

## OBSERVATIONS ON THE SURIN DIALECT OF KHMER

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### 0. INTRODUCTION

It is sometimes forgotten that the southern third of Northeast Thailand, a generally arid and economically depressed territory, falls within the zone of distribution of Khmer speech.<sup>1</sup> One of the more fertile parts of this region, otherwise known as the Khorat Plateau, is the basin of the Mae Nam Mun, which rises in the Dong Phraya Yen chain west of Nakhon Ratchasima (Khorat) and flows east past Ubon to join the Mekong some 40 kilometres above Paksé. In its progress the river crosses Buriram, Surin, Sisaket and Ubon provinces, all bounded on the south by the Dangrek escarpment and northern Cambodia. Most of the inhabitants of the relatively densely populated lands watered by the Mun speak Khmer as their mother-tongue. Official figures are wanting for the total number of Khmer-speakers in the four provinces, and estimates range from an ultra-conservative 200,000 to a probably excessive 500,000.

Of movements and intercommunications between the Mun valley and the Cambodian hearland to the south we have little except inferential knowledge. It is tempting to conjecture that they could never have been important. During much of the Angkorian period the whole Khorat Plateau along with much of Central Thailand was under Khmer suzerainty. This circumstance cannot be used to prove that Khmer speech had a similar extension, for in reality the settlement of the Khorat Plateau is not known in any detail. There are nevertheless good archeological grounds for taking the confluence of the Mae Nam Mun with the Mekong as the earliest identifiable centre of Khmer power - providing Khmer was not also the common language of Fu-nan.<sup>2</sup> However this may be, it is reasonable to suppose that Khmer-speaking rice-growers have been in occupation

of the lower Mun valley for a millennium or more. Control over most of the Khorat Plateau was wrested from Angkor by Rāmādhīpati of Sukhotai by the year 1350. In the wars culminating in the abandonment of Angkor (1431-3) the territories on both sides of the Dangrek were repeatedly ravaged and depopulated. Although it is not known how they were affected, it is unlikely that the humble Khmer-speakers of the Mun came through these events unscathed. At least it can be pointed out that the usual direction of the mass deportations practised at the time was into rather than away from the sparsely settled Northeast. It may even be supposed that from the 15th century on the earlier Khmer population was increased by important accessions of transportees from the Tonlé Sap basin. In 1794 Thailand formally annexed the old Cambodian provinces of Battambang, Angkor, Mongkolborey, Sisophon and Khorat. While this whole territory was under Thai administration there were presumably ample opportunities for contacts and migrations between the Mun valley and central Cambodia, notwithstanding the difficulty of communications across the Dangrek chain. Since the mid-15th century, however, there has been no sustained motive for major contacts or movements, and the historical connection of the Khmer dialects of the Mun basin with modern standard Khmer has yet to be determined.

The town (/myyən/) of Surin,<sup>3</sup> seat of the province of the same name, lies 54 kilometers south of the Mun, the same distance due north of the Cambodian frontier, 42 kilometers by rail east of Buriram, and about 95 kilometers by rail west of Sisaket. During the spring of 1967 it was my good fortune to meet on the University of Hawaii campus a young Thai student, Miss Aree Somthawin, who had been born and raised in Surin, who spoke Khmer as her first language, and who accepted with much good grace my request for her services as an informant. In the following paragraphs I sketch out the results of our collaboration over a period of some four months, believing that the peripheral position of the Surin dialect may justify the presentation of such tentative findings to others in the field of Khmer or Mon-Khmer studies.

The Surin dialect is an unwritten vernacular which has for long, apparently, followed a line of development independent of the Cambodian mainstream.<sup>4</sup> The mutual intelligibility of Surin Khmer and the standard of Cambodia, which I had the opportunity to test, is limited. Its main areas of divergence from standard Khmer are intonation, the vowel system, and lexicon. Register<sup>5</sup> appears to be entirely absent; whereas standard Khmer has a maximum of 31 contrasting syllable nuclei, Surin Khmer has only 23. The circumflex clause terminal seems to be characteristic. The vocabulary contains a good many archaisms (/biət/ 'near'), regionalisms (/kmaat/ 'first person singular pronoun, masculine'), and loans

from Thai (/talaat/ 'market').

