

# THE VERB IN SPOKEN MON

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I shall discuss some basic structures of the verb complex in spoken Mon, involving compounds, auxiliaries and minor verbs of direction, both morphologically simple and complex, and aspect.<sup>1</sup> Quantifying verbs such as /lòn/ 'to exceed', /ʔot/ 'to be finished, exhausted', or other minor verbs such as /plon/ 'to do again, in return' are more appropriately analyzed at a higher syntactic level (clause, sentence) and will be excluded from treatment here.<sup>2</sup> I shall also exclude verbs of existence, possession and negation which show different patterns in word-order and distribution.<sup>3</sup> This article is divided into the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Three-term constructs
3. Two-term constructs
  - i) directional verbs
  - ii) aspectual verbs
    - a) ingressive
    - b) perfective
    - c) progressive
  - iii) modifying verbs

## 1. *Introduction*

The study of the verb complex in Mon does not appear, at first, to be promising for a statement on the major differences between this particular subgroup (Mon, Nyah Kur) and other Mon-Khmer languages or non-cognate contiguous languages (Thai, for instance) unlike other areas of Mon grammar such as the highly complex nominal piece with its plural-marking clitics and various means of determination, lacking 'classifiers' (except for Buddhist terms, humans and plants), the modal system and (assertive, hypothetical), negation and shifts in the affix-system.

Yet, we can, even at this rather basic syntactic level, observe some significant differences.<sup>4</sup>

While, for instance, both in Khmer and Mon the verbs to *take (away)* and to *bring* consist of two terms, a major and a minor, modifying, verb, the latter shows different distributional properties in each language.

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modern Khmer	yòok t̀ỳu	to take (away)
	yòok mòok	to bring
spoken Mon	ket na	to take away
	ket ǹêaŋ	to bring

Khmer t̀ỳu and mòok are directional verbs, to go and to come respectively. They may occur as major verbs in simple statements like t̀ỳu psaa to go to the market or followed by another minor verb mòok d̀ɔl pt̀êəh k̀nom [he] arrived at my house.

Both may also mark aspect. na and ǹêaŋ may occasionally occur in spoken Mon (SM) by themselves while the two directional verbs ʔa and klɔŋ to go and to come may function as aspect-marking verbs. The former pair has a complex history: na is a phonologically aberrant form (unnatural register, spelt om instead of the expected \*\*/ǹêa/), attested, for the first time, in the Ananda-Plaques (c. 1105 AD), Old Mon (OM) kil na /køl na/ (SM /kɔ na/) to give (away).

SM ǹêaŋ and r̀êaŋ are reflexes of OM \*naŋ (as attested in Nyah Kur) and OM raŋ 'to bring' occurring as a major verb,<sup>5</sup> either by itself, or in head-position, followed by directional verbs, rather like the Khmer pattern.

OM	raŋ ʔar	---/to go
	raŋ tluŋ	---/to come

forming derivatives

OM	sraŋ	<s->	[hypothetical]
	praŋ	<p->	[causative] to send
	pahraŋ	<-n->	[noun] present, gift

or contracted forms

OM	rənʔar	to carry off	ʔar	to go
	rəntit	to take away	tit	to go, come, out
	rənlop*	to take into	lop	to enter

Variation in word-order, however, does occur, with Middle Mon (MM) conforming to the reverse pattern.

MM	ket raŋ	to bring
	phyaw raŋ	to bring, take, home.

Similarly, some verb complexes in Khmer and SM, while using identical terms, differ from Old Mon in word-order, as in

modern Khmer	t̀ỳu c̀iə	to become	(to go/to be)
SM	t̀òh ʔa	to become	(to be/to go)
	t̀òh klɔŋ	to come to be	(to be/to come)

Again, OM shows a pattern different from the modern language (SM) (SM), ʔar d̀ɔs, tluŋ d̀ɔs (to go/to be), (to come/to be).

A phonological classification of the verb in SM is possible only within certain limits: Shapes like /əC-/ and /ʔiʔC-/ tri- and tetrasyllables (loans) except /həcarəna/ to *think, reflect*, P. *vīcāraṇā*, are exclusively confined to nouns; no noun/verb classification can be established on phonological grounds alone, the majority of simple forms in the SM lexicon showing shapes like.

