HAJI KIAD AND KLON LAM TAT: SIAM'S CRIMES IN THE BANGKOKIAN MUSLIM'S VIEW (1920'S – 1930'S)¹

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ABSTRACT

his article studies the Siam's Crimes during 1920's – 1930's by using primary sources as the text for content analysis. It categorizes into three parts. The first part surveys and explains about the background of *Lam Tat* and *Klon Lam Tat* in print. The second part considers the bandit and murder cases in Siam, which presents through the newspapers and paperbacks. The third analyzes *Haji Kiad*'s works and his view on the incident as a Bangkokian Muslim, including his criticism about Siam's Crimes and the government efficiency throughout his *Klon Lam Tat*.

Key words: Haji Kead, Klon Lam Tat, Siam's Crime, Bangkokian Muslim's View

INTRODUCTION

Mrs. Kimlai the Beauty But her heart was ugly, Spearing through her husband's face His dead immediately.

The above passage, extract from "Nang Kimlai Aua Hok Tok Na Pua" (Mrs. Kimlai Speared through Her Husband's Face). It was Klon Lam Tat of The famous Lam Tat's writer during 1920's – 1930's named "Haji Kiad", the Bangkokian muslim who had consistently presented many murder cases and crimes in Siam society through his works.

What is *Klon Lam Tat*?

Lam Tat is the Thai folk entertainment which is affected from an Islamic ritual performance in Melayu areas. The 1920's – 1930's was the rise of publishing era in Siam. During this time, Lam Tat became a popular printing called *"Klon Lam Tat"* amongst Siam readers. Analyzing these primary sources was a study of the lower class's history because the sources were produced by ordinary people.

Recently, very few works offer about *Klon Lam Tat* especially *Haji Kiad'* works, and even fewer researchers approach the primary sources because it was rare items nowadays. This study is based on materials from the private library for paperbacks of *Klon Lam Tat* along with archive from the National Library of Thailand in Bangkok (Thewes), including Old newspapers and magazines.

¹ I wish to thank Pasit Ounmaettachit, Passavon Sungsorn, Peerapon Saengsawang and Suri Songbundith. Without a great help of them, my article would have not been impossible.

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Surely, this article aims to survey and explain about the presentation of Siam's Crimes in *Haji Kiad's Klon Lam Tat* and his view about the Siamese criminal justice through textual and contextual analysis of literary works.

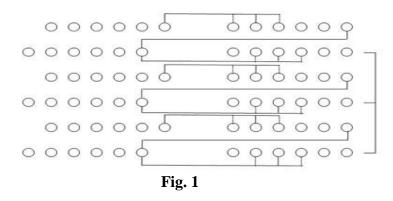
Background of Lam Tat and Klon Lam Tat in print

Lam Tat, a sort of racy folk banter and song show, is the Thai performance which is developed from an Islamic chanting around the Malay Peninsula areas. According to Surapon Wiroonrak, Lam Tat was modified from the Melayu word *Lagu yao*, which meant showing of impromptu antiphon with the rhythm of *rammana* (a kind of small drum).³ Along with Aneke Nawigamune explained originally Lam Tat was performed in Pattani as so-called *Likehulu*. The Muslims from Southern transferred this performance into Central Siam during the early Rattanakosin period (1780s-1850s) due to the impact of wars.⁴

Previously, *Lam Tat* had been sung only in the Melayu style, using Malay is a major languages and all of the performers were only males not females. But the latter, it had been changed by Thai cultures and languages. Performance consist of male and female singers and applied news, stories, rumors and miscellaneous topics in an everyday life to sang in response to one another by the rhetoric included: frankly, metaphoric and humorous. Besides, Innuendos and risqué words were often used in this performance to make laughs from the audience. It had become popular amongst Thai people.

During the reign of Vajiravudh (1910-1925), it was the boom and popularity era in Siam society. Following memory of Wangdee Nima, or known as 'Wang Tae', the Siamese national artist during that reign, Lam Tat's competition, created by Phraya Phaibulsombat, was fiercely popular. Later on, there was a *Klon* (poem) writing for insulting others, and most of these writers were teachers.⁵

Lam Tat was composed in a verse form of "*Klon hua daew*" (a kind of Thai folk poem), it was the most important for the lyrics and helps the performance used rhythmic words that affected the emotion of the audience. Lam Tat didn't have a fixed poetic form, only a loose pattern. As this chart below:



³ Surapon Wiroonrak. (1996). *Likay*. Bangkok: The Teachers Council of Thailand, Ladprao, p. 11-12.

