

# **KHMERO-THAI: THE GREAT CHANGE IN THE HISTORY OF THE THAI LANGUAGE OF THE CHAO PHRAYA BASIN**

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## **1. Introduction**

This paper is an attempt to demonstrate that Ayutthaya, the old capital of Thailand from 1351 – 1767 A.D., was from the beginning a bilingual society, speaking Thai and Khmer. Bilingualism must have been strengthened and maintained for some time by the great number of Khmer-speaking captives the Thais took from Angkor Thom after their victories in 1369, 1388 and 1431 (Kasetsiri 1999: 25). Gradually toward the end of the period, a language shift took place. Khmer fell out of use. Both Thai and Khmer descendants whose great-grand parents or earlier ancestors were bilingual came to use only Thai. In the process of language shift, an abundance of Khmer elements were transferred into Thai and permeated all aspects of the language. Consequently, the Thai of the late Ayutthaya Period which later became Ratanakosin or Bangkok Thai, was a thorough mixture of Thai and Khmer. There were more Khmer words in use than Tai cognates. Khmer grammatical rules were used actively to coin new disyllabic and polysyllabic words and phrases. Khmer expressions, sayings, and proverbs were expressed in Thai through transference. This paper is organized under six topics in the following order: The background of Ayutthaya and her language; Code-switching and the Rajasap of Ayutthaya; More than just loanwords; The Khmer elements in Thai; The hybrid Thai?; and The conclusion.

## **2. The Background of Ayutthaya and her language**

Ayutthaya was founded in 1351 A.D. by King U-thong, who administered her in accordance with the Khmer traditions and culture. He seemed to have wanted to make Ayutthaya the center of the empire, replacing Angkor Thom, the Khmer center. In 1369 he sent his son and his son's uncle to invade the Khmer and won the battle. He also invaded Sukhothai, then under the Khmer

control. By 1419/1420 Sukhothai had become Ayutthaya's vassal state. Ayutthaya started as an outpost of Lopburi. The Arabs referred to her as the "New Capital" and Lopburi the old. Later this capital emerged as a flourishing entrepot in Southeast Asia. She created a network of trading and diplomatic relations throughout maritime Asia unmatched by any other Asian ports. Ayutthaya was quite cosmopolitan. She was crowded with people from other lands. There were many international villages in Ayutthaya such as Vietnamese village (Baan Yuan), Portuguese village (Baan Portugate), Japanese village (Baan Yii-Pun) and Muslim village (Baan Khaek). Some of them, Muslim and Vietnamese villages, remain to this day. Foreigners must have been numerous such that they were mentioned both in the royal Thai chronicles and in many articles of the Three Seals Laws. Foreigners are mentioned in many aspects, such as marriage, arms, and taxes. Some times as many as fourteen different group names were mentioned. For example:

#### **Article one:**

Muslims (Khaek), Brahmins (Phraam), Vietnamese (Yuan), French? (Farang), English (Angrit), Chinese, Cham, Wilanda (Dutch), Javanese, Malayu, Kuey, Khmer (Khōm), Burmese, Mon (Raaman) who enter to stay in the royal territory or to trade either by land or by boat...(From the Three Seals Laws volume 4, page 38).

Ayutthaya was well known for her sophisticated administration called Wiang, Wang, Khlang, Na and her highly hierarchical social structure. The kingdom lasted over four hundred years before she was sacked and fell to the Burmese in 1767.

The Languages of Ayutthaya. As a former outpost of Lopburi, which was a study center for Khmer civilization (Kasetsiri 1976: 85), at the beginning, Ayutthaya must have used Khmer as the language of wider communication in the same manner as Lopburi. The Khmer language, especially the written one, was then regarded as being holy and had magical power. People paid special respect to written materials which happened to be mostly about religions and kings. The Thais of Ayutthaya, formerly under the Khmer control, could also speak Khmer besides their own language. Pali was used only in the religious circle. The people of Ayutthaya as well as the Thais of

Bangkok today enjoyed listening to monks chanting in Pali though they did not understand it. They believed they were making merit.

