

# Phuan in Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia: Resettlement under the Reign of King Rama III of Siam

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## Abstract

During fieldwork in 2012 on Lao-Tai languages in Banteay Meanchey Province on the northwest border of Cambodia, the author met a number of Lao speakers who were called 'Liao' by the Khmer people in that area. This research led to the determination that some of these Liao people were actually speakers of Phuan. This then raised the question of why the Phuan were living in this place, which was very far from their homeland in Laos. The objectives of this paper, therefore, are first to prove that some Liao villagers in Banteay Meanchey are Phuan speakers; and second to propose that their ancestors came to this area during the power expansion of the Siam Kingdom in the Early Rattanakosin period. To prove these hypotheses, linguistic data are analyzed and compared with that of speakers of dialects of the displaced Phuan in the central part of Thailand and with a Phuan dialect in Laos. Historical records of Siam are also examined in order to determine when their ancestors came to this area in present-day Banteay Meanchey Province in Cambodia. The analysis reveals that the language of Phuan speakers in Banteay Meanchey Province is closely related to Phuan dialects in Thailand, and there is evidence from historical records stating that the Siam Kingdom sent a large number of Lao-Tai captives to work as laborers in Battambang during the reign of King Rama III (1824–1851). Thus, the linguistic evidence and historical evidence presented here are mutually supportive.

**Keywords:** Phuan, Tai Phuan, Liao, Phuan Cambodian, Phuan Resettlement

## Introduction

In 2012, the author conducted fieldwork in the villages of Lao and Tai speakers in Banteay Meanchey and Battambang Provinces, situated in northwestern Cambodia, next to Sra Kaew Province of Thailand. The author found that the 'Liao' people (as the Khmer called them) lived in many villages scattered from the Aranyapradesh district of Thailand, across the Poi Pet border post, to Srei Sophone, the capital of Banteay Meanchey Province, which is 40 kilometers from the border. There were also some Liao people living in Battambang Province, more than 100 kilometers from their relatives in Banteay Meanchey. Among these groups of Liao, there were 10 villages where Phuan speakers lived. Some of these people did not even know that they were Tai Phuan but thought they were Liao, the exonym given to them by the Khmer—the majority group in this area. These Tai Phuan speakers in Cambodia did not know exactly when, why or how their ancestors had come to be there. They only knew that their great-grandfathers said that they fled to these places from Siam because they were afraid of being captured by

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the Siamese army and forced to serve as soldiers. As no studies currently exist concerning Lao-Tai speakers in Cambodia, this comparative linguistic and historical study of the Phuan in Banteay Meanchey and Battambang Provinces seeks to trace the movement of the Phuan and their language.

### **The Migration of Phuan from Their Homeland to Siam**

The migration of the Phuan from their homeland in present-day Laos to Siam has been documented by many scholars including Viravong (1985), Smuckarn and Breazeale (1988), Piyabhan (1998) and Vongvichit (2012). In addition, the history of Muang Phuan has been recorded by Senmany et al. (2001). When and why the ancestors of the Phuan had to move from their homeland can be summarized as follows.

The mountainous homeland of the Phuan was established before the fourteenth century and was known as Muang Phuan (the principality of Phuan people), with Xieng Khouang as the capital. Muang Phuan, located on the *Plain of Jars* plateau, has an area of approximately 400 square kilometers and is 1,200 feet above sea level, southeast of Xieng Thong (Luang Phrabang Kingdom) and northeast of the Vientiane Kingdom. By the mid-fourteenth century, King Fa Ngum had unified the Kingdom of Lao Lan Xang, and Muang Phuan became a semi-independent vassal state under the Lao Kingdom. Beginning in the fifteenth century, the Phuan people experienced more hardship when three powers tried to take control of their state—the Annam Kingdom (Vietnamese) in the east, the Lao Kingdom in the west and the Kingdom of Siam in the southwest. The Phuan kings had to pay tribute to these powers for centuries. By the 1770s, the Kingdom of Siam had taken control of all Lao territories which were to serve as vassal states including Muang Phuan. The kingdom had begun taking people from these states to be used as manpower in Siam. In 1782, King Nanthasen of Vientiane (1781–1794) forced some Phuan people to move to Siam, and again in 1792 he forced the Tai Dam (Black Tai) and more than 4,000 Tai Phuan to move to Siam where King Rama I (1782–1809) commanded that they stay in Bangkok. After the Lao King Anouvong (1805–1828) had launched a campaign for the national liberation of Laos, many Phuan were forced to move again between 1834 and 1837; this was before the war started again between Siam and Vietnam in Cambodia (between 1841–1845). In 1875–76, after the Siamese army had suppressed the Chinese Ho marauders' invasions of northern Lao, many Phuan and Lao people were again moved to Siam. By the end of 1876, the Phuan people were allowed to return to Muang Phuan, but there were only a few who went back to their homeland.

### **The Phuan in Cambodia**

Schliesinger (2011:315) indicates that there are ten villages in Mongkol Bourei District, Banteay Meanchey Province where Phuan speakers live, and he reports the names of these villages. Jaturaphatarawong (2013:5) also refers to ten villages in Mongkol Bourei District, Banteay Meanchey Province and additionally includes one village in Battambang Province. In Banteay Meanchey Province the villages are: Pongro Village, Banteay Neang Commune; Ta Sal Village, Chamnaom Commune; Sranal Village, Sambour Commune; Prey Totueng Village, Phnum Touch Commune; Pupi Deum Village,

Ta Lam Commune; Sdey Leu and Sdey Krom Villages, Koy Maeng Commune; Kouk Thnong Village, Ou Prasat Commune; Kantom Ruy Village, Bat Trang Commune and Rohat Tuek Village, Rohat Tuek Commune; and Thamo Kol District in Battambang Province. The Phuan population in these villages is estimated to be around 3,000–4,000. The Phuan people have been peasants in this region for more than 200 years, but currently only children and old people remain, as most young Phuan have gone to work primarily as laborers in Bangkok or in the other parts of Thailand (Jaturaphatarawong 2013:5).