## 1. SEGMENTAL PHONEMES

### 1.1. VOWELS

There are 9 simple (long) vowel phonemes, namely /ii, ee, εε; yy, əə, aa; uu, oo, ɔɔ/. These combine with shortness to yield 8 (or 9) shortened counterparts, namely /i, (e), ε; y, ə, a; u, o, ɔ/; functional contrast between /ee/ and /e/ cannot be demonstrated by my data, and is only tentatively assumed for the sake of symmetry. The 3 simple (/ii, yy, uu/) and 3 shortened (/i, y, u/) high vowels combine with /ə/ to form 6 falling diphthongs. The total vowel inventory is shown in Table I. Note the absence of /aa, a/, of /ee, əə, ooə/, and of /aaε, aaə, aao/.

The phonetic quality of these syllable nuclei is not essentially different from that of standard Khmer and will not be detailed here. It may be worth mentioning, however, that as in the standard the phonetic length of the long nuclei is perceptibly decreased by voiceless finals while that of the shortened nuclei is increased by voiced finals. Again as in the standard, the shortened vowels tend to be lower than their long counterparts.

### 1.2. CONSONANTS

There are 17 consonant phonemes, /p, b, m; t, d, n; c, ɲ; k, ŋ; q; w, j; r, l; s, h/, all of which occur initially. /b, d/ are preglottalised (implosive); /q/ represents [ʔ], often theoretical in word-initial position; /w, j/ are the labial and palatal semivowels respectively; /r/ is a voiced lingual flap (occasionally a trill) with alveolar contact in syllable-initial position.

Front Unrounded		Central Unrounded		Back Rounded	
i	ii	y	yy	u	uu
iə	iiə	yə	yyə	uə	uuə
(e)	ee	ə	əə	o	oo
ε	εε	a	aa	ɔ	ɔɔ

Table 1: The Syllable Nuclei

Table 2, which probably falls short of representing all possible combinations, shows the initial consonant clusters occurring in my data.

<i>initials</i> →	p	b	m	t	n	c	k	w	r	l	s
p	x			x			x				x
b		x		x			x				x
m				x		x	x		x		x
t							x		x		x
d	x						x		x		x
n	x		x	x	x	x	x				x
c			x								
ɲ	x										
k	x			x		x					x
ŋ				x						x	x
q	x					x				x	x
w						x			x		x
j							x				
r	x		x	x		x	x				x
l	x		x	x		x	x	x		x	x
s	x						x		x		
h	x		x	x		x	x				

Table 2: Complex Initials

The most common initial elements are /k, p, s, c, t/ while the most common post-initials are /r, l, h, m, n/, in that order. A few ternary clusters with prefix /m-/ 'one' occur: /mkhεε/ 'one month'. As in the standard, transition from the initial to the post-initial may be direct or indirect, i.e. over a phonetic bridge-sound. Direct transition is normal between an initial stop and post-initial /r, h/. Bridge-sounds include a short voiced vowel, normally [ə] but not seldom [ɪ, ɔ]; a short voiceless vowel, here represented by [h]; and aspiration + [ə]. Before post-initial /b, d, q/ transition is indirect, nearly always by way of [ə]. After initial /s/ it is likewise over [ə] in deliberate speech but becomes direct in normal speech. Between stops other than /b, d, q/ aspiration + [ə] marks deliberate speech while normal speech shows only [h]. Before post-initial nasals and /w, l/ transition is indirect, with [h] being most common while [ə], with or without prior aspiration, is also heard in deliberate speech. These phonetic details are exemplified by /ppuək/ [pəpəək] 'cloud', /tbaan/ [təʔba·ʏn] 'to weave', /cmaa/ [čhma·] 'cat', /knoŋ/ [khnoŋ] 'room', /pkuər/ [phəkəə·l] 'thunder', /tnɔɔt/ [thəno·t] 'sugar palm'.

