

From "A Comparative Dictionary of the Pwo Karen Dialect"
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GRAMMATICAL INTRODUCTION.

[The sections of this introduction correspond with those of Dr. Gilmore's Grammar of Sgaw-Karen. In a large number of cases Dr. Gilmore's actual phraseology is retained and it is hoped that the practical advantage which accrue from this arrangement may mitigate the charge of plagiarism.]

1. The Pwo dialect of Karen is spoken by people who call themselves Sho ရှိ or Hplon Mu-hteik မိုဝ်းမိဝ်း. Sgaw Karens are called by Pwos, Shan ရှဲ or Hplon Hpa-hteik မိုဝ်းဖါဝ်း. The alternative titles mean respectively Karens of the mother and father stems. In Karen sex-couplets, the female element is always given precedence which way perhaps be a vestige of matriarchy. The inference in this present case is that Pwo, being the mother-stem, is the senior of the two chief Karen dialects.

The Pwo dialect is split up into two chief sub-dialects which are called by the people themselves ပုဒဲး and တဲးကျဲ. These dialects are sufficiently diverse in pronunciation and vocabulary to make Karens who only know one resort to Burmese when they wish to converse together. The ပုဒဲး sub-dialect is regarded as the senior and it is the pronunciation and vocabulary of this sub-dialect which is preserved in the printed books. The ပုဒဲး live for the most part in Tenasserim Division and the တဲးကျဲ in the Delta of the Irrawaddy. The two dialects are referred to in this work as Tenasserim Pwo (T.P.) and Delta Pwo (D.P.)

2. The Pwos have an abundant store of traditions consisting of folk-lore and legends strongly tinged with Buddhism. They have proved much more susceptible to Burmese influence than their Sgaw brethren and their folk-lore shows traces of this influence. Attempts have been made from time to time

to reduce these legends to writing and to give them the appearance of incunabula by the use of palm-leaved pages and unfamiliar characters. The Talaing alphabet has been used for this purpose but has never had any vogue. Dr. Mason has preserved one of these legends in his "Synopsis of a Grammar of the Karen Language."

3. The same erudite, if somewhat wayward, scholar was the pioneer of the modern Pwo Karen script. Dr. Mason used English and Greek characters to make up the defects of Burmese but the result was not very satisfactory, as may be gathered from the fact that it was called by the Karens လံ့ဆဲၵုၵု "the scratchings of fowls!" Dr. Mason's system was simplified by Dr. Brayton and it is this system which is now exclusively used in the printing of Pwo books. In the present work the spelling is that of T.P; but where pronunciation is indicated it is usually that of D.P.

4. The Alphabet.

The letters of the alphabet are derived from the Burmese characters with certain modifications; there are twenty-five consonant and eleven vowel signs.

5. Consonants: --

က, ခ, ဂ, ဃ, င,

စ, ဇ, ဆ, ရှ,

တ, ထ, ဒ, န,

ပ, ဖ, ဘ, မ,

ယ, ရ, လ, ဝ,

၁, ဟ, ဇ, ပု,

6. Pronunciation.

With the exception of the following, the consonants are pronounced as in Burmese: --

ဂ is the uvular R the Northumbrian burr. ဃ is the above preceded by the velar fricative Ch heard in Scotch loch. When ဃ is combined with ဝ the ဂ sound is dropped and only Ch is heard.

ရ is the trilled R

ဝ is the Burmese ဝ

ဧ is voiced H

ယ is pronounced by D.P. as ယ

7. Combination of consonants.

ယ, ရ, လ, ဝ, may be combined with other consonants as follows: --

က₂ / က / ယ / kya

ကြ / က / ရ / kra

ကျ / က / လ / kla

ကွ / က / ဝ / kwa

8. The eleven vowel signs are: --

အ, အါ, အံ, အ့, အဲ, အ့

အိ, အု, အူ, အို, အီ

9. ə is the indeterminate vowel as a in above

ɑ back open vowel as a in father

e front close vowel as ea in eat

ɜ front middle vowel as a in late

aɪ diphthong ai as in aisle

ɪ mixed half-open vowel as i in bird

ɪ spread close vowel

y round, close, front vowel as u French du

u close, back vowel as oo in pool

ɔ half-close, back vowel

aʊ diphthong a u as ow in how

10. Nasalisation of the vowels is indicated by the sign [◌̃] which in combination with a tone-sign is reduced to one dot below the tone-sign:

e.g., ◌̃̇, ◌̃̈, ◌̃̉

11. ə is scarcely distinguishable from ɜ e.g., ə is pronounced am and pə padu.