Language usage in Ayuthaya was very complicated in accordance with her elaborate social relations. Communication was status-based. Kings were regarded as gods and on the same scale as the Buddha in the hierarchy. Since kings were regarded as gods the language used to talk to and about them needed to be different from that of commoners. “Raja-sap” or royal vocabulary was created in the Ayuthaya period to be used with kings. At first, the royal vocabulary was meant for the aristocrats and commoners to use to talk with or about kings only. Later when King Baromtrailokanat promulgated the Law of Civil Hierarchy, he also amended the Law of the Palace, Kot Monthien Ban, in 1461. The use of “Raja-sap” or the royal vocabulary then was extended to other royal family members and the aristocrats.

Ayutthaya was also very sophisticated literally. She had a large number of “educated” aristocrats and elites who could read and write both Thai and Khmer. Many classical works, religious and folk literature, all in poems, were written in this period. . Many works were written entirely in Khmer; for example, “Dutsadi-Sangwuei-Klom Chang”, the old version (Ruangraklikhit 1999) and Pra-Tamra Borom Rachuthit. Those composed in Thai were full of Khmer words such as “Lilit Ongkan Chaeng Nam,” “Yuan Phay” and “Mahachat Kham Luang.”

How did the Thai in Ayutthaya manage to be so sophisticated administratively and literally as early as the fourteenth century while a large number of other Tai groups were still illiterate rice farmers and minorities? Who was King U-Thong? Where did he come from? What was he doing before he founded the Ayutthaya kingdom? Answers to these questions are still debatable. Thai historians do not agree on all points. Some say he was the son of a wealthy Chinese merchant, Shodu’k Sretthi (Kasetsiri 1976). Patronage. Others say King U-thong was a Lavo prince who married more than once for political reasons. One of his wives was a princess from Sukhothai and another from Suphanburi. These two marriages related him to at least two powerful political groups at the time. Later he became the Prince of Phetburi, a city for a future king to rule. When he founded Ayutthaya and became king he inherited control over a large area from Lavo or Lopburi and Suphanburi to Nakhon Srithammarat.

Though Thai historians do not agree on where King U-Thong came from, they all agree that he married a Khmer Princess and that Ayutthaya inherited all the Khmer administrative system and culture.

Whether or not King U-Thong was a Chinese or Khmer descendant, he was definitely a Thai speaker. It was he and his Thai-speaking fellows that brought the Thai language to Ayutthaya and later made it the language of the region. "U-Thong" is a Thai word meaning figuratively "the cradle or the land of gold" and literally "gold cradle." ("U" means "cradle" and "thong" means "gold" for the Thais in the Chao Phraya basin and "metal" to other Tais.) If his name derived from a place name, as suggested by Prince Damrong, it is then significantly different from all other contemporary important city names, i.e., Suphanburi Lavo and Phetburi, in that it is a Thai name, not Indic and not Khmer. According to some legends, the king derived his name from the gifts people gave to his parents when he was born. Many of the gifts were gold or metal cradles. King U-Thong was born in 1314 A.D. (Kasetsiri 1976: 52). Then the Thai were not the foremost influential people. At least they could not have been influential enough for the Chinese or Khmer people to adopt Thai names for their people. Then most cities or states were not fully independent. The Thai were just one of many minority groups under the Khmer. As with all other minorities, the Thai must have acquired the Khmer language so they could communicate with other people around them. Acquiring Khmer must have been "a must" for all minority leaders and elites at the time. There was evidence that three princes from the north who later became kings - Ramkhamhaeng, Mengrai, and Ngam-muang - went for their education at Lavo or Lopburi at the same time. This city was earlier an outpost of the Khmer capital and a study center for Khmer civilization such as Buddhism and Hinduism (Kasetsiri 1976: 85).

