REVIEW ARTICLE:

ROBERT K. HEADLEY JR, KYLIN CHHOR, LAM KHENG LIM, LIM HAK KHEANG, CHEN CHUN: *CAMBODIAN-ENGLISH DICTIONARY*

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Robert K. Headley Jr, Kylin Chhor, Lam Kheng Lim, Lim Hak Kheang, Chen Chun, *Cambodian-English Dictionary*. Bureau of Special Research in Modern Languages. Publications in the Languages of Asia, III (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1977), Volume I: *K - BH*, Volume II: M - '. Exclusive Distributor: ISBS, Inc., P.O. Box 555, Forest Grove, OR 97116. U.S. price: $49.00.

Physically, this is a massive unabridged work in two volumes measuring 21.5 by 28 cm (8½ by 11 inches). Volume I weighs about 2.25 kg (4.9 lbs.), Volume II about 2.75 kg (5.9 lbs.). The reproduction is by photo-offset from camera-ready typescript, and is done on good stock of uncommon whiteness. It is bound with not unattractive casings in navy cloth with gilt lettering on the spines and fronts.

The main body of the dictionary (1-1495) is preceded by a Preface (v), Acknowledgements (vii), a table of Contents (ix), a list of Plates (xi), an Introduction (xiii-xxii), a list of Abbreviations (xxiii-xxiv), and a Select Bibliography (xxv-xxvii) of forty titles, "all of the works systematically consulted for vocabulary items or other information during the preparation of the dictionary". The body of the work is followed by thirteen plates, each containing one or more line-drawings giving Khmer terms for a considerable number of cultural and other objects - mostly household articles, house parts and types, agricultural and fishing implements, loom parts, games, boat types and musical instruments - and a few plants.

The Introduction comprises two paragraphs on the background of Khmer (xiii), with which is to be included a full-page chart (xiv) showing the classification of selected Mon-Khmer languages. This is followed by sections on the Arrangement of the Dictionary (xiii-xv), Phonology (xv-xvii), Khmer Syntax and Word Classes (xvii-xviii), and the Khmer Script (xix-xxii).

In the dictionary proper pages are laid out in generous double columns. All Khmer forms have been done on the Vari-Typer, the Khmer font for which is well designed and legible except for some of the smaller conjunct symbols. In a few combinations a magnifying glass is needed to make out the *anusvāra*, the breve, and certain of the conjunct vowels. Matter in roman type looks as if it had also been done on the Vari-Typer, though justified right margins are few.

Main entries, in the Khmer character, are followed by phonemic transcriptions. The pronunciation represented is "that of Standard Khmer as spoken by educated persons throughout the Khmer-speaking area" (xv). English meanings are preceded by an italicised abbreviation indicating the wordclass to which the item belongs. These headwords may also contain "alternate pronunciation(s), synonyms ..., usage indicators ..., examples, etymological information, alternate spellings ..., feminine forms [of Indic loans], antonyms ..., or cross references to related or derived forms or to entries which might provide additional information ..." (xv). Main entries so described are followed wherever appropriate by a considerable selection of subentries consisting for the most part of constructs in which the headword is the second as well as the first member. Phonemic transcriptions are not given after these subentries, a circumstance which will inconvenience those who do not yet read well but which represents a major saving of space. The total number of entries and subentries is not stated, but would appear to be close to 90,000.

While the Preface (v) notes that Dr Headley and his team of native-speaking assistants "have tried to utilize all previous Khmer lexical material", the dictionary is based on the fifth edition of the semi-official, two-volume *Vacanānukrama khmēra / Dictionnaire cambodgien* (Phnom-Penh: Institut Bouddhique, 1967, 1968). "Great numbers of additional words, expressions, and examples were extracted from many secondary sources ...", chiefly from Sam Thang, *Vākyaparivattana khmēra-pārāṃha / Lexique khmer-français* (Phnom-Penh, 1962) and S. Tandart, *Dictionnaire cambodgien-français* (Phnom-Penh: Albert Portail, 1935). It is a cause for regret that a few items registered in the *VK* are not listed here. Two examples are kesī /kèesèəj ∿ kaaɛsèəj/ '(rājasabda) *head*' (cf. Sanskrit keśin) and kūva /kòow/, heretofore one of the most