## **Objectives**

This paper has two objectives. The first is to prove that the Liao language spoken in these ten villages is a Phuan language closely related to Phuan in Thailand. The second is to present evidence showing that the ancestors of these Phuan villagers were forced to move to these locations to become laborers in Banteay Meanchey which was, at that time, a part of Battambang Province and thus was part of Siam during the reign of King Rama III.

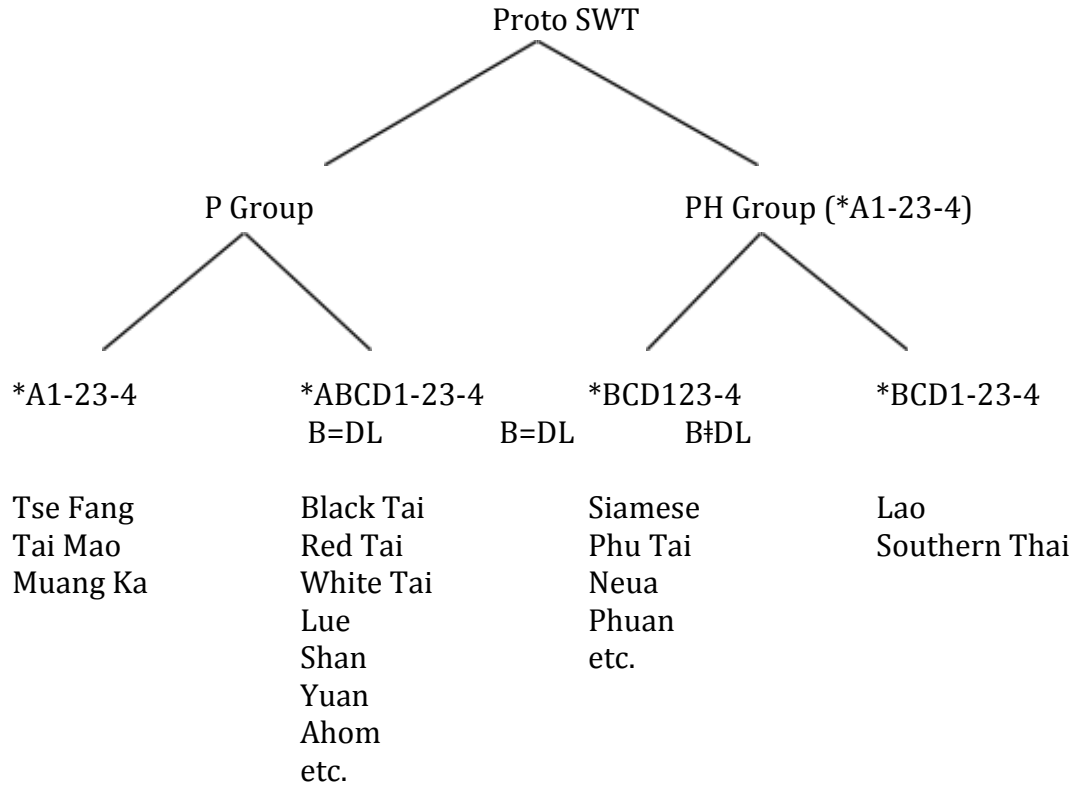
## **Linguistic Evidence**

A pilot study conducted by Jaturaphatarawong (2013) reports that the Liao speakers in these ten villages in Banteay Meanchey Province all speak the same dialect. For this paper, the phonological system and basic words of Liao speakers in one village (Pong Ro Village) are studied. The phoneme inventory of this language is described in the appendix.

The sound development of initial consonants, tones and vowels is used as the linguistic evidence to prove that the Liao people are actually Phuan speakers.

## **Development of Initial Consonants and Tones**

The classification of Southwestern Tai Dialects was proposed by Chamberlain (1975:50), who divided Southwestern Tai into two main groups, the P group (proto Tai voiced stops changed to voiceless unaspirated stops) and the PH group (proto Tai voiced stops changed to voiceless aspirated stops); he then subdivided them by considering their pattern of split and coalescence of proto tones as shown in Chart 1.



**Chart 1:** Classification of southwestern Tai dialects by Chamberlain (1975)

The proto Tai initial voiced stops - *\*b* *\*d* and *\*g* reconstructed by Li (1977) have changed to voiceless aspirated stops in the Pong Ro dialect in words such as:

***\*b > ph***

phi: <sup>443</sup>	'fat'
phu: <sup>443</sup>	'mountain'
phɔ: <sup>332</sup>	'father'
phɛ: <sup>443</sup>	'raft'
pha: <sup>443</sup>	'to take along'

***\*d > th***

thuj <sup>443</sup>	'to guess'
thak <sup>42</sup>	'land leech'
thɔ:ŋ <sup>457</sup>	'stomach'
thaj <sup>443</sup>	'way, road'
thɛ:k <sup>42</sup>	'to measure'

***\*g > kh***

kha: <sup>443</sup>	'stuck'
khem <sup>443</sup>	'salty'
kha:ŋ <sup>443</sup>	'chin'

khi:m<sup>443</sup>  
kha:<sup>457</sup>

'pincers'  
'to trade'

The Pong Ro dialect in this study therefore should be classified in the PH group because the proto initial consonants *\*b* *\*d* and *\*g* became *ph*, *th*, and *kh*, respectively.

According to Chamberlain's criteria in Chart 1, the PH group is subdivided into two groups based on the pattern of split and merger of proto tones, i.e. *\*BCD123-4*, B=DL and *\*BCD1-23-4*, B#DL group.

By adapting Gedney's *Checklist for Determining Tones in Tai Dialects* (1972), 66 basic words from the checklist were elicited, as shown in Figure 1.