CV(C)	CəCV(C)
CCV(C)	CəCCV(C)
CCCV(C)	

The historical evolution of complex (derived) forms resulted in a *syncretism* of various affixes, inflectional or derivational. Thus OM gluŋ (SM klàŋ) to be *much, numerous* takes the Old Mon infix <-m-> to derive an attributive, gəmluŋ, and the infix <-r-> to derive a noun-quantifier, OM gərluŋ. Subsequent phonological shifts in the consonant\* system yielded a merger of these two distinctive OM forms, plus an additional form that can be reconstructed from SM həlaŋ to *increase, exceed*, OM \*gərluŋ, MM \*gəløŋ (\*causative)

OM	gəmluŋ		
	gərluŋ	SM	həlaŋ
	*gəmluŋ		
OM	gluŋ	SM	klàŋ
OM	<-m->	SM	<-ə->
	<-r->		
	<-ə->		

following the rules of mediocluster-reduction

OM	-ml-	SM	-l-
OM	-rl-	SM	-l-
OM	-l-	SM	-l-

Relevant in this context is the fact that formerly grammatically distinctive classes also merged, and SM həlaŋ reflects the causative verb (*to increase, exceed*), the noun-quantifier and a noun-clitic (OM attributive). The majority of nouns and verbs cannot be distinguished phonologically, and the SM lexicon abounds in homophonous forms.

Before entering into a detailed discussion some phonological features of the verb complex should be mentioned: Chiming and alliterative forms are quite frequent, especially in narratives and public speeches, as in

krìp hərìp	<i>to flee, run away</i>
kòp kò	[to] <i>ought</i> [to]
khyɔp kəsɔp	<i>to think, reflect</i>
kəpat krat krao	<i>to wash [clothes]</i>

ɗə ɗək həcə həcah həkao mò<sup>?</sup>sa<sup>?</sup> həkao<sup>?</sup>  
to oppress our nation

(ɗə ɗək to oppress həcə həcah to run against, counter).

A certain number of chiming constituents can, in fact, be analyzed as a sequence of simple and derived form (or base and derivative), as in the quoted examples

kri <sup>̀</sup> p	to run away	həri <sup>̀</sup> p	running (attr.)
khyɔp	to think	kəsɔp	thought, intention

A distinction between stative (the term *attributive*, as used by Mrs Jacob for Khmer, is to be avoided in this context since OM/MM/LM possess a separate infix to form attributives) and operative verbs is not necessary. Only stative verbs may be reduplicated to form the translation-equivalent of adverbials,

sa	to be light [weight], gentle
ʔa phèa ʔa sa-sa	[when] in a monastery, walk gently
prɔh	to be fast, quick
kwaik prɔh-prɔh	to walk fast

Reduplication of operative verbs, and other word-classes, does occur, the former in modern literary Mon (LM)

nèh kòh khyu-khyu nòŋ kè<sup>?</sup> tɛm lòa, pòh lòa, klɔh lòa, ...  
those who are writing so that it may be easily learnt,  
easily read, easily understood, ...

(khyu to write)

həkao mòa-mòa	each people, nation
əca mòn tɛŋ <sup>è</sup> -tɛŋ <sup>è</sup>	various Mon teachers

(mòa one numerals in Mon are verbs)

(tɛŋ<sup>è</sup> individual)

Only operative verbs occur in chiming pairs like kri<sup>̀</sup>p həri<sup>̀</sup>p to run away, flee. Two-term constructs may be reduplicated to form intensifying expressions, as in kwaik ʔa kwaik ʔa to walk and walk

In SM, unlike OM, only causative verbs are marked morphologically, as in the following:

Non-causative form	Causative	Affix
hum ɗaik	phum ɗaik [kɔ]	<p->
sɛŋ hə <sup>?</sup> ui	phyɛŋ hə <sup>?</sup> ui	<p->
cɛ <sup>?</sup> pɛŋ	həcɛ <sup>?</sup> pɛŋ	<h->
klàŋ	həlàŋ	<-ə->
sai	hərai	<-ə->

to have a bath	to bathe [s.o.]
to take medicine	to administer medicine [to s.o.]
to eat [rice]	to feed [s.o.]
to be much, numerous	to increase
to be separate	to separate

The use of the causative does not affect word-order  
 The particle ko, however, does:

həcɛʔ kon nəik pɜŋ      to feed the children with rice  
 həcɛʔ pɜŋ ko kon nəik

Through affix-syncretism some attributive forms have merged with causatives

bɔh	həbɔh	[ɗaik həbɔh]
to be cool	-to cool	
	-attr.	[cold water]

The remaining derivations are nominalizations of various kinds

Affixes: <-m-> <-w-> <-n-> <-ə-> <-ə-> <?i?->

Categories: agentive, instrumental, quantifying, simulative, locative, deictic, onomastic

[this list is not exhaustive; readers are referred to Bauer 1982]

The verb complex in spoken Mon can be classified according to the number of terms.