Final consonants, always simple, include all of the initials except /b, d, s/. Final stops are normally unreleased; as a result, contrast between /-k/ and /-q/ is so weak as to be usually lost: /srok/ 'village' is indifferently [srok ~ sroʔ] while /pluəq/ 'to taste' is indifferently [pʰlœʔ ~ pʰlœk]. Final /l/, like its initial counterpart, is a voiced post-alveolar lateral; final /r/, unlike its initial counterpart, is a voiced retroflex lateral with frictionless [r] colouring of the prior vowel: /tiər/ [ti·ə·l] 'duck', /kəmmɔɔr/ [kəm'mɔ·ɔ·l] 'lime', /skɔɔr/ [səkɔ·ɔ·l] 'sugar'.

Transition from the syllable nuclei to the finals is direct or indirect, i.e. effected by means of glides. The latter include (a) labial, palatal, and neutral glides and (b) voiced homorganic occlusion before nasal finals. Labial glides are heard mainly after back rounded nuclei, their frequency decreasing with the openness of the nucleus: /ruup/ [ru·ʷp] 'image', /poot/ [po·ʷt] 'corn, maize', /thɔɔm/ [thɔ·ʷm] 'to be big'. Palatal glides are heard after front unrounded nuclei before velar finals, as in /peek/ [pe·ʏk] 'too much' and /pleen/ [pʰle·ʏŋ] 'music', and above all before palatal finals: /sac/ [saʏč] 'meat', /qoc/ [ʔoʏč] 'to kindle', /khəən/ [khv·ʏn] 'to see', /peep/ [pe·ʏn] 'to be full'. Neutral glides occur most often before voiced finals: /krɔɔm/ [krɔ·ə·m] 'underside', /pul/ [po·ə·l] 'poison'. They are also occasionally heard before voiceless finals, where they signal the length of the preceding nucleus: /croot/ [čɪro·ə·t] 'to reap'. In the speech of my informant voiced homorganic occlusion was heard only before final /ŋ/:

/jyŋ/ [jw·<sup>9</sup>ŋ] 'first person plural pronoun', /roŋ/ [ro·<sup>9</sup>ŋ] 'hall, building'. Direct transition from the nucleus to the final is usual in the environments not specified above: /ciik/ [çi·k] 'to dig', /leep/ [le·p] 'to swallow', /baan/ [ʔba·n] 'to get', /chɔɔt/ [çhɔ·t] 'to be stupid'.

Before a pause, particularly in citation forms, the lengthening of final /m, n, ŋ, l/ (though not of /-p/) is common following long as well as short nuclei: /ktim/ [kətimm] 'onion', /myən/ [mwənn] 'fowl', /coŋ/ [çoŋŋ] 'tip, end', /kbaal/ [kəʔba·ll] 'head', /cræən/ [çrɛ·nn] 'much', /riiŋ/ [ri·ŋŋ] 'to be dried up', /qəmmel/ [ʔəm·mell] 'salt'.

## 2. SUPRASEGMENTALS

### 2.1. STRESS

There are 3 degrees of stress: primary or strong, secondary or moderate, and tertiary or weak. Primary and secondary stress are represented by the acute and grave respectively while tertiary stress is unmarked. As in the standard, monosyllables uttered in isolation take primary stress: /báan/ '[I] can [do it]', /srúuəl/ '[It's] easy'; disyllables of native provenance take primary stress on the ultima: /cənnəər/ 'ladder', /ləmbáak/ 'trouble'. The same pattern obtains in disyllabic compounds: /koon kóon/ 'children', /pləəw tɔɔl/ 'road, highway'. Polysyllables take primary stress on the ultima, secondary stress on the first syllable: /tɔɔrəsáp/ 'telephone', /wɪtsəwɔkɔɔn/ 'engineer'. Within the phrase qualifying elements take primary stress, qualified elements secondary or tertiary stress: /tɪɔɔj nɪh/ 'this day = today', /jùp méɪn/ 'last night', /nɪək prəçáan/ 'Mr Prachan', /ptɪəh kən lóok/ 'your house', /baaj tɪk ɪɪiəc nɪh/ 'this evening's supper', /təəw nàa mɔɔw nàa/ 'to go all over'.