⁴ Aneke Nawigamune.(1984). *Pleng nok sattawat* [Song from out of this century]. Bangkok: Muangboran, p.625-627.

⁵ Pathum Thani Cultural Office, Phetchaburi Witthaya Long Kon Teacher College. (1987). *Cheewit lae ngan khong Wangdee Nima (Wang Tae)* [The Life and Work of Wangdee Nima (Wang Tae)]. Bangkok: Office of the National Culture Commission , p. 21.

During 1920's – 1930's, Lam Tat's performers would take turn digging up scandals about their opponents to sing in their songs⁶, to the audience's much interest. At first, it was only bantering among performers. Then they started satirizing public figures' dishonest behaviors. This would later develop into political Lam Tat sections in newspapers, where the literary form was used for criticizing official's corruption and political discontentment.

In this period was the ascendancy era of publishing in Siam, The book's production had expanded greatly, and the literary market grew rapidly. Matthew Phillip Copeland showed the statistics of the amounts of presses in Bangkok; there were 99 in 1924 and rose to 127 in the next three years.⁷ Besides the proliferation of paperback and journal, a new generation of writers and journalists was born in literary circles. They tried to present realism writing style that could be seen in everyday life which differed from the Siam's old literary that present idealism stories. Not surprisingly Lam Tat became a widely popular printing called *"Klon Lam Tat"*, poem that combined with a news article that presented real events in the society, except that *Klon Lam Tat* was still written in a traditional format as similar as the old literary form.

At first, they was wrote by journalists, including Chawiang Sawettatat⁸, Sem Sumanan⁹, Kosol Komoljan¹⁰ and Kulap Saipradit¹¹, as a political's poem serial sections in newspapers and magazines for reporting news and rumors by sarcastic tone, especially was used in criticizing official's corruption and notorious crimes that the government could not solve yet. Their Lam Tat would act as a mouthpiece for those plaintiffs; and at the same time, criticize the Siamese criminal justice.

One case in Siam society of such period was so notorious that there were criticisms of it for a long time in a newspaper. The case was that *Phraya Nonthisen* swindled lottery money, causing him to be imprisoned. Many journalists in a newspaper criticized this case with strong words. Other than a newspaper, the case was written and published in books. The owner of famous literary style popular with readers was "*Haji Kiad*".

⁶ Aneke Nawigamune.(1984). *Pleng nok sattawat* [Song from out of this century]. Bangkok: Muangboran, p. 630.

⁷ Copeland, Matthew Phillip. (1993). "Contested Nationalism and the 1932 Overthrow of the Absolute Monarchy in Siam" Phd diss. The Australian National University, p. 54.

⁸ Chawiang Sawettatat was a newspaper editor *Saman Maitree* [Friendship Unity], 1925-1926. He wrote his *Klon Lam Tat* satirizing about dishonest behaviours of one high-ranking official. He was arrested and put in jail.

⁹ Sem Sumanan was a newspaper editor *Bangkok Kanmuang* [Bangkok Political], 1922-1923. Sem not only was attacked with knife but also sentenced to three months in prison for his sharp political articles, and met Chawiang Sawettatat there. After he acquitted, Sem returned to a journal editor *Kroah Lek* [Iron Armor] along with wrote *Klon Lam Tat* with the pseudonym *"Kan Petch"*.

¹⁰ Kosol Komoljan or Boonterm, was a newspaper editor *Lakmuang Rai Supdah* [City's principal weekly], 1922-1923. He was put in jail by case of political, and met Sem Sumanan there. When he had freedom, Kosol used *Klon Lam Tat* to criticize Siam government in a journal *Kroah Lek* [Iron Armor] with the pseudonym "*Suea Tia*" [Short Tiger] and wrote novels in the nom de plume "*Sri Ngern Yaung*".