*Tone *Initial	A	B	C	DL	DS
1. Voiceless Consonants	ear, leg, head	egg, to split, knee	rice, shirt, to kill, fever, five	broken, torn, the gums, to carry on a shoulder pole	flea cooked, ripe, vegetable
2. Unaspirated Consonants	year, eye, to eat	forest, chicken, old	aunt, rice seedlings, to boil	the lungs, wing, to pound	frog, liver, to hurt
3. Glottalized Consonants	to fly, red, star	shoulder, young man, to scold	crazy, village, to open (the mouth)	sunshine, to bathe, flower	fish hook, raw, chest
4. Voiced Consonants	hand, water buffalo, rice field	older sibling, father, dry field	water, younger siblings, wood horse	knife, (one's) child, blood, outside	bird, to tie up, to steal

**Figure 1:** Gedney's checklist for determining tones in Tai dialects

In this field study, the author elicited more than 800 words from the informants. One informant was a 78-year-old male speaker and the other was a 75-year-old female speaker. Gedney's checklist for determining tones was used first, and a wordlist from Li (1977) was used to collect data on consonant and vowel sound developments; six tones were found. The shapes of these tones were based on the auditory judgment of the author. The tone system and tone shapes in the Pong Ro dialect are shown in Figure 2.

From the details of its tone system and tone shapes it can be said that in the Pong Ro dialect, the tones in the B column are similar to the tones in the DL column (B123 = DL123, B4 = DL4)

*Tone *Initial	A	B	C	DL	DS
1	T1(24)	T3(32)	T5(44?)	T3(32)	T1(35)
2	T2(443)	T3(32)	T5(44?)	T3(32)	T1(35)
3	T2(443)	T3(32)	T5(44?)	T3(32)	T1(35)
4	T2(443)	T4(332)	T6(45?)	T4(42)	T2(44)

Figure 2: Similarity of tones in the B column and the D column in Pong Ro dialect

Based on the criteria B=DL mentioned above, it can be judged that the Pong Ro dialect should be grouped with Siamese, Phu Tai and Phuan but should not be grouped with Lao. The tone system of the Pong Ro dialect is very different from Lao because the striking features of the tone system in all Lao dialects are B≠DL, C1=DL123 and C234=DL4 as suggested by Brown (1965) and Chamberlain (1975). The tone system of Vientiane<sup>2</sup> Lao is shown in Figure 3.

*Tone *Initial	A	B	C	DL	DS
1	T1(24)	T3(33)	T4(21?)	T4(21?)	T1(35)
2	T1(24)	T3(33)	T5(342?)	T4(21?)	T1(35)
3	T1(24)	T3(33)	T5(342?)	T4(21?)	T1(35)
4	T2(35)	T3(33)	T5(342?)	T5(342?)	T3(44)

Figure 3: Tone system of Vientiane Lao

The tone system of the Pong Ro dialect is also very different from Siamese. The tone system of Bangkok Siamese is shown in Figure 4.

<sup>2</sup>The tone system of Vientiane Lao is from the author’s field study for this paper.

*Tone *Initial	A	B	C	DL	DS
1	T1(24)	T3(11)	T4(42)	T3(11)	T3(11)
2	T2(33)	T3(11)	T4(42)	T3(11)	T3(11)
3	T2(33)	T3(11)	T4(42)	T3(11)	T3(11)
4	T2(33)	T4(42)	T5(45)	T4(42)	T5(45)

**Figure 4:** Tone system of Bangkok Siamese

Although in Phu Tai and in Pongro Phuan the tone shapes in column B are similar to the tone shapes in column DL, the pattern of the tone system in Phu Tai is different from that in the Pong Ro dialect. The tone system of Phu Tai<sup>3</sup> is shown in Figure 5.

*Tone *Initial	A	B	C	DL	DS
1	T1(24)	T2(32)	T4(44?)	T2(32)	T1(24)
2	T1(24)	T2(32)	T4(44?)	T2(32)	T1(24)
3	T1(24)	T2(32)	T4(44?)	T2(32)	T1(24)
4	T2(32)	T3(45?)	T3(45?)	T2(32)	T3(35)

**Figure 5:** Tone system of Sakon Nakhorn Phu Tai

<sup>3</sup>The tone system of Phu Tai was found to be based on Phok Noi village, Phanna Nikom district, Sakon Nakhorn Phu Tai in the author's field study for this paper.

## Development of Vowels

The analysis above confirms that the Pong Ro dialect is not a Lao dialect. Comparing the tone system of Pong Ro with Siamese, it can be seen that Pong Ro is also not a sub-dialect of Siamese. The remaining question is whether or not Pong Ro is a dialect of Phu Tai.

Even though the tone shapes in column B are similar to the tone shapes in column DL (B=DL) in Phu Tai, one of the most salient features of Phu Tai is the sound change of proto diphthongs *\*ie, \*iē, \*iā, \*iō, \*ue* and *\*ui*, which became *e, ə, ə, ə, ə* and *o*, respectively. To demonstrate that the Pong Ro dialect is not a Phu Tai dialect, some cognate words in Phu Tai, the Pong Ro dialect and Siamese are compared below.

### Proto Tai diphthong *\*ie*

<i>Phu Tai</i>	<i>Pong Ro</i>	<i>Siamese</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
le: <sup>32</sup>	lia <sup>443</sup>	lia <sup>33</sup>	'to lick'
pe:n <sup>32</sup>	pian <sup>32</sup>	plian <sup>11</sup>	'to change'
je:t <sup>32</sup>	jiat <sup>32</sup>	jiat <sup>11</sup>	'to stretch'

### Proto Tai diphthong *\*iē*

<i>Phu Tai</i>	<i>Pong Ro</i>	<i>Siamese</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
də:n <sup>24</sup>	dian <sup>443</sup>	dian <sup>33</sup>	'month'
lə:t <sup>32</sup>	liat <sup>32</sup>	liat <sup>42</sup>	'blood'
bə: <sup>32</sup>	bia <sup>32</sup>	bia <sup>11</sup>	'to poison fish'

### Proto Tai diphthong *\*iā*

<i>Phu Tai</i>	<i>Pong Ro</i>	<i>Siamese</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
hə:n <sup>32</sup>	hian <sup>443</sup>	rian <sup>33</sup>	'house'
khəŋ <sup>32</sup>	khian <sup>32</sup>	khian <sup>11</sup>	'young (chicken)'

