

META-RHYMES IN CLASSICAL THAI POETRY

ABSTRACT

Descriptions of rhyme patterns in classical Thai verse are found in Thai versification textbooks and Thai literary anthologies. These descriptions are meticulous in their discussion and detail. Because of this detail, it appears that each verse form has its own idiosyncratic pattern that must be learned individually. To determine the validity of this impression, this study examines and compares the rhyme patterns of the five classical Thai verse forms: *râay*, *khlooy*, *kàap*, *chăn*, and *kleen*. The study concludes that the rhyme schemes are not idiosyncratic; but, rather, they are based on three primary couplet patterns (meta-rhymes), with the use of each pattern dependent upon the number of lines (*wák*) in each stanza. These patterns, moreover, are highly conservative in that they have exhibited little or no change throughout the history of Thai literature.

Meta-Rhymes in Classical Thai Poetry

Poetry has always held a significant position in the literature of Thailand. Working with five different verse forms, Thai poets, over the centuries, have created a body of work that compares in quality with the very best of Western literature. Much of the beauty of this poetry derives from the mastery of rhyme patterns that characterize all forms of classical Thai verse.

Traditionally, descriptions of classical Thai verse forms and rhyme patterns have been found in Thai versification textbooks known as *chānthālāk* (Pali *chanda* – prosody; *laksana* – characteristics) and in Thai literary anthologies. *Phya Uppakit Silpasarn's Lāk phaasāa thay* [Principles of the Thai language] (1968) is generally considered the best of the *chānthālāk* series and Pīfaṅ ná? nákhcen's *Prāwāt wanná-khādii thay sāmrap náksiksāa* [History of Thai Literature for Students] (1964) the best of the anthologies.¹ Sources in Western languages have

1. The following phonetic transcription is used in this study:

Consonants

Bilabial Labio-Alveolar Palatal Velar Glottal Dental

Stops p ph b t th d c ch k kh ?

Fricatives f s h

Nasals m n ṅ

Laterals l

Trills r

Semi-vowels w y

	Front	Central Unrounded	Back Rounded
High	i, ii, ia	i, ii, ia	u, uu, ua
Mid	e, ee	e, ee	o, oo
Low	ɛ, ɛɛ	a, aa	c, cc

Tones

no mark

mid tone

low tone

falling tone

high tone

rising tone

included Bidyalankarana (1926), Schweisguth (1951), Mosel (1959, 1961), Wenk (1961), Simmonds (1963), Jones and Mendiones (1970), and Chitakasem (1972). During the past ten years, the number of studies on the structure and development of classical Thai poetry has increased significantly: Gedney (1978), Cooke (1980), Kuo (1980), Bickner (1981), Hudak (1981), and Bofman (1984). Investigations into the verse forms found in the dialects outside Central Thai have also become prominent: Wijeyewardene (1968), Egerod (1971), Hartmann (1976, 1981, 1983), and Compton (1979).

All of these studies recognize the importance of rhyme for Thai poetry, both as a source of aesthetic pleasure and as a feature in constructing stanzas (see Hudak 1981 for details). A few of the studies discuss similarities in the rhyme schemes between two or three of the Thai verse forms (Uppakit 1968; Hudak 1981). None, however, investigates the rhyme schemes of all five of the classical Thai verse forms: *râay*, *khlooy*, *kàap*, *chân*, and *klecn*. Because of this lack of a single study on rhyme in classical Thai poetry, this paper considers the following. First, it examines Thai stanzaic components and specific types of rhyme required for stanzas; second, it compares the rhyme schemes of the classical verse forms and reduces them to those primary patterns, meta-rhymes, that consistently appear in all the classical forms.

Descriptions of all the major verse types in the *chänthälák* consist of a scheme of each verse type, a list or discussion of the constraints on each form, and a short example that, in theory, exhibits the constraints, although this is not always the case. In some versions, there are attempts to provide a history of the verse forms. All *chänthälák* list the constituents requisite for a poem: *kháná?*, the structure of each verse type; *pháyaay*, the specific number of syllables set for each verse type; and *sämpHàt*, the rhyme requirements.

The *kháná?* of a Thai poem consists of several components which are found in all verse forms, their number and arrangement dependent upon the verse type. Each verse type has a required number of syllables, *pháyaay*, arranged into groups called *wák*. Usually two *wák* complete a line of poetry, a *bàat*; and one or more *bàat* form a stanza, *bòt*. Each stanza exhibits specific rhyme patterns. A typical stanza without the rhyme pattern appears as follows.