¹¹ Kulap Saipradit was a newspaper editor and one of the foremost Thai novelists, his romantic masterpiece such *as Luk Phu Chai* [Manly spirit,1928] and *Kang Lang Parp* [Behind the painting, 1937]. In his young, Kulap worked in the translation school of Kosol Komoljan and began wrote novels there. Kosol gave the nom de plume for Kulap; *"Sri Burapa"*.

Later, many "Klon Lam Tat" were published in paperbacks. They were created to meet the needs of the lower class who could not read a newspaper which was written in a modern form, as fluent as the middle class who was well-educated. The lower class was familiar with poem reading so Lam Tat writers tried to describe a story from a newspaper by converting its form into *Klon*, to satisfy the lower class's demand.

A paperback's *Klon Lam Tat* differed from a newspaper's *Klon Lam Tat* sections. A newspaper one criticized bureaucrats and the authorities; a book one narrated, without being specific, a story of controversial news that people of that era interested. During that time, most news was about gruesome murders or outlaw leaders. Some were unusual stories that looked interesting and marketable. However, Story beginnings by an onomatopoeia phrase of Malay language of both are similar such as *Klon Lam Tat* of "*Suea Tia*" (Kosol Komoljan) in a newspaper "*Kroah Lek*" was "*Ta li lai yon ya Ta li lai*"¹² and Another by *Haji Kiad's* paperback was "*Cha bu nga ram pai, Le le le sai, Bu ngi ma ree, Ha hai sun yor, Cha bu ngo ram pai*"¹³

Most of *Klon Lam Tat* was a story ended in one book and sold just for 10 satang (*Nungsu sip satang*). The content in paperback was generally about "news." It did not just describe events in chronological order with a matter-of-fact tone like a newspaper, but it narrated the story like a novel. It had an introduction to explain an origin of a story, a background of a 'character', the reason why it happened, its climax, and the end of such story. The famous *Klon Lam Tat*'s writer and eulogized in a popular of the time was "*Haji Kiad*".

Who is Haji Kiad?

The Bangkokian Muslim who consistently presented many murder cases and crimes in society. Many his works but his real name and details of his life were still not discovered yet. Supposedly he was a famous *Klon Lam Tat* writer. And he might be a Muslim because his title was '*Haji*' which meant one who had ever been on a pilgrimage to the holy Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

However, following memory of 'Wang Tae', Klon Lam Tat's writers used the word 'Haji' before name even they are not Muslim, such as 'Haji Kob and 'Haji Dum'. I assumes that Klon Lam Tat by 'Haji Kiad' who is the real Muslim which was very popular, and the best seller that was printed around 3,000- 5000 copies. It seem like the book was published plentifully, if compared to publishing in Thailand (2016). Therefore, to put the word "Haji" before the name by Thai is to make Klon Lam Tat favored like 'Haji Kiad'

The story in *Haji Kiad*'s *Klon Lam Tat* could be categorized into 2 groups:

1. A story that was based on serious offenses that happened in Siam society. The story had 2 kinds;

-a story of a murder case;

-a story of an outlaw whom people in that era called him 'Ai Suea' (a tiger);

Klon Lam Tat about a murder case was, for example, E Thongluean Ti Hak Kor Nong Pua [Thongluean Who Broke Brother-in-law's Neck] and Nang Kimlai Aua Hok Tok Na Pua (Mrs. Kimlai Speared through Her Husband's Face).

¹² Kroah Lek. Sunday, July 12, 1925, p. 1275.

¹³ Haji Kiad. (1927). *Ai Suea Yoi Jai Yak* [The Cold-hearted bandit named Yoi]. Bangkok: Kasempanich, p.1.

And *Klon Lam Tat* about the story of '*Ai Suea*' or an outlaw was, for example, *Ai Suea Yoi Jai Yak* [The Cold-hearted bandit named Yoi]

2. A story that was based on public interests such as *Luang Neramit Baijayonta Pu Mee Kam* [Destiny of Luang Neramit Baijayonta], Lieutenant Colonel who pass away because of an encountered an engine failure during the flight in 1929¹⁴

Siam's crimes in print

The bandits and the murderers would have appeared in Siam society since the olden days, largely killing for the property. Siam governments have severity of criminal sanctions and horrific punishments caused people more afraid, including trial by ordeal and humiliate beheading. However, there were many persons who fearlessly challenge to punishments.