### Proto Tai diphthong *\*iō*

<i>Phu Tai</i>	<i>Pong Ro</i>	<i>Siamese</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
hə: <sup>32</sup>	hia <sup>443</sup>	ria <sup>33</sup>	'boat'
lə:ŋ <sup>24</sup>	lian <sup>24</sup>	lian <sup>24</sup>	'yellow'
kə: <sup>24</sup>	kia <sup>443</sup>	kia <sup>33</sup>	'salt'

### Proto Tai diphthong *\*ue*

<i>Phu Tai</i>	<i>Pong Ro</i>	<i>Siamese</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
tho: <sup>32</sup>	thua <sup>32</sup>	thua <sup>11</sup>	'bean'
ho: <sup>24</sup>	hua <sup>24</sup>	hua <sup>24</sup>	'head'
ho: <sup>32</sup>	hua <sup>32</sup>	rua <sup>42</sup>	'to leak'



Proto Tai diphthong \**ui*

<i>Phu Tai</i>	<i>Pong Ro</i>	<i>Siamese</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
ho:ŋ <sup>32</sup>	huan <sup>443</sup>	ruan <sup>33</sup>	'ear of corn'
so:n <sup>24</sup>	suan <sup>24</sup>	suan <sup>24</sup>	'garden'

These sound changes confirm that the Pong Ro dialect is not a sub-dialect of Phu Tai. However, there are some changes of proto diphthongs that could be a shared development in Phu Tai and Pong Ro dialects, such as \**ei* > ə; \**oi* > ə and \**ai* > ə.

The change in these proto diphthongs may be one of the salient characteristics of Tai Phuan because it also happened in other Phuan dialects, such as those in Nongsaeng Village, Pakphli District, Nakhorn Nayok Province, Thailand. The Nongsaeng Phuan data were obtained from Sangvanthrup (1991).

Proto Taidiphthong \**eĩ*

<i>Phu Tai</i>	<i>Pong Ro</i>	<i>Nongsaeng</i>	<i>Siamese</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
cə: <sup>24</sup>	cə: <sup>443</sup>	cə: <sup>443</sup>	caj <sup>33</sup>	'breath'
khə: <sup>32</sup>	khə: <sup>32</sup>	khə: <sup>42</sup>	buam <sup>33</sup>	'swollen'

Proto Taidiphthong \**oi*

<i>Phu Tai</i>	<i>Pong Ro</i>	<i>Nongshang</i>	<i>Siamese</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
mə: <sup>32</sup>	mə: <sup>32</sup>	mə: <sup>11</sup>	maj <sup>11</sup>	'new'
sə: <sup>32</sup>	sə: <sup>32</sup>	sə: <sup>11</sup>	saj <sup>11</sup>	'to put in'

Proto Tai diphthong \**əĩ*

<i>Phu Tai</i>	<i>Pong Ro</i>	<i>Nongshang</i>	<i>Siamese</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
hə: <sup>44?</sup>	hə: <sup>44?</sup>	hə: <sup>44?</sup>	haj <sup>42</sup>	'to give'
bə: <sup>24</sup>	bə: <sup>24</sup>	bə: <sup>334</sup>	baj <sup>33</sup>	'leaf'
tə: <sup>24</sup>	tə: <sup>24</sup>	tə: <sup>334</sup>	taj <sup>33</sup>	'gizzard'
tə: <sup>44?</sup>	tə: <sup>44?</sup>	tə: <sup>44?</sup>	taj <sup>42</sup>	'under, below'
kə: <sup>44?</sup>	khə: <sup>44?</sup>	khə: <sup>44</sup>	klaj <sup>42</sup>	'close to'
sə: <sup>24</sup>	sə: <sup>24</sup>	sə: <sup>24</sup>	saj <sup>24</sup>	'transparent'

There is yet another shared development in Phu Tai and Phuan, which is the change of the final consonant *-k* in the cognates in column DL, which became a glottal stop *-ʔ* in Phu Tai and Phuan. For example:

<i>Phu Tai</i>	<i>Pong Ro</i>	<i>Nongshang</i>	<i>Siamese</i>	<i>Gloss</i>
paʔ <sup>44</sup>	paʔ <sup>44</sup>	paʔ <sup>44</sup>	pa:k <sup>11</sup>	'mouth'
maʔ <sup>44</sup>	maʔ <sup>44</sup>	maʔ <sup>44</sup>	ma:k <sup>11</sup>	'fruit'
teʔ <sup>44</sup>	teʔ <sup>44</sup>	teʔ <sup>44</sup>	te:k <sup>11</sup>	'broken'

phəʔ <sup>44</sup>	phiaʔ <sup>44</sup>	phiaʔ <sup>44</sup>	phiak <sup>11</sup>	‘taro’
poʔ <sup>44</sup>	puaʔ <sup>44</sup>	puaʔ <sup>44</sup>	pluak <sup>11</sup>	‘white ant’
peʔ <sup>44</sup>	piaʔ <sup>44</sup>	piaʔ <sup>44</sup>	piak <sup>11</sup>	‘wet’

Up to this point, analysis has shown that the Pong Ro dialect is Phuan, but it is not Lao and it is not Phu Tai. Another group of dialects in the PH, B=DL node is *Neua*, which consists of Tai Sam Neau, Tai Muang Sen, Tai Yeuang and Tai Muang Vat, as mentioned in Chamberlain (1975:54). However, there is a lack of linguistic data on these dialects, so we cannot compare them with Pong Ro Phuan. Nevertheless, what is more important is to know the Phuan dialects in Thailand and Laos to which the Pong Ro dialect is most closely related.

### Comparison of Phuan in Thailand, Xieng Khouang and Cambodia

Phuan in Thailand has been the subject of much study. Some scholars, such as Liamprawat and Wattanapraserit (1996) and Tanprasert (2003) have focused on its phonological characteristics, while others, such as Sukpiti (1989), Sangvanthrup (1991) and Srisuwan (1993) have completed a linguistic description. After reviewing these studies, the author finds that the most salient characteristics to use as linguistic evidence to prove the close relationship of Pong Ro Phuan and Phuan in Thailand are their tone systems. However, Pong Ro Phuan is found to be different from Phuan in Xieng Khouang.