### 2.2. INTONATION

My informant's speech showed 3 pitch levels, namely low, mid (normal), and high, hereafter number 1, 2, and 3 respectively. Four clause terminals stand out clearly: a rising pitch contour, /↑/, marking a question in the absence of an interrogative word; a sustained pitch, /+/, marking a momentary suspension of an utterance; a circumflex or rising-falling contour, /↘/, marking questions with the interrogative /nəə/ and the enclitic interrogative /qə/; and a falling or trailing contour, /↓/, marking the completion of a declarative utterance. These may be represented graphically as follows:

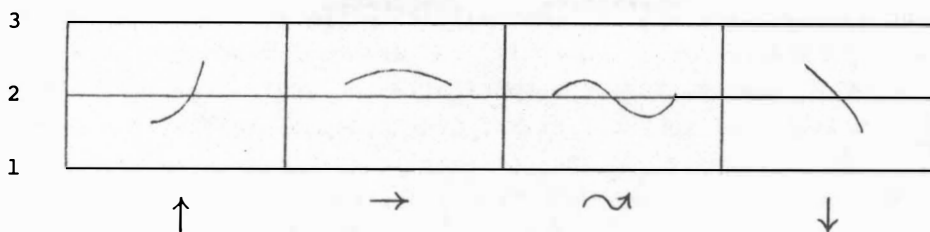


Table 3: The Clause Terminals

### 3. STRUCTURE OF THE WORD

As in the standard, the word may be defined in terms of the syllable. The latter may be expressed as (C)CV(VF), wherein F stands for a non-obligatory consonant final. Monosyllables have the shape CV(VF), exemplified by /tii/ 'place', /toq/ 'table', /bɛɛp/ 'manner'. Subdissyllables have the shape CCV(VF) and may be interpreted as phonemically monosyllabic but for the most part dissyllabic on the phonetic level: /sdam/ [səʔdam] 'right (side)', /rmyəh/ [rɔmwəh] 'itch', /pɹiəw/ [pʰɹiəw] 'visitor'. Dissyllables of native origin are either (1) compounds of monosyllables or subdissyllables or (2) derivatives by affixation, these last consisting of a monosyllabic or subdissyllabic main syllable together with an unstressed presyllable exhibiting one or the other of two structures: CvN- and Crv-. C in these cases represents any consonant except /m, n, ɹ, ŋ; w, j; h/ while the lower-case v represents a phonemically short, neutral vowel; N represents /m, n, ŋ/ (/ɹ/ is here included in /n/) while the lower-case r is /r/. Illustrating these various presyllables are /pənɾəə/ 'servant', /bəntooh/ 'to blame', /prətiəh/ 'to meet', /təmpɛɛk/ 'to be bald', /dənɾɛɛj/ 'elephant', /trəpiəŋ/ 'swamp', /cəŋkəh/ 'chopsticks', /crəmoŋ/ 'nose', /kəmmɔɔr/ 'lime', /krəbɛɛj/ 'carabao', /qənnooŋ/ 'well (puits)', /rəntiəh/ 'lightning', /ləmbaak/ 'trouble', /səmmok/ 'nest', /srəmooc/ 'ant'. Paralleling the rhotacised presyllables the Surin dialect has at least one instance of a /mrə-/, not found in the standard: /mrətiəh/ 'chili pepper', corresponding to mdesa /mtéh/ [m<sup>ə</sup>tɪh].

