

THE TONES OF PHUKET AND KO SAMUI: A CORRECTION

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In Egerod (1961), I recorded the tones of Phuket as being identical with those of Nakhonsithammarat, and those of Ko Samui as being identical with both of these in categories (tonemes) but not in tonal manifestations. I have later come to realize that while this is an accurate description of the speech habits of my informants (who were students at the then Secondary Teachers' Training Colleges of Bangkok and Songkhla respectively), their speech was not representative of the pure local dialects of Phuket and Ko Samui. I had at the time I wrote the article not had an opportunity to visit the localities in question. In the spring of 1971 I did so*, and I take this opportunity to correct what I said in 1961 on the tones of Phuket and Ko Samui.

Using the terminology of my article mentioned above (where high, middle, and low initial consonants of the Thai system of writing are indicated as H, M, and L; where the tonal markers máj èeg and máj thoo were indicated by the numerals 1 and 2, and the absence of a tonal marker as 0 in live syllables and as G and :G in dead syllables with short and long vowel respectively; and where tonal manifestations are written by means of combinations of the letters h high, m middle, l low, e even, r rising, f falling) we find the following system in Phuket :

	0	1	2	G	:G
H	hf	hf	me	he	me
M	mrf	mrf	me	mr	me
L	lf	lr	le	le	lr

The two main differences from Nakhonsithammarat in development of tonemes (categories, not manifestations) are that MG is not identical with M:G, but that on the other hand M2 and H2 have coalesced.

In Ko Samui the system looks like this :

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	0	1	2	G	:G
H	hf	hf	me	he	me
M	mrf	mrf	lr	mr	lr
L	lf	lr	le	le	lr

Ko Samui is then different from both Phuket and Nakhonsithammarat in combining M2 and L1 (like Standard Thai, but without adding H2); but like Nakhonsithammarat, different from Phuket, H2 and M2 are kept apart. In actual manifestation the Ko Samui tone /me/ is higher than mid, but not as high as /he/.

I was happy to find that Brown (1965: pp. 122-123) has come to exactly the same conclusion. So there is no longer any discrepancy between Dr. Brown's and my own description of the Southern Thai tones.

The following words will exemplify the tonemes :

	Phuket	Ko Samui
eat	kin. mrf	kin. mrf
fly	bin. mrf	bin. mrf
chicken	kaj. mrf	kΛj. mrf
nine	kaaw. me	kaaw. lr
seven	ced. mr	ced. mr
eight	pæd. me	pæed. lr
dog	maa. hf	maa. hf
four	sej. hf	see. hf
five	haa. me	haa. me
ten	sib. he	sib. he
to tear	chii ? . me	chee ? . me
come	maa. lf	maa. lf
father	phəə. lr	phəə. lr
horse	maa. le	maa. le
bird	nəg. le	nəg. le
child	luu ? . lr	luu ? . lr