

OBSERVATIONS ON THE USES OF REDUPLICATION AS
A POETIC DEVICE IN KHMER

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The constant use of alliterative and other reduplicative forms is a striking feature of Khmer poetry. The purpose of this short study of a vast subject is to analyse some of the forms of reduplication which occur in traditional Khmer poetry. The reduplicative structures of modern spoken and written prose (Gorgoniyev 1963: 58-61; Huffman 1967: 129-40; Jacob 1968: 188-93; Jenner 1969: 63-73; Nacaskul 1971: 354-62) are taken as a basis for the examination.

The Khmers enjoy using an elaborate language style in descriptive, consciously literary prose and tend to adopt the poetic vein quite suddenly and rather more readily than we do now in the West. Lewitz (1970: 108) remarks on the occurrence of rhyme in prose in her introduction to No. 3 of the "modern" inscriptions of Angkor. Many of the poetic compound words which will be discussed below are to be found in descriptive prose writing. The contrast which is to be borne in mind, then, with regard to the vocabulary described in the following pages, is rather between the "plain language" of speech and factual prose and the "poetic language" of stylish literature and poetry. Where devices other than the choice of vocabulary are concerned, it will be clear from the citations and references that only poetry is involved.

The poems which have been consulted are listed at the end of the paper with, where possible, dates or approximate dates. The material has been arranged under six headings:

1. Reduplication in the structure of simple words
2. Reduplication in the structure of compound words
3. Grammatical categories of reduplicative words
4. Reduplication in syntactical structures
5. Reduplication and lexical meaning
6. Reduplication in relation to style.

Under each heading comment and examples are given, first for the plain language and then for the poetic language.

1. Reduplication in the structure of simple words

Reduplication occurs in the extended initial sequences of monosyllables and in the sequences of consonants which precede the vowel nucleus in restricted disyllables (Henderson 1952: 164-73).

Plain language

/kəka:y/	to scratch or dig with hands or paws constantly	<	/ka:y/	to scratch or dig with hands or paws
/kək ² a:k/	with repeated sounds of laughter	<	/k ² a:k/	with a laughing sound
/tùəntðən/	close on the heels of	<	/tðən/	to catch up, be in time for

Poetic language

/ləlò:t/	to spring about	<	/lò:t/	to jump
/səsraoc/	pouring all over	<	/sraoc/	to sprinkle

A poetic example of a restricted disyllable with reduplication has not been noted but the form is not of very common occurrence in Khmer at all.

No special development of reduplication in simple words has been noticed in the poetic language. There is a tendency, perhaps greater than in the plain language, to use a reduplicative initial consonant before each of the two components of a reduplicative compound, however:

/pəprò:ŋ-pəprì:əy/	constantly sparkling	<	/prò:ŋ-prì:əy/	sparkling
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2. Reduplication in the structure of compound words

In reduplicative compound words, the two components are usually structurally alike, i.e. both are monosyllables with simple initial consonant or both have a two-place initial sequence, etc. It is only in the second of the following patterns that the components often have different forms.

Plain language

Normally one component is a free form (+) and the other bound (0).

i. Repetitive compound (with reduplication of the whole form)

/to:c-to:c/	small and numerous, very	<	/to:c/	small + +
	small			

This live word-forming process is applied with great frequency to attributive verbs and to nouns with concrete meaning.

ii. Rhyming compound (with reduplication of vowel nucleus and final consonant)

/mè:n-tè:n/	really	(true /0)
/sru:əl-bu:əl/	with ease	(comfortable, easy /0)
/crəlaəh-baəh/	disrespectful	(to overdo, go beyond the limit /0)

iii. Chiming compound (with reduplication of initial and final consonant)

/kaŋ-kaŋ/	very contemptuous	(0/ haughty)
/kme:ŋ-kma:ŋ/	children, a crowd of children	(young /0)
/bontec-bontu:əc/	to a certain extent, a few (plural)	(a little /0)

iv. Alliterative compound (with reduplication of initial consonants; one bound form)

/lî:əy-ləm/	jumbled up	(mixed /0)
/præ-prah/	to use generally (suggests plurality of things used)	(to use /0)
/prənap-prənal/	bustling along	(to hurry /0)
/bōndəh-bōnday/	to use an excuse to avoid some commitment	(to free v.tr. /0) (cf. /dəh-day/ to shake off responsibility)

v. Alliterative compound (with reduplication of initial consonants; two free forms)