When King U-Thong founded Ayutthaya in 1351 A.D., he was actually a Khmero-Thai or Khmer-speaking Thai. At least he must have been educated as a Khmer leader because he became king in the Khmer tradition - a god-king. He sent for eight Brahmins in Banares to perform his accession ceremony. After the ceremony he was given the name Ramathibodi and ruled as a god-king (Testimony of the people from the old capital 1973: 59). He sent Ramesuan, his son born from his Khmer wife, to rule Lopburi,



the city traditionally assigned to the future king. King U-Thong and the later kings were successful in establishing Ayutthaya as the center of the empire, replacing Angkor Thom, the Khmer center. Lopburi became Ayutthaya's major city instead of the Khmers'. People of other cities looked, then, to Ayutthaya as the center of learning. Theravada Buddhism prospered and Brahmins also became indispensable to the capital from the very beginning.

### **3. Code-Switching and the Rajasap of Ayutthaya**

The inherited Thai language of Ayutthaya is laden with code-switching and code-mixing in both prose and poetry. Rajasap "Royal vocabulary" is taken as prose in this article. Rajasap or "Royal vocabulary" is a form of language used especially when referring to, talking about or talking to kings and their royal family members. Gedney (1964) explained that Rajasap was simply a special set of vocabulary. When "speaking Rajasap," one simply substituted normal Thai words with the Rajasap ones, using the normal Thai grammar. Kings do not use Rajasap. It was the ordinary people who used it with the kings. Thus it was the ordinary people who were code-switching when using Rajasap. Rajasap originated in the Ayutthaya Period. Then kings were held as gods, a belief in the administrative system inherited from the Khmer. Since kings were gods, they had to be addressed, talked to, and talked about differently from ordinary people. Special words and phrases to address the kings and things related to them had to be created. Khmer used "Rajasap" or "Royal vocabulary" and rules to create new royal vocabulary as early as the time of Old Khmer. Thais borrowed both the Royal vocabulary and rules to enlarge the vocabulary from Khmer (Varasarin 1984: 91). The Thais later developed the royal vocabulary according to their immediate environment. Thai and Pali, the latter from Theravada Buddhism, were added to the vocabulary.

An investigation of the Ayutthaya Rajasap reveals that three languages, Thai, Khmer and Khmero-Indic were at work closely both in formulaic expressions and in normal discourse. In fact, Khmero-Indic may be classified in the same category as Khmer because Indic had been adapted to the Khmer system first before the Thai borrowed it. (Diller (1985) created the term "Khmero-Indic" to explain this. This term has been

adopted as the title of the paper and will be used hereafter). For example “brah” is “vrah” in Khmer and “phrá?” in Thai. Of the three, Khmer appeared to be the major language at work at the beginning. In a way, Thai was the least significant language. Thai words by themselves could not be used as royal vocabulary. They had to be changed into Khmer or Khmero-Indic first by some Khmer or Khmero-Indic prefixes. For examples, “soj” or “sa-dèt” turned an ordinary Thai verb into a royal verb one and “phrá?” a noun (i.e. /thăam/ → /soj thăam/ “to ask”; /pay/ → /sa-dèt pay/ “to go”; /câaw/ → /phrá? câaw/ “head” (noun). The examples below might clarify what has been said so far on Rajasap.

(1) Formulaic beginning:

khǎw-	dee-chá?	fàa	lá?-lǎw	thú?-lii	
Thai	Khmero-	Thai	Khmer	Khmero-	
Indic				Indic	
<i>to ask for</i>	<i>power</i>	<i>sole</i>	<i>dust</i>	<i>dust</i>	
<i>something</i>					
phrá?-	bàat	pòk	klâaw	pòk	krà-mòm
Khmero-	Indic	Thai	Thai	Thai	Khmer
<i>holy;</i>	<i>foot</i>	<i>cover</i>	<i>top of</i>	<i>cover</i>	<i>top of</i>
<i>prefix</i>			<i>the head</i>		<i>the head</i>
<i>honorific</i>					

“May the power of the dust under your holy feet protect the top of my head.”