12. The value of ɜ in certain combination is so near to ə that the foreign ear finds it difficult to detect the difference.

13. The sound ɪ lies between ɪ and y and is known by the phonetic sign $\text{u}@\text{}$. When in combination with ◌̃̇ it is not distinguishable from ɜ e.g. $\text{ɪ}̃̇$ & $\text{ɜ}̃̇$ are pronounced alike.

14. Tones.

Tones are certain modifications of the sound values of the words of isolating languages corresponding to the inflections of agglutinative languages. These modifications are of a composite character and may affect at one and the same time the pitch, duration and modulation of the sounds. A tone may therefore be described as to its pitch, whether high or low; its duration, whether long or short; and its modulation, whether rising, level or falling.

Six different tones are indicated in Pwo Karen script but as the language is pronounced by D.P. there are now only four tones. The terms used by the Karens to differentiate the various tones, indicate the nature of the sign used to denote them and provide no clue as to their pronunciation. It is better to use a nomenclature which refers to the sound rather than to the sign; and so, in the schedule below, the tones are designated by terms which refer to their most conspicuous sound characteristics.

15. i. The high tone.

This is the tone implied when no tone-sign is used:
high pitch, short duration, rising modulation

ii. The middle tone ◉z

middle pitch, long duration, level modulation

iii. The low tone ◉J or ◉1

low pitch, short duration, falling modulation.

iv. The checked tone ◉L or ◉s

high pitch, short duration, modulation cut out by glottal check.

N.B. The indeterminate vowel, although it is not followed by a tone-sign, is a variation of the middle tone but with shorter duration.

16. When the tone-signs follow ဝါ the ဝါ is omitted and understood; this is the case also when ဝါ is followed by the sign [◌:] indicating nasalisation. e.g. မါး is written မး.

17. Sound-shiftings between Pwo and Sgaw.

The Pwo and Sgaw dialects are very closely allied and in a large number of cases the vocabulary is identical except for slight modifications. These modifications of vowel, consonant and tone obey certain laws which may be compared with those which govern the Aryan languages as expressed in Grimm's law.

18. The following general principles may be laid down with regard to the relationship existing between cognate Pwo and Sgaw words:

(a) Pwo has aspirated where Sgaw has the corresponding unaspirated consonants: --

Pwo ခါ break / Sgaw ကါ

Pwo ထိး bridge / Sgaw တိး

Pwo ဖျါ arrow / Sgaw ပျါ

(b) Breathed consonants in Pwo are replaced by the corresponding voiced consonants in Sgaw: --

Pwo ထဲး branch / Sgaw ဒဲး

Pwo ဖျါ smooth / Sgaw ဘျါ

(c) Occasionally the reverse is the case: --

Pwo ဒါ see / Sgaw ထိး

(d) The formative affix is often omitted in Pwo: --

Pwo နါ bee / Sgaw ကဲး

Pwo မုါး maiden / Sgaw မုါးကဲး

Pwo ခိး mango / Sgaw သိး

(e) Pwo ယ corresponds with Sgaw ည : --

Pwo ယၢ before / Sgaw ညါ

Pwo ယီၤ easy / Sgaw ညီ

Pwo ယၢၤ mercy / Sgaw သးကညီ

(f) Pwo ရှ or ဖ corresponds with Sgaw ပု, ဖု, စု, ဆု : --

Pwo ရှါ old / Sgaw ပုါ

Pwo ပွဲ buy / Sgaw ပုါ

Pwo ပံ sow / Sgaw ဖံ

Pwo ရှဲ few / Sgaw စုါ

Pwo ပံ clean / Sgaw ဆံ

(g) Pwo nasalised ဝါ corresponds with Sgaw အိ : --

Pwo ခဲ foot / Sgaw ခိံ

(h) Other nasal vowels in Pwo are represented in Sgaw by the corresponding pure vowels: --

Pwo ဗာ heavy / Sgaw ဃါ

(i) The middle, low and checked tones are usually consonant: --

Pwo မဲ rice / Sgaw မုါ

Pwo ယာ fish / Sgaw ညံ

Pwo ဘာ itch / Sgaw သး

(j) The high tone in Pwo sometimes corresponds with the low tone in Sgaw: --

Pwo ယါ sail / Sgaw ယါ

(k) The low tone in Pwo sometimes corresponds with the high tone in Sgaw: --

Pwo မါ wife / Sgaw မါ

19. Pronunciation is the same as in English.

20. Figures are the same as in Burmese.

The Structure of the Sentence.

21. The order of words in Karen may be illustrated by the following simple sentence: စဘွဲးသ့ဂံ့လီၤ. S' Bwa builds a house, စဘွဲး S' Bwa, subject; သ့ builds, predicate, ဂံ့ house, object; လီၤ a particle used to mark the close of a declarative sentence.