2. Each 0 represents one syllable. In Thai, *wák* making up a *bàat* are generally printed on the same line.

	wák
	00000
bàat	
	00000
bòt	
	00000
bàat	
	00000

While the *kháná?* describes the basic requirements for the structure of a particular verse type, it is the rhyming patterns that create the greatest variation and often determine the excellence of the poem. In fact, it is the rhyme that signals a poem, for without rhyme, a poem cannot exist in Thai. Mosel (1961:9) relates an incident in which Prince Bidyalankarana, wishing to determine the importance of rhyme in poetry, inserted a few stanzas of blank verse into a lecture on poetry, only to discover that the audience was completely unaware of the blank verse because of the lack of rhyme. Rhyme in Thai can be divided into two major types: 1) *sāmphàt nêck* – external rhyme, or rhyme that occurs between end syllables of *wák*; and 2) *sāmphàt nay* – internal rhyme, or rhyme that occurs between syllables within a *wák*.

External rhyme, considered compulsory for poetry, is always the type in which two syllables are alike in all respects except the tones and the initial consonants. In earlier poetry the tones on the syllables also had to agree for the syllables to rhyme. In the following example taken from the *klccn* classic? *Īnāw* of Rama II (1809-24), these external rhymes are underlined.

dèckmāay	thúk	phan	kê	bandaan
flower	every	kind	then	produce
bèckbaan	keesçcn	khácccn		<i>klìn</i>
bloom	pollen	spread in air	smell	
phummárêet	rên		récç	booybin
bee	fly in circles	call	fly	
prāsāan	sīaç	phiaç	phinphâat	<i>khécç</i>
unite	sound	as	orchestra	ring

(*klécç* rhymes with the final syllable of the second *wák* of the following stanza, linking the two.)

Flowers of every kind bloom and produce fragrant pollen floating

and spreading in the air. Bees fly in a circle buzzing, uniting their sounds like the sounds of an orchestra.

External rhyme is considered compulsory in poetry for several reasons. First, it helps create the melodious and pleasing quality (*phayré?*) essential to Thai poetic aesthetics. Repeatedly, in literary anthologies, in printed introductions to the poetry classics, in reviews of new literary compositions, and in the poems themselves, highly esteemed and valued works are described as *phayré?*.

A second reason for external rhyme is discussed by Mosel in "Sound and Rhythm in Thai Poetry." In that article, Mosel (1959:31) claims that Thai verse forms, with the exception of *chǎn*, have demarcative rhythm, which "...is obtained by grouping the syllables into a fixed number or groups with a fixed number of syllables." These groups are marked by pauses at the end of each group. To emphasize these groups, external rhyme pairs are used. Kuo (1980:22) also makes the claim that external rhyme patterns help to determine and to mark rhythmic groupings.

Finally, external rhyme is instrumental in the formation of stanzas, for it orders formalized patterns of syllables. In the formation of stanzas, external rhyme is discussed in terms of rounds or *rûat*. A *rûat yà* (major round) is completed when the end syllables of two *wák* rhyme. One completed *rûat yà* is necessary for one stanza. In his discussion of *klccn*, Phya Uppakit Silpasarn (1968:359) maintains that the minimum number of *bàat* per stanza is generally two (each *bàat* consists of two *wák*) because the *rûat yà* begun in the first *bàat* is completed in the second. Schematically, such a *klccn* stanza appears as follows with the *rûat yà* linking the second *wák* of the first *bàat* with the first *wák* of the second *bàat*:

<i>bàat</i> 1	a	000000
	b	000000
<i>bàat</i> 2	c	000000
	d	000000

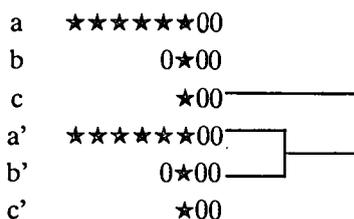
In *maalinii chǎn* 15, however, a stanza consists of a single *bàat* divided into three *wák*:³

a	★★★★★00
b	0★00
c	★00

3. The *chǎn* meters are based on two different types of syllables designated as light and heavy. Each * represents a light syllable and each 0 a heavy one.

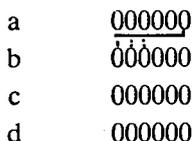
The single *bàat* of this meter completes a stanza because the *rûat yà* begun on the last syllable of *wák* a is completed on the last syllable of *wák* b. The basis for the Thai stanza, then, is the couplet, “the most rudimentary form of stanzaic organization...” (Fussell 1979:129). *Phya* Uppakit’s claim that the minimum number of *bàat* per stanza is generally two probably results from the fact that most popular verse forms, including the *klccn* stanzas, have stanzas of two *bàat*.

Conceivably, a single complete stanza could consist of only two *wák*, provided that the end syllable of these *wák* rhymed. In most cases, however, stanzas appear in series. With this arrangement, the stanzas are nearly always linked to each other with another rhyme also considered part of the *rûat yà*. In a series of *maalinii chán* 15, this linking rhyme occurs between *wák* c of the first stanza and *wák* a of the second.



These linking rhymes between stanzas are almost always present and can continue for thousands of stanzas.

