

# SOME OLD KHMER AFFIXATION

You Sey

0. Introduction
1. C- prefixes
2. CN- prefixes
3. Ch- prefixes
4. Cr- prefixes
5. V- prefixes
6. VN- prefixes
7. Conclusion

0. Introduction. Many ancient Khmer inscriptions are scattered throughout Cambodia and in neighboring countries, dating as far back as the 6th century A.D. They are found as far afield as Vientiane in Laos, Sukhothai, Nokor Swan and Nokor Reach provinces in Thailand, and the delta of South Vietnam.

Affixation has been described in Modern Khmer by scholars such as Jenner, Maspero, Jacob, Gorgoniyev, Huffman, Keng Vannsak and others. Lewitz has studied Middle Khmer. An inspection of the ancient inscriptions also shows that Old Khmer used much affixation, as Jacob has commented on, and this paper presents some of the affixal forms of Old Khmer. Many more examples of each affix could be adduced, only one or two of each being given here for illustrative purposes. The purpose of this paper is to give documentation on the different kinds of prefixes used in Old Khmer and to show which ones have parallels in Modern Khmer.

1. C- Prefixes. C- prefixes include p-, t-, c-, k-, r-, v-, s-. These prefixes all seem to have denoted an intensification of the meaning of the root morpheme, except for some cases of a negative meaning for s-.

- (1) p-  
 prañ 'dry season'<sup>2</sup>  
 rañ 'to be dry, have no rain'<sup>3</sup>
- t-  
 (2) tpoñ 'high official'<sup>4</sup>  
 poñ 'official'<sup>5</sup>  
 (3) tleñ 'who go up, rebellious'<sup>6</sup>  
 leñ 'to go up'<sup>7</sup>
- c-  
 (4) cpoñ 'oldest brother'<sup>8</sup>  
 poñ 'older brother'<sup>9</sup>  
 (5) ckop 'to bury deeply'<sup>5</sup>  
 kop 'to bury'<sup>10</sup>  
 (6) cloñ 'to cross, transmit'<sup>11</sup>  
 loñ 'to pass'<sup>12</sup>
- k-  
 (7) kpat 'to betray'<sup>13</sup>  
 pat 'to fold, bend, turn'<sup>12</sup>  
 (8) krau 'outside'<sup>8</sup>  
 rau 'outer form, shape'<sup>12</sup>  
 (9) kloñ 'high official of finance'<sup>5</sup>  
 loñ 'official of finance'<sup>14</sup>
- r-  
 (10) raloñ 'to cross over, pass over'<sup>15</sup>  
 loñ 'to cross, pass'<sup>12</sup>
- v-  
 (11) vrāy 'to shoot'<sup>16</sup>  
 rāy 'to scatter'<sup>12</sup>  
 (12) vraḥ 'a god'<sup>5</sup>  
 raḥ 'to shine'<sup>12</sup>
- s-  
 (13) steñ 'to show, a high official'<sup>17</sup>  
 teñ 'to decorate'<sup>18</sup>  
 (14) sgal 'to recognize, know'<sup>19</sup>  
 gal 'to sit near (royal word)'<sup>20</sup>  
 (15) slāp 'to die'<sup>14</sup>  
 lāp 'to regain health'<sup>12</sup>  
 (16) stāc 'to go (royal word)'<sup>21</sup>  
 tāc 'to loose, unloose'<sup>12</sup>

Prefixes of the shape /C-/ occurred on monosyllabic root morphemes. These prefixes transformed noun roots into derived nouns (nos. 2,4,8,9), verb roots into derived verbs (nos. 5,6,7,10,11,13,14,15,16), and verb roots into derived nouns (nos. 1,3,12).