/cat-caŋ/	to organise	(to send people/ to clarify)
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/slɔŋ-slaɔ/	to show signs of great shock	(to feel faint/with eyes widely open)
/prələk-prələ:h/	very dirty	(sprinkled all over/ dirty all over)
/bɔndaet-bɔndaoy/	to make (someone) do as one wishes	(cause to float/ cause to follow)

Poetic language

Free and bound forms are not marked here since a considerable span of years is under review and it is not in all cases possible to know whether a component which is not now a free form was always a bound form.

i. Repetitive compound (with reduplication of the whole form)

/yɛək(s)-yɛək(s) sva:-sva:/ ogres and monkeys (plurality stressed)

ii. Rhyming compound (with reduplication of vowel nucleus and final consonant)

/cù:ə-bu:e/	row upon row	<	/cu:ə/	row
/sləŋ-kaŋ/	faint and pale	<	/sləŋ/	pale
/trəlaeŋ-kaeŋ/	having four sides			

iii. Chiming compound (with reduplication of initial and final consonant)

/rùŋ-rwəŋ/	splendid			
/thkaeŋ-thkaeŋ/	elevated	<	/thkaeŋ/	lofty
/krəʔe:p-krəʔo:p/	<i>delightfully fragrant</i>	<	/krəʔo:p/	<i>fragrant</i>
/kɔntre:k-kɔntre:k/	in tatters	<	/kɔntre:k/	ragged

iv. Alliterative compound (with reduplication of initial consonants; at least one component cannot be demonstrated to be free)

/yùəŋ-yùəl/	to catch sight of, to see	<	/yùəl/	to see
/skɤm-skay/	huge, vast			
/rùm-cùm-rumcè:ŋ/	to crash (of waves)			

v. Alliterative compound (with reduplication of initial consonants; both components may be demonstrated to have occurred as free forms in poetry)

/mì:əl-mì:əh/	all gold	(much/gold)
/phle:k-phlɔh/	to dart here and there	(to flash/to bound over)
/trətè:h-trətù:əy/	swaying gracefully	(lithe, curving over)

The proportion of alliterative compounds formed of two free forms to those formed on any other pattern is very high in the plain language; in the poetic language it is overwhelmingly so. The most frequently recurring pattern of alliterative compounds in poetry seems to be $C_1C_2V(C)-C_1C_2V(C)$. These compounds may be regarded as catalysed as such, for the purpose of this paper, by the fact that they are cited as separate entries in the Vacananukram Khmer. However, some compounds which are discussed in vi. and vii. below or in section 5 and which are not to be found in the dictionary are held to be compounds only because they are repeatedly used, perhaps only in one work, with a fixed, coordinated meaning which is clear from the context.

The examples given in the two sets of paragraphs i-v above show that approximately the same variety of patterns occurs among poetic reduplicative compounds as among those in the plain language. The following paragraphs introduce two further poetic patterns.

vi. Semi-repetitive compounds based on Indian loanwords

A Sanskrit (Skt.) or Pali (P.) loanword is repeated with a change of final consonant or final vowel nucleus and final consonant. The Sanskrit or Pali inflexions which are thus brought into play do not in all cases reflect correct Sanskrit or Pali forms. This kind of compound is virtually unknown in the plain language.

/ta:bəh-ta:bah/	ascetic	< Skt. P. /tāpasa/ id.
/baksə:-baksɔy/	birds, male & female	< Skt. /paksi/ bird
/məha:-məha:h/	great	< Skt. P. /maha/ id.
/mulhao-mulhaen/	erring	< P. /mūlha/ gone astray
/yac-yap/	sacrifice	< Skt. /yajña/ & P. /yañña/ id.
/vəntì:ə-vəntì:/	greet with palms placed together	< Skt. /vandā/ praising
/vè: rì:əvè:/	revenge	< P. /vera/ hatred
/səra:sə:/	arrows in quantity	< Skt. /çara/ arrow
/sorìya:-sorìye/	sun	< P. /suriya/ id.
/se:na:-se:nì:/	army	< Skt. P. /senā/ id.
/se:lao-se:lɔy/	rocks & boulders	< P. /sela/ id.
/ʔaphìvì:ə-ʔaphìvì:ət/	greet respectfully with palms placed together	< Skt. /abhivāda/ reverential salutation

/ʔaeka:-ʔaekao/	alone	< Skt. P. /eka/ one
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vii. Alliterative compounds based on Indian loanwords