Besides the *rûat yà*, external rhyme also includes the *rûat lék* (minor round) which optionally appears in stanzas with more than three *wák*. The *rûat lék* links the last syllable of a *wák* with one of the early syllables, usually the third, in the following *wák*. Schematically the *rûat lék* appears as follows:



Because the *rûat lék* does not link the two end syllables of *wák* a and *wák* b, it cannot be the basis for a stanza.

The other type of rhyme important to Thai poetry is internal rhyme, *sámphát nay*, rhyme which occurs between syllables within a *wák*:

dèckmáay	thúk	phan	kê	bandaan
flower	every	kind	then	produce
bèckbaan	keesčcn	khácccn	klîn	

00000̄ 0̄0000̄ 0̄0̄0̄00 0̄0 0̄000̄0̄ 0̄0(00)

4) *râay yaaw* in which the number of syllables per *wák* is not set and the rhyme pattern links the last syllable of a *wák* with any syllable in the following *wák*.

In these early verse types, two rhyme patterns consistently appear. Occurring in all the *râay* forms the first pattern links the final syllable of a *wák* with an early syllable of the following *wák*, forming the *rûat lék* of a formal stanza:

00000̄ 0̄0000̄

The second rhyme pattern is the couplet in which the end syllables of two *wák* rhyme. This couplet also, in part, signals the completion of a passage of *râay sùphâap*:

0000̄0̄ 0̄000̄0̄ 0̄000(00)

Characteristic of *rây sùphâap*, the couplet may also occur in *rây yaaw*, although it is not listed as a required pattern.

Two basic types of *khloong* verse appear in the Thai literary corpus, *khloong sùphâap* and *khloong dân*.⁴ These two types, nearly identical, vary chiefly in syllable number, although minor differences in tone placement and in rhyme scheme also occur. In *khloong*, the rhyme patterns between syllables nearly always require that the two rhyming syllables have the same tone. Both types of *khloong* have varieties with stanzas of two *bàat* (*khloong* 2), three *bàat* (*khloong* 3) and four *bàat* (*khloong* 4). Each of the numbers in the name refers to the number of five syllable *wák* in the respective stanzas. A *bàat* can be further divided into two *wák*.

Both *khloong* 2 *sùphâap* and *khloong* 2 *dân* have identical external rhyme patterns, a couplet linking the two *bàat* in each stanza: *mâat* and *râat* in *khloong* 2 *sùphâap*, *nécy* and *cécy* in *khloong* 2 *dân*.⁵

4. The *khloong* verse form was developed when the Thai language had a three tone system. Sometime between the fourteenth and sixteenth century these tones split, forming the present day five tone system. Because of this split, much of the *khloong* poetry seems to be filled with errors. A significant number of these errors disappear when the original tones are used in reading the verse. See Bickner 1981 for a complete discussion.

5. In Thai, the last two *wák* (the second *bàat*) are printed on the same line.

khlooy 2 sùphâap

taa	mían	taa	márikmâat	
eye	like	eye	deer	
phít	khíw	phrá	lcc	râat
look at	eyebrow	Phra	lcc	royal
pràdùt	kêew	kawthan	kòη	naa
like	jewel	bow	arch	particle

His eyes are like the eyes of the deer. Gaze at Phra Lcc's eyebrows.
They are arched like the jeweled bow. Is it not so?

Lilit phrá? lcc

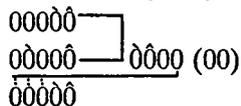
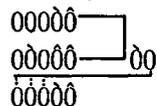
khlooy 2 dân

bâannêck	rεεη	lék	nêcy
countryside	strength	little	small
baaηrâcan	cêcy	cêcy	
proper name	little	little	
cithâan			
brave			

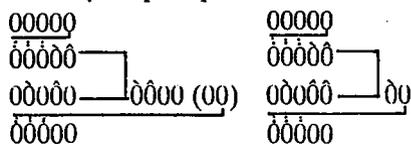
There is little strength in the countryside. Baaηrâcan's bravery is little.

Sàdùdii bâan baaηrâcan kham prâphan baaη rîaη Phya Uppakit Silpasarn

Schematically these two forms appear as follows. In addition, the diagrams show that the linking rhymes between stanzas are identical.

khlooy 2 sùphâap*khlooy 2 dân*

khlooy 3 stanzas also have the same external rhyme schemes. Both stanzas are formed by adding a third *bâat* of five syllables and by linking it to the couplet with a *râat lék*.

khlooy 3 sùphâap khlooy 3 dân

Phya Uppakit (1968:403) suggests that these two types of *khloong* are similar, but fails to clarify the similarities; he does point out, however, that the couplet in *khloong 3 dān* may end on the fourth syllable rather than on the fifth.

khloong 4 stanzas are far more complex. The chief difference between these stanzas and the *khloong 2* and *khloong 3* stanzas lies in the couplet structure. Couplets in the *khloong 4* stanzas are formed by the end syllables of two *wák* which are separated by other intervening *wák*:

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00000 }
00000 }
00000 }
00000 }
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In the *khloong 2* and *khloong 3* stanzas, on the other hand, no such intervening *wák* exist in the couplets.