These prefixes are still in evidence in Modern Khmer in forms such as:

p-	p-	
pdo		'to make a trade, change'
do		'to trade, barter'
priəj		'to shoot, hunt'
riəj		'to scatter'
t-	t-	
tlaɛŋ		'to give off, emit'
lɛŋ		'to let go, release'
tbiət		'to hold (under the arm or with tongs)'
biət		'to be near'
c-	c-	
cɲəj		'to get up, rise to one's feet'
ɲəj		'to rise, stand'
clāk		'to carve, chisel'
lɛək		'to scratch, cut'
k-	k-	
kbǎŋ		'a covering'
bǎŋ		'to cover'
kqāt		'very small mosquito, small frog, undersized cormorant'
qāt		'small'
r-	r-	
rliəj		'to melt, dissolve'
liəj		'to mix'
s-	s-	
stiə		'to be keen, shrill'
tiə		'to resound'
skak		'to harden up, be dried up, withered'
kak		'to harden'

Prefix v- in Old Khmer has changed to p- in Modern Khmer, as in vraŋ > priəj 'shoot'.

2. CN- Prefixes. The prefixes p-, t-, c-, k-, r-, s-, combined with nasals -m, -n, -ŋ to form pam-, kam-, sam-, pan-, tan-, can-, kan-, pañ-, rañ-. The nasals tend to be homorganic with the following consonant.

- |      |         |   |
|------|---------|---|
|      | pam-    |   |
| (17) | pampat  | 'to cause to lose' <sup>22</sup>                  |
|      | pat     | 'to lose' <sup>12</sup>                           |
| (18) | pamcam  | 'to deposit' <sup>23</sup>                        |
|      | cam     | 'to wait for (someone)' <sup>14</sup>             |
|      | pan-    |   |
| (19) | pandval | 'a speech, the saying (royal word)' <sup>17</sup> |
|      | dval    | 'to carry on one' head' <sup>9</sup>              |
| (20) | panhem  | 'to cause to swell' <sup>14</sup>                 |

- hem 'to swell'<sup>12</sup>
- (21) pañ-pañ-  
pañkap 'to cause to bury'<sup>31</sup>  
kap 'to bury'<sup>12</sup>
- (22) pañket 'to cause to be born'<sup>24</sup>  
ket 'to be born'<sup>5</sup>
- (23) tan-tan-  
tanlap 'a round wooden container used to keep vaseline or  
medicated balm'<sup>28</sup>  
lap 'to fill up, fill in'<sup>29</sup>
- (24) can-can-  
candal 'a support'<sup>27</sup>  
dal 'to support'<sup>15</sup>
- (25) kamkam-  
kamton 'very old woman'<sup>15</sup>  
ton 'old woman'<sup>9</sup>
- (26) kamvok 'something that bumps'<sup>24</sup>  
vok 'a bump'<sup>25</sup>
- (27) kamvrau 'to get old without being married'<sup>26</sup>  
vrau 'old unmarried person'<sup>3</sup>
- (28) kamsteñ 'high official'<sup>9</sup>  
steñ 'official'<sup>17</sup>
- (29) kan-kan-  
kantai 'a woman (unlucky word)'<sup>30</sup>  
tai 'a woman'<sup>30</sup>
- (30) kanmyañ 'an ant (unlucky word)'<sup>14</sup>  
myañ 'an ant'<sup>12</sup>
- (31) rañ-rañ-  
ranvāñ 'to cause to be tortuous'<sup>32</sup>  
vāñ 'to be tortuous'<sup>12</sup>
- (32) samsam-  
samruk 'to goad strongly'<sup>27</sup>  
ruk 'to goad'<sup>12</sup>

Prefixes of the shape /CN-/ occurred on monosyllabic root morphemes. These prefixes transformed noun roots into derived nouns (nos. 19, 20, 28, 29), verb roots into derived nouns (nos. 24, 27), and verb roots into derived verbs (nos. 17, 18, 23, 25). Most of these prefixes denoted a superlative or in a few cases a nominalized instrument, except pañ- which sometimes denoted a causative.