The tone system of Phuan in Xieng Khouang, Laos was described by Chamberlain (1971:30). There are six tones, but the split and coalescence of proto tones ABCD and the tone shapes in Xieng Khouang Phuan are different from those of the Pong Ro dialect. The tone system of Xieng Khouang Phuan is shown in Figure 6.

*Tone *Initial	A	B	C	DL	DS
1	T1(24)	T2(22)	T3(42)	T2(22)	T1(24)
2	T1(24)	T2(22)	T3(42)	T2(22)	T1(24)
3	T1(24)	T2(22)	T3(42)	T2(22)	T1(24)
4	T4(33)	T5(243)	T6(45)	T5(243)	T6(45)

**Figure 6:** Tone system of Xieng Khouang (adapted from Chamberlain, 1971)

The Phuan dialects in Thailand have been described in many articles and theses, but the most relevant to this paper is the description by Tanprasert (2003). Tanprasert classified the Phuan dialects in Thailand into five groups according to the patterns of their

tone systems (the split and coalescence of proto Tai tones). Group VII of Phuan in Tanprasert (2003:104) is very similar to Pong Ro Phuan when their tone systems and tone shapes are compared. In both of these Phuan dialects, there are six tones, and the pattern of split and coalescence is identical; tone in column B = column DL. However, their tone shapes differ somewhat, as shown in Figures 7 and 8.

*Tone *Initial	A	B	C	DL	DS
1	T1(243)	T3(22)	T5(33?)	T3(22)	T1(24)
2	T2(232)	T3(22)	T5(33?)	T3(22)	T1(24)
3	T2(232)	T3(22)	T5(33?)	T3(22)	T1(24)
4	T2(232)	T4(42)	T6(35?)	T4(42)	T6(35)

**Figure 7:** Tone system of Phuan in Group VII (Adapted from Tanprasert (2003:104))

*Tone *Initial	A	B	C	DL	DS
1	T1(24)	T3(32)	T5(44?)	T3(32)	T1(35)
2	T2(443)	T3(32)	T5(44?)	T3(32)	T1(35)
3	T2(443)	T3(32)	T5(44?)	T3(32)	T1(35)
4	T2(443)	T4(332)	T6(45?)	T4(42)	T2(44)

**Figure 8:** Tone system of Pong Ro Phuan

The split and coalescence of proto tones in Group VII Phuan and Pong Ro Phuan are identical, and their tone shapes are similar. It can thus be said that they are similar, because the tone shapes of Phuan in other groups are much more dissimilar.

This linguistic evidence provides the basis for a conclusion that Pong Ro Phuan is closely related to Phuan in Group VII. According to Tanprasert (2003:104) the Phuan speakers in Group VII are the people who live in the following three villages: Padeang Village, Nongphayom Subdistrict, Taphanhin District, Phichit Province; Khawdin Village, Thaitung Subdistrict, Thapklaw District, Phichit Province and Khumkhaw Village, Nongsaeng Subdistrict, Pakphlee District, Nakhon Nayok Province. The evidence

confirms that the ancestors of Phuan in Banteay Meanchey Province moved together (Map 1) with the ancestors of the Phuan in Phichit and Nakhon Nayok Province to central Thailand, and then the ancestors of Phuan in Banteay Meanchey moved again to their location in present-day Cambodia.

### **Evidence from Siam's Historical Records**

The multiple Siamese army invasions of the Lan Xang Kingdom and the forced resettlement of the Lao population to Siam will not be presented here. What the author would like to highlight is that there are some parts of the *Prachum Pongsawadan phak thi 67* (History Series 67) that concern the resettlements of the Phuan in Siam and the Phuan in Cambodia. This History Series 67 was titled, "Records Pertaining to the Khmer and Vietnamese in the Third Reign" and published by the Fine Arts Department of Thailand in 1938. As will be shown, these historical records are relevant to the resettlement of the Phuan in Cambodia.

In 1833, King Rama III ordered Chao Phraya Bodindecha, the Minister of the Interior, to march troops in to protect the Khmer Kingdom, a vassal state of Siam at the time. Bodindecha, with his soldiers, constructed a cantonment at Battambang, a principality in Cambodia. There was an official order from Bodindecha to Phraya Phiromraja (Fine Arts Department 1938: 6–7), saying "...tell Phraya Phiromraja to lead captives toward Muang Aranyapradesh and build cook-houses there. Tell Phraya Prachacheep to manage purchasing 500 cartloads of rice from Muang Prachinburi, Muang Chachoengsao and Muang Nakhon Nayok and store in granaries at Muang Prachinburi."

In 1837, the tension between Siam and Annam intensified, and King Rama III was afraid that the population in Muang Phuan might be taken to Annam. A royal letter was therefore sent to Chao Phraya Thamma (Fine Arts Department 1938: 34–35), saying "...If this year we cannot prevail upon all Phuan population to move to Siam, there may be some left behind, but you have to admonish the governors of Muang Nongkhai, Muang Nonghan and Muang Chayaburi to be cautious and do not let the Phuan captives flee back to their lands. When dry season comes, prevail upon those who still live there; if they do not consent to move, send troops to evacuate all of them. Do not let them be the source of provisions for our enemy. The Phuan families, who have already moved, will be sent to the Muang written on the list..."