Although more complex, the two types of *khloong 4* stanzas are strikingly similar both in structure and in rhyme. *khloong 4 sùphâup thammádaa* and *khloong 4 dān wiwitthámaalii* represent the two most common varieties of *khloong 4*:

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khlooy 4 sùphâap thammádaa

<i>sĭaŋ</i>	<i>lii</i>	<i>sĭaŋ</i>	<i>lâw</i>	<i>?âaŋ</i>	<i>?an day</i>	<i>phĭi</i>	<i>?ccy</i>
sound	rumor	sound	tell	say	whatever	older	particle
						sibling	
<i>sĭaŋ</i>	<i>yĕm</i>	<i>ycc</i>	<i>yót</i>	<i>khray</i>	<i>thŭa</i>	<i>lâa</i>	
sound	likely	raise	honor	who	everywhere	earth	
<i>sĕcŋ</i>	<i>khĭa</i>	<i>phĭi</i>	<i>lâp lăy</i>		<i>liim</i>	<i>tĭin</i>	<i>rii</i>
two	you two	older	to be		forget	wake	particle
		sibling	sound				older
			asleep				sibling
<i>sĕcŋ</i>	<i>phĭi</i>	<i>kĭt</i>	<i>?eeŋ</i>	<i>?âa</i>	<i>yâa</i>	<i>dây</i>	<i>thăam</i>
two	older	think	self	particle	do not	get	ask
	sibling						<i>phĭa</i>
							we

What are these rumors? What do they say? Whose honor is raised throughout the land? Have you two been sleeping so soundly that you've forgotten to awaken? Think for yourself: don't ask us.

Lĭlĭt phrá? lcc

khlooy 4 dân wĭwĭthâmaalii

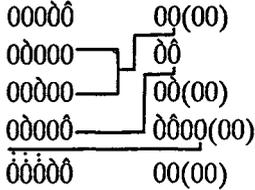
<i>yaam</i>	<i>nâat</i>	<i>khâat</i>	<i>càak</i>	<i>câaw</i>	<i>cam</i>	<i>khĕn</i>
time	destruction	separate	from	title, you	remember	adversity
period		from				calamity
<i>phŭak</i>	<i>phamâa</i>	<i>thaarun</i>			<i>rút</i>	<i>râay</i>
group	Burmese	cruel, harsh			terrible	fierce
<i>khòmkhĭi</i>	<i>khúkkhaam</i>	<i>pen</i>			<i>pàathĭan</i>	
tyrannize	threaten	be			savage	
<i>dŭay</i>	<i>cĭt</i>	<i>hòothĭam</i>	<i>khláay</i>		<i>sàt</i>	<i>phray</i>
with	heart	ruthless,	similar		animal	forest
		cruel				

That time of destruction, separated from you (Siam),—remember the calamity: Groups of the cruel and terrible Burmese tyrannizing and threatening, savages with ruthless hearts like animals of the forest.

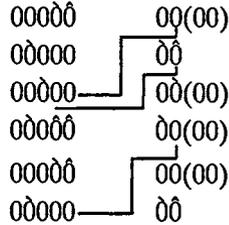
Sàdŭdii bâan baanĭácan kham pràphan baan rĭaŋ Phya Uppakit Silpasarn

Comparing the structures of these two *khlooη* 4 stanzas reveals only three differences in rhyme patterns:

khlooη 4 *sùphâap thammádaa*



khlooη 4 *dân wíwíthámaalii*



First, in *khlooη* 4 *sùphâap thammádaa*, *wák* two rhymes with the couplet completed by *wák* three and *wák* five. In *khlooη* 4 *dân wíwíthámaalii*, on the other hand, *wák* two forms its own couplet with *wák* five.

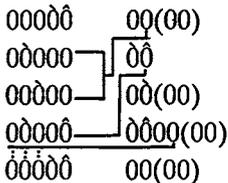
A second difference is found in the couplet formed by *wák* four and *wák* seven of both stanzas. In *khlooη* 4 *thammádaa*, the rhyme must fall on the fifth syllable of the *wák*. In *khlooη* 4 *wíwíthámaalii* the rhyme may fall on either the fourth or the fifth syllable.

The last difference lies in the linking rhymes between stanzas. In *khlooη* 4 *thammádaa* the last *wák* rhymes with the first *wák* of the following stanza. In *khlooη* 4 *wíwíthámaalii* the link is with the third *wák*.