## 2. Three-term constructs

Verbs in this category can be reduced to a sequence incorporating a minor verb or a noun.

kriɓ tɛa ʔa	to run after	V V V
hɔm əɾɛ hɔmɔn	to tell lies	V N V
hɔm əɾɛ mɔn	to speak Mon	V N N
kəɓɔ tɔh nɪh	to be born	V V N

Instances without a directional verb are

V V V

kòp kò tɛh	ought to [pre-verbal -V#]
kwòinɔ cɔŋ tao	to be seriously concerned
klài he klip	to search carefully

Other sequences include directional verbs, always in final position

kəleəŋ cao klɜŋ	to come back
paik hətom phyih	to fell
ʔɔh lài ʔa	to waste away

## 3. Two-term constructs

Analyzing two-term verb constructs in Mon might prove as hazardous as isolating affixes; the reasons for this are two-fold.

Firstly, variation of the kind

həḏah saɪ	~	sai həḏah	to be separated
hənɛ̃a krɔt	~	krɔt hənɛ̃a	to hinder
kwaik wòɪŋ	~	wòɪŋ kwaik	to go for a stroll

entails a change in stress-placement. In sequences such as these the stress is fixed the primary stress being placed on the second term

kwaik 'wòɪŋ	wòɪŋ 'kwaik
-hə'ḏah 'sai	sai -hə'ḏah

and secondary stress on the first, with unstressed minor syllables. In isolation or in different syntactic environments disyllables of the shape CəCV(C), əC(C)V(C) and ?i?C(C)V(C) show primary stress on the first syllable. Additional rules apply to tri- and tetrasyllabic Indo-Aryan loans.<sup>6</sup>

The set given below, kwaik ?a and ?a kwaik, shows exceptions to the stress change rule. In the first sequence, ?a functions as an aspectual verb<sup>7</sup>, receiving secondary stress, as in the latter, although occurring here as a major verb,

'kwaik ɪ?a	[off he] went
ɪ?a 'kwaik	[to] walk

as opposed to

ɪḏak 'kwi	[to] go by car, cart (to mount/cart)
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A second difficulty arises when negating two-term constructs,

		* Negative
yàk ket		hù? yàk ket
cɔp klɜŋ		hù? cɔp klɜŋ
toik hloɪŋ		hù? toik hloɪŋ
		toik hù? hloɪŋ
klài chɜ		hù? klài chɜ
		klài hù? chɜ
V <sub>1</sub>	V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>1</sub> V <sub>2</sub>
to carry	to take	to carry [in arms]
to reach	to come	to arrive
to lie down	to sleep	to sleep
to look for	to find	to find

Two-term constructs may not be split by the negative verb particle hù? if the minor verb is a directional verb, ?a ~ k13ŋ, na ~ nɛaŋ, cih ~ ton, or a modifying verb.

However, if the minor verb is a resultative verb, the negative particle may either precede the entire construct or the resultative verb,

toik hloiŋ                      hù? toik hloiŋ                      toik hù? hloiŋ

The former conveys the idea of not even having made an attempt while the latter expresses a failed attempt or an inability of some sort, [I] *did not* [go to] *sleep*, [I] *could not*, *was unable to*, *sleep*. In some cases, I did not note the negation of the entire construct,

ròŋ nàt                      ròŋ hù? nàt                      cannot see

Should minor verbs of result and ability be treated rather as auxiliaries,

ərə həmɛa kòh ?oa hóm hù? lèp  
ərə həmɛa kòh ?oa hóm lèp kòm  
deh lèp ərə həmɛa

*I cannot speak Burmese*  
*I can speak Burmese as well*  
*he can speak Burmese*

- if lèp to know how to, have learned to is considered as an auxiliary, as kə?, màn &c. - or be classified in the same group as verbs of direction and modifying verbs in second position?

Finally, how are two-term constructs to be isolated from extended syntactic environments, such as the following:

krìp tèa lùp krəp ?a      fled into the forest [narrative]  
pa? ka həcət ?a      [he] died  
?a ròŋ chə tèh      to come across

?a to go &c., in final position of a complex indicated either aspect or direction ([away from speaker]); in the two cases quoted it refers, however, to the entire complex,

krìp tèa lùp krəp  
pa? ka həcət

in its aspectual function, and not, as might be suggested in the first case, to lùp alone, as in lùp ?a which Shorto glosses as to go indoors (DSM.184) while listing as example

deh lùp ?a əhmo nòm sòa kòh  
he went in under the pipal tree [narrative]

The third case shows ambiguity in the analysis: tèh may follow the main verb, meaning *it happened that*, *inadvertently*; to be

able to and refer to either ch<sub>3</sub> or the entire complex ?a ròŋ ch<sub>3</sub>. But it may also be the second term of a two-term construct, such as

ch <sub>3</sub> t <sup>h</sup> èh	to encounter, meet
həp <sup>è</sup> ? t <sup>h</sup> èh	to encounter
cəm t <sup>h</sup> èh	to crash into
t <sup>h</sup> èh	to hit [target]

?a in head-position of a complex, as any other verb, controls the sequence and cannot be a directional verb in the restricted sense or function as an aspectual verb ([ingressive]).