(“dee-chá?” is an opening as well as an ending word.)

(2) Formulaic ending:

dûay	klâaw	dûay	kra-mòm	khǎw	dee-chá?
Khmer?	Thai	Khmer	Khmer	Thai	Khmero-Indic
<i>with</i>	<i>top of</i>	<i>with</i>	<i>top of</i>	<i>to ask for</i>	<i>power</i>
	<i>the head</i>			<i>the head</i>	<i>something</i>

“Ending phrase”

“With or from the top of my head.”

(3) Non-formulaic sentence:

phrá?	bàat	sôm-dèt	phrá?
Khmero-Indic	Khmero-Indic	Khmer	Khmero-Indic
<i>holy prefix</i>	<i>foot</i>	<i>honorific</i>	<i>holy prefix honorific</i>
<i>honorific</i>			

phut-thi-	căaw	yùu	hũa	sa-dèt	pay
Khmero-Indic	Thai	Thai	Thai	Khmer	Thai
<i>Buddha</i>	<i>king</i>	<i>stay</i>	<i>head</i>	<i>to go</i>	<i>to go</i>

thôot-	phrá?-nêet	wát
Khmer	Khmero- Indic	Khmer
<i>to cast</i>	<i>eyes</i>	<i>temple</i>

“The king went to look at the temple.”

The switching between languages occurs in such a high frequency that the word “code-mixing” might describe the phenomenon better. It appears that the speakers had the three, or basically two, languages at their disposal. They had to know Thai and Khmer very well to “speak Rajasap” or they would not know which word was Thai and needed to be transformed into Khmer and which word was already Khmer.

The same degree of code-mixing occurs in the poem of the Ayuthaya Period. Below is an excerpt from Mahachat Kham Luang, a classical work. In telling the Jataka tales in poetic form, the composer began with a Pali or Khmero-Indic text and narrated in a code-mixing style as in Rajasap.

Khmero-Pali text: amit-ta-taa pana tham-ma phram-man  
pa-ti-chak-kha-ti

#### Ayuthaya Thai:

ʔan	wăa	ʔa-mít-ta-daa	kôo	yùu	bam-rəə
<i>relative</i>	<i>that</i>	<i>“name”</i>	<i>then</i>	<i>stay</i>	<i>“to serve”</i>
<i>pronoun</i>					

*A beginning word*

Thai	name	Thai	Thai	Khmer
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chəə-	phák	ɲaan	phraam	nək	man	kôo	ʔaw
<i>serve</i>	<i>royal</i>	<i>work</i>	<i>Brahman</i>	<i>heavy</i>	<i>she</i>	<i>then</i>	<i>take</i>
Khmer?	Khmero-Pali	Khmer	Khmero-Pali	Thai	Thai	Thai	Thai

ɲaan	phraam	baw	man	kôo	sûu
<i>work</i>	<i>Brahman</i>	<i>light</i>	<i>she</i>	<i>then</i>	<i>fight; take</i>
Khmer?	Khmero-Pali	Thai	Thai	Thai	Khmer

bòò	mí	ʔàat	yia	chúu	tham	khót-khúu
<i>not</i>	<i>not</i>	<i>capable</i>			<i>to do</i>	<i>Lazy</i>
Thai	Thai	Khmer	Khmer	Khmer	Khmer	Khmer?

kêe	phraam	pha-duŋ	dooy	taa	thúk	mîa
<i>to</i>	<i>Brahman</i>	<i>maintain;</i>	<i>by</i>	<i>eye</i>	<i>every</i>	<i>ending</i>
		<i>to look</i>				<i>word</i>
Khmer	Khmero-Pali	Khmer	Khmer	Thai	Khmer?	Khmer

“So Amittada stayed to serve the Brahmin. The Brahmin’s heavy work, she took. The Brahman’s light work, she did. She could not be lazy to the Brahmin (for he) watched? (her) every moment.”