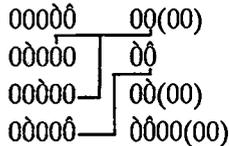
Both *khlooη* 4 *thammádaa* and *khlooη* 4 *wíwíthámaalii* serve as models from which other *khlooη* varieties derive. As models, these stanzas exhibit the most common rhyming patterns as defined in the versification textbooks. The variations are based on changes in these rhyme patterns. Those stanzas differing from the *khlooη* 4 *thammádaa* stanza include *khlooη* 4 *sùphâap càttàwaathanthii* and *khlooη* 4 *sùphâap triiphíttháphan*:

khlooη 4 *sùphâap varieties*

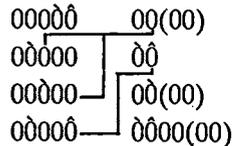
thammádaa



càttàwaathanthii

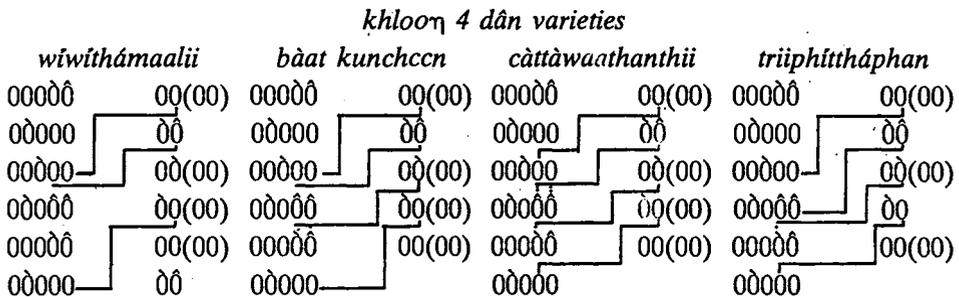


triiphíttháphan



khlooη 4 cằtằwaathanthii places the rhyme on the fourth syllable of the third *wák* rather than on the fifth syllable as in *khlooη 4 thammádaa*. *Phya* Uppakit (1968:386) notes that the compounded name of the stanza suggests that there is a requirement to place the rhyme on the fourth syllable (*cằtằwaa* – four; *thanthii* – walking stick, to have ill effects). In *khlooη 4 triiphíttháphan* the rhyme falls on the third syllable of the third *wák*. *Phya* Uppakit (ibid.) also explains that the name of the stanza implies that the rhyme falls on the third syllable (*triiphít* – three places; *phan* – character, letter). Neither the *khlooη 4 cằtằwaa-thanthii* nor the *khlooη 4 triiphíttháphan* variety has any linking rhyme between stanzas. These similarities are briefly acknowledged in the literature. (Uppakit 1968:386-87; Jones 1970:199; Bickner 1981:109).

For *khlooη 4 dân* stanzas, the *khlooη 4 dân wíwítthámaalii* stanza provides the model. *Phya* Uppakit (1968:391) maintains that the meaning of *wíwítthámaalii*—to be in good order, systematic—has no significance for the structure of the stanza. Variations of the *khlooη 4 dân wíwítthámaalii* stanza include *khlooη 4 dân bàat kunchccn*, *khlooη 4 dân cằtằwaathanthii*, and *khlooη 4 dân triiphíttháphan*. Like the *sùpháap* stanzas, the *dân* varieties differ from the *khlooη 4 dân wíwítthámaalii* stanza in rhyme patterns:



The *khlooη 4 bàat kunchccn* stanza displays the simplest variation with the addition of a linking rhyme between the last syllable of *wák* six of the first stanza and the fourth or fifth syllable of the first *wák* of the following stanza. *bàat kunchccn* translates as the footprint of an elephant, *Phya* Uppakit (1968:494) explains; and the rhyme pairs occur diagonally across from each other, similar to the position of the elephant's legs when walking. The *khlooη 4 dân cằtằwaathanthii* varies only slightly from *khlooη 4 bàat kunchccn*. As the stanza name suggests, the rhyme falls on the fourth syllable of the fifth *wák* and on the fourth syllable of the

underlying 5-syllable line in Thai (Siamese) canonical form and the feature of rhyming syllables according to their membership in the earlier A, B, and C tones categories... the historical picture might well be viewed as one where the "primitive" *râay* of an earlier oral tradition became the polished *khlooη* of a more self-conscious written tradition."

Historical literary evidence seems to support this claim, for, according to Mosel (1959a:6-7), the earliest *râay* predates the Sukhothai period (thirteenth century) while the earliest *khlooη* begins to appear in the fourteenth century.

A closer examination of these forms in terms of their rhyme scheme further suggests that the forms are closely related. In the examination of *râay sùphâap* it was stated that the last three *wák* of the stanza must be the same as *khlooη 2 sùphâap*. In fact, the last three *wák* of *râay sùphâap* with the rhyme scheme and the tone placement constitute the *khlooη 2 sùphâap* stanza:

000ðô		
0ð00ô		ðð00(00)

khlooη 3 sùphâap, furthermore, is the same as the last four *wák* of *râay sùphâap*:

00000		
00000		
0ð00ô		ðð00(00)

An even more striking parallelism occurs with the *khlooη 4 dân* in which the last four *wák* are the same as the last four *wák* of *râay dân*:

00000	00(00)
00000	00
00ð00	0ð(00)
0ð00ô	ð0(00)