Following the works of Charlie IamKrasin,¹⁵ there were a whole lot of murder cases in the capital areas and rural areas since the Reign of Chulalongkorn (1868-1910),this reports were habitually appeared in newspaper, seem like Siamese follow up and give their priorities to the stories.

Surprisingly, since the decade of 1920-1930; the transformation period of Siam society toward civilization and Bangkok had become a modern city, but there were extremely murder cases. In the same time, there had been many criminal cases such as snatching, stealing, assaulting, and murdering. Thieves and muggers usually committed crime in desolate places where were no light during nighttime. These places were more problematic than others as they had an ambush by hitting to a head and then stealing the victim's possessions. As an illustration, the newspaper "*Sayamras*" (Siam people) on August 26, 2464¹⁶, reported that an old woman who sold snacks was hit and robbed, and that a Chinese rickshaw puller was mugged for money.

Other than theft, there were many murder cases during the same period. Some cases became notorious for violence that beyond belief, for example, parents killing their children, children killing their parents, husbands killing wives, wives killing husbands, families killing each other, including killing others in the society by gruesome methods.

From my observations, there were ruthlessly and mysteriously murder cases in this time, as if criminals made trouble soundly and without redolent of evident. The cases often appear in private areas more than in public, especially the murder in household. If considered in terms of the representation through news and literary, that found consistent issue about it. While there were the mysterious murder cases in Siam society significantly, detective fictions were popularity amongst readers in same time such as Sherlock Holmes, the famous work of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. Likely, Siamese followed the real murder cases because they felt as same the detective in this novel.

Looks like *Klon Lam Tat*'s writers efforts to be a detective and delve into the murder cases too. A plot about murder in Lam Tat would usually be about brutal death and bloodshed; and a murderer seemed to be a psychopath like women who killed their husbands, children who killed their parents,

¹⁴ So Plainoi.(1996). Khon Dang Nai Adeet [Famous person in the olden days]. Bangkok: Ton or Grammy, p.151-157.

¹⁵ Charlie's works, including *Pu Rai Samai Khun Pu* [Bandit in the olden days], *Pu rai Bangkok* [Bandit in Bangkok], *Pu rai Muang Luang* [Bandit in the metropolis].

¹⁶ Sayamras. Friday, August 26, 1921, p.4.

mothers who killed their children etc. A story represented Lam Tat was a story in a newspaper. A writer used it as a material, presented it in a form of *Klon Lam Tat*, and then sent it to a publisher. Most writers used pen names; for example, *Plai Narin*¹⁷ and *Haji Kiad*. Surely, this article aims to describe only *Haji Kiad's works*.

Siam' crimes in Haji Kiad 's Klon Lam Tat

Haji Kiad was a witty writer who had plentiful works, but his works were the rare item nowadays. From the names that appear on the rear cover. I can compile in this table:

Authors	Years	Stories
Haji Kiad	1925, 1928	<i>E Thongluean Ti Hak Kor Nong Pua</i> [Thongluean Who Broke Brother-in-law's Neck]
Haji Kiad	1927, 1929	Ai Suea Yoi Jai Yak [The Cold-hearted bandit named Yoi]
Haji Kiad	1929	Ying Jai Yak [The Cold-hearted woman]
Haji Kiad	1929	Nang Kimlai Aua Hok Tok Na Pua [Mrs. Kimlai Speared through Her Husband's Face]
Haji Kiad	1930	Ai Boonpeng Ti Ka Nang Prig Tai [Mr. Boonpeng who Killed Mrs. Prig]
Haji Kiad	1930	Phraya Nonthisen Ti Kong Ngern Huay Lottery [Phraya Nonthisen swindled lottery money]

From the above data, it seem that *Haji Kiad* tended to write about female murderers in his works. These pointed out that *Haji Kiad* wanted to tell stories of female murderers. The reason might be that he could severely criticize her, according with Siam society in his era which was patriarchal. For women who committed crime or became murderers, they were labeled by the society as evil women. People were enthusiastic about this phenomenon which created controversy. It was possible that *Haji Kiad* chose to wrote *Klon Lam Tat* that criticized a murder case that the defendant was a woman was because to satisfy Thai readers' tastes. So the books would be sold well.