It is worth noting that the presyllable /qəN-/ was consistently pronounced by my informant either as a nasal with a faint vocalic onglide or as a syllabic nasal: /qəmpəw/ [q<sup>ə</sup>m<sup>1</sup>pɹw ~ ŋ<sup>1</sup>pɹw] 'sugar cane', /qəncul/ [q<sup>ə</sup>ɹ<sup>1</sup>ʒɔl ~ ŋ<sup>1</sup>ʒɔl] 'needle'. Of special interest is the dentalisation of the nasal finals of CvN- presyllables before main-syllable initial /c, r, l/: /bənriən/ 'to teach' (standard /bənɾiən/), /cənriiəp/ 'to salute, greet' (standard /cəmɾiəp/), /kənliəŋ/ 'strength' (standard

/kamləŋ/), /sənleəŋ/ 'voice' (standard /samléəŋ/), in addition to the /qəncul/ (standard /mcul ~ qəncul/) and /pənɾə/ (standard /bəmɾəə/) cited above. Also worthy of attention is the curious assimilation of base-initial /b, d/ to the final of CvN- presyllables: standard /kambət/ 'knife' = /kəmmit/, standard /qambət/ 'salt' = /qəmmel/, standard /sambok/ 'nest' = /səmmok/, standard /kambaaor/ [kəm<sup>1</sup>ba·o] 'lime' = /kəmmɔɔr/, standard /cundaaər/ [čɔn<sup>1</sup>ɔda·ə] 'ladder' = /cənnəər/, standard /qandəŋ/ 'well' = /qənnəŋ/. Prefix /m-/ 'one' likewise causes the assimilation of base-initial /d/ to /n/: standard /mdəŋ/ 'once' = /mnɔɔ/ (this is the sole occurrence of the replacement of /ŋ/ by /l/ in my data). Note, finally, that geminate /mm, nn/ resulting from such assimilation are sometimes reduced to simple /m, n/ and forms so affected pass from the status of dissyllables to that of subdissyllables: standard /dambəol/ 'roof' = /tmool/, standard /kandaal/ 'centre' = /knaal/, standard kaŋtura /kandol/ 'rat' = /knɔɔr/.

#### 4. SAMPLE TEXT

The following reproduces part of a breakfast-time dialogue, written and recorded by my informant, between two sisters the elder of whom manages the house, the younger being a teacher.

- A <sup>2</sup>ŋaaj nɪh bɔɔŋ <sup>1</sup>n <sup>2</sup>thəə <sup>3</sup>qɛɛj <sup>1</sup>kɪah †  
*day this elder-sibling future-marker do what pluraliser*  
*What are you going to do today?*
- B <sup>2</sup>thəə qɛɛj-qɛɛj jaəŋ <sup>3</sup>náa → <sup>1</sup>mjəəŋ <sup>2</sup>bɔɔŋ <sup>1</sup>kɔɔ <sup>2</sup>tɔɔŋ  
*do what-what kind which one-kind elder-sibling then must*  
<sup>2</sup>təəw <sup>2</sup>taláat <sup>3</sup>tɔɔŋ <sup>1</sup>prɪk nɪh †  
*go-to market time morning this*  
*Among other things, I have to go to market this morning.*
- A <sup>2</sup>bɔɔŋ <sup>1</sup>n <sup>2</sup>təəw taláat <sup>3</sup>náa ~ <sup>2</sup>təəw taláat  
*elder-sibling future-marker go-to market which go-to market*  
<sup>3</sup>myət <sup>3</sup>stɪŋ † <sup>2</sup>ryy taláat <sup>3</sup>lɔɔŋ †  
*edge river or market public*  
*Which market are you going to, the one down by the river or the main one?*
- B <sup>2</sup>dèŋ jaəŋ <sup>3</sup>náa <sup>2</sup>tee ~  
*know way which question-marker*  
*How am I to know? (= I'm not sure.)*



<sup>2</sup>snàam tæw talàat myət <sup>3</sup>stýŋ <sup>1</sup>həəj ↓  
*probably go-to market edge river completion-marker*  
*I'll probably go to the one at the river.*

<sup>2</sup>wiə <sup>1</sup>biət <sup>3</sup>cfiəŋ ↓  
*it close more*  
*It's closer.*