These similarities are occasionally mentioned in the literature; but because of their wording, the discussions on this point seem to suggest that the *khlooη* stanzas have been used to terminate the *râay* stanzas. Since, historically, formalized *khlooη* patterns do not appear until well after the *râay* stanzas, this cannot be the case. Rather, the *khlooη* stanzas must have developed from the *râay*, the poets adopting the same tone placement, canonical form, and rhyme scheme as the last

third *wák* in the following stanza. Aside from these rhyming pattern differences, the two stanzas are identical. A similar pattern of rhyme on the fourth syllable appears in the *sùphâap* variety.

khlooη 4 dân triiphíttháphan presents only a slightly different variation. In this case the linking rhyme from the last *wák* of the stanza falls on the third syllable of the third *wák* in the following stanza. There is no rhyme with the third syllable in *wák* five of the first stanza because the tones of the two rhyming syllables are different. This requirement for the rhyme to fall on the third syllable is suggested by the name of the stanza.

All the external rhyme patterns occurring in *râyay* and *khlooη* can be reduced to three basic couplet types. First, a couplet may be formed by two *wák* with one *wák* immediately following the other as in the *khlooη 2* and *khlooη 3* stanzas:

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A second couplet type may be formed by two *wák* with one or more *wák* intervening between the rhyming pair as in the *khlooη 4* stanzas:

