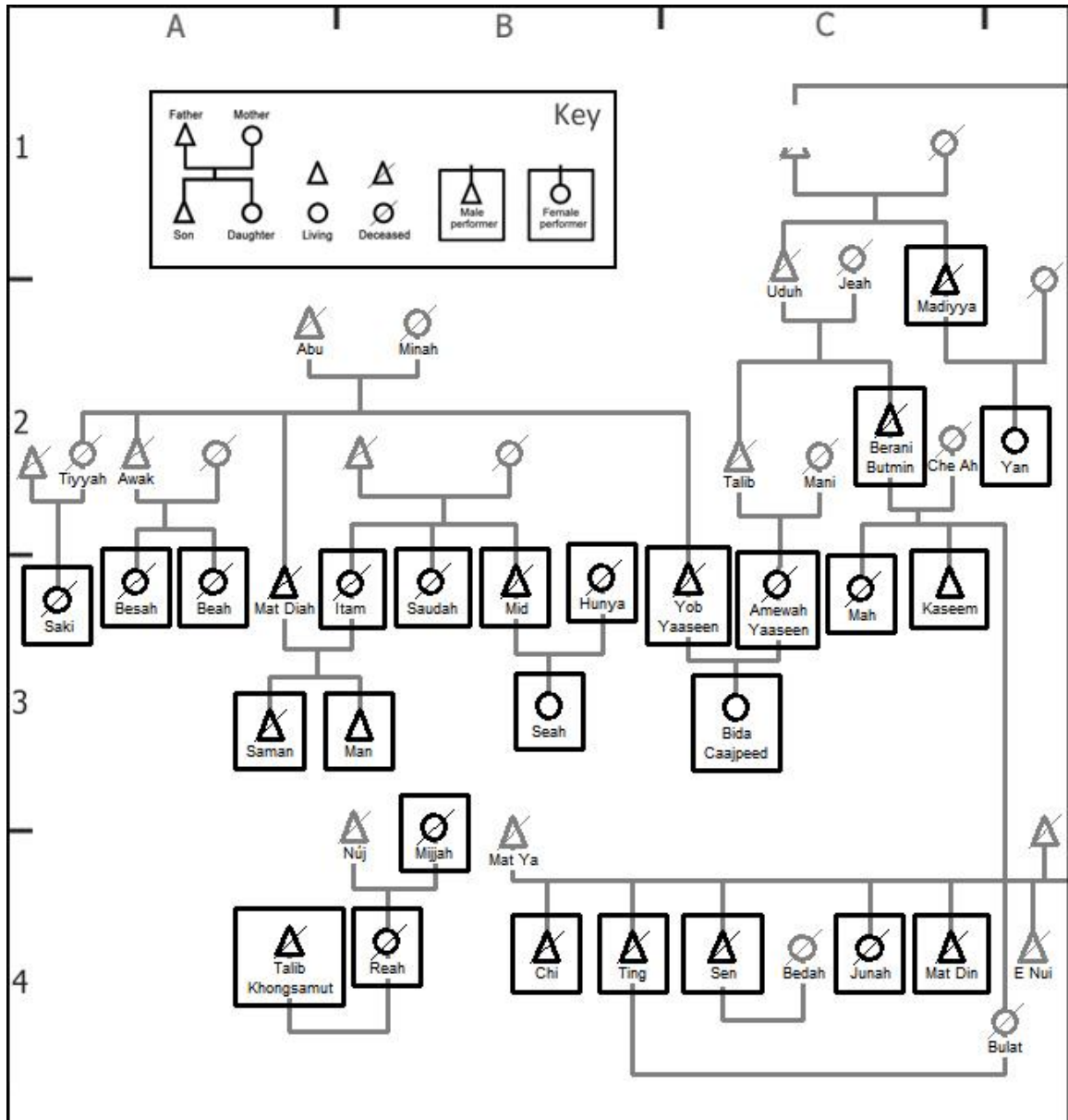