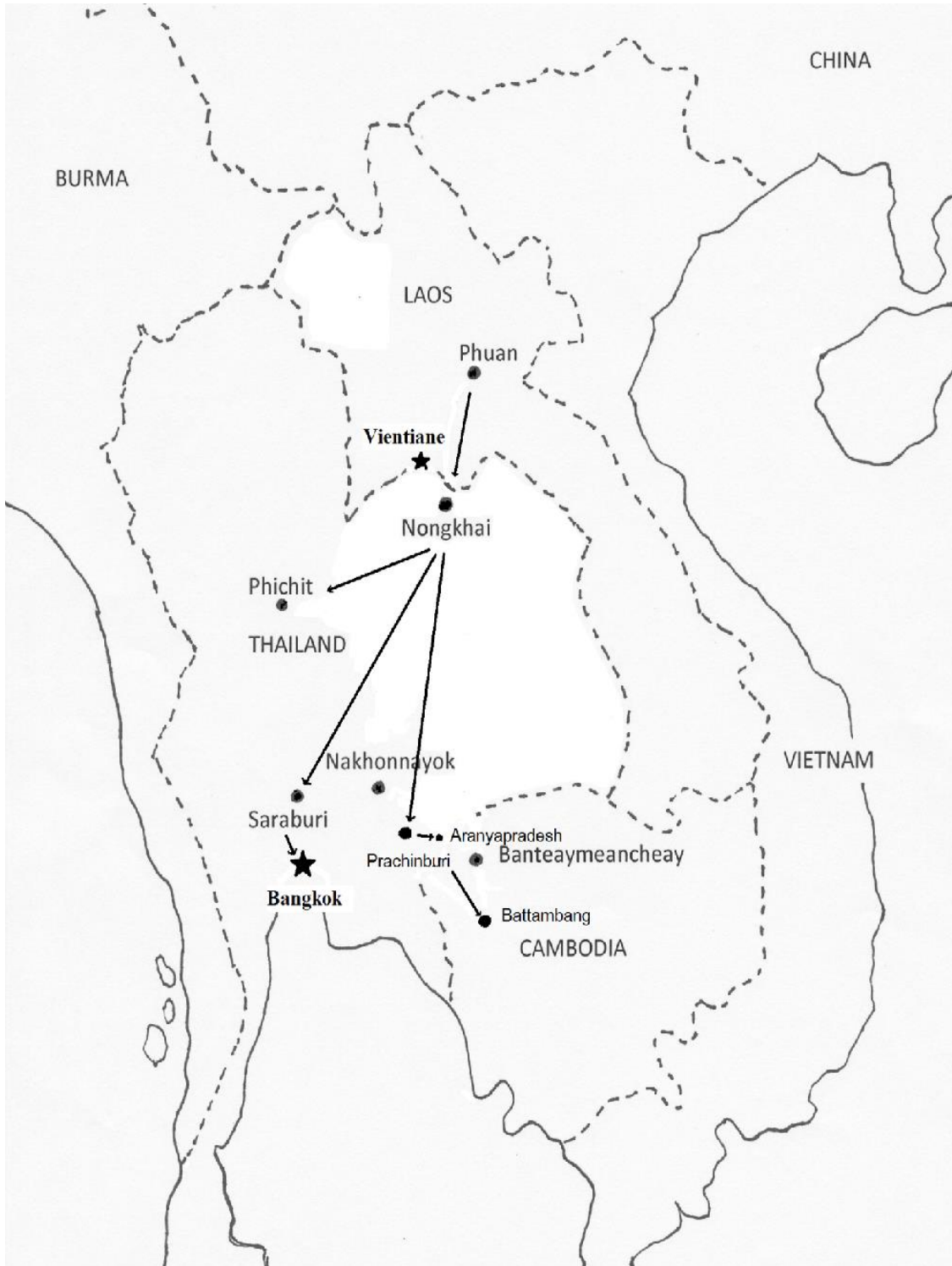
There was also a letter from Chao Phraya Chakri sent to the governors of Nongkhai and Nonghan in 1837 (Fine Arts Department 1938: 137), saying "...Phuan and Lao Vieng proletarians— families, fully-grown men, novice monks and monks altogether 1,770 will be sent to Prachinburi...the departure time from Nongkhai and Nonghan is the 5th month, 10th day..."

History Series 67 (Fine Arts Department 1938: 144–182) provides a record of the number of proletarians and soldiers levied to construct Muang Battambang in 1837, numbering altogether 728 troops, who had to transport rice and salt to Battambang. The levied proletarians were from many Muang in northeast and central Siam. Among the proletarians there were "...Thai 5, Lao 100 from Nakhon Nayok..." They finished the construction of Muang Battambang in 1838.

These historical records provide clear evidence as to why the Phuan speakers can be found in Cambodia, a place that is very far from their former homeland.

Based on this historical evidence, it appears that Phuan people were captured and forced to move to Siam on a number of occasions. It is likely that the route of their resettlement was first from Muang Phuan, from where they were herded across the Mekong River to Muang Nongkhai and Muang Nonghan. Later they were sent to many provinces in northeastern, northern and central Siam. At present, Phuan descendants can be found in many of Thailand's provinces. According to Tanprasert (2003:5) the descendants of the Phuan live in three provinces in the northeast, eight provinces in the north and eight provinces in the central regions of Thailand.

The similarity between the Phuan dialect in Cambodia and the Phuan dialect in Phichit and in Nakon Nayok, provides confirmation that the ancestors of the Phuan in Cambodia might have been forced to leave Muang Phuan together with the ancestors of Phuan in either Phichit or Nakon Nayok. These Phuan captives were then sent to Aranyapradesh to build the cook-houses, and some of them were sent to construct Muang Battambang, which was a part of the Kingdom of Siam at that time. The places they live now are located in Banteay Meanchey, which was a part of Battambang. The proposed route of their resettlement is shown as in Map 1.



**Map 1:** Route of Phuan resettlement to Cambodia

## Conclusions

The linguistic evidence presented in this paper confirms that the Liao speakers in some villages in Banteay Meanchey are actually Phuan speakers, and also that this Phuan dialect has a closer relationship to the Phuan in central Thailand than the Phuan in Xieng Khouang, Laos. This means that the Phuan in these two villages in Cambodia have the same ancestors. The historical evidence presented here has shown that the ancestors of Phuan in Banteay Meanchey moved from central Thailand during the reign of King Rama III (1824–1851).

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## Appendix

### Phoneme Inventory of Pong Ro Phuan

The author elicited linguistic data from two speakers in Pong Ro village, Banteay Neang Commune, Mongkol Borei District, Banteay Meanchey Province. One informant was a 78-year-old male speaker and the other was a 75-year-old female speaker. The village comprised 284 households. Most of the peasants in this village are Tai (90%); some are Khmer and other ethnic groups.

The phoneme inventory in this Phuan dialect comprises tones, consonants and vowels. Syllable structure is simple: CV:<sup>T</sup>, CVV<sup>T</sup>, CVC<sup>T</sup>, CV:C<sup>T</sup> and CVVC<sup>T</sup>.