/kse:m-ksa:n/	serene	< Skt. /ksema/ peace; /ksānta/ patient
/tùp-tè:p/	divine, august	< P. /ḍibba/ divine; Skt. P. /deva/ id.
/trùh-trùh/	having evil intention	< Skt. /druh/ to harm; /dr̥ç/ to see, understand
/pùeŋ-pù:c/	family descent	< Skt. /vamsa/; P. /vaṇsa/ family; /bṛja/ seed
/vicùt-vìcèy/	victory	< Skt. P. /vijita/ con- quered; /vijaya/ victory
/ʔanaek-ʔanən/	innumerable	< Skt. P. /aneka/ many; /ananta/ endless

3. Grammatical categories of reduplicative words

Plain language

A large proportion of reduplicative words are attributive verbs which most frequently occur in a post-verbal position, modifying the preceding verb; they are thus usually translated into English by adverbs or adverbial expressions. They hardly occur in isolation at all, even when mooted. Some reduplicative words are nouns, however; these are in many cases names of plants, animals or foods.

Poetic language

The bulk of poetic reduplicative words also are attributive verbs and they occur most frequently in second position. However, there are many instances in poetry of reduplicative compounds which may occur as main verbs. The following are examples of words so used:

/ca:-caeŋ/	to clarify	< /caeŋ/ id.
/chiəŋ-cha:p/	to swerve & swoop (to go to one side/ to swoop)	
/chlah-chlaəy/	to reply	< /chlaəy/ id.
/du:əc-dəl/	to arrive	< /dəl/ id.
/thla:-thlaeŋ/	to declare, explain	< /thlaeŋ/ to wxplain
/yùeŋ-yùəl/	to see	< /yùəl/ id.
/lò:-lò:t/	to spring forth (to move forward/jump)	

/stùh-stì:ə/ to leap about energeti-
 cally (to bound/to
 dash about)

Poetic nouns include: /tù:-tì:/ remote spot (with Sanskritic order of adjective-noun); /sdaen-sdac/ prince, king (manifest/royal person).

4. Reduplication in syntactical structures

Plain language

The Khmers do not tire of repetition and certainly do not avoid repeating a word as we do in the West. Repetitive reduplication occurs both with and without interpolation, as the following five paragraphs illustrate.

i. Repetition of a word without interpolation, giving slight emphasis.

/chùp chùp/ stop!
 /ba:t ba:t/ yes, yes.

ii. Repetition of a word with the interpolation of other words, to add liveliness.

/baek pè:ŋ baek ca:n baek dɔ:p baek kaev/ The breakages! Cups,
 plates, jugs, glasses!

iii. A word which is to receive emphasis may be repeated with the interpolation of either /ʔɣy/ 'what' or the exclamation /ʔɣ:y/.

/kdau ʔɣy kdau/ How hot it is!

iv. Repetition of a word with the interpolation of the components of a compound word.

/do:c kè: do:c ʔaen/ like everybody else (kè:-ʔaen one & all)

v. Repetition of a word with the interpolation of two words which are lexically opposites.

/stùh coh stùh laen/ to jump up and down

Poetic language

i. Repetition of a word without interpolation to give emphasis is not a common occurrence in the poetic language.

ii. Repetition of a word with the interpolation of other words to add liveliness.

S.C.¹ 165 /sɔp tʰɔn sɔp tʰi:və sɔp mʰi:əsa:/ every day, every day,
every month

L.A.V. 290 /cak kɔ: cak sma: cak khnɔ:ŋ cak cʰi:ŋ cak day/ they stabbed
them in the neck, shoulder, back, legs and arms.

iii. Interpolation with /ʔɿy/ or /ʔɿ:y/ is not a common occurrence in the poetic language. However, a poetic form of interpolated reduplication involving three words does occur, in which the literary particle /dɔ:/, which tends to link an attribute to a noun, is preceded and followed by the components of a compound with attributive meaning.

R.10.8/vicʰt dɔ: vicʰy/ victorious (conquered particle victory)

iv. Repetition of a word with the interpolation of the components of a compound word. This seems to take place rather often with the components in the opposite order from the usual one.

K.21 /cra:l chʰau cra:l chʰɿn/ glowing with burnished brightness
(chʰɿn-chʰau bright red)

v. Repetition of a word with the interpolation of two words which are lexically opposites.

S.S.C. 108 /pʰi: kraoy pʰi: mʰuk/ from behind, from in front

The reduplicative structures which add emphasis, outlined above in paragraphs i and iii (plain language), tend to be lacking in poetry. They might occur in long narrative poems in the passages of lively direct speech but are not really part of the poetic language.