Other evidence of bilingualism is the language used in writing. Three different languages were used in literary work: Pali, Khmer, and (code-mixing) Thai. It is no surprise that religious work was written in Pali, with Thai script, for Theravada Buddhism was the main religion of Ayutthaya. Monks had to learn and use Pali. Writing or composing in Khmer could only signify that Khmer was in use. People could understand it. On top of that, the script used in writing was Thai. If the work was not meant for bilingual Thais, it would have been written in Khmer script. It then held to be holy and sacred – not the Thai script. The famous work written in Khmer is Kham-Chan Dutsadi-Sangwuei Klom Chang – a poem chanted or read in an elephant celebration ceremony.

#### 4. More Than Just Loanwords

Rajasap and literary work might have been limited to the elites and learned people of Ayuthaya. Was bilingualism perhaps limited only to certain groups of people in Ayutthaya? Evidence in the Thai language of the early Bangkok Period which was inherited from Ayuthaya suggests otherwise. Khmer elements have permeated in all aspects of Thai in such an abundance that language transference is clearly indicated.

There are more than 2,500 Khmer-derived words in Thai. This amount is greater than the Tai cognates. The Khmer words are present in all semantic fields. Varasarin (1984) categorized them into more than 200 sub-categories. It is not possible for Thais, then and now, to make any discourse without using Khmer-originated words on any topic, even “to walk”/dœn/, “to

plant rice” /dam/ or “to be born” /kəət/. In fact, most Thais, again, then and now, cannot separate Thai words from the Khmer ones. Or they would be using /yâaŋ/ “walk” instead of /dəən/. It is going to be argued here that a good number of these Khmer-originated words were the result of language transference, not borrowing. Below, six major groups of words are explained to be the results of language transference.

The first group is the “function words.” These words are the most unlikely to be borrowed since they are not related to anything in the real world. Their entrance into Thai must have been via “habit” or constant use of Khmer in daily life. This group includes words like /khi/ “to be”, /rhi/ “or”, /dooy/ “by” /săm-ràp/ “for” /phrɔʔ/ “because” /têe/ “but” /ʔaat/ “capable; might, may” /khuan/ “ought to” /khon/ “stable; might; may” /sôm-khuan/ “proper; suitable” /kam-lan/ “energy; force” (for more detail on the auxiliary see Diller 2001).

The second group is the words expressing feelings and descriptions. Bilinguals usually feel that some words in one language can express certain meaning or feelings that the other language cannot do equally well. Such Khmer words must have been transferred into Thai by those who felt that certain Khmer words could express or describe things better. Examples of such words are given below. These words are difficult to translate; only some rough translation is given below.

1. /cháʔ-ŋǝn/ “to be curious”
2. /kràʔ-won-kràʔ-waay/ “to feel restless”
3. /kràʔ-ʔàk-kràʔ-ʔuàn/ “to feel ill at ease in a situation”
4. /lǎəŋ/ “to enjoy oneself to an extreme”
5. /phlɛət-phlɛən/ “to be enjoying oneself doing something”
6. /pra-caan/ “to disclose someone’s misdeed.”
7. /ram-phin/ “to be pensive”
8. /săm-ník/ “to repent”
9. /săm-ʔɔɔy/ “to implore; to entreat”
10. /sàʔ-nuək/ “to enjoy oneself; to have a good time”
11. /tháʔ-lîŋ/ “to be impudent”

The third group is the opposite of the second group in that the transferred words are those commonly used in daily life and Thais already had their own native words for the meanings. These words must have been transferred by those

bilinguals who used them habitually. They have replaced the native ones of the Ayutthaya Thai. This group includes the names of the twelve-year cycle calendar.