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00000      00(00)
00000      00
00000      00(00)
00000      00(00)
```

These two couplets, with end syllables of the *wák* rhyming, form the *rûat yàt*, the basis of a Thai stanza. The third couplet type, most prominent in the *râyay* stanzas, may be formed by the end syllable of a *wák* and one of the early syllables of a following *wák*:

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This couplet, the *rûat lék*, is never the sole basis of a stanza, other than in *râyay*.

A final observation on *râyay* and *khlooη* concerns their historical relationship. It has been suggested that on the basis of "... the similarities in syllable number and tone placement in *râyay* and *khlooη*,...*râyay* may have been the forerunner of the *khlooη* verse forms" (Hudak 1981:21). Hartmann (1983:4) makes the same point about the two forms:

because "...both share the common feature of an ideal or

wák of *râay sùphâap* and *râay dân*.

kàap, chǎn, and klccn

While the similarities in *râay* and *khloor* are occasionally acknowledged, those in the second group are not. The three couplet patterns found in the first group also occur in *kàap, chǎn, and klccn*, the appearance of each pattern dependent upon the number of *wák* in a stanza.

1. The three-*wák* stanzas

The first of these patterns, the couplet without intervening *wák* appears in stanzas consisting of three *wák* as *kàap chàbaη* 16:

kàap chàbaη 16

sǎamsipsáam	sǎa	sǒophaa	
thirty-three	head	beautiful	
sǎa	nǐη	cèt	ηaa
head	one	seven	tusks
dàη	phétchárát	ruucii	
like	diamond jewel	bright, glorious	

(The elephant) had thirty three beautiful heads and each head had seven tusks which were like bright diamonds.

Kham pháak raammákian

Royal Composition group, Rama II

In this three-*wák* stanza the final syllables of the first two *wák*, *phaa* and *ηaa*, complete the couplet without intervening *wák*. The final syllable in the third *wák*, *cii*, provides the linking rhyme with the last syllable of the first *wák* in the next stanza. Other verse types with this same rhyme pattern include *maalinii chǎn* 15,⁶ *meekháwipphùt-chítāa chǎn* 19, *sàthunlāwikkiiłitā? chǎn* 19, and *?iithísā? chǎn* 20:

maalinii chǎn 15

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6. Other verse forms with this pattern include: *pápháthákā? chǎn* 15, *sàsikálā? chǎn* 15, *maniikhánánkàrà? chǎn* 15, *waanínii chǎn* 16, *hǎcránii chǎn* 17, *sikhírínii chǎn* 17, *manthákkantāa chǎn* 17, and *kùsùmtìlā-daawenlīāa chǎn* 18.

meekháwipphùtchítàa chǎn 19

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sàthunláwikkíiltà? chǎn 19

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?iithísà? chǎn 20

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The three-*wák* pattern is almost identical with the one in the *khlooη* 2 stanza which also consists of three *wák*. The difference resides in the linking rhyme; in *khlooη* the rhyme is with the first syllable of the *wák*, not the last syllable as in these forms.

2. The four-*wák* stanzas

The couplet without intervening *wák* appears in stanzas of four *wák* as *?intháráwíchian chǎn 11*:

?intháráwíchian chǎn. 11

bay	phoo	sùwan	hěcy
leaf	Bo tree	gold	hung
ráyáa	yěcy	bè	runraη
pendant	hang loosely	not	ragged
lom	phát	kràdiη	daη
wind	blow	bell	to sound
sàncè	sàpthá	?onweenη	
melodious	sounds	agreeable	
		to the ears	

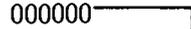
The leaves of the golden Bo tree hang loose and not ragged. The wind blows the bells and makes melodious, agreeable sounds.

Bunnoowâat kham chǎn

The final syllables in the second and third *wák*, *raη* and *daη*, complete the couplet. The last syllable of the fourth *wák*, *weenη*, provides the linking rhyme with

the last syllable of the first *wák* of the next stanza. If the *rúat lék*, the third couplet type, appears, it is generally between the last syllable of the first *wák* and one of the early syllables, usually the third, of the second *wák*. In the above example *h̄c̄y* and *ȳc̄y* form the *rúat lék*. Besides *?intháráwíchian chǎn 11*, these rhyme patterns also occur in the following frequently used verse types: *kàap yaanii 11*, *toodòkkà? chǎn 12*, *?intháwoη chǎn 12*, *wásǎntàdilòkkà? chǎn 14*, *klccn hòk*, and *klccn p̄eet*.⁷

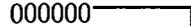
kàap yaanii 11

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?intháwoη chǎn 12

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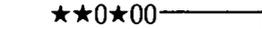
klccn hòk

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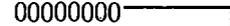
toodòkkà? chǎn 12

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wásǎntàdilòkkà? chǎn 14

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klccn p̄eet

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It should be noted that the couplet and linking rhyme in the four-*wák* stanzas are the same as those in the three-*wák* stanzas. The difference between the stanzas lies in the addition of another *wák*, which may bear a *rúat lék* rhyme, in the four-*wák* stanzas. Uppakit (1968:431) does note these similarities in rhyme between *kàap yaanii 11* and the *klccn* stanzas.

7. Other verse forms with this pattern include: *tànúmáthánaa chǎn 6*, *kùmaaráláltaa chǎn 7*, *phúchákhásúsũuhàtâ? chǎn 9*, *rummáwádii chǎn 10*, *sũtháwíraachítâ chǎn 10*, *pànáwâ? chǎn 10*, *mánooramá? chǎn 10*, *campàkàmaalaa chǎn 10*, *máttâ chǎn 10*, *?ũpeentháráwíchian chǎn 11*, *?ũpàchâat chǎn 11*, *sũrásásiri? chǎn 11*, *sáallnii chǎn 11*, *sũmũkhũ chǎn 11*, *?ũpàthítâ chǎn 11*, *sâwâakhátâ chǎn 11*, *thoohókâ? chǎn 11*, *ráthòuthátâ chǎn 11*, *pháthikaa chǎn 11*, *thaatummitsáa chǎn 11*, *piyaηwáthaa chǎn 12*, *thútàwĩlamphitâmaalaa chǎn 12*, *láltaa chǎn 12*, *pàmítàkkhàrà chǎn 12*, *pùttâ? chǎn 12*, *?ũtchálaa chǎn 12*, *hũtaamárótsâ? chǎn 12*, *kũsũmmáwĩcũt chǎn 12*, *kammálaa chǎn 12*, *phúchon̄khápâyâat chǎn 12*, *waηsâuthâ? chǎn 12*, *wẽetsâtheewii chǎn 12*, *pàhâasinii chǎn 13*, *rũcĩraa chǎn 13*, *pàhàránákálltaa chǎn 14*, *pàraachitâ? chǎn 14*.