In other cases, paradigmatic commutations are easily established:

?a həðə	to go inside
?a pəŋ <sup>h</sup>	to go outside
kwaik ?a	[off he] went
kətem ?a	to crawl
t <sup>h</sup> èh ?a	to become
t <sup>h</sup> èh kl <sup>3</sup> ŋ	to come to be
?a kl <sup>3</sup> ŋ	to come and go
y <sup>h</sup> òn lùp	to creep in
y <sup>h</sup> əm lùp	to breathe in

Several directional verbs may be used in some cases

y <sup>h</sup> əm tət	~	y <sup>h</sup> əm tən	to breathe out
y <sup>h</sup> əm lùp	~	y <sup>h</sup> əm cih	to breathe in

These preliminary observations lead us to establish two types of two-term constructs:

- simple autonomous verbs showing ambiguity due to morphological syncretism to mark causative / non-causative or attributive / non-attributive forms, such as

həton	to teach, to learn
kət həton	to learn, study
həl <sup>3</sup> ? həton	to teach, instruct

- modifying verbs in second position, consisting of
  - directional verbs
  - aspectual verbs
  - resultative verbs

### i.) Directional verbs

All directional verbs may also occur in initial position of a two-term construct or as simple autonomous verbs, or as part of complex autonomous verbs.



Three directional verbs also yield derivatives which are members of this set,

pətn	~	tn	to raise / to rise
pətət	~	tət	to take out / to emerge
phyih	~	cih	to lower / to descend

Affix: <p-> [causative]

Apart from these, we recognize a total of eight directional verbs:

V	autonomous V		second position V <sub>2</sub>
cih	to go down, descend		[downward]
tn	to rise, go up		[upward]
lùp	to enter, go in to		[inward]
tət	to go, come, out		[outward]
na	to take away		[away from speaker]
nèaŋ	to bring		[towards speaker]
ʔa	to go		[away from speaker]
klɜŋ	to come		[towards speaker]
V <sub>1</sub>		V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>2</sub>
		-na	-nèaŋ
kd	to give	to send [away]	to send
ket	to take	to take away	to bring
kok	to call	to take with one	to collect s.o.
		ʔa	klɜŋ
tòh	to be	to become	to come to be
chui	to move aside	[id.]	to move over
		cih	tn
həlaik	to jump	to jump down	to jump up
yəm	to breathe	to breathe in	to breathe out
		phyih	pətn
pət	to throw	to throw down	to throw up

A derivational pair occurs in

hərùi cih ~ hərəi phyih to fall in drops / to scatter in  
drop

hətom cih ~ hətəm phyih to fall down / to knock down

Examples of simple and derived directional verbs are given in Figure 1 and Figure 2 respectively.

[Verb- and noun-particles will not be discussed here though in some ways the resemble directional verbs. In some cases severe syntactic restrictions apply,

 $V_1 V_2$ 

N-particle

həlaik cih nù

to jump from

tət plèh nù

to be freed from

həlaik tən ətao

to jump onto

or

ʔa phèa kəmàn

[I am] going to Potter's Monastery

kləŋ nù-lə rao

where are you coming from? [hello!

əmù mòn ələ rao

where do you live?].

\*

I. Simple directional verbs

Directional verb	Verbal piece	Meaning of autonomous headverb	
cih / ton	həp̄h cih	'to demolish'	
	tòm cih	'to fall down'	
	hətək cih	'to fall head-long'	
	kwàn ton	'to climb up'	
	cèak ton	'to advance'	
	lòn ton	'to pass, overtake'	
	yèa ton	'to lift up'	
	yòn lùp	'to creep in'	
	klàk lùp	'to duck into'	
	kəyo lùp	'to enter a room stooping'	
	tèa tet	'to run away'	
	hwò tet	'to flow out'	
	hətəh tet	'to burst out'	
hələt tet	'to come out'		
na / nèaŋ	kleʔ na	'to borrow for s.o.'	
	cèak na	'to cart away'	
	tah na	'to sweep away'	
	phyao nèaŋ	'to bring back'	
ʔa / klɔŋ	ket nèaŋ	'to bring (back)'	
	kok nèaŋ	'to fetch s.o.'	
	pèak ʔa	'to follow along'	
	tət ʔa	'to cross'	
	plèh ʔa	'to stray'	
	lòn klɔŋ	'to elapse'	
	kəleəŋ klɔŋ	'to come back'	
	cəp klɔŋ	'to arrive'	
			'to decay'
			'to fall'
		'to tumble'	
		'to climb'	
		'to pull, draw; travel'	
		'to elapse, exceed'	
		'to lift'	
		'to stalk'	
		'to duck'	
		'to stretch, bend forward, slope'	
		'to run away, stray'	
		'to flow'	
		'to burst'	
		'to slip, come off'	
		'to leave'	
		'to pull, draw, travel'	
		'to level, sweep together'	
		'to bring, send, back'	
		'to get, obtain'	
		'to call'	
		'to follow, chase'	
		'to go across'	
		'to free'	
		'to elapse, exceed'	
		'to return'	
		'to reach, arrive'	