5. Reduplication and lexical meaning

Plain language

The effect of reduplication in word-formation, as will be clear from the examples given in 1. and 2. is usually to specialise or intensify the meaning of the base with a tendency to suggest plurality where the lexical meaning admits this. In the case of entire reduplication of the base it may suggest, according to context, either intensification or plurality. When a compound word is composed of two free forms, the meanings of the two words are coordinated to produce a more specific meaning than either has on its own. A very large proportion of reduplicative words in Khmer are phonaesthetic. The Khmer people are acutely aware of and observant about the way in which people do things, especially with reference to

movement of the body or limbs. They have numerous words, for the most part reduplicative, to describe the way a person sits, walks, moves his head or hands and so on. Smith (1973: 86) makes similar comments about Ngeq. The creation of reduplicative words, particularly of those with phonaesthetic meaning, is a live process in Khmer.

Poetic language

The above comments may be taken as applicable to poetic reduplicative vocabulary too. The following further comment on poetic reduplicative compound words is given because there are some which are not of frequent occurrence and will not be found in any dictionary. Their meaning has to be arrived at by a process of analysis which is rapidly and more or less unconsciously carried out by the native speaker. The thought processes which are required, in five different sets of circumstances, are:

i. One component is a known word, the other not. Provided that the meaning of the known component is suitable to the context, the reduplicative compound may be assumed to be an intensifier or pluraliser of that component, according to the requirements of the context, or to express with a poetic form the same meaning as the base.

R.5.39 /ŋì:ə-ŋù:əy/ (raise arm threateningly /0) id.

S.71 /rəciəc-rəcol/ (0/ panic) id.

Some syllables seem to occur as meaningless reduplicative components in compound words of quite different meaning, e.g. /chlah/ in /chlah-chlaəy/ "to answer", /chlah-chlɔ:ŋ/ "to cross" and /ca:/ in /ca:-caəŋ/ "to explain" and /ca:-cam/ "to wait".

ii. Neither component is a known word in the precise form in which it occurs but if one considers the base of one or both components understanding can be achieved.

R.2.63 /mə̀mì:ə-mə̀mù:ə/ (cf. /mì:ə(r)/ much, many, great) id.

iii. Neither component is a known word nor can any known base be arrived at by ignoring regular prefixed consonants. However, by looking at the even more basic vowel nucleus and final consonant and by considering other words having those vowel nuclei and final consonants, one may find some related word suitable to the context.

R.5.34 /krə̀pe:v-krə̀paən/ cf. root found in /kə̀mpaəp/ "threatening"

R.8.23 /rə̀nì:əp-rə̀nè:ɪ/ cf. root found in /nə̀nì:əl-nə̀nè:ɪ/ "rolling about on the ground"

iv. One component is a known word which does not suit the context; its meaning is disregarded. The meaning of the other component only must be held to be valid.

R.4.68 /ha:-həh/ (to open mouth, to laugh/ to go through the air) to fly
passim /puəl-pì:əl/ (army/ignorant; weak; erring) army (usually, in the context "a fine army")

/rù:əh-rò:ŋ/ (quick; to bear, to undertake) quick (R.77.7; to undergo (R.75.55))

v. One component only is recognised and this only from its occurrence in other reduplicative compounds with other components whose meaning is clear.

R.9.40 /khùk-khì:ən/ (/khùk/ occurs also with /khò:(r)/ "to threaten")

R.7.31 /ləlòəm-ləlì:ən/ (/ləlòəm/ occurs with /ləlò:/ "to dash forth")

In establishing the meaning of reduplicative words which have passed out of use, the importance of the context is very obvious. Similar processes of thought to those outlined above are necessary for the understanding of more modern poetry when poets invent reduplicative words, basing them on a known word or root.

6. Reduplication in relation to style

Plain language

Use of reduplicative words and syntactical structures is very common in both spoken and written Khmer. It is part of an enlivening process noticeable when even the most trivial incident is narrated or the most simple thing described.

Poetic language

Reduplicative forms are certainly used in poetry, as in the plain language, to enliven accounts of action and to embellish descriptions. Compounds such as /prət̚:h-prət̚əh/ "impeding each other and becoming entangled" and /prət̚up-prət̚uəl/ "blocking each other's way" occurring in an account of a battle scene, are livelier than their simple counterparts /t̚:h, t̚əh, t̚up/ and /t̚uəl/. A whole verse may consist of reduplicative compounds, e.g.

R.77.29 /sak-səm chaom-cha:y pr̚m-pr̚y/ (lit. status-suitable, beautiful, attractive) prestigious and delightful to behold.

Reduplicative compound words are invaluable to the poet when he is seeking rhymes and syllables to meet the requirements of the metres; some of the compounds may occur with the components in any order. In the following

stanza every one of the rhymes is achieved by the use of a reduplicative compound, (/trɔy/ with /nɔy/; /l²ah/ with /cah/ and /prɛəh/; /phɔŋ/ with /trɔŋ/).