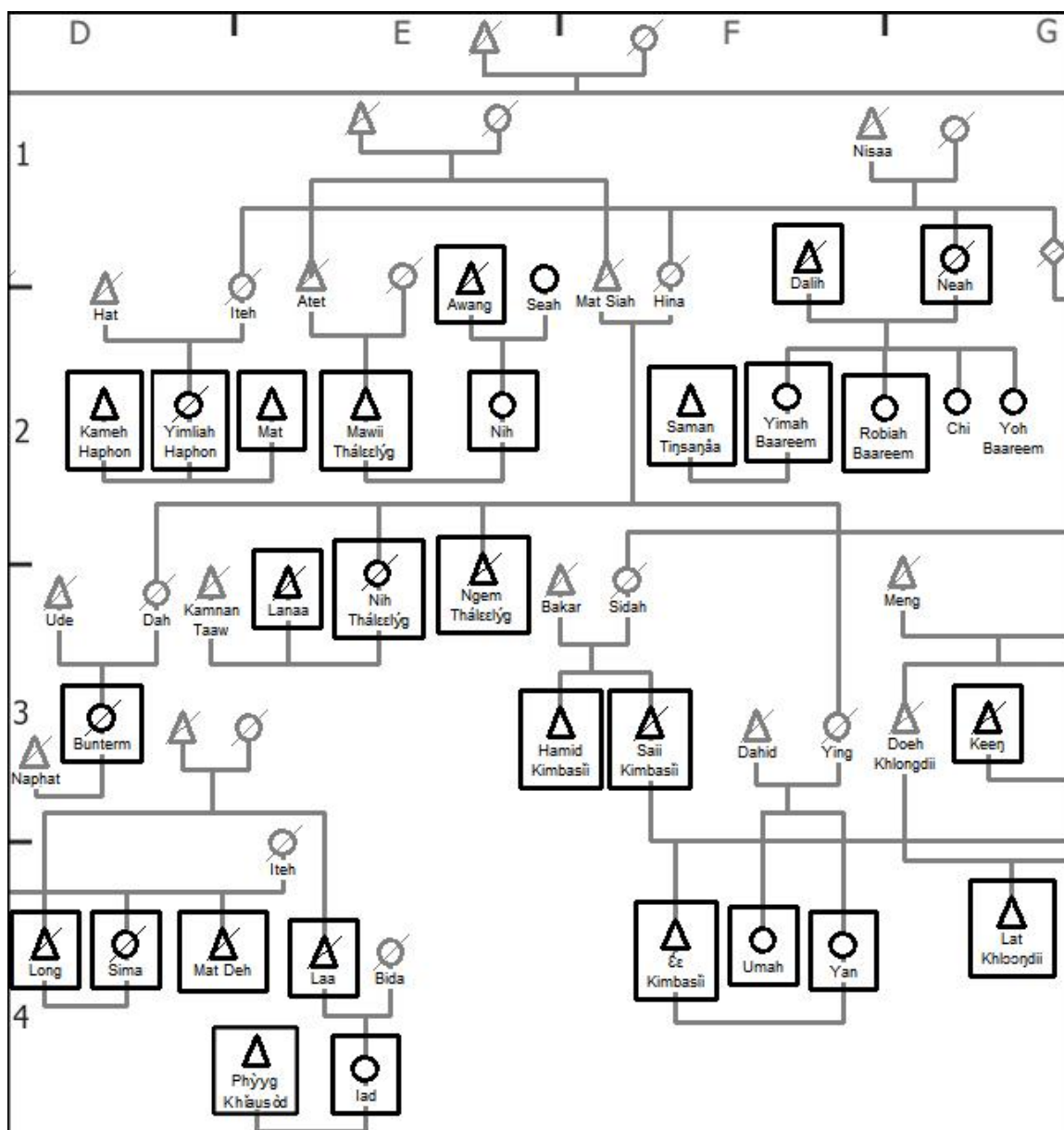
Figure 226. "Mas Merah"