Figure 1: Simple directional verbs

## II. Derived directional verbs

Directional verb	Verbal piece	Meaning of autonomous headverb
pətet	həm pətet	'to speak, talk'
	hələk pətet	'to put on'
	klon pətet	'to make, do, work'
	pək pətet	'to follow, chase'
	kàŋ pətet (nù)	'to grasp, keep'
pəton	pət pəton	'to throw'
	yəa pəton	'to lift'
	həʔon phyih	'to reduce'
phyih	thoʔ phyih	'to throw'
	chai phyih	'to empty, unload'
	pàik phyih	'to fell, slash'
		'to reveal'
	'to take off'	
	'to manufacture'	
	'to expel'	
	'to take, bring, out'	
	'to throw upwards'	
	'to lift up'	
	'to reduce'	
	'to throw down'	
	'to unload'	
	'to fell'	

Figure 2: Derived directional verbs

## ii.) Aspectual verbs

One tense (past) and three aspects (ingressive, perfective, progressive) are overtly marked in SM. There are also two modalities, the hypothetical and the assertive, which may have, in some contexts, aspectual or tense values. The status of 'i'-(MM yə-) in Mon grammar is, as yet, unclear, and has therefore been excluded from treatment here. It marks the perfective aspect but commutes in the paradigm with təe in that position preceding ra', the assertive modality (in declarative sentences and commands in absolutely sentence-final position). Modality and tense-markers are sentence particles. Tense and aspect may be combined and can occur with auxiliaries, the aspectual verb always immediately the main verb and preceding the tense-particle.

deh kə' na kətao kətan ton təe tēh [narrative]  
 he became [increasingly] depressed by worries

where ton (ingressive) and təe (past tense) follow the main verb kətao kətan to be depressed.

Aspectual verbs may function as autonomous verbs as well. Instances like mòŋ mòŋ or thə' thə' are not to be considered mere reduplications but ought to be analyzed as the autonomous verb, mòŋ and thə' to be located, situated at and to throw respectively, followed by the verb in its aspectual function.

The word-order with respect to aspectual verbs and tense and modal particles is absolutely rigid, as shown in the following table. Aspect immediately follows the verb, tense comes at the end of a clause.

Complex	Exponent	Category	
təak lò cək	lò	aspect	perfective
pòh mòŋ lòik pərəŋ	mòŋ	aspect	progressive
cəp lè'phùn təe	təe	tense	past
'at əkhəŋ nəŋ	nəŋ	modality	hypothetical
pək lò kərəŋ təe	lò-təe	asp./tense	
hum mòŋ daik təe	mòŋ-təe	asp./tense	
cə' lò təe	lò-təe	asp./tense	

*fastened the rope*

*reading a letter*

*having reached, arrived at, Lamphun*

*should ask for permission*

*having opened the door*

*having [had] a bath*

*[and] put it down*

Neologisms show a difference in word-order in that a complex consisting of a verb and a noun, such as pa? hətəo *reside* (where pa? verbalizes nouns, as in pa? həmɔe *be ordained, become a monk*) may not be split by an aspectual verb, thus pa? hətəo mən *residing [at]*.

The ingressive and perfective aspect comprise a set of two terms each; historically, the occurrence of two terms for each of the two functions stems from a shift in the grammatical system of Mon:

OM	MM	SM	colloquial	narrative
?ar	?a	?a	✓	
tøn	tøn	ton		✓
lar	low	lò	✓	
∅	tho?	tho?		✓

SM ton and tho? occur predominantly in narratives while ?a and lò being retained for colloquial usage.

OM ?ar had three main functions,

- as autonomous verb *to go*
- as directional verb, as in tit ?ar *to go, come, out*
- as aspectual verb, as in sgut ?ar *to be cut short*

whereas tøn occurred only as an autonomous verb *to go, come, up; ascend*. The history of the second pair is identical: MM tho? (no instance is attested for OM; most OM th- initials are Burmese contact words and IA loans) occurred only as an autonomous verb *to throw away* whereas OM lar, MM low, SM lò functioned, from the earliest attested instances onwards, as an aspectual verb as well.