<sup>2</sup>tìŋ rbəh piir bæej jáəŋ <sup>3</sup>ponnòh<sup>2</sup> <sup>1</sup>qəeŋ ↓  
*buy object two-three kind that-much only*  
*I just have to buy a few things.*

A <sup>1</sup>jyyŋ <sup>2</sup>kwàh <sup>3</sup>qéej <sup>1</sup>klah ↓  
*we lack what pluraliser*  
*What are we out of?*

<sup>2</sup>krom kyt tháa mɛɛ <sup>1</sup>kyət <sup>2</sup>tìŋ qəej kəmpəh kəmpəŋ<sup>32</sup> mɔw  
*I think say mother she buy what all-sorts-of come*  
<sup>1</sup>həəj tæw mɛɛ <sup>2</sup>mɛŋ ↓  
*completion-marker go-to yesterday*  
*I thought Mama already bought plenty of things yesterday.*

B <sup>2</sup>tìŋ <sup>1</sup>qənlúək<sup>2</sup> <sup>3</sup>kɔɔ <sup>1</sup>nəŋ <sup>2</sup>sác səmráp iŋiəc nfh <sup>3</sup>tíət ↓  
*buy greens and-with meat use-for evening this more*  
*I want to get some more vegetables and some meat for tonight.*

<sup>1</sup>bənti<sup>2</sup> qəəw kyət qàac <sup>1</sup>nəŋ <sup>2</sup>nɔəm <sup>3</sup>pɔfəw <sup>1</sup>mɔw <sup>2</sup>ptiəh ↓  
*maybe father he able linker take guest come house*  
*Papa may be bringing a visitor home with him.*

A <sup>2</sup>kommɔɔj plèc tìŋ <sup>1</sup>mɔrətìh<sup>3</sup> <sup>2</sup>mɔw <sup>3</sup>nəə ~  
*don't forget buy chili come all-right?*  
*Don't forget to get some peppers, will you?*

<sup>2</sup>jup mɛŋ <sup>3</sup>mɛɛ <sup>1</sup>kyət <sup>2</sup>prap tháa → <sup>1</sup>wiə <sup>2</sup>mìn miəŋ <sup>3</sup>lúək <sup>1</sup>qii  
*night last mother she tell say one not have sell at*  
 talàat<sup>2</sup> ↓  
*market*

*Mama said last night they didn't have any at the market.*

<sup>1</sup>kən <sup>2</sup>jyyŋ kɔɔ hãap <sup>1</sup>nəŋ <sup>3</sup>mɔɔt <sup>2</sup>həəj ↓  
*thing our clause-connector near linker gone completion-marker*  
*Ours are just about gone.*

B <sup>1</sup>bəcnðh<sup>2</sup> → bɔɔŋ      <sup>1</sup>n      <sup>2</sup>rùuə <sup>3</sup>tíŋ      <sup>2</sup>qɔɔj      bəan †  
*if-so elder-sibling will seek buy give (= benefactive) get-to*  
*In that case, I can get some for (her, us).*

A <sup>2</sup>bɔɔŋ      <sup>1</sup>nɔŋ <sup>2</sup>təəw talðat myət <sup>3</sup>stýŋ → <sup>2</sup>bɔɔŋ      <sup>1</sup>kɔɔ  
*elder-sibling will go-to market edge river elder-sibling then*  
<sup>2</sup>tɔɔŋ <sup>2</sup>phəan <sup>1</sup>ptiəh <sup>3</sup>lɔɔŋ †  
*must pass house La'ong*

*If you're going to the market by the river, you'll have to pass by La'ong's house.*

<sup>2</sup>jùuə qənsyy <sup>3</sup>nìh <sup>2</sup>təəw qɔɔj kee phɔɔŋ <sup>3</sup>kɔɔ <sup>2</sup>jaan nà †  
*take book this go-to give her on-way then way what*  
*How about taking this book to her on your way?*