**Tones.** There are six tones; their phonetic characteristics are as follows.

**Tone 1 (T1)** represents a low-rising pitch (24).

kha: <sup>24</sup>	'leg'
hu: <sup>24</sup>	'ear'
ma: <sup>24</sup>	'dog'

When this tone occurs in a checked syllable, it becomes a mid-rising pitch.

khat <sup>35</sup>	'to shut'
mat <sup>35</sup>	'flea'
kat <sup>35</sup>	'to bite'
bet <sup>35</sup>	'fish hook'

**Tone 2 (T2)** represents a high-level pitch slightly falling at the end (443).

kha: <sup>443</sup>	'thatch grass'
ka: <sup>443</sup>	'crow'
ma: <sup>443</sup>	'to come'

This tone also occurs in a checked syllable as in the following words.

khat <sup>44</sup>	'to stop bleeding'
nok <sup>44</sup>	'bird'
mot <sup>44</sup>	'ant'

**Tone 3 (T3)** represents a mid-falling pitch (32).

kha: <sup>32</sup>	'galangal'
khaj <sup>32</sup>	'egg'
kaj <sup>32</sup>	'chicken'
ba: <sup>32</sup>	'shoulder'

This tone also occurs in a checked syllable as in the following words.

kha:t <sup>32</sup>	'to be torn'
ka:t <sup>32</sup>	'cabbage'
?a:p <sup>32</sup>	'to bath'

**Tone 4** (T4) represents a mid-level pitch and falling at the end (332).

phɔ: <sup>332</sup>	'father'
mɛ: <sup>332</sup>	'mother'
haj <sup>332</sup>	'dry field'

This tone becomes higher when it occurs in a checked syllable as in the following words.

kha:t <sup>42</sup>	'harrow'
ha:k <sup>42</sup>	'root'
liat <sup>42</sup>	'blood'

**Tone 5** (T5) represents a high-level pitch with glottal closure (44?).

kha: <sup>44?</sup>	'to kill'
pha: <sup>44?</sup>	'cloth'
pa: <sup>44?</sup>	'aunt'
?a: <sup>44?</sup>	'to open the mouth'

**Tone 6** (T6) represents a high-rising pitch with glottal closure (45?).

kha: <sup>45?</sup>	'to trade'
ma: <sup>45?</sup>	'horse'
na:m <sup>45?</sup>	'water'

**Consonants.** There are 20 consonants in the Pong Ro dialect. All of them can occur in the syllable initial position : *p- ph- b- t- th- d- c- k- kh- ʔ- f- s- h- m- n- ɲ- l- w- j-* and some of them can occur in the syllable final position : *-p -t -k -ʔ -m -n -ɲ -w -j.* Their phonetic characteristics are as follows.

*/p/* represents a voiceless unaspirated bilabial stop [p] when it occurs as an initial consonant, and it is inaudibly released [p<sup>h</sup>] when it occurs as a final consonant.

pa: <sup>32</sup>	'forest'
pi: <sup>443</sup>	'year'
pa: <sup>44?</sup>	'aunt'
?a:p <sup>32</sup>	'to bath'

*/ph/* represents a voiceless aspirated bilabial stop [p<sup>h</sup>]. It occurs in the syllable initial position only.

pha: <sup>32</sup>	'to split'
phɔ: <sup>332</sup>	'father'

phi:<sup>24</sup> 'ghost'

/b/ represents a voiced unaspirated bilabial stop with pre-glottalization [ʔb]. It occurs in the syllable initial position only.

ba:<sup>32</sup> 'shoulder'  
 ba:n<sup>447</sup> 'village'  
 ba:w<sup>32</sup> 'young man'

/t/ represents a voiceless unaspirated alveolar stop [t] when it occurs as an initial consonant, and it is inaudibly released [t<sup>1</sup>] when it occurs as a final consonant.

ta:<sup>443</sup> 'eye'  
 taŋ<sup>32</sup> 'small stool'  
 tu:<sup>447</sup> 'breast'  
 kat<sup>35</sup> 'to bite'

/th/ represents a voiceless aspirated alveolar stop [t<sup>h</sup>]. It occurs in the syllable initial position only.

tha:<sup>32</sup> 'dock'  
 thaŋ<sup>32</sup> 'to strike'

/d/ represents a voiced unaspirated bilabial stop with pre-glottalization [ʔd]. It occurs in the syllable initial position only.

da:<sup>32</sup> 'to scold'  
 daŋ<sup>443</sup> 'nose'  
 den<sup>443</sup> 'tomato'

/c/ represents a voiceless unaspirated alveolo-palatal affricate [tɕ]. It occurs in the syllable initial position only.

cə:<sup>443</sup> 'heart'  
 ca:ŋ<sup>443</sup> 'insipid'  
 cum<sup>32</sup> 'to dip in water'

/k/ represents a voiceless unaspirated velar stop [k] when it occurs as an initial consonant. It is inaudibly released [k<sup>1</sup>] when it occurs as a final consonant.

kaj<sup>443</sup> 'far'  
 kaj<sup>32</sup> 'chicken'  
 ka:ŋ<sup>443</sup> 'to spread'  
 kok<sup>35</sup> 'base'

/kh/ represents a voiceless aspirated velar stop [k<sup>h</sup>]. It occurs in the syllable initial position only.

khaj<sup>32</sup> 'egg'  
 kha:ŋ<sup>443</sup> 'chin'

/ʔ/ represents a glottal stop [ʔ] when it occurs as an initial consonant, and it is inaudibly released [ʔ̚] when it occurs as a final consonant.