They are:	/chûat/	“the year of the mouse”
	/chalûu/	“the year of the ox”
	/khăan/	“the year of the tiger”
	/thôʔ/	“the year of the rabbit”
	/máʔ-roon/	“the year of the dragon”
	/máʔ-sěŋ/	“the year of the snake”
	/máʔ-mia/	“the year of the horse”
	/máʔ-mɛɛ/	“the year of the goat”
	/wôk/	“the year of the monkey”
	/ráʔ-kaa/	“the year of the rooster”
	/cɔɔ/	“the year of the dog”
	/kun/	“the year of the pig”

Other Tai groups use a sixty-year cycle calendar. More words in this group are given below.

- 1) /cháʔ-náʔ/ “to win”
- 2) /chít/ “to be near”
- 3) /dəən/ “to walk”
- 4) /kàʔ-dɔɔ/ “male sexual organ”
- 5) /phleeŋ/ “song”
- 6) /ram/ “to dance”
- 7) /sàʔ-phaan/ “bridge”
- 8) /sàʔ-ʔàat/ “clean; clear”
- 9) /tron/ “straight”
- 10) /ʔam-dɛɛŋ/ “title preceding a woman’s name like *Miss* and *Mrs.*”

The fourth group includes poly-semous words or different meanings that have the same form. The different meanings of the words were transferred into Thai. This could not have happened if it had been just a normal borrowing process. This phenomenon could only happen with bilinguals who knew and used such words in Khmer.

For example:

/khlooj/	“poem; to rock (said of boats)”
/cùk/	“cork; (stomach) pain; top knot”
/kōʔ/	“island; to hook”
/càp/	“to catch; to begin”
/caan/	“to inscribe; to help”
/châw/	“to rent; to buy (Buddha images)”
/cam/	“remember; to imprison”
/kam/	“action; fate”
/laa/	“donkey; to say goodbye”

The fifth group includes Khmer-originated names. Though hundreds of people's names are derived from Khmer, they cannot be used as evidence for bilingualism. The reason is that Thai people's names are normally created from foreign languages. The most popular ones are from the Indic languages. Monks and learned people are name-creators. “Names” in this topic includes animal and plant names. They can be used as evidence of bilingualism because these are names of common things in the environment of the Thai speakers, at least some 500 years ago. People do not normally use foreign words to name things in their natural environment unless the things are from foreign lands. For this reason names for plants and animals may be used as evidence of bilingualism in the Ayutthaya Period. Many fish, birds, trees and plants have Khmer names. Why would Thai use Khmer names for animals and plants in their environment? There are two possible answers to this question. First, the Thais could be newcomers to the area. The local plants and animals were new to them. Instead of coining new words, they just used whatever names the local people already had, a universal practice. The second possibility is that the Thais were speaking Khmer at the time too. However, both possibilities could be present at the same time. That the Thais used Khmer names for plants and animals points to the fact that the Thais came from somewhere else where there were no such animals and plants. They had to use the local people's terms. However, not all plants and animals' names in Thai are derived from Khmer. Some are Thai. The Thais were probably speaking both Thai and Khmer, so they kept what they had earlier in their native language.

Examples of Khmer names for plants and animals are given below.

Fish with Khmer names:

/plaa kraay/	/plaa krim/
/plaa chà?-làat/	/plaa chá?-doo/
/plaa chà?-lăam/ “shark”	

Plants and Trees with Khmer names:

/khà?-nũn/ “jackfruit”	/krà?-waan/
/rá?-kam/	
/sà?-nõo/	/sà?-daw/

The sixth is a very small group of closed class words. They are answering words like “yes” and exclamation words. There are three main usages of “yes” and two exclamations. The “Yes” group is also used as final particles, expressing politeness and familiarity.