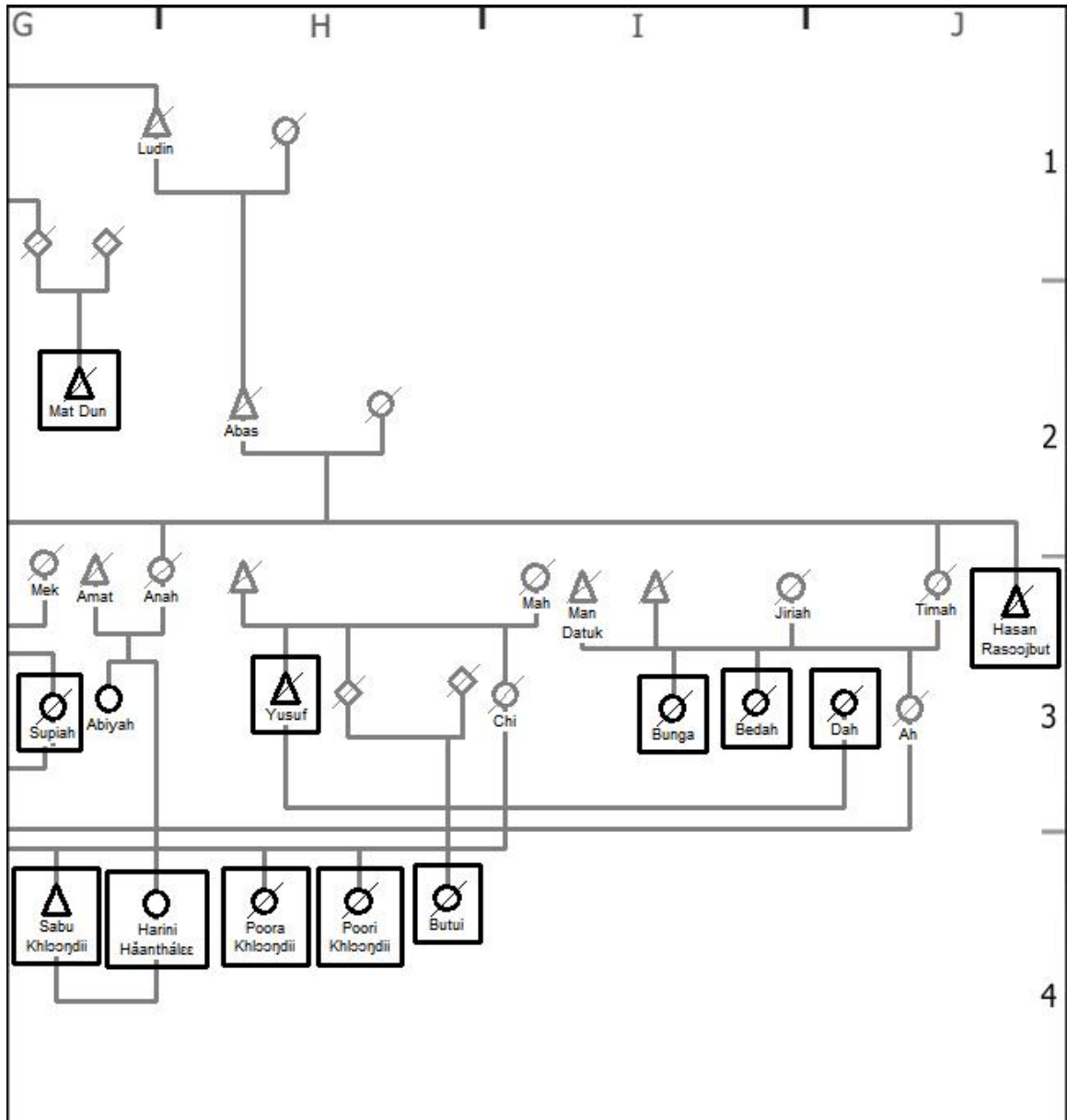
E. COMPARISON OF VIOLIN TUNINGS AMONG CURRENT PERFORMERS

Player	1st string	Pitch Variation (up/down)	Sample Period
Mawii (Sãŋkaa-ûu)	E5	no change over six week period	6 weeks
Een (Hàad Sãmraan)	Eb5	—	1 time
Hari (Raawaj)	Eb5	semitone (down)	3 1/2 months
	D5		
Sanan (Râamàad)	Eb5	semitone (down)	13 months
	D5		
Hàamá (Khlóŋ Piŋ)	C#5	semitone (up) then no change	1 year
	D5		
Eem (Hàad Sãmraan)	C#5	no change	5 weeks
Dam (Kò Khiam Tâj)	C#5	—	1 time
Che Beh (Hûaj Nám Khãaw)	C#5	semitone (down)	7 months
	C5		
Jàafàad (Lěem Krùad)	C#5	semitone (down)	3 weeks
	C5		
Lat (Lěem Phoo)	B4	semitone (up)	5 months
	C5		
Hussein (Kantaŋ)	B4	—	1 time

F. GENEALOGICAL CHART OF PROMINENT ISLAND PERFORMERS







G. TAXONOMY OF SIBLING RANK: MALAYSIA, SOUTHWEST

THAILAND

Sibling order	Common Version	Long Form	English Translation
Eldest	Wa	<i>tua</i>	old
	Long	<i>sulung</i>	eldest
2	Ngah	<i>tengah</i>	middle
3	Lang	<i>alang</i>	a roof beam
4	Njang	<i>panjang</i>	long
5	Ndak	<i>andak</i>	short ( <i>pendek</i> )
6	Tam	<i>hitam</i>	black
7	Teh	<i>puteh</i>	white
Youngest	Cik	<i>kecil</i>	small
	Su (or Cu)	<i>bongsu</i>	youngest

Generation (in relation to the speaker)	Female / Male	Some Examples
Grandparents	Tok	Tok Teh, Tok Tam
Parents	Mak/Pak	Mak Lang, Pak Wa
Speaker's own (elder)	Cá (Thailand only), Kak /Bang	Kak Ngah, Bang Cik
Speaker's own (younger)	Che (or uses name/nickname)	Che Lang

## I. MENTERA MANIS SUARA (SWEET VOICE MANTRA)

<i>Bismillah</i>	In the name of God
<i>Bismillah manis suara aku</i>	In the name of God, sweeten my voice
<i>Suara ular hitam manis</i>	The voice of the dark snake
<i>Manis suara aku, suara Nabi Daud</i>	Sweeten my voice, the voice of Prophet David
<i>Manis suara aku, suara Nabi Yusuf</i>	Sweeten my voice, the voice of Prophet Yusuf
<i>Lagi deras, lagi budi</i>	Louder, kinder
<i>Burung terbang lagi tertu (jatuh)</i>	The bird flies more disciplined
<i>Bayang Allah</i>	Reflecting God
<i>tujuh cangkat (tingkat) malighai</i>	Seven levels of the palace
<i>lapan kanak-kanak</i>	Eight children
<i>sembilan mengangung ibu</i>	Nine, the pregnant mother
<i>sepuluh Muhammad menjadi</i>	Ten, Muhammad is born
<i>Sejuk budi mengandung ilmu</i>	Mild character abounding with knowledge
<i>Khruu semangat sekelian umat Muhammad</i>	Teachers of solidarity of Muhammad's people
<i>suluh kasih sayang kepada aku</i>	Shine your love on me

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