All aspectual verbs may also function as autonomous verbs; their meanings are set out below:

Exponent	Tense	Aspect	Autonomous verb
tɔe	past		<i>to be ready, finished</i>
?a		ingressive	<i>to go</i>
ton		ingressive	<i>to rise, ascend, go up</i>
lò		perfective	<i>to place, put</i>
tho?		perfective	<i>to throw, place</i>
mən		progressive	<i>to be situated, located, [at]</i>
∅		CONTEXT DEPENDENT	

a.) *Ingressive* ʔa, ton

As mentioned, in narratives ton occurs more frequently; it marks the beginning of an action,

tèh ton cət	to get fond of s.o.
təm nət ton	to get acquainted [with]
kərɛʔ ton	to start crying
lùp ton	to enter

The last example is, in this context, ambiguous since ton may function here as a directional verb; when occurring with a complex which includes a noun the ambiguity is removed, lùp ton hoeʔ and lùp hoeʔ ton to enter the house [directional] and [he] went up into the house [aspectual]. Only in instances such as these may the aspectual verb be separated from the main, or head-verb, to remove the ambiguity.

Examples with ingressive ʔa have been mentioned previously;

khyot ʔa	to die
tòh ʔa	to become
hut ʔa	to decay
lòn ʔa	to pass, passed

b.) *Perfective* lò, thoʔ

This aspect marks the conclusion of an act and does not occur with stative verbs. As yet, no precise distributional account can be offered as to whether certain classes of verbs occur only with one particular aspectual verb; as with the foregoing, however, the use of thoʔ is confined to narratives and public speeches. Both occur in modern literary Mon. *He threw away* translates both into thoʔ lò and thoʔ thoʔ although the former may also have adhortative connotations *throw it away*.

deh tèak lò kə həcòm	he tied an amulet [around his neck]
pətət na lò pəŋèh teʔ	having put it outside
saŋ lò phèa kòh	[they] built the monastery
na cəŋ thoʔ hwèʔ	took [the corpse] away for cremation
thoʔ daik thoʔ	splashed water
nèh həcət thoʔ deh	they killed him

c.) *Progressive* mòŋ

mòŋ may occur with stative and operative verbs; mìp mòŋ to be well, pəŋ pəlciŋ nùm mòŋ ha is there any sticky rice left?

mòŋ indicates an ongoing action or temporary state of affairs (progressive, durative).

ce? m̀oŋ hwa?	eating [a curry]
tòik hloiq m̀oŋ	sleeping, be asleep
pòh m̀oŋ lòik kòh	reading the book
deh' lèn m̀oŋ əca pra?cum	he gives Acharn Prachum a [foot-] massage

One of the verbs of existence, ǹum, may occur with the progressive aspect,

daik cha ǹum m̀oŋ ha	is there any tea [left]?
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### iii.) Modifying verbs

As yet, I cannot propose any categories for this third group of verbs, occurring in second position, which are not directional or aspectual verbs. Some of these may be classified as resultative verbs, as already mentioned briefly. This is supported by distributional evidence: A two-term construct which has a resultative verb as a second verb may be split by the negative verb-particle h̀u?,

r̀oŋ ǹat	r̀oŋ h̀u? ǹat	to see / cannot see
klài chə	klài h̀u? chə	to find / cannot find

These others may be classified as verbs affixally derived from the main verb. These simple and derived verbs may occur in any order; there are no phonological constraints (syllabicity, register).

Complex	Base V <sub>1</sub> / V <sub>2</sub>	Affix	
kok pəkom	kom	<p->	to call together
t̀əŋ kələŋ	kləŋ	<-ə->	to welcome
hə?ɔ? kle?	?ɔ?	<ɰ->	to vomit
kəto t̀oh	to	<k->	to come into being

Some two-term constructs show a large variety of modifying verbs in second position while others occur with only one modifying verb, like kənon həbòh to point out or kənom pətòh to build, institute.

In Figures 3, 4, and 5 three types of two-term constructs are shown, type 1 with a variable modifying verb in second position (V<sub>2</sub>) type 2 with a variable head-verb (V<sub>1</sub>), and type 3 transitive verbs followed by a noun-complement which are idiomatic expressions.

Type 2 is problematic and needs further investigation; are verbs like t̀əh to be classified as auxiliaries - since they are preceded by the negative verb particle h̀u?, and show variable positions with respect to the main verb? How are verbs like k̀oŋ to dare to, be bold to be classified,



kòŋ hɔm	to dare to speak
hɔm kòŋ kòŋ	to speak out boldly

Are verbs like kean to have had the occasion to be grouped together with auxiliaries even if they cannot change their position with respect to the main verb when they are negated?

ʔiʔkòh hùʔ kean nət	<i>I have never seen that one</i>
	<i>[object]</i>
əmù kean ʔa đɜŋ həmèa ha	<i>Have you ever been to Burma?</i>

While verb-complexes in SM agree with other MK languages in placing the controlling, or determinant, verb in head-position followed by the modifying verb, the internal order and distribution differ markedly. Thus in Khmer, the complex yòk tɿu may be split by a noun construct, the SM equivalent ket na must precede the noun and cannot be split; to quote another example:

ʔoa kɔ na lòik kɔ suʔet	<i>I have sent a letter to Su-et</i>
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Aspectual and directional verbs are always postverbal (or in second position with respect to the main verb), and are followed by auxiliaries. If auxiliaries, whether negated or not, precede the complex, the order of the constituents of the complex remains unaffected. Particles of modality (assertive, hypothetical) and tense (past) are to be analyzed at the sentence-level.