B <sup>1</sup>min <sup>2</sup>qəɛj → <sup>3</sup>bəan      <sup>2</sup>həej †  
*not what get-to completion-marker*  
*It's nothing (= no trouble). I can do it.*

A <sup>2</sup>krðm <sup>1</sup>n      <sup>2</sup>tùk qənsyy <sup>1</sup>qii trɔŋ myət <sup>2</sup>twiəer <sup>3</sup>nìh      <sup>2</sup>həej →  
*I will put book at place edge door this completion-marker*

<sup>2</sup>prùəm <sup>1</sup>tiəŋ <sup>2</sup>cùutməaj <sup>3</sup>phɔɔŋ †  
*along with note as-well*  
*I'll leave it here by the door, along with a note.*

<sup>2</sup>kee soom kcəej <sup>1</sup>mɔɔw      <sup>3</sup>mkhée <sup>2</sup>həej †  
*she ask borrow come one-month completion-marker*  
*She asked to borrow it a month ago (now),*

<sup>2</sup>kɔɔtəe <sup>1</sup>min <sup>2</sup>cəh      baan <sup>3</sup>jùuə <sup>2</sup>təəw qɔɔj <sup>1</sup>kəe →  
*but not know-how get-to take go-to give her*  
*but I haven't been able to get it to her.*

<sup>2</sup>qəə      bɔɔŋ      <sup>3</sup>déŋ <sup>1</sup>qə → thaa <sup>2</sup>qəəw <sup>1</sup>kyət      nɔŋ <sup>2</sup>nəəm niək  
*er elder-sibling know ? say father he will take person*

<sup>3</sup>náa <sup>2</sup>mɔɔw †  
*what come*

*Um-m, who's papa bringing home, do you know?*

B <sup>2</sup>lyy thaa → niək mɔ̌w <sup>1</sup>pii myyəŋ kɔ̌q<sup>2</sup> †  
 hear say person come from Bangkok  
 I understand (it's) someone from Bangkok.

<sup>2</sup>bɔ̌ŋ min skỳəl <sup>3</sup>cmúəh <sup>2</sup>kee tee †  
 elder-sibling not know name his emphasiser  
 I don't know what his name is.

<sup>1</sup>qəə <sup>2</sup>bəə <sup>1</sup>min <sup>2</sup>kəət tnaajkwəam<sup>3</sup> † kɔ̌w <sup>2</sup>kəət niək  
 er if not be lawyer then be person

<sup>3</sup>c}iəŋ <sup>1</sup>qəej <sup>2</sup>mjaəŋ mjàəŋ <sup>3</sup>n}h <sup>2</sup>həej †  
 artisan what one-kind-or-another this completion-marker  
 Well, if he's not a lawyer, I expect he's some kind of  
 technician.

A <sup>2</sup>knom səŋsəaj <sup>1</sup>thaa <sup>2</sup>kyət niək khùum thəə <sup>3</sup>tnɔ̌l <sup>1</sup>nəə →  
 I suppose say he person control make road agree?  
 I guess he (must be) in charge of building the road...

<sup>2</sup>pləəw təəw kɔ̌r}iəc<sup>3</sup> <sup>2</sup>nəə → <sup>1</sup>ryy jaəŋ <sup>2</sup>nəə <sup>3</sup>n}h <sup>2</sup>həej †  
 road go-to Khorat agree? or kind what this completion  
 you know, the road to Khorat - or something like that.

B <sup>2</sup>snəam mɛɛn <sup>3</sup>dəŋ ~ <sup>2</sup>wliiə kee mɔ̌w <sup>3</sup>kɔ̌w <sup>2</sup>jỳyŋ nɔ̌ŋ dəŋ həej †  
 probably true know time one come then we will know completion  
 You may be right. We'll find out when he gets (they get) here.

A <sup>1</sup>knom <sup>2</sup>təəw <sup>3</sup>nəə ~ <sup>1</sup>tɔ̌ŋ <sup>2</sup>triəm kluuən təəw <sup>1</sup>rooŋ <sup>2</sup>r}ən <sup>1</sup>ləəwnəh †  
 I go all-right? must fix self go-to hall learn now  
 Well, I'm going... I've got to get ready for school now.