/câa/ /cǎa/	“Yes” (polite)
/ʔiɨ/ /ʔəə/	“Yes” (familiar terms)
/wóoy/	“Yes” (rude)
/ʔooy/	“ouch?”
/ʔúy/	“an exclaim”

Like the first group, these words must have been transferred by bilinguals who were using them habitually in Khmer.

## 5. The Khmer elements in Thai

The transference of Khmer into Thai had changed the language deeply. Khmer elements permeated the whole system of Ayutthaya Thai. The changes took place in the vocabulary and the syllable structure, as well as the syntax. Ayutthaya emerged a new Thai differing from her sister languages in the Southwestern branch in many aspects. Below is a sketch of the changes.

**Vocabulary.** The vocabulary of Ayutthaya Thai had increased significantly. The newly-acquired Khmer and Khmero-Indic vocabulary were in the administrative, religious and literary circles. The change in the vocabulary had, in a way, created diglossia in the Ayutthaya society. The city-Ayutthaya Thai had



more than doubled its vocabulary. It was used mainly in Rajasap and literary work. This variety had become the high language. The village-Ayuthaya Thai also added the Khmer and Khmero-Indic to their vocabulary but not the Rajasap one. This variety was used in the family and in the villages. It became the low variety. (For detail on "High and Low Thai" see Diller 1985.) The Thais and the Khmers of Ayutthaya must have been living side by side both in the city and in the villages because the Khmer words borrowed or transferred into Thai are found at various levels of the language. For example, the Khmer word /ka-baan/ "head" is used in swearing. This word is found only in the low language. Whereas, the Khmer word /chəəŋ/ "foot" is used in both the low and the high languages in compounds, i.e., /chəəŋ- khǎw/ "the foot of the mountain." /kha-nŋ/ "eye brow" is used only in Rajasap. It is note-worthy that though the Khmer was always mentioned along with other ethnic groups several times in the Three Seals Laws, there was no Khmer village in Ayutthaya. It could very well be that they were living among the Thais, not in separate villages, because the Thais could speak their language at the time.

**Word Structure** Before the transference, the Thai vocabulary was basically monosyllabic and compound. The transference gave it a large quantity of disyllabic words, i.e., /sàʔ-nùk/, /kam-lan/, /chàʔ-lǎy/. From them, Thai acquired the affixation process. Thais, later, created their own prefixes, i.e., kàʔ-/kràʔ-, tàʔ-/traʔ-, and pàʔ-/pràʔ-. Varasarin (1984: 257) found a large number of disyllabic words whose roots she could not trace back to Khmer, for example, /tàʔ-krâa/ "basket" and /tàʔ-nŋy/ "a kind of ant." It turned out that they were new creation of the Thais. She also found that the Thais were getting so used to the prefixation process such that they applied it to their native words. Thus, the Thais of the Chao Phraya Basin had /kràʔ-dùuk/ and /pràʔ-tuu/ instead of /duk-DS2/ and /tuu-A2/ in other sister Tai languages. Aside from prefixes, Thai, then, seemed to have developed some infixes on their own too. Varasarin found the following pairs of words in Thai which she could not find in Khmer:

chûay	"to help"	—	chamrûay	"gift given to help"
khòt	"coil"	—	khàʔ-nòt	"the end of snake's tail"

Finally, Varasarin commented that the Thai affixes did not have definite meaning and functions like those in Khmer.

**Syntax** The transferred function words /rǎ́/ “or”, /khiǎ́/ “to be”, /phrǒ́/ “because, and /dooy/ “by” have changed the syntactic structure of Thai significantly. With /rǎ́/ “or”, Thai could construct various questions differing from her sister languages, for example.

/ca pay rǎɿ̌ mây pay/ “(Are you) going or not (going)?”  
/chôɔp rǎɿ̌/ “Do you like it?”

