

This first part of this document presents my notes about the two Angkuoch instruments intended as Acquisitions for the British Museum collection. These notes were provided to Asia Curator Alexandra Green in March 2020 to inform the acquisition proposal.

The second part of this document presents excerpts from the project Field Notes that relate to the acquisition of these two Angkuoch instruments for the project.

- Catherine Grant (project leader), April 2020

Acquisition Proposal [Notes] – British Museum

Department	Curator	Keeper
Asia	Alexandra Green	Jane Portal
Short title of proposed acquisition Two Cambodian Angkuoch		
Description (including maker (if known); date and place of origin, etc.; material(s); technical metadata if digital, e.g. file name, size, creation date, etc.; descriptions of find circumstances; bibliography) Two small traditional musical instruments from Cambodia, called “Angkuoch”, one made of iron and the other of bamboo. The Angkuoch is a type of Jew’s harp, a class of musical instruments found in several countries. Instrument 1 Angkuoch Russey (Bamboo Angkuoch) Maker: CHI Monivong (Male, DOB 1990/09/09, resident of Srah Srong Kang Choeung Village, Nokor Thom Commune, Siem Reap Town, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia) Date and place of origin: January 2020, Srah Srong Kang Choeung Village, Siem Reap Materials: Bamboo, glue Instrument 2 Angkuoch Daek (Iron Angkuoch) Maker: BIN Song (Male, DOB 1942, resident of Preah Kor Thmey Village, Svay Chek Commune, Angkor Thom District, Siem Reap Province, Cambodia) Date and place of origin: Late 2019, Preah Kor Thmey Village, Siem Reap Province Materials: Iron The assets were acquired in connection with the British Museum’s Endangered Material Knowledge Program 2019 – Small Grant 02 – Cambodian Angkuoch. See associated fieldnotes for details.		

Dimensions (or number of objects with typical dimensions)

Instrument 1

Length: 23.5cm

Width: 1.0cm

Height: 0.8cm

Weight: 1.00g (estimated)

Instrument 2

Length: 12.0cm

Width: 2.3cm

Height: 5.0cm

Weight: 3.00g (estimated)

See also British Museum acquisition Asset 13800796001 "Jew's harp made of cane" (comparable dimensions to Instrument 1).

Indicate type of acquisition: Purchase / Donation / Bequest / CGS / AIL / Other

Purchase (see field note excerpts for details)

Reasons for acquisition:

Collection (Please explain how the acquisition would add to or improve the existing collection and whether there are any other examples of this type of object in the collection)

There is only one Angkuoch in the British Museum: Asset 13800796001 "Jew's harp made of cane". According to the catalogue, this was donated to the Museum by W Hanson Rawles in 1966; date of production late 19th to early 20th century. Minimal further information exists in the catalogue about this instrument.

This proposed acquisition includes a contemporary (2020) bamboo instrument made by CHI Monivong, the grandson of Angkuoch-maker KRAK Chi. KRAK Chi learnt his craft from MONG Keuy (d. 2012), who it appears may have made the 1966 instrument in the collection. (Further evidence on this claim will be provided to BM in coming weeks / months as part of the associated EMKP project.)

No Angkuoch Daek (iron Angkuoch) has been identified as a museum asset in any institution in Cambodia or abroad. Instrument 2 would therefore represent an especially internationally important addition to the collection, also for the reason that Angkuoch Daek is a highly endangered form of the instrument (more so than the bamboo Angkuoch Russey). This asset also complements the two bamboo assets to provide a richer understanding of Jew's Harp in Cambodia.

Knowledge about the proposed acquisition assets will be greatly enriched through the rich documentation and metadata generated via the associated Endangered Material Knowledge Program (SG02 EMKP) of the British Museum. The project is due for completion in September 2020.