These prefixes are still in evidence in Modern Khmer in forms such as:

bombæk<sup>bɔm-</sup> 'to cause to break'

baək 'to break'

bɔmbuəh 'to cause to be a monk'

buaəh 'to be a monk'

bɔn-

bənleŋ 'to cause to play'

leŋ 'to play'

bənsa:p 'to cause to be tasteless'

sa:p 'tobbe tasteless'

bəŋ-

bəŋkɔ: 'to cause to make, to build'

kɔ: 'to make, build'

bəŋkhəm 'to cause to aim at, to struggle for'

khəm 'to aim at, struggle for'

cən-

cəndaə 'a step'

daə 'to walk'

cəntuəl 'a support'

tuəl 'to support'

kəm-

kəmbaək 'to be broken'

baək 'to break'

kəmbəŋ 'to cause to cover'

bəŋ 'to cover'

kən-

kəntuəl 'a peck, bite'

tuəl 'a swelling'

kəntuək 'broken rice'

tuək 'to crumple, crease'

rəŋ-

rəŋvəŋ 'a circle'

vəŋ 'to encircle'

rəŋviəh 'a measure'

viəh 'to measure'

səm-

səmroak 'to goad strongly'

ruk 'to goad'

səmbɔ:k 'a peel'

bɔ:k 'to peel'

The OK p:ModK b shift is just an interpretational shift, though subscribed to by many scholars. The written script form of the words did not change.

3. Ch- Prefixes.

The prefixes p-, t- became aspirate consonants ph-, th-.

- ph-
- (33) phgal 'to cause to meet'<sup>20</sup>  
gal 'to meet (royal word)'<sup>20</sup>
- (34) phlās 'to transfer'<sup>33</sup>  
lās 'to abandon'<sup>6</sup>
- (35) phsāk 'to cause to try'<sup>34</sup>  
sāk 'to try'<sup>12</sup>
- th-
- (36) thleñ 'to say, report'<sup>35</sup>  
leñ 'to free'<sup>14</sup>
- (37) thlai 'to price'<sup>36</sup>  
lai 'to try to make, to be sufficient'<sup>12</sup>

Prefixes of the shape /Ch-/ occurred on monosyllabic root morphemes. They transformed verb roots into derived verbs (nos. 33, 34, 35, 36) and verb roots into derived nouns (no. 37). They denoted a superlative except nos. 33 and 35, which denoted a causative. They are not found in inscriptions before the 8th century A.D., and even after that they are often in free variation with their unaspirated counterparts. This is a transcriptional change which may or may not have indicated a phonemic change.

These prefixes are still in evidence in Modern Khmer in forms such as:

- ph-
- phlah 'to transfer, change'  
leah 'to abandon, leave'
- th-
- thlaεŋ 'to say, repeat'  
leŋ 'to free'  
thlai 'a price'  
lai 'to try to make, to be sufficient'

4. Cr- Prefixes.

The prefixes p-, t-, k-, s- combined with r as pr-, tr-, kr-, sr-.

- pr-
- (38) prajeñ 'to strive in rivalry'<sup>7</sup>  
jeñ 'to compete'<sup>12</sup>
- (39) pralāy 'a canal'<sup>29</sup>  
lāy 'a fishing instrument'<sup>12</sup>
- tr-
- (40) trakāl 'modern, new'<sup>37</sup>

kāl 'a time'<sup>12</sup>

kr-

(41) kravil 'to move round strongly; an earring'<sup>38</sup>

vil 'to move around'<sup>12</sup>

(42) kracap 'a device for catching (something)'<sup>39</sup>

cap 'to catch'<sup>12</sup>

sr-

(43) sralāñ 'to love'<sup>40</sup>

lāñ 'to ruin, destroy'<sup>12</sup>

Prefixes of the shape /Cr-/ occurred on monosyllabic root morphemes. They transformed verb roots into derived nouns (nos. 39, 41, 42), verb roots into derived verbs (nos. 38, 41, 43), noun roots into derived adjectives (no. 40), and noun roots into derived noun roots (no. 39). All these prefixes denoted a superlative, except no. 42 which is a nominalized instrument.