B.K. 101-2 /rɔ:h ko:n mʉəntɔy	They chose a young mandarin
se:na:-se:nɔy	Of the military forces,
rù:p-rì:əŋ l ² ɔ:-l ² ah	Handsome in form
phɛəktra: pho:-phɔŋ	Fair of face,
trɛɔŋ-trɛcah	Resplendent.
rìəp daə hae prɛəh	They made him ready to go in procession with

məha: ksət tɛəŋ tvì:/ The two royal persons.

A poet may achieve a sense of rhythm, audible even when the poetry is properly recited with its air, by composing verses with repeated sequences of word-pattern, such as the following, which occur quite near together:

L.A.V. 294-5 /trɛɔŋ-trɛcah chaət cha:y/	resplendent, beautiful
/trɛdaət-trɛdɔŋ daom-du:əc/	floating, up on high
/kɔmpù:l kɔmpùəh sraoŋ sru:əc/	the pinnacle, lofty, far-away, pointed

Some genres of poetry do not lend themselves so easily as others to this kind of elaboration. In the dignified yet homely Cbap or the seriously religious poem on the inscription of 1701 A.D. there is not so much embellishment of the language. In general, however, reduplication has the very important function, together with the use of Indian loanwords, of contributing to the formation of the special language of Khmer poetry. While the loanwords and grandeur, reduplicative structures provide the required sound.

We tend in Western poetry to associate rhyme with metre and to regard alliteration and assonance as special phonaesthetic effects. For the Khmers, reduplication has another use besides its involvement in the rhyme scheme and in specific, phonaesthetic effects: its sound is very pleasing to the Khmer ear. The appreciation of the beauty of particular sounds must, I think, be a matter in which a mere foreigner cannot fully participate. A succession of syllables with velar plosive initial may be described by a Khmer as "pretty" while an English-speaker may find it a little rough. Perseverance is required of the foreigner!

The following eight paragraphs illustrate some stylistic devices based on reduplication which have been found only in poetry. It will be seen that, although there is no question here of compound words, the forms given in paragraphs i.-v. below echo the particular sound effects

of the reduplicative compounds set out above in 2. Those in paragraphs vi. and vii. recall the interpolated reduplication described in 4. above. Paragraph viii. consists of citations to illustrate special phonaesthetic effects which depend upon the repetition of particular sounds.

i. Repetitive sequence

One word is repeated. The sequence looks in writing and even sounds when recited like a repetitive reduplicative compound but the context precludes the possibility of a pluralised or intensified meaning. The emphasis given by syntactical reduplication is not involved either.

H.Y. 95-6: /trùəŋ phka: phka: krəpəm/ with (its) flowers, (its) flowers
in bud

/krəsa:l ʔət ʔət ʔae mə:ŋ/ having enjoyment without without
(particle) anything-to-spoil-it

ii. Rhyming sequence

An extra rhyme occurs between two adjacent syllables. The sequence thus resembles a rhyming reduplicative compound but the meanings of the words are not to be coordinated. The following examples are both from poems written in the "metre with seven syllables" (i.e. with four verses each having seven syllables). Rhymes required by this metre are not in adjacent syllables.

S.S.6 /rùmkha:n khsək-khsu:əl kdu:əl saok tha:/ frustrated, (he) sobbed in
sobbed in distress and bewailed, saying distress and bewailed, saying

T.T.29 /prùksa: prəkì:əp tì:əp cùt dxy/ (lit. tree fork low near ground) on a
low branch of a tree near the ground

Sometimes the rhyme is achieved by the use of an infixed derivative:

K.S.63 /ka:c kəmna:c khah khaeŋ/ (lit. bad (as to) badness) evil in
his ways and full of contempt

iii. Chiming sequence

Chiming reduplication occurs between two adjacent syllables, causing a resemblance to a chiming compound but the very different meanings of the two words are not coordinated.

C.L.60 /tɿ:p ksat kraot pho:ŋ Then the king, angry as well
kənlə:ŋ kənlə:ŋ trah tha:/ As excessively troubled, spoke

K.38 /səmru:əl səmra:l dɔh khlu:ən/ easily frees herself from guilt with
an excuse

Some chiming sequences of words have been much used by more than one poet in certain kinds of context. The following occur in descriptions of battle scenes:

/prəyat prəyùt/ be on guard, fight together
/pùənlù:k puənlùk/ overthrow astoundingly

iv. Alliterative sequence

Quite apart from the occurrence of alliterative compounds, alliteration occurs in successive words or syllables without any coordination of meaning being involved. Three or more syllables in succession may be affected.