Public outcomes (any exhibitions, publications and website potential; give information on the relevance of the proposed acquisition to specific BM audiences)

None planned specific to these two instruments, but a suite of public activities on Cambodian Angkuoch is planned as part of the associated SG02 EMKP project. These include a video documentary and a documentary launch event with photographic exhibition in Siem Reap, Cambodia (with support of UNESCO Cambodia, and with the involvement of project participants and community members).

Academic outcomes (any future scholarly work that might be developed)

As above – a suite of academic outcomes (conference presentations, journal articles, creative outputs) in association with the SG02 EMKP project on Angkuoch.

Funding:

Price (if purchase) **or Value** (if donation)

Instrument 1: purchased for \$5 USD

Instrument 2: purchased for \$20 USD

See fieldnotes. Purchase of instruments has been added as a budget line to EMKP SG02.

Additional costs (Please indicate any packing or transportation costs and how these will be met. Note that the Acquisitions Committee cannot cover such costs)

Secure postage of the instruments from Australia to the British Museum could be covered by the funding allocated to SG02 of EMKP, if this acquisition request is processed in time for postage to occur before project budget acquittal (September 2020).

FIELDWORK NOTES – Angkuoch Project – SG02

The remainder of this document presents those excerpts from the project Fieldwork Notes that provide information about the two instruments intended as Acquisitions for the British Museum collection.

This project presents the combined fieldwork notes of Catherine GRANT (project leader) and SAY Tola (research assistant). We drafted these notes individually at the end of each day of fieldwork between 1 and 12 January. In the week of 13 January, we compiled them into this document, and checked over each other's notes, discussing discrepancies and reconciling and/or noting any differences in this document. We have deliberately retained any duplication of information, and any remaining discrepancies, in our notes.

Note: In these fieldnotes, the surnames of Khmer people are written first, following convention. "Ta" is a generic form of respectful address to an elderly man in Khmer; "Yeuy" is its equivalent for women. "Bong" is the respectful address to a man or woman around the same age as the interlocutor.

...

6 JANUARY 2020

1. CATHERINE GRANT

...

- v. The project team asked whether Monivong would like the British Museum to add one of his Angkuoch to its collection. He said yes, and selected an instrument from a small bundle of those that he had recently made, testing the sound of several of them and seeking opinion of his brother Chen. The instrument they eventually chose Monivong had made using the 'smoking' technique to dry the bamboo, a technique that he had showed us earlier that morning (see associated video asset for 2020-06-01). Singe marks from the fire are visible on the flat broader end of the instrument. Three sets of three small lines on the rounded side of the instrument are characteristic markings. I offered to buy the instrument off him; he said they'd sell for maybe \$1 (USD) or \$2 at the markets. I gave him \$5, with added thanks for his time today, and confirmation that project collaborator Seng Song would return with a further honorarium for his participation.

...

10 JANUARY 2020

1. CATHERINE GRANT

...

- iii. I explained to BIN Song the purpose of the British Museum, and showed him the photo of the Angkuoch Russey in the collection. I asked him whether he would like also one of his Angkuoch daek to be in the collection, and he gave an emphatic 'yes' (three times). I told him I would buy the instrument from him, but neither he nor Research Assistant Tola was sure about a price: in the 1950s, he used to sell Angkuoch Daek for 25 Riel (under 1 cent USD by current conversion), and he hasn't sold an Angkuoch Daek since about 1970. Tola thought maybe \$15USD was reasonable; I gave him \$20, with additional thanks for his generosity for his time and skills (and confirmation that project collaborator SONG Seng would soon return with his honorarium for the project).

...



15 JANUARY 2020

1. CATHERINE GRANT

- i. I departed Cambodia for Australia today, transporting in my suitcase the two Angkuoch Russey (one purchased from CHI Monivong for the British Museum, and one given to me as a gift by KEUY Ratha) wrapped in a kroma (Cambodian scarf), and the Angkuoch Daek (purchased from BIN Song for the British Museum) in a hard glasses case. The two Angkuoch Russey (made of bamboo) were inspected by customs on my arrival in Australia, unproblematically. (The customs official was curious about their function.)