enigmatic words in the older language, which Khin Sok (1979) has recently narrowed down to 'précisément' (e.g. thn̂ai neḥ kūva /tŋaj néh kòow/ *'this very day'*). One suspects that the basis for the exclusion of these and a good many other items was the circumstance that they are archaic.

This being the first unabridged Khmer-English dictionary by a trained linguist, no one should be surprised that it falls short of perfection. However, its strengths are as many as its weaknesses, though a work of such ambitious scope may be particularly liable to faultfinding. Its most conspicuous strengths are its fullness and the evident pains to which Dr Headley and his team have gone to ensure accuracy of detail. Its chief weaknesses, aside from a pervading unevenness of quality, are four: (1) an unjustified dependence on the *VK*, (2) insufficient attention to the older literature as a source of lexical data, (3) several inconveniences in the phonemic transcription, and (4) several inconveniences in the alphabetisation. The first of these is only to be expected in the present state of Khmer studies; a full translation of the *VK* alone would have been a welcome undertaking. The second weakness, again because of the state of our knowledge, is entirely predictable and would have required a formidable effort to overcome. The other two weaknesses, less basic, are of more immediate interest.

Headley follows Huffman (1970:24-8) in excluding register from his analysis of the vowel inventory. This is a perfectly valid approach, though it seems to this reviewer one which should be carefully explained if it is not to entail features which are liable, in a work of this importance, to lead the reader astray and, worst of all, to be misunderstood by persons who may have to cite forms from the dictionary without any knowledge of Khmer.

In Headley's analysis the vowel phonemes are neatly divided into simple and complex (falling diphthongs).

In the simple nuclei nine short phonemes are recognised. These are written as unmarked units, and include, as in my own analysis, a subphonemic /ɔ/ found in High Register presyllables. The eleven long nuclei, marked by gemination, include an /ee/ and an /eɛ/ representing respectively the High and Low Register realisations of orthographic e. Thus jera [čeˆː ∿ čeː] *'to insult'* is Mrs Jacob's (1968:3-24; 1974) phonological cè:(r), Huffman's and Headley's simple /cee/, and my /cée̋r/; while cera [čeˇː ∿ čeː] *'of long duration'* is Jacob's ce:(r), Huffman's /ceɨ/, Headley's /ceɛ/, and my /cèer/. This much is well and good, especially if it is explained to the reader that the /eɨ/ and /eɛ/ are phonemic devices marking a relationship with the registral

system or the writing system. In the back rounded mid vowels, however, this graphic diphthongisation has no counterpart. Thus jora [čo^: ∿ čo:] *'to rise, mount'* is Jacob's cò:(r), Huffman's and Headley's /coo/, and my /cóor/, while cūra [čo˘: ∿ čo:] *'mild imperative marker'* is Jacob's co:l [*sic*], Huffman's /cou/, my /còor/, but Headley's /coo/ again. Thus the symmetry which Huffman achieves is lost.

