

been accepted in Cambodia and its neighboring countries. You'll sometimes see younger monks buying music and other "entertainment" items in stores from time to time. This is technically considered breaking the precepts.

Nevertheless, we laypeople are supposed to treat monks differently, and they're supposed to treat us differently. This is most striking in the case of women. Quite simply, monks are not supposed to touch—or even look at—women. If you're female, please respect this fact and don't put a monk in an uncomfortable situation. You can talk to them, but keep it brief, and don't look them in the eyes. Above all, don't touch them. We'll show you in class at SEASSI how to give an object to a monk, there's a special procedure for that.

Many of the ways that laypeople relate to monks differently than to each other (and vice versa) is expressed in language. On **Audio Track 135** (page 221), you have a list of the most basic words you'll need to use when speaking with monks. Memorize them. It's really not that hard to switch to these words when you're talking with a monk. You're always switching pronouns in Khmer anyway, right, depending on who you're talking with? And don't worry, you'll be forgiven when you make a mistake. You'll hear monks making mistakes from time to time too.

Grammar Notes

G.1 Talking About Illness

For some reason, in the various grammatical structures and verbs used to refer to states of illness, Khmer seems to veer particularly far afield from what we're used to in English. That is to say, some of the constructions are really going to seem weird to you and your English language brain. Which means you're going to have to work a bit harder than usual to get those verbs and structures to "sink in."

We can divide the major ways of talking about illness into three types of constructions:

1. ឈឺ "to be sick;" "to hurt" This verb has no corollary in English. Or rather,

the semantic area it covers overlaps a little bit with our English “hurt,” perhaps, but it covers so much more as well. First, we have simply ខ្ញុំឈឺ which translates as “I’m sick.” Notice that there’s no “to be” verb in the Khmer construction; using ជា is a common mistake made by non-native speakers talking about illness in Khmer. However, ឈឺ is also used to refer to specific body parts hurting, and that’s done in this way:

ខ្ញុំឈឺដៃ “My arm hurts.”

គាត់ឈឺក “My neck hurts.”

Notice that we really don’t have a verb that works in this way in English, so be on guard against wanting to use this verb in an English fashion (in other words, you never want to say ដៃខ្ញុំឈឺ).

2. កើត This verb means in other contexts, you’ll remember, “to be born” and “to give birth.” When used in the context of illness, it means “to catch” or “to come down with” an illness or for a given condition or disease to develop. Thus we can say:

ខ្ញុំកើតរលេង “I developed tuberculosis.”

ម្តាយខ្ញុំកើតរោគហើមសួត “My mother caught pneumonia.”

Again, this is not a construction we’re used to in English, so spend some time practicing it. Note that the general word for disease or illness, រោគ, is often used in conjunction with this verb.

3. Active Verbs or verbs which carry within them the whole sense of “catching” and “having” a given illness. The only two of these you need to worry

about now are គ្រិន “to have/catch a fever,” and ផ្លាសាយ “to have/catch a cold.” Again, the way these verbs are a little weird to our English ears:

ខ្ញុំគ្រិន I have/had/caught a fever.

កូនខ្ញុំផ្លាសាយ My child has/had/caught a cold.

Note that for other terms/constructions relating to health, weirdness also abounds. Take pregnancy, for instance. There are many terms used to refer to it, but of these, only the vulgar term (used to refer to animals, and humans with whom one is either intimate or despises), functions “normally:” ងើម .

ឆ្មារនោះវាងើម That cat is pregnant.

However, consider this term, which is a polite term for pregnancy, and how it works in a sentence:

ខ្ញុំមានទំងន់ I’m pregnant. (literally, “I have weight”)

...or this one, introduced to you in Audio Track 128 in this chapter:

បងស្រីខ្ញុំមានផ្ទៃពោះ My older sister is pregnant. (literally, “My older sister has stomach surface”)

To make a long story short, there are lots of idiomatic constructions like those above related to illness and health, and if you want to discuss those topics, you’re just going to have to memorize them. Here are a few others, several of which you’ve been introduced to in the Audio Tracks for this chapter:

ចង់ “to be inclined to” Some examples ចង់ក្អក “to be nauseous” ចង់ដួល “to walk in a stumbling manner”

ស្រួល “to be comfortable, well” Some examples: គាត់មិនស្រួលខ្លួន He’s not well.

ខ្ញុំស្រួលហើយ I’ve recovered, I’m better.

There’s one more important way of talking about illness (and misfortune in gen-

eral. Yes, it's another "weird" construction, and it deserves its very own Grammar Note, on the next page.

G.2 The "Disastrative" in Khmer

There's no true "passive voice" in Khmer, but there is a strange little construction that appears to function like a passive construction does in Western languages, at least in some respects. Here's the really bizarre thing, though: this construction is only used to discuss events deemed by the speaker to be negative in nature. It's only used to talk about misfortune and disaster. Therefore, I've labeled this verb,

ត្រូវ, "the disastrative." By the way, a very similar construction exists in Thai,

and the exact same construction exists in Khmer's cousin language, Vietnamese.

The way the disastrative functions is very similar to how បាន functions in one of its many guises. However, បាន in this usage always refers to positive occurrences:

ខ្ញុំបានគេជួយ "He helped me," or "I was helped by him," or even "I encountered the beneficial act of him helping me." Another example of this usage of បាន is ព្រះខ្ញុំបានលុយពីគាត់ "She gave my uncle money," or "My uncle received money from him."

Here's how ត្រូវ does this when reporting negative, unfavorable situations:

ខ្ញុំត្រូវគេវាយ "He hit me," or "I encountered the unfortunate occurrence of him hitting me.":

គាត់ត្រូវទ្បានបុក "She was hit by a car," or "She encountered the negative situation of a car hitting her."

Is this starting to make sense? The important thing to remember about this use of

ត្រូវ is that it can only be used to report events or actions the speaker deems to be negative or undesirable. Ask your teacher if you need more examples and explanation. Also, relax: at a beginning level of Khmer, don't worry too much about incorporating this structure into your speech but do recognize it when you hear it.