A Karen sentence, therefore, resembles an English sentence in two particulars.

- (1) The order of words is: subject, predicate, object.
- (2) The subject and object are recognized by their position in the sentence.

22. Modifiers may be added to the above sentence as follows:

လဘျးဘျးစဘွဲးသးရှါနီၤသ့ထံ့ဂံ့သ့ၤလီၤ. sometimes, old S' Bwa builds a house quickly, လဘျးဘျး sometimes, adverbial modifier; သးရှါ old, adjective modifying စဘွဲး; နီၤ demonstrative modifying စဘွဲး; သ့ၤလီၤ quickly, adverb modifying သ့ထံ့.

In a Karen sentence, therefore: --

- (1) An adjective modifier follows the noun which it modifies.
- (2) An adverbial modifier stands after the verb and its object, if it have one; but,
- (3) An adverbial modifier denoting time may stand at the beginning of the sentence.

Parts of Speech.

23. The Karen language has the nine following parts of speech; nouns, pronouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, interjections and particles.

24. But it must be understood that the distinction between the different parts of speech is by no means so sharply defined in Karen as in English. The same word will appear now as this, and now as that part of speech, according to the office it performs in its sentence.

Thus in the phrase ကံ့အိၣ်, a big house, အိၣ် appears as an adjective; in ကံ့အိၣ်ဝဲ, the house is big, အိၣ် appears as a verb; in ကံ့အိၣ်ဆဲးအိၣ်, the bigness of the house, အိၣ် forms a noun.

25. Among the most striking peculiarities of the Karen language are its paired words, or couplets. Sometimes two words of analogous signification are united to form a word of slightly different meaning from either; sometimes the couplet consists of two synonymous words; sometimes it consists of a significant root which, out of the couplet, has no meaning. Couplets are found among nouns, adjectives, verbs and adverbs.

26-27. A proper noun is usually preceded by the name of the class to which the individual belongs; ခးဒိၣ်ဂံး Burma, (ခး meaning country;) ဝံးတခိၣ် Rangoon (ဝံး meaning city.) Names of men are preceded by the particle စ; e.g. စရွၣ်ယိၣ် S' Shwe Young. Names of women are preceded by the article နး e.g. နးအိၣ်တြဲၣ် Nant Aung Pyu.

28-30. Common nouns may be derived from: --

- (1) Verbal roots.
- (2) Adjective roots.
- (3) Other noun roots.

31. Nouns are formed from verbal roots in the following ways: --

- (1) Abstract nouns of action are formed: --
 - (a) By prefixing the particle ဆဲး to the verbal root; e.g. from the root လဲး, to go, is formed the noun ဆဲးလဲး going, journey.
 - (b) By simply using the verbal root as a noun, qualifying it by a demonstrative adjective;

e.g. နှစ်ဆယ့်နှစ် ယနာ့ဘာအလ. I don't understand what you say.

(2) Nouns of agency are formed by prefixing ပု person, to the verb, and at the same time affixing ဖိ; e.g. ပုလှဲဆဲဖိ a traveller, sometimes the affix ဖိ is omitted.

(3) Instrumental nouns are formed by prefixing နိ to the verbal root; e.g. ဝ, to shake, နိဝ a pudding stick.

(4) Nouns denoting where an action takes place are formed by prefixing လး, place, to the verbal root; e.g. မိ, to sleep; လးမိ, a bed.

32. Abstract nouns of quality are formed by prefixing to the adjectival root the particle ဆဲ; e.g. ဒိ, great; ဆဲဒိ, greatness.

33. Nouns are formed from other noun roots in the following ways: --

(1) Diminutives are formed by adding ဖိ, young, little, to the noun root; e.g. ထုံ a dog; ထုံဖိ, a little dog, a puppy.

(2) Gentile nouns, and all nouns expressing residence, are formed by affixing ဖိ to the name of the place, e.g. ဝး, city; ဝးဖိ, citizens. The particle ပု is generally prefixed as well. e.g. ဒိဂံ, Burma, ပုဒိဂံဖိ Burmans.

(3) Two or more noun roots may be combined; e.g. ထံချိ river, ခုလူးခိ knee.

34. Noun couplets are formed by the combination of two noun roots, each of which is generally followed or preceded by a particle, which serves to connect them: e.g. ထံဘံလံဘံ, or ထံဖိလံဖိ, birds, ဆဲခိဆဲတဲ, grace, ဆဲဂုဆဲဘွဲ, goodness, ပထံပခဲ my country, နဖိနလဲ your descendents, အဂံအပု, his buildings. In the last three examples the connecting particle is a personal pronoun in the possessive case.