/khɿɿ/ "to be", /phrɔʔ/ "because" and /dooy/ "by" gave rise to many new sentence types which cannot be found in her sister languages.

khǎw khɛ̌ khon t̃hɛ̌i t̃hɛ̌n t̃hɛ̌n kaan phóp  
 “He is the person I want to meet.”

raw mây pay phró? fǒn tòk nàk  
 “We did not go because it was raining hard.”

sàʔ-dèt dooy chon-láʔ-mâak  
 “(The king) went by boat. (the water way)”

## 6. The Hybrid Thai?

Both Thai and Khmer must have levelled off their differences in the process of change. Khmer has become more like Thai and vice versa. Compared to her sister languages and some ancient documents, it appears that Thai has lost many of her native features in the process of change under Khmer influence. Many have been replaced by Khmer elements.

**Sounds** Proto-Tai and Sukhothai Inscription I had the sound /x/, khǒɔ-khùat in the written form, but the Khmer did not. When they came to speak Thai, they must have substituted /kh/, khǒɔ khày, for it. The large number of Khmer speakers could have contributed to the loss of this sound in Thai (Diller 1988b). Meanwhile Khmer had a trill /r/. They must have contributed to the conservation of this sound in Thai. All other sister

languages in the Southwestern branch have lost this sound and replaced it with /h/ or /l/.

The Khmer were used to speaking a non-tonal language. It must have been an effort for Khmer speakers to acquire the tones when they learned to speak Thai. They could contribute significantly to the Ayutthaya tonal development. We need more investigation into this area.

**Words** The Khmer administrative system which stratified people hierarchically had a very strong impact on the change of the Thai language. Rajasap or the royal vocabulary was created to serve the administrative purposes. The most important characteristics of Rajasap is defining reference terms for speaker and hearer. The king was at the top, at the same level with the Buddha. All words and references that were used with the Buddha were also used with the king. Other people at the different levels of the hierarchy under him are also referred to by different terms according to their level in the hierarchy. Speakers had to know where they were on the scale in relation to the hearer so they could choose the proper term of reference both to themselves and to the hearer. Khmer used the “head”, the highest point of the body, as reference to the speaker to the king. The “feet”, the lowest part of the body, were used to refer to the king. Thai adopted this system of reference from the beginning. Later Thai created new personal pronouns from this principle. That was how the personal pronouns /phǒm/ “I” or “hair” and /tâay-thaáw/ “you” or “under your foot” were derived (Khanittanan 1988). On the whole, this system has completely changed the native Thai personal pronoun system (Diller: personal contact). Earlier, the use of Thai personal pronouns was not socially conditioned. The Proto-Tai system made use of grammatical functions such as “first, second, and third person” with distinction among “singular”, “plural” and “dual” in all three persons and “inclusive” and “exclusive” in some duals. (For further detail see Strecker 1984). Some of the old personal pronouns are found sporadically in Sukhothai inscriptions and (early?) Ayutthaya’s literary work such as Lilit Phra Loo, i.e., /raw/ “we”, /phǎ̌/ /sǔu/ “you”, /khǎ̌a/ “they”. The grammatical distinctions in “plural”, “dual”, and “inclusive-exclusive” in the old system seemed to have been

replaced by the Khmer socially conditioned personal pronoun system.

## 7. Conclusion

Khmer civilization and culture were adopted by the Thais of Ayutthaya with a high regard. Ayutthaya's kings wanted to make Ayutthaya the center of the empire like Angkor Thom. In achieving the goal, the Thais adopted the Khmer administrative system, traditions and culture. The Thais of Ayutthaya emerged as a new group of Thais, a hybrid of Thai and Khmer in language and culture. The hypothesis that the Thai speakers of Ayutthaya were once bilinguals might give Thai scholars a different perspective on Ayutthaya, at least to those who once asked the question "Was Sri Praat Thai or Khmer?". It is probably very difficult to trace Sri Praat's ancestors. He could have been either a Thai or Khmer-speaking Thai descendant but he was definitely a bilingual, speaking both Khmer and Thai.

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