V <sub>1</sub>	V <sub>1</sub> V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>1</sub>	V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>1</sub> V <sub>2</sub>
hɔm	hɔm kwɔh	'to speak'	'to preach'	'to speak formally'
	hɔm pətət		'to take out'	'to reveal'
	hɔm pətəm		'to inform'	'to petition'
	hɔm kəh	*	'to say'	'to say'
	hɔm kəlɔh		'to explain'	'to explain'
	hɔm həbɔh		'to show'	'to explain'
kənoik	kənoik hətɔn	'keep secret'	'to hide'	'to conceal'
	kənoik kəmon		'to mislead'	'to wrap up tight'
	kənoik kətɔ		'to cover (up)'	'to conceal'
	kənoik kəlɔn		'to deceive'	'to avoid truth'
pɔk	pɔk həbɔh	'to open'	'to show'	'to expound'
	pɔk kɔ		'to give'	'to found, open'
	pɔk kle?		'to leave'	'to uncover'
kəlɔe?	kəlɔe? kle?	'to pass'	'to leave'	'to pass'
	kəlɔe? kà?		'to get'	'to acquire'
klòiq	klòiq hòɑ	'to be long'	'to be distant'	'to be distant'
	klòiq hwò		'to flow'	'to extend'

Figure 3: Two-term constructs of Type 1.

V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>1</sub> V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>1</sub>	V <sub>2</sub>	V <sub>1</sub> V <sub>2</sub>
həpət	kit həpət	'to bite'	'to cut, break off'	'to bite through'
	kut həpət	'to amputate'		'to cut off'
	ʃək həpət	'to chop, strike'		'to chop off'
həton	həlà? həton	'to teach'	'to learn, teach'	'to teach'
	kət həton	'to study'		'to learn'
	wət həton	'to instruct'		'to instruct'
cəp	ton cəp	'to rise'	'to reach, arrive'	'to come up'
	kləŋ cəp	'to come'		'to arrive'
khra	kəŋəh khra	'to be other'	'to be separated'	'to differ'
	khyai khra	'to be separated'		'to diverge'
	paŋ khra	'(Burm., DSM)'		'to distinguish'
	sai .khra	'to be separate'		'to be parted'
tèh	dàk tèh	'to ride, load'	'to hit &c.'	'to crush'
	kwò? tèh	'to touch, feel'		'to touch, feel'
	həpè? tèh	'to encounter, meet'		'to encounter'
	cəm tèh	'to collide, heave'		'to crash into'
	tì? tèh	'to collide'		'to collide with'
	pərat tèh	'to splash about'		'to splash'
	hətem tèh	'to remember'		'to remember'
	klɔ? tèh	'to cross, penetrate'		'to be transmitted'

Figure 4: Two-term constructs of Type 2.

V	V N	V	N	V N
?on	?on cɔt	'to be few'	'mind &c.'	'to be sorry'
hum	hum ɖaɪk	'to bath'	'liquid, water'	'to have a bath'
sɔŋ	sɔŋ ɖaɪk	'to drink'	'liquid, water'	'to drink'
cɛ?	cɛ? pɔŋ	'to eat'	'boiled rice'	'to have a meal'

Figure 5: Two-term constructs of Type 3.

## NOTES

\*This article was written in May 1983 when I was a post-doctoral research fellow in linguistics at Monash University, Melbourne. After corresponding with Theraphan Thongkham and Gérard Diffloth, both accepted it for publication to be included in the forthcoming third volume of the series "Monic Studies funded by the Toyota Foundation, entitled Mon and Nyah Kur Linguistic Studies. After the publication of volumes one and two of the same series in the middle of 1984, it was uncertain when the third volume was going to be published; so I decided, in agreement with Dr. Theraphan, to have it published in the Science of Language Papers, as part of volume seven, to be devoted to syntax and semantics. After the appearance of volume six, however, linguists at Chulalongkorn University decided to transform the Papers into a proper linguistics journal, to be edited by Dr. Sudaphorn Laksaniyanawin who agreed to publish this article in the first issue. Subsequent changes in editorial policy such as shift of emphasis on theoretical topics combined with a focus on Thai, as well as targeting a readership in Thailand, precluded the acceptance of this contribution of Mon. In agreement with both Dr. Theraphan and Dr. Sudaphorn I decided to offer it for publication in Mon-Khmer Studies. May I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to Monash University for offering me a postdoctoral fellowship in linguistics, from January 1983 to January 1985, and to colleagues at Monash and elsewhere in Australia for advice. I have changed nothing substantial in the original article although my views on, and knowledge of, Mon grammar have evolved over the past five years. I hope this will be reflected in my forthcoming A Grammar of Spoken Mon. David Thomas's editorial assistance and David Bradley's earlier comments (1983) are gratefully acknowledged. (1 January 1989.)