These prefixes are still in evidence in Modern Khmer in forms such as:

prɔ-

prəkət 'to touch strongly'

ket 'to touch'

trɔ-

trəkɑ:l 'modern, new'

ka:l 'a time'

trɔsa:j 'spreading, branching, bushy, thick'

sa:j 'to spread out, extend'

krɔ-

krɔvel 'to turn around strongly'

vil 'to turn around'

krɔcap 'a device used for catching (something)'

cap 'to catch'

## 5. V- Prefix.

A- was used as an intensifying prefix.

(44) acas '(to be) older'<sup>41</sup>

cas '(to be) old'<sup>42</sup>

(45) ajī 'an older woman who stays in a pagoda'<sup>41</sup>

jī 'an old woman who stays in a pagoda'<sup>12</sup>

This prefix occurred on monosyllabic root morphemes. This prefix is no longer used in Modern Khmer.

## 6. VN- Prefixes.

A- combined with nasals -m, -n, -ñ, -ṅ, to form am-, an-, añ-, aṅ-.

The nasals tend to be homorganic with the following consonant.

- am-
- (46) ampek 'to cause to break'<sup>5</sup>  
pek 'to break'<sup>12</sup>
- (47) amrek 'a load carried by a person using a yoke'<sup>43</sup>  
rek 'to carry with a yoke'<sup>12</sup>
- (48) amveñ 'to cause to be long'<sup>18</sup>  
veñ '(to be) long'<sup>8</sup>
- (49) amvuḥ 'a boiling'<sup>44</sup>  
vuḥ 'to boil'

- an-
- (50) antaṃ 'a planting'<sup>29</sup>  
taṃ 'to plant'

- añ-
- (51) añcañ 'a fishing net'<sup>11</sup>  
cañ 'to tie, bend'<sup>12</sup>

- an-
- (52) añveñ 'long long ago'<sup>41</sup>  
veñ '(to be) long'<sup>23</sup>

Prefixes of the shape /VN-/ occurred on monosyllabic root morphemes. These prefixes transformed verb roots into derived nouns (nos. 47, 49, 50, 51), verb roots into derived verbs (no. 46), and adjectival roots into derived verbs (nos. 48, 52). They denoted a nominalized instrument or result (no. 51), a superlative (nos. 47, 49, 50, 52), or a causative (nos. 46, 48).

These prefixes are still in evidence in Modern Khmer in forms such as:

- qam-
- qambaεŋ 'a piece of something broken'  
baεŋ 'to divide'  
qampuh 'a boiling'  
puh 'to boil'

- qan-
- qanteak 'a snare, trap'  
teak 'to snare, trap'

- qañ-
- qañcañ 'to tread on several times'  
cañ 'to tread on'  
qañcaŋ 'a fishing net'  
caŋ 'to tie, bend'



ꠘꠗꠣ-	
ꠘꠗꠣru:s	'a file'
ru:s	'to file down'
ꠘꠗꠣrut	'a fishing trap'
rut	'to catch fish with an <u>ꠘꠗꠣ</u> rut'

## 7. Conclusion.

In conclusion, the consonants p-, t-, c-, k-, r-, v-, s-, and the vowel a- were used as affixes in Old Khmer. They sometimes combined with nasals, -h, and -r- as CaN-, Ch-, Cr-, aN-. A- was used as an affix in Old Khmer but no longer in Modern Khmer, but aN- is found in both Old Khmer and Modern Khmer.

Although there are a few observable differences between the simple prefixes, notably the causative specialization of p-, there are not any readily apparent differences between the meanings of the simple prefixes and the meanings of the prefixes with -h-, -N-, or -r-. This may indicate that the initial consonants carried the main functional distinctiveness in the affixes.