Moreover the examples of *Klon Lam Tat of Haji Kead* were widely well-known. Surely, there are many works were mentioned name in the secondary sources but I can found only 3 primary sources now.

First book is *E Thongluean Ti Hak Kor Nong Pua* [Thongluean Who Broke Brother-in-law's Neck] was presumed that it was so highly successful that it had its 9th edition with 5,000 copies in 1925. And it still reprinted and sold well until it published the 10th edition with 3,000 copies in 1928.

¹⁷ *Plai Narin* was a contemporary writers with *Haji Kiad*. His famous works such as *Ai Karn Pu Wises* [Karn the Socerer], the story of the outlaw leader of Nong Don, Saraburi.



Fig. 2

The cover image (fig. 2), *E Thongluean Ti Hak Kor Nong Pua* [Thongluean Who Broke Brother-in-law's Neck]. It showed Mrs. Thongluean sat on a chair and her legs were chained.

Nang Thongluean was a daughter of a Mon woman, living in Phra Pradaeng. Her father was Chinese. Thongluean was pretty. She married with Nai Tangguay. The couple lived together around Paklad market with Tangguay's sister Noo Lek. Thongluean was greedy for her husband's wealth, so she planned to kill Noo Lek, who was still young.

One day, Tangguay went out to buy an offering in the morning, then Thongluean told her maid to bring her child to her mother's house. Approaching noon, Thongluean brought Noo Lek to the toilet, broke the child's neck, and then put the body into the water jar; so she could say that Noo Lek had fallen into the jar by chance.

Thong Dee, Noo Lek's friend, waited her for so long, so she asked Thongluean for her. Thongluean said she did not know. In the evening, the maid found Noo Lek's body in the jar, and she screamed. Neighbors arrived and brought the body from the jar. The police who were at the scene were Sub Lieutenant Tee and Phra Narong Ritthi. Both of them noticed the green bruise on the corpse's neck, so they sent it to a hospital to carry out an autopsy. When the police investigated Thongluean, they were suspicious of her; so she was sent to jail.

When the case came to trial, the court found her guilty. While she was serving the sentence, E Thongluean was pregnant with another child of Nai Tangguay. Her abdomen kept expanding, so the court allowed her to give birth to the baby at home. When it finished, she would come back to jail. In the end, the court sentenced her to death. On the day, the executioner who had never executed a woman could not behead her in a single blow. So Thongluean did not die instantly. She was tortured to death by the second blow. Neighbors spread rumors that this happened because she broke a child's neck.

Another work by *Haji Kiad* was "*Nang Kimlai Aua Hok Tok Na Pua*" (Mrs. Kimlai Speared through Her Husband's Face). I saw the fourth edition book in the old man private library, printed with 3000 copies, August 1929.

The interesting part was that Mrs. Kimlai's picture appeared on the cover. It showed a good-looking woman, dressed in a loose short-sleeve shirt draped by sabai (a Thai breast cloth), a flowery chong kraben (a lower-body, wrap-around cloth), and shoes. The picture was assumed to be taken in a studio before she became a murderer.



Fig. 3

Turning the page of the book, fierce criticism of Mrs. Kimlai from Haiji Kead could be found. The case began with the story of Nai Ngern (Mr. Ngern) whose house was at Bang Chak, Thon Buri. The handsome man worked in the Ministry of Finance. He had no wife, but he was in a relationship with a female betel leaf seller named Mae Pun. Nai Ngern usually dressed well to flirt Mae Pun; they married later. The couple had 5 children: 2 sons, 3 daughters. The eldest daughter was named Mae Pard.

Later, Mae Pun became seriously ill. The doctor could not cure her, and then she died. Nai Ngern arranged for his wife's funeral at *Wat Ling Khob* (Bowon Mongkol Temple).

After being a widower for many years, Nai Ngern had another wife named Mae Kimlai. Before she married him, she used to live in Saraburi until she became an adult; then she stayed with her cousin at Bang Khun Phrom, Phra Nakhon district.