Gender.

35–38. The Karen language recognizes only natural gender.

39. The gender of indeterminate nouns may be distinguished by the following affixes: ပုၤ or ခုၤ masculine, applied to human beings.

ပုမုၤ or မုၤ feminine, applied to human beings.

ဖၤ masculine, applied to animals.

မိၤ feminine, applied to animals.

e.g. ဖိၤၤ child, ဖိၤၤအခုၤ boy, ဖိၤၤအမုၤ girl,

ကဲၤ horse, ကဲၤဖၤ stallion, ကဲၤမိၤ mare.

Number.

40. Karen nouns convey of themselves no idea of number; e.g. the noun ဂံၤ may mean house or houses. The number is often left to be inferred from the context. When, however, it is desired definitely to mark the number, this can be done.

41. The singular is denoted by the numeral, က or လ; e.g. ဂံၤကဖျိၤ, ဂံၤလဖျိၤ.

42. The plural may be noted in the following ways: --

(1) By the use of a numeral adjective;

e.g. ဂံၤနံၤဖျိၤ two houses, ဂံၤအံၤဖျိၤ many houses.

(2) By any one of the following affixes လဖၤ, the usual affix;

e.g. ဂံၤလဖၤ houses. ဝံၤ used with the vocative, or with pronouns;

e.g. ထၤဂံၤဝံၤဖျိၤ, brethren.

အဝံၤဝံၤ they

ဝံၤလဖၤ used principally with pronouns; e.g. အဝံၤဝံၤလဖၤ they.

(3) The plural, when used to convey the idea of generality is often expressed by a couplet; e.g. ဂံၤဝံၤဂံၤဝံၤ, houses or buildings in general.

43-44. With regard to case, the "absolute case" alone calls for remark as being peculiar to Karen. Its function is to name prominently at the beginning of the sentence, and thus to emphasize the person or thing about which some statement is made in the remainder of the sentence ကံ့ကပျိုနီယ ယဗွ့ယုယု.
I have bought that house.

45. In Karen, as in English, the case of the noun is indicated, not by inflection, but by the position of the word in the sentence. Where this is not sufficient, recourse is had to particles.

46. Regularly, the subject precedes the verb, and the object follows it; e.g. စဘွ့ဘုဂံ့လီ, *S' Bwa builds a house*, စဘွ့ the subject, precedes the verb, ဘု; and ကံ့ the object, follows it.

47. Karen nouns, like English nouns, are often governed by prepositions; e.g. ယလုးစီလုးဝံးတခိး *I am going to Rangoon*. Here ဝံးတခိး is governed by the preposition စီလုး. Nouns follow the preposition by which they are governed. (N.B. စီ is often omitted e.g. ယလုးလုးဝံးတခိး.)

48. Where in English a verb has two objects, or one direct and one indirect object, the Karen may place either one as the direct object of the verb, and the other will then be governed by the preposition လု; e.g. where the English says, *I give S' Bwa a book*, the Karen may say, ယဖုးစဘွ့လုလံလဲဘံ့ or ယဖုးလံလဲဘံ့လုစဘွ့လီ.

49. In Karen, verbal nouns as well as verbs may take objects; e.g. ဆးအဲနုး *love (for) you*.

50. A noun in the possessive construction is joined to the name of the thing possessed by the particle အ; e.g. စဘွ့အကံ့ *S' Bwa's house*.

51. A noun in the vocative case is followed by the particle ဧ,
e.g. စဘွဲဧ S' Bwa.
(N.B. D.P. pronounce ဧ, as ဂါး.)

52. Substantives in the absolute construction stand first in the sentence, free of all grammatical relation thereto, and are usually followed by the demonstrative adjective, ယိး or နိး; e.g. ဂံ့အဝါနိး စဘွဲဧယုထုဝါလိး, that house, S' Bwa built it. Here ဂံ့ is in the absolute construction, followed by နိး, that. Occasionally the particle ဘိး takes the place of the particle ယိး or နိး; more commonly it follows one of them, e.g. ဂံ့အဝါနိးဘိး, စဘွဲဧယုထုဝါလိး.

Pronouns.

53. Karen Pronouns are principally Personal, though Interrogative and Indefinite Pronouns exist.

54. There are no Relative Pronouns in Karen. Relative clauses are common; but they are connected with the nouns which they modify by means of the conjunction ဝါ, the pronouns used being personal pronouns of the third person.

Personal pronouns.

55. In Karen, as in English, the personal pronouns are declined, the cases being marked by case forms