L.A.V.291 /du:əl de:k dəl dɔy/ fell over, to lie on the ground
C.1.102 /kondaoc-kəndaen konda:l desolate, there upon the path
 ʔa:thvi:ə/
M.Y.1 /srac khnom nùŋ thlaen Now I shall give
 dəmnəə dəmnəen (an) account (of) events
 dəmnə:l pì: mən/ Beginning from long ago

Certain alliterative sequences of words recur quite often in works of different poets of different periods in connection with some of the well-known themes of Khmer poetry: descriptions of fine palaces, passages about nature, accounts of the preparation of the king's army or procession, etc. The following are examples of such pairs of words:

Fine artefacts connected with royalty:

/kaev kaem/ jewels added
/khnaey khnol/ pillows and cushions
/pìtù: pìtì:əy/ cat's eye gems and red precious stones
/ròət rì:əy/ gems in profusion

Animals

/khlaon khla:/ great (chief) tiger
/tùənsaon tùənsa:y/ wild oxen and hares
/rəmi:əh rəməəŋ/ rhinoceros and roebuck
/sva:n sva:/ wild dogs and monkeys

Plants

/krɔ:c kra:y/ citrus and xylophia

/compɣy compa:/	frangipanier and <i>Michelia champaka</i>
/rùnde:ŋ rùndu:əl/	galangal and <u><i>Popowia aberrans</i></u>
/srələu srəlɣy/	<u><i>Lagerstroemia</i></u> and <u><i>Wrightia tomentosa</i></u>

What advance preparation the Western reader requires in order to appreciate the "purple passages" which are concerned with nature! They do not describe a natural scene so much as recall to the reader or listener a host of natural phenomena of which the names are arranged so as to sound most pleasing to the ear.

The desire to use alliterative language led poets to juxtapose words of which the meanings were less descriptive or interesting than those just quoted. It seems possible that, when one poet had used a sequence such as /thvat thva:y/ (directly/to offer) for "offer", he had set a precedent; /thvat thva:y/ thus became a poetic way to express the simple idea "to offer". Other such word sequences are:

/cbah cbo:ŋ/	(clear/elder) elder, respected
/nè:p nùt/	(next/close) closely together
/pùt pùm/	(true/not) not
/mè:n mì:ən/	(true/is, are, have) there is, there are
/lùəŋ lùh/	(to go beyond/when) by the time that
/lɣ:h lùən/	(exceeding/to go beyond) far beyond, exceeding
/vùl vùŋ/	(to turn round/back again) to return
/sa: so:ŋ/	(to do over again/to return) to tell to
/so: sap/	(sound/speech) words spoken
/so: siəŋ/	(sound/voice) words spoken
/srəp srac/	(ready done/finished) and then
/ʔae ʔay/	(at/at) at

A number of alliterative sequences, of similarly simple and basic meaning to those given above, are regularly used as the last syllables of a verse; some of them occur frequently as the last syllables of a stanza. In either position they can be useful in producing the rhymes and syllables necessary for the metre.

/krah krael/	(thick/very) in great numbers
/krah kray/	(thick, a good number) in great numbers
/nìh na:/	(this, these/emphatic particle) this, these
/nìh nèy/	(this, these/in relation to that, in that connection) this/these very one(s)

/pʰən pè:k/ (going beyond/too much) excessively
 /sɔp sa:y/ (all/diffused) everywhere about

v. Semi-repetitive sequences of Indian loanwords

In addition to the semi-repetitive compounds based on Indian loanwords, discussed under 2 (poetic language) vi., sequences of Indian loanwords have been noted which echo these forms but are not compound words.

R.10.25 /pʰpʰət pʰpʰə/ Pipet the successful

In each of the two further examples below the word sequence is a mixture of Sanskrit or Pali and Khmer vocabulary and involves a play on words. The reduplication is based in one case upon a Pali prefix used with a Khmer word and in the other case upon a Khmer prefix applied to a Sanskrit word.

R.4.11 /vʰbat vʰbɔŋ sʰa:n sʰhɛt/ the misfortune in abandoning home

The word-play is between /vʰbat/ (< Pali /vipatti/ "misfortune") and Khmer /bat-bɔŋ/ "abandon".