1. Fieldwork was conducted in Thailand between 1978 and 1980. I lived in Mon communities, with families and in monasteries, in Rajburi, Lopburi, Nonthaburi and Lamphun provinces, with occasional visits to Samut Sakhorn. The National Research Council of Thailand kindly gave permission to visit these areas. The research was funded by the British Council (1977-1981), the Central Research Fund of the University of London (1979), SOAS (1979) and from private sources. May I take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the above-mentioned institutions and organisations. I am also deeply indebted to the Mon people, for their hospitality and kindness, in particular Professor Su-ed Kochaseni, and various senior bhikkhus, as well as to my two

principal London teachers, Mrs. Jacob and Professor Shorto.

All quoted phonologizations of OM forms are Shorto's reconstruction, as published in DMI (1971). I have adopted his transcription of SM forms, except for his /c-/ and /ch-/ which in the various Thailand dialects correspond to /ky-/ and /khy-/.

The terms 'complex' and 'piece' (in the Firthian sense) are interchangeable; the three charts which use the term 'piece' are drawn directly from Bauer (1982:381, 382, 385). I prefer now the term complex, and do apologize for employing only partially defined concepts here. At present I am rethinking and redefining the entire syntax section of my Mon grammar.

2. As exemplified in the following:

... wàt kàt lòn nù kòh  
... wàt kàt nù kòh

[is] far more difficult than that  
[is] more difficult than that

?a cɔp əyək həcam cuh prɛŋ  
?a cɔp əyək həcam cuh

[he] is over 80 [years] old  
[he] is 80 [years] old, has reached the age of 80 [years]

mòa saik plɔn	and yet another matter
ŋoa plɔn kòh	a day later
nùm ba ətət plɔn	there are two weeks left
ket plɔn ha	would you like some more?

3. As in

nài tip kòh kon pɔn nùm	Nai Tip has four children
nài tip kon hù? mòa	Nai Tip has no children
tòh sùm hù? mòa kɔ kyì?	it's not a venomous snake

nùm and its negative counterpart hù? mòa occur in these contexts, exceptionally, in sentence-final position. If the noun-particle kɔ is used, however, the order is reversed. kɔ may function, in other contexts, as verb-particle as well.

4. To avoid two possible misunderstandings: (i) I do not advocate the comparison of individual terms but rather insist on comparing grammatical systems. Yet, for historical purposes the former procedure can be revealing. (ii) I do not regard Khmer and Mon as belonging to the same subgroup; the only reason for quoting them is that they are AA languages which I know from first-hand experience; and they are typologically sufficiently distinct. However, one should bear in mind that Khmer and Mon were, before the Thai intrusion, contact languages.

5. This may be due to possible confusion of OM raŋ and OM reŋ to SM rəaŋ (to arrange / to bring). Irregular phonological shifts are also common in Mon, as exemplified in the following table:

SM	OM	
raʔ	daʔ	~ <sup>n</sup> daʔ EMM modal particle
noŋ	roŋ	modal particle
ha	-a	question(-sentence-)particle
hùʔ	sak, hə-	negative verb-particle

A fair number of studies have been devoted to language diffusion and typological similarities of the languages of South-east Asia in an attempt to define the mainland as a *linguistic area*. Yet, some fundamental questions remain unanswered:

Why, for instance, do certain particles not conform to regular phonological shifts? Which elements, at the syntactic level, are more likely to change, or be replaced, or duplicate the system, while others remain unaffected by contact with non-cognate languages.

6. Stress is another thorny subject in Mon; HLS reports variable stress in only one case, from Burma Mon, in

lɲèh kòh	they, the people; he, she
ɲèh kòh	who? [question-particle]

The stress-pattern of the first is found in Thailand varieties as well but the vocalism of the question-particle shifted to /œ/, merging with diphthongs in other contexts, /phœ/ to be sated, full [after meals] (HLS in DSM 1962 /phoa/) and /tœ/ [particle, past-tense],

ɲèh kœ	who?
mòʔ kœ ~ mùʔ kœ	what?
	[not listed in DSM]

spelt goy, gay, ga'.

Noun constructs, with their various clitics, show very complex stress-patterns.

7. This is at variance with HLS (DSM 1962.2) who describes kwaik ʔa as a verb of locomotion, in this case, and in-gressive in others caik ʔa to get torn. However, I noted ʔa kwaik ʔa kwaik. HLS does not list ʔa kwaik.

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