ʔaj <sup>443</sup>	'to cough'
tuaʔ <sup>35</sup>	'to lie'

/f/ represents a voiceless labio-dental fricative [f]. It occurs in the syllable initial position only.

faj <sup>443</sup>	'fire'
fi: <sup>24</sup>	'boil, ulcer'

/s/ represents a voiceless alveolar fricative [s]. It occurs in the syllable initial position only.

saj <sup>443</sup>	'fish trap'
sa:m <sup>24</sup>	'three'

/h/ represents a voiceless glottal fricative with nasalization [h̥]. It occurs in the syllable initial position only.

haj <sup>443</sup>	'chicken louse'
ha:m <sup>24</sup>	'to carry by two persons'

/m/ represents a voiced bilabial nasal [m]. It can occur both in the syllable initial position and in the syllable final position.

ma: <sup>443</sup>	'to come'
ma:m <sup>457</sup>	'spleen'

/n/ represents a voiced alveolar nasal [n]. It can occur both in the syllable initial position and in the syllable final position.

na: <sup>443</sup>	'rice field'
nom <sup>443</sup>	'milk'
naŋ <sup>24</sup>	'skin'
no:n <sup>24</sup>	'worm'

/ɲ/ represents a voiced palatal nasal [ɲ]. It occurs in the syllable initial position only.

ɲa: <sup>332</sup>	'grandmother'
ɲa:ŋ <sup>332</sup>	'to walk'

/ŋ/ represents a voiced velar nasal [ŋ]. It can occur both in the syllable initial position and in the syllable final position.

ŋa: <sup>332</sup>	'twig'
ŋa: <sup>443</sup>	'sesame'
dɛ:ŋ <sup>443</sup>	'red'

/l/ represents a voiced alveolar lateral approximant [l]. It occurs in the syllable initial position only.

lom <sup>443</sup>	'wind'
laŋ <sup>24</sup>	'back'

/w/ represents a voiced labio-velar approximant [w]. It can occur both in the syllable initial position and in the syllable final position.

wa: <sup>332</sup>	'to say'
wi: <sup>443</sup>	'to fan'
wa:w <sup>457</sup>	'to speak'

/j/ represents a voiced palatal approximant [j]. It can occur both in the syllable initial position and in the syllable final position.

ja: <sup>443</sup>	'medicine'
ja: <sup>32</sup>	'do not'
fa:j <sup>447</sup>	'cotton'

**Vowels.** There are 18 monophthongs : *i i: e e: ε ε: ɨ ɨ: ə ə: u u: o o: ɔ ɔ:* and three diphthongs : *ia ia ua*. Their phonetic characteristics are as follows.

/i/ represents a short close front vowel [i].

khij <sup>24</sup>	'ginger'
tiŋ <sup>32</sup>	'earlobe'

/i:/ represents a long close front vowel [i:].

khi:ŋ <sup>443</sup>	'body'
phi: <sup>443</sup>	'fat'

/e/ represents a short close-mid front vowel [e].

ʔen <sup>443</sup>	'tendon'
hen <sup>24</sup>	'to see'
keŋ <sup>32</sup>	'smart'

/e:/ represents a long close-mid front vowel [e:].

ʔe:n <sup>443</sup>	'to lie down'
le:n <sup>24</sup>	'great grandson'
phe: <sup>443</sup>	'collapse'

/ε/ represents a short open-mid front vowel [ε].

keŋ <sup>32</sup>	'to swing'
keŋ <sup>32</sup>	'essence'

/ε:/ represents a long open-mid front vowel [ε:].

ke:ŋ <sup>443</sup>	'curry'
khε:ŋ <sup>332</sup>	'shin'
phe: <sup>443</sup>	'raft'

/ɨ/ represents a short close central vowel [ɨ].

mɨn <sup>443</sup>	'dizzy'
khɨŋ <sup>24</sup>	'to stretch'

/i:/ represents a long close central vowel [i:].

mɨ:n <sup>443</sup>	'to open (one's) eyes'
tɨ:m <sup>32</sup>	'to add'

/ə/ represents a short open-mid central vowel [ə].

lək <sup>44</sup>	'deep'
khəŋ <sup>24</sup>	'a kind of fish trap'

/ə:/ represents a long open-mid central vowel [ə:].

kə:p <sup>32</sup>	'shoes'
khə:ŋ <sup>332</sup>	'half'

/a/ represents a short open central vowel [ɐ].

khaŋ <sup>24</sup>	'to pen'
lak <sup>44</sup>	'to steal'

/a:/ represents a long open central vowel [ɛ:].

kha:ŋ <sup>32</sup>	'a top'
kha:ŋ <sup>332</sup>	'langur'

/u/ represents a short close back rounded vowel [u].

ɲuŋ <sup>443</sup>	'mosquito'
cum <sup>32</sup>	'to dip'

/u:/ represents a long close back rounded vowel [u].

ɲu:ŋ <sup>443</sup>	'peacock' (full word : nok <sup>44</sup> ɲu:ŋ <sup>443</sup> )
cu:m <sup>443</sup>	'budding'

/o/ represents a short close-mid back rounded vowel [o].

com <sup>32</sup>	'to repine'
com <sup>443</sup>	'to sink'

/o:/ represents a long close-mid back rounded vowel [o:].

co:m <sup>443</sup>	'to carry with two hands'
to:ŋ <sup>32</sup>	'to collect water'

/ɔ/ represents a short open-mid back rounded vowel [ɔ].

khɔj <sup>447</sup>	'I'
tɔŋ <sup>32</sup>	'bundle'

/ɔ:/ represents a long open-mid back rounded vowel [ɔ:].

khɔ:j <sup>457</sup>	'slope'
cɔ:m <sup>443</sup>	'peak'

/iɑ/ represents a diphthong [i:a] when it occurs in a smooth syllable and becomes short [iɑ] in a checked syllable with glottal stop coda [ʔ].

mia <sup>443</sup>	‘wife’
piaʔ <sup>44</sup>	‘wet’

/iɑ/ represents a diphthong [i:a]. It becomes short [iɑ] when it occurs in a checked syllable with glottal stop coda [ʔ].

mia <sup>443</sup>	‘to go back’
piaʔ <sup>44</sup>	‘bark’

/ua/ represents a diphthong [u:a]. It becomes short [ua] when it occurs in a checked syllable with glottal stop coda [ʔ].

mua <sup>443</sup>	‘gloomy’
puaʔ <sup>44</sup>	‘white ant’
tuaʔ <sup>35</sup>	‘to deceive’