## FOOTNOTES:

1. This paper summarizes briefly some of the findings from a study of the inscriptions on the ancient Khmer monuments in both the original forms and in the transcriptions of Coedès. The detailed results of the study are being incorporated in a longer work.  
The transcription of Old Khmer in this paper follows that of Coedès.
2. Stèle de Takêv K79 (639 AD.), IC. II (Inscriptions du Cambodge, vol. II, par G. Coedès), p. 69.
3. Piedroit de Pràsàt Kōmbōt, K144 (XIV cent.), IC. VII, p. 34.
4. Piedroit de Văt Vihār Trañ, K748, IC. V, p. 17.
5. Stèle de Pràh Kuhār Lūoñ, K44 (674 AD.), IC. II, p. 10.
6. Inscription de Pràsàt Prei Thnàl, K451 (680 AD.), IC. V, p. 49.
7. Inscription de Tuol Pràsàt, K72, IC. VI, p. 114.
8. Stèle de Văt Po, K22 (635 AD.), IC. III, p. 143.
9. Stèle de Văt Ph'u, K720 (1002 AD.), IC. V, p. 212.
10. Stèle de Văt Prei Val, K49 (664 AD.), IC. II, p. 7, 115, IC. VI, p. 6.
11. Piedroit de Pràsàt T'oč, K138 (620 AD.), IC. V, p. 19.
12. This word is not found in the Old Khmer inscriptions but occurs in Modern Khmer; so we assume a similar form and meaning in Old Khmer.
13. Inscription du groupe oriental de Phimãñ Akàs, K292 (1011 AD.), IC. III, p. 205.
14. Inscription de Pràsàt Kantop, K352-354, IC. V, p. 125.
15. Stèle de Văt Thleñ, K1, IC. VI, p. 28.

16. Inscription de Pràsàt Khtom, K450, IC. III, p. 109.
17. Inscription de Pràsàt Taros, K349 (954 AD.), IC. V, p. 108.
18. Stèle de Praḥ Vihār Kùk, K61 (912 AD.), IC. VII, p. 20.
19. Piedroit de Nom Vān, K393 (1055 AD.), IC. VII, p. 64.
20. Stèle de Saḥron, K258 (1094 AD.), IC. IV, p. 175.
21. Inscription de Pràsàt Bēñ Vien, K872, IC. V, p. 97.
22. Inscription de Phnom Čisôr, K33 (1017 AD.), IC. III, p. 148.
23. Piedroit de Čo'n Añ, K99 (922 AD.), IC. VI, p. 107.
24. Inscription de Traḥñ Thma, K133, IC. V, p. 81.
25. Inscription de Praḥ Non, K87-88 (1003 AD.), IC. VIII, p. 30.
26. Inscription de Pràsàt Sñēñ, K879 (1040 AD.), IC. V, p. 235.
27. Piedroit de Tūol Añ Rolāñ Ken, K877, IC. VI, p. 66.
28. Stèle de Tūol Pei, K164 (922 AD.), IC. VI, p. 96.
29. Stèle brisée Kdei Añ, K56 (966 AD.), IC. VII, p. 3.
30. Groupe des Inscriptions des collines de la région d'Arāñ, K505 (639 AD.), IC. V, p. 23.
31. Inscription de Pràsàt O' Romđuol, K659 (960 AD.), IC. V, p. 143.
32. Stèle de Ban T'at T'ong, K697, IC. VII, p. 94.
33. Inscription de Pràsàt Tà Kām, K245 corpus CXXIII (1062 AD.), IC:III, p. 89.
34. Inscription de Vāt Damnàk (Siem Rāp), K420, IC. IV, p. 161.
35. Stèle de Phum Dà, K139 (1054 AD.), IC. III, p. 175.
36. Inscription de Vāt Bāsət, K205 (1036 AD.), IC. III, p. 5.
37. Piedroit de Pràsàt Nāñ Khmau, K765 (678 à 687 AD.), IC. V, p. 53.
38. Stèle de Lovêk, K136, IC. VI, p. 285.
39. Inscription de Pràsàt Bēñ Vien, K873 (937 AD.), IC. V, p. 104.
40. Inscription de Phnom Aksār, K523 (1118 AD.), IC. III, p. 136.
41. Piedroit de Loñ Vêk, K137, IC. II, p. 115.
42. Inscription de Pràsàt Čak, K521, IC. IV, p. 167.
43. Inscription de Pràsàt Lāk Nāñ, K265, IC. IV, p. 64.
44. Inscription de Kôk Rokà, K155, IC. V, p. 64.

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