B <sup>1</sup>ŋiiəc <sup>2</sup>n}h n}iəŋ <sup>1</sup>nɔ̌ŋ <sup>2</sup>hɔ̌q mɔ̌w pt}əh <sup>1</sup>tɔ̌n <sup>3</sup>nəə ~  
 evening this young-lady will come-home come house time what  
 What time will you be getting home tonight?

A <sup>2</sup>dəŋ jaəŋ <sup>3</sup>nəə tee †  
 know way which emphasiser  
 How am I to know? (= I'm not sure.)

<sup>2</sup>knom tɔ̌ŋ sɔ̌p <sup>1</sup>niək <sup>2</sup>r}iən phɔ̌ŋ → <sup>1</sup>tɔ̌n <sup>2</sup>pryk n}h †  
 I must test person study all on morning this  
 I have to give a test to the students this morning.

<sup>2</sup>qàac <sup>1</sup>nɔŋ <sup>2</sup>nəəw trùuət <sup>1</sup>kaar <sup>2</sup>sóɔp <sup>1</sup>qɔɔj ruuəc <sup>2</sup>sən †  
 able linker stay correct work test give finish first  
 I may stay on and finish correcting their work before coming  
 home.

B <sup>2</sup>kommɔɔj <sup>1</sup>səəw <sup>2</sup>nəəw lŋiɪəc <sup>3</sup>nàh nəsə ~  
 don't very stay late very agree?  
 Don't be very late, will you?

<sup>2</sup>təc tɔɔŋ hɔq <sup>1</sup>mɔɔw <sup>2</sup>ptiəh <sup>3</sup>tqɛŋ <sup>1</sup>tɔɔn <sup>2</sup>ŋyt ŋyt †  
 else must come-home come house alone in all-dark  
 Otherwise you'll have to come home all by yourself in the dark.

A <sup>3</sup>cáah † <sup>2</sup>knom nɔŋ pjàam hɔq <sup>3</sup>mɔɔw <sup>2</sup>mun pràm mɔɔŋ †  
 yes I will try come-home come before five hour  
 All right, I'll do my best to get back before five.

<sup>3</sup>mìn <sup>2</sup>qɔɔj lŋiɪəc <sup>1</sup>ciiŋ <sup>2</sup>nuh <sup>3</sup>tee ~  
 not give = let late more that emphasiser  
 I won't make it (let it be) any later than that.

B <sup>2</sup>təəw cɔh †  
 go descend  
 Run along!

<sup>3</sup>təc <sup>2</sup>thaa bɔɔŋ thəə qɔɔj niŋ jùur  
 else say elder-sibling make give = so-that young-lady late

<sup>3</sup>káar †  
 work

Otherwise I'll make you late for work.

<sup>2</sup>ciə lqɔɔ <sup>3</sup>nəsə ~  
 be-well be-fine agree?  
 Bye-bye.

## NOTES

1. Khmer also overlaps Cambodia's western frontier into Prachinburi (Krabin), Chanthaburi, and Trat provinces.
2. On this question see the views summarised in my unpublished doctoral dissertation, *Affixation in Modern Khmer* (University of Hawaii, January 1969).
3. Surin is shown on AMS L509 (1:250,000) sheet ND 48-5 at grid coordinates UB 3946 or 14° 53' N x 103° 29' E. The town claims a population of a little over 147,000.
4. Radio Phnom-Penh is received in Surin but its broadcasts appear to be imperfectly understood. Newspapers, books, and films are not imported from Cambodia. Identification with the Khmer language community appears to be slight.
5. I use the term "register" here in its original Hendersonian sense, which emphasises contrasting oral and pharyngeal resonance and contrasting higher and lower pitch; see Eugénie J.A. Henderson, "The Main Features of Cambodian Pronunciation", in *BSOAS*, XIV (1952).1:149-74.

