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Ralph Haupers
SIL-UND

Lorraine Haupers
SIL-UND

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A Note on Vietnamese kh and ph

Ralph and Lorraine Haupers
 Summer Institute of Linguistics
 University of North Dakota

kh -- voiceless velar fricative -- and ph -- voiceless labio-dental fricative -- contrast in most environments: khu section, phu coolie, khép to shut, phép to permit; khán to reclaim, phán to betray.

In some environments no contrasts are found. For instance kh occurs before -oo, ph does not. kh occurs before -om, ph before -ong; neither before -on.

kh also occurs before [w]. In standard Vietnamese ph does not. It is noteworthy that in some dialects of Vietnamese (Southern?) ph replaces kh before [w]. khoan wart > phoan; khoa lock > phoa; khoai potatoes > phoai.