R.8.58 /nʰp rəɛt rʰ:cɛy Nine brilliant gems
 rə:cɛy pʰcɛt racəna:/ With decorative design

Here a form /rə:cɛt/, which was probably invented, alliterates with the previous two words and suggests the Khmer prefix /r/ occurring before /cɛt/ and forming a rhyming sequence with /pʰcɛt/ (< Sanskrit/vicitra/ "variegated").

vi. Repetition of a word with the interpolation of other words, described in 4. (poetic language) ii., occurs also entirely for the sake of the sound of the reduplication. In the following stanza /trɛy/ followed by a word with the initial consonants /kr/ occurs at the beginning of each verse. The stanza also illustrates the use of extra rhymes: /lɛp/ with /dɛp/ and /kraoy/ with /bɔndaoy/.

S.S.85 /trɛy krap rʰəl lɛp dɛp trɛy kɾoh
 trɛy kɾɛm kra:p coh chʰp bɔŋ[?]ɔŋ
 trɛy kra:y hael kraoy bɔndaoy trɔŋ
 trɛy kɾɛm vʰl vʰəŋ kraom trɛy kra:y/

"Anabas sennal, Dangila cuvieri and the little white cyprine chase after the Osteochilos hasseltii. The fighting fish lies low and stays in wait. The Notopterus chitala swims along straight behind the fighting fish, which turns full circle and goes down underneath it."

The second example is given here because the reduplicating words are again at the beginning of each verse; only part of the word is repeated in this case, however.

- K.11 /krəlap phèæktra: He lowered his eyes,
 krəlau m̃:l ska: Looked at the chessmen,
 krəlah kò:y kùən Changed the direction of his gaze,
 krəle:k chmò:ŋ-chmiəŋ/ Gave a sideways glance.

In the third example reduplication of the initial sequence /pəphl/ occurs at intervals through the stanza:

- S.S.82 /pəphlèæk coh tùm con pəphlì:ə
 haəy haə rè:-rì:ə t̃y pəphl̃:
 səmbol pəphl̃æk mùk ŋi:-ŋ̃:
 haəy haə pəphl̃: t̃y ta:m ṽi:əl/

"The jay descends to perch on top of the Grewia paniculata
 Then flies up to hover, bewildered.
 Its colour is variegated. Its head turns from side to side.
 Then it flies uncertainly across the plain."

vii. Repetition of a word interpolating the components of a compound, described in 4. (poetic language) iv. is recalled by the interpolated sequence of chiming words, which do not form a compound, in the following:

- A.3.207 /kùt prèəh r̃iəm prèəh r̃ù:əm ka:y/
 thinking of you, my revered lover, united with me
 (lit. think revered elder revered-one unite body)

In the following two verses from one stanza, however, the reduplicative compounds /l̃uəñlò:c-l̃uəñl̃uəŋ/ "melancholy" and /ʔaeka:-ʔaekao/ "alone" are interpolated, not by a repeated word in accordance with the usual pattern, but by a word or words which repeat some of the sounds of the compounds:

- A.3.211 /l̃uəñlò:c l̃uəñl̃uəm l̃uəñl̃uəŋ c̃yt ʔaeka ʔao kùt ʔaeka: ka:y/
 desolate and melancholy ... alas, think of it, alone!

viii. The following citations have been chosen to try to illustrate the use by Khmer poets of particular sounds in writing about particular experiences, emotions, etc.

Initial voiceless velar plosive consonants, aspirated and unaspirated (anger)

- P.89 /khɿŋ mdec laəy kray kɔnɔ:ŋ khe: khɿŋ khɿŋ nũŋ bɔ:ŋ?/
Why are you so very angry, so furious with me?

Initial voiceless palatal consonants, aspirated (fire)

- L.A.V. 292 /chol cheh cho:v chap/ (lit. spurt-up catch-fire crackle quickly)

Initial consonant sequence of sibilant and dental nasal consonant or initial dental nasal consonant (love)

- H.Y.93 /thlɔ̃p rɛ:ŋ n̥y n̥y nɛ:p n̥t You used to be constantly near,
thlɔ̃p sna:l sna:l snaɛ sn̥t to be close.
sn̥t nɛ:p n̥t nũŋ pʔo:n n̥y/ You used to be bound closely in
Close by me, your loved one.

Initial consonant sequence of voiceless labial plosive and /r/; also /l/ and /r/ (flickering light and brightness)

- S.K.23 /rɛəsmɿy rũŋ-rũŋ chl̩ah-chloh His splendid radiance sparkled
phl̩w: prɔ:ŋ-pr̩əy proh/ Shone with dazzling brightness.