Nai Ngern walked to the workplace and passed Mae Kimlai's house. He saw her and fell in love. As a result, he hired Nang Soon to be a matchmaker by giving her 1 chang (80 baht). Nang Soon succeeded overnight. Nang Kimlai agreed on her dowry to be 2 chang (160 baht).

By the way, his eldest daughter Mae Pad became a beautiful young woman. She had a lover named Luang Nonthasak (Puan), a short, stout, and fat man who was a member of the Suea Pa (Wild Tiger Corps - a national paramilitary corps). Later on, they married.

Luang Nonth went along with his parent-in-law, but he took care of his young mother-in-law too intimately behind her husband's back. As a consequence, they committed adultery. Haji Kead described this as Mae Kimlai was possessed; the one who possessed her was Luang Nonth.

One day while Mae Kimlai was sleeping next to her husband, Luang Nonth climbed through the window into the room and ordered her to kill Nai Ngern with a spear. By pushing into his forehead, the spear remained like that. Then Mae Kimlai copulated with her son-in-law in front of the corpse of Nai Ngern. In the next morning, the police arrived. Kimlai gave testimony she had slept on the bed next to Nai Ngern. And she just realized that her husband died on this morning. The police were suspicious of that.

At last, Luang Nonth and Mae Kimlai were under arrested. When the case came to trial in criminal court, Kimlai accused Luang Nonth of telling her to kill and bringing her the spear. In the end, the court found her guilty of mariticide and sentenced her to death. But because of confession, the sentence was reduced to twenty years' imprisonment. Unbelievably, Luang Nonth, somehow, was found not guilty.

Not only *Haji Kiad* often told the stories of a murder case that the defendant was a woman, but also the stories of events that happened outside Bangkok. The reason was that what happened outside Bangkok was exotic for readers in Bangkok. Even though Haji Kiad was a Muslim who lived in Bangkok, he tried to find stories that happened outside the capital especially the stories of Ai Suea(s), the outlaws. So he gratified a Bangkokian's curiosity.

The well-known "Ai Suea" story of Haji kiad which happened outside Bangkok is Ai Suea Yoi Jai Yak [The Cold-hearted bandit named Yoi], printed in April, 1927 with 5,000 copies. The cover image (fig. 4) was a painting of Ai Suea Yoi, mustache face, a flowery chong kraben (a lower-body, wrap-around cloth), and stand with sword in his hand.



fig.4

The book describes about a criminal called *Ai Suea Yoi*, he plundered around Samutprakarn and Samutsakorn provinces. *Ai Suea Yoi* with his gang robbed at Ban Sakla in Samutprakarn. Nai Ploi saw Ai Suea Yoi then reported to the local government officers, but they ignored. When Ai Suea Yoi knew about it he extremely feuded and determined to kill Nai Ploi. One day, while Nai Ploi worked near Nang Pad's house, Ai Suea Yoi shooted NaiPloi with gun but the bullets ricocheted. Nai Ploi lunged to fight with Ai Suea Yoi and can snatch the gun.

NaiPloi returned reported to the local government officers again and gave Ai Suea Yoi's gun on the incident as exhibit, but they remain ignored. Finally, Nai Ploi complainted to the center of government officers in Bangkok, and they commanded the local polices to suppressed Ai Suea Yoi. Nai Nor, Nai Ploi's brother cooperated with the polices to against outlaws gang, but Ai Suea Yoi killed him by gunfight

Haji Kiad not only depicted the criminal cases, but also efforted to refect the Siam government ineffectually with sarcastic tone as like in this book.

CONCLUSION

Samson Lim proposes that the report about crimes and violations will make rumors become to a reliable data and use in the justice.¹⁸ Surely, *Klon Lam Tat* of *Haji Kiad can prove Lim's argument*. However, for Siam society, it seemed that after the popularity of news that had been used in *Klon Lam Tat* faded, paperbacks might get rid of, for they became unnecessary. At the same time when readers of a new generation got a modern education, the popularity of a poem books gradually interested. So these primary sources would become rare items nowadays because there were few left.

I hope, ascertaining of this article open the study areas for *Klon Lam Tat* continually. At least, I alarm *Haji Kiad* from drowsy slumber in the dusty book. Hear! Can you hear?

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