The ten complex nuclei, inexplicably, are not discriminated according to their length. The seven long nuclei include an /ie/ defined as [i:ɛ] (xvi), representing the High Register realisation of orthographic ā, and an /iə/, undefined as to length, representing both registers of orthographic iə. Thus dāra [ti:ɛ] *'to dun'* is Jacob's tì:ə(r), Huffman's /tiə/, Headley's /tie/, and my /tíiər/, while diəta [ti:ət] *'more, still'* is Jacob's tìət, Huffman's and Headley's /tiət/, and my /tíiət/ (cf. tiəma [ti:əm] *'shop'* = Jacob's tiəm, Huffman's and Headley's /tiəm/, my /tìiəm/). The other long diphthongs are /ɨə/, /uə/, /ae/ (correctly defined as "Front Low to Mid-Low"), /aə/, and /ao/. The three short diphthongs are /ea/, defined as [ɐa] though written [ɛa]; /oa/, which has two allophones: [oɑ] ("short mid-high back to low back") before zero, and [ɔæ], written [ɔa] ("short mid-low back to low front") before finals other than /k, ʔ, ŋ, h/. Thus bā'ka [pɐək] *'to hang'* is Jacob's phonological pèək, Huffman's /peəq/, my /peək/, Headley's /peak/; dā'ta [tɔ^ət] *'to kick'* is Jacob's tɔ̀ət, Huffman's /tɔ̆ət/, my /toət/, Headley's /toat/; daṃbāra [tum'po:ə] *'page (of book)'* is Jacob's tùmpɔ́ə(r), Huffman's /tumpɔə/ (note the absence of the breve), my /tumpoər/, Headley's /tumpoa/. There is nothing at fault here except the fuzziness of the phonetic definitions. The third and last of the short diphthongs, however, is correctly defined as [uə] but for some unaccountable reason is phonemicised /ɔə/. In reality this is an environmentally conditioned allophone of /u/ and hence another subphonemic feature. Thus ga'ta [kuət] *'precisely'* is Jacob's phonological kùət, Huffman's /kŭət/, Headley's /kɔət/, my /kut/; la'ka [luək] *'to sell'* is Jacob's lùək, Huffman's /lŭəq/, Headley's /lɔək/, my /luk/. Since Headley has stated exactly what he means, the most that can be said is that such an unfortunate choice of symbols can only add to the reader's confusion.

In general, the alphabetisation of entries in the dictionary follows the traditional Khmer order as perfected in the *VK*. However, two innovations have been introduced, no doubts on grounds of logic, neither of which is especially welcome.

In the first place, vowels before *visarga* are grouped together after those with *anusvāra*, so that kiḥ, kuḥ, keḥ and koḥ follow kaḥ. In the

VK kaḥ comes at the very end of the series, the other combinations being interspersed with the vowels in question; for example, kuḥ comes after kuhaka and before kūka.

In the second place, forms with initial *a-kāra* (the *Vokalträger*), with and without conjunct vowel symbols, are grouped into one section all the way through aṃ and aḥ to 'hoḥ. This section is then followed by separate sections for the other Indic syllabic vowels such as *i-kāra* and *Ī-kāra*. In the *VK*, *a-kāra* with the conjunct vowels is mixed in with the other syllabic vowels so that 'ūna, for example, is followed immediately by ūna, which in turn is followed immediately by 'ūpadrū.

In both of these features Headley's way is obviously better, but is a nuisance.

One decided improvement over the *VK* is the inclusion of the Indic vowels ṛ, ṝ, ḷ and ḹ among the vowels. In the *VK* they are grouped, contrary to tradition, at the end of *ra-kāra* and *la-kāra*.

In a work of this quality, finally, we are entitled to expect that Dr Headley would have taken the bull by the horns and decided upon a policy for the treatment of the *repha*, the allograph of *ra-kāra* for syllable-final /-r/ in the *devanāgarī* and other Indic writing systems. The Khmer have usually treated this as a diacritic, and as a consequence it has never had any fixed alphabetic order. Both the *VK* and Headley therefore vacillate in their ordering of forms with which it occurs. In the *VK* var-ṇaq comes (correctly) between va-ruṇaq and va-rman, but sar-bejña comes (incorrectly) before sa-rabraḥ. In Headley dhar-ma comes (correctly) between dha-ramāna and dhā'ka, but 'ār-tha comes (incorrectly) between 'ātmopajīvin and 'ādara.

For all of these negative judgements, Dr Headley, his team of assistants, and the Catholic University of America are to be congratulated for their imagination and perseverance in producing a work of this magnitude and this excellence.

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