Liquid and nasal consonants, initial or final (gracefulness)

- L.2.103 /hak yũəl rũ:p-r̩:əŋ As though he beheld her form -
lũmʔɔ: n̥y n̩:əŋ That beautiful maiden -
hak yũəl lũmnɔ̃əm/ As though he beheld her moving.

Initial aspirate (flying, often by magic)

- S.53 /haəy haɛ hiəv hɔh/ And flew, flitting through the air.

Glottal stops and imploded dental consonants (distress)

- A.2.107 /ʔaorɛəʔ kdaʊ ʔaora: kdu:əl r̩m̩c̩u:əl ʔɔŋ/
My heart is on fire with emotion and I am in turmoil.

Developments in the poetic language have been illustrated in the preceding pages without reference to the date or period of the poems. Some of the devices used to elaborate the language are more evident in one period than another. Complicated manipulation of Indian loanwords seen in 4.ii. and 6.v. belong particularly to the earlier poetry. The use of extra rhymes and the repetition of words placed in different verses, discussed in 6.i. and vi. are characteristic of poetry of the nineteenth century.² Over the years there has been a gradual increase in the length and diffuseness of poetic compositions. This tendency to wordiness may seem in some later poems to produce an excess of repetition

both of sound and of sense. In accordance with a long tradition, however, the Khmer poet must show inventiveness and erudition if he is to earn the admiration and respect of his readers and it is not surprising if he is clever at handling words, since he belongs, after all, to a people who excel at producing puns, rhymes, spoonerisms and other verbal witticisms on the spur of the moment. It is a challenge to the foreigner to appreciate the resulting poetry fully.

NOTES

- ¹ The full titles of the poems represented in abbreviated form will be found in the list of poems at the end of the paper, together with the details of the editions to which volume and page references are made.
- ² It seems likely that many other patterns of elaboration may be found, especially in the nineteenth-century poetry on which Thai influence was strong. I am grateful to my colleague, Dr. Manas Chitakasem for pointing out to me some of the many reduplicative and other devices used by Thai poets.

LIST OF POEMS CONSULTED

Titles of poems are given in the form with which they occur in the editions cited. Abbreviations used: I.B.P.P. = Institut Bouddhique, Phnom Penh.

- A. Anthologie cambodgienne. (Lyric poems, probably all composed in the 18th and 19th centuries A.D., published in parts in Kambujasuriya, 1938, 1939 and 1940.) Parts to which reference is made are No. 2 (1939: Part 5: 103-17) and No. 3 (1939, Part 9: 203-20), consisting of poems composed by ladies of the court.
- B.K. Bhogakula Kumar. Composed by Nong in 1804 A.D. I.B.P.P. 1961.
- C. Histoire de Preah Chinavong 1-4. Composed by Hing in 1856 A.D. I.B.P.P. 1964.
- H.Y. Hangsa Yonta. Undated. I.B.P.P. 1964.
- I.M.A. Poem on inscription of 1701 A.D., edited by Lewitz: 1975.
- K. Roeung Kahey. Composed by King Ang Duong in 1815 A.D. I.B.P.P. 1949.

- K.S. Histoire de Khyang Saing. Composed in 1729 A.D. I.B.P.P. 1961.
- Kr. Krung Subhamitra. Composed by Kao. Undated. I.B.P.P. 1961.
- L. Lokanayapakarana. 1-4. Composed by Nong. Undated. I.B.P.P. 1958.
- L.A.V. Lpoek aṅgar vat. Poème d'Angkor Vat. Composed in 1620 A.D.
(See Pou: 1975) in Textes khmères publiés avec une traduction
sommaire. Ière Série, Saigon 1878: 267-97.
- M. Histoire de Maranamata. Composed in 1877. I.B.P.P. 1961.
- M.Y. Mea Yoeung. Undated. I.B.P.P. 1961.
- P. Le roi Puthisen. Undated. I.B.P.P. 1964.
- R. Reamker. 1-10, 75-80. Early parts may date from 16th or even 15th
century A.D.; most of it 17th century A.D. (Pou: 1975:356).
Editions de la Bibliothèque Royale and I.B.P.P. 1937-67.
- S. Histoire de Preah Sudhana. Undated. I.B.P.P. 1963.
- S.C. Histoire de Sratop Chek. Composed by Ngen in 1889. I.B.P.P. 1962.
- S.K. Soben Komar. Undated. I.B.P.P. 1959.
- S.S. Histoire de Sabbasiddhi. Undated. I.B.P.P. 1962.
- S.S.C. Histoire de Saing Selchey. Undated. I.B.P.P. 1962.
- T.T. Histoire de Tum Teav. Composed by Som in 1915. I.B.P.P. 1962.

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