Similar parallels exist with the *khloong* 3 stanzas which also consist of a *rúat lék* followed by a couplet. As with the *khloong* 2 stanzas, the linking rhyme, falling on the first syllable of the next *wák* rather than the last, differentiates the *khloong* stanzas from these four-*wák* stanzas.

3. The eight-*wák* stanza

Stanzas of eight-*wák*, as *maanáwákkà? chǎn 8*, include a combination of all three couplet types:

maanáwákkà? chǎn 8

?ee	?ilárâat		
oh	a name		
pràat	thúrákaan	_____	
without	cause of anger		
raw	kê	pràthaan	_____
we	then	bestow	
thôotsà	kà	?on	_____
punishment	to	person	
tèe	khànà	nī	
but	time	this	
mii	siri	son	_____
have	all	form	
rúuppà	lé	khon	_____
form	and	firm	
deem	bè	mī	klaay
previous	not	have	change

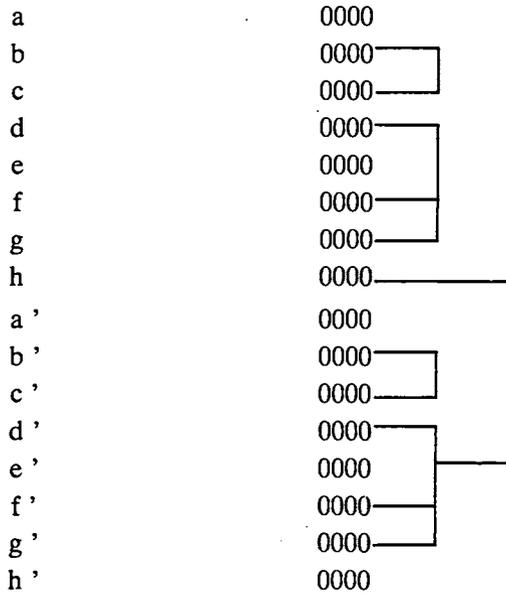
Oh, Inlaraat, you without the cause of anger. (At that time) we bestowed punishment upon you, but now you have your entire shape and form, firm as before without any change.

?Inlárâat kham chǎn

The last syllables of *wák* two and *wák* three, *kaan* and *thaan*, complete the couplet without intervening *wák*. Three *wák* complete the couplet with intervening *wák* (this couplet is actually linked to another couplet without intervening *wák*): *wák* four, six, and seven. As in other stanzas, the linking rhyme begins on the last syllable of the last *wák*, *klaay*. Frequently, two *rúat lék* appear, one between the

first and second *wák*, *râat* and *prâat*, and the other between the fifth and sixth, *nîi* and *mîi*.

In forms with eight *wák* per stanza, the external rhyme pattern is the same as the pattern of two four-*wák* stanzas combined.



wák a through *wák* d and *wák* e through *wák* h represent the two four-*wák* stanzas, linked together by the same external rhyme which would link two separate four-*wák* stanzas (*wák* d with *wák* f). To distinguish two eight-*wák* stanzas linked together from four four-*wák* stanzas linked together, a linking rhyme between the stanzas extends from *wák* h, the last *wák* of the stanza, to *wák* d' in the next stanza. The linking rhyme between two four-*wák* stanzas would terminate at *wák* b'.

kàap sùraaηkhánaaη 28 also employs the eight-*wák* pattern even though it consists of seven *wák*.

kàap sùraaηkhánaaη 28

prànaη	kan	<i>khccy</i>	┌──────────────────┐
gather	together	wait	└──────────────────┘
mûη	meen	tôn	<i>rccy</i> ┌──────────┐
intend	look	body	trace └──────────┘

bè	hěn	khaawii	
not	see	cow	
rêŋ	yen	rêŋ	yâm
quick	dusk	quick	evening
rêŋ	khâm	rêŋ	tii
quick	night	quick	early morning
?òk	hây	hăa	sĩ
heart	weep	look for	excellent
phrītsòp	maandaa		
cow	mother		

They waited together and then looked for traces of the body. But still they did not see Khawii, the cow. Quickly came the dusk and evening. Quickly came the night and early morning. They wept looking for their mother.

Sĩa khoò kham chăn

What differentiates the *kàap* form from the eight-*wák* form is the absence of the first *wák*, which carries no *rúat yây* in the eight-*wák* pattern. In *kàap sùraaŋkhánaaŋ* 28, a *rúat lék* appears between *wák* four and *wák* five, *yâm* and *khâm*.

Other eight-*wák* verse types include *cittàpàthaa chăn 8*, *sàmaanikà? chăn 8*, *pàmaanikà? chăn 8*, and *witchummaalaa chăn 8*. Although consisting of eight-*wák*, the *khlooŋ* 4 varieties do not employ this same combination of couplet types. The *khlooŋ* varieties, however, are similar, in that couplets with intervening *wák* predominate.

Conclusion

From this examination of classical Thai verse forms, the following generalizations can be made. Three metarhyme patterns, all based on the couplet, exist as external rhyme patterns in Thai verse forms. A couplet formed by two successive *wák* appears in stanzas of three and four *wák*. *khlooŋ* stanzas with three and four *wák* complete a separate group from the other three and four *wák* stanzas, *kàap*, *chăn*, and *klccn*, because of the difference in linking rhyme patterns. In the *khlooŋ* stanzas, this linking rhyme falls on one of the first three syllables of the first *wák* of the next stanza. In the other group the rhyme falls on the last syllable of the *wák*.

A couplet formed by two *wák* with intervening *wák* constitutes the second meta-pattern. This pattern appears in stanzas with seven and eight *wák*. The *khloong* 4 stanzas again form a separate group, for they display slightly different combinations of patterns from those in the *kàap* and *chăn* stanzas.

The last meta-pattern is a couplet in which a final syllable rhymes with a non-final syllable in the following *wák*. This rhyme pattern appears only in stanzas with four or more *wák*. Unlike the two other couplets, this rhyme sequence cannot be used as the basis of a stanza, other than in *râay*.

All of the external rhyme patterns discussed in the versification textbooks can be reduced to these three couplet types. These forms are highly conservative in that they exhibit little or no change. Occasionally, nonce forms with different patterns have been tried, particularly in the *chăn* meters, but they have remained rare experimentations.⁸ Such conservatism has constrained poets in the forms they can use. As a consequence, they have turned to developing internal rhyme patterns where, it is said, their true genius lies.

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8. See *hàlámúkhī chăn 9, ?ùppháphaasòkkà? chăn 10, sàtháaraa chăn 21, and phátthákà? chăn 22*. More recently, there have been attempts at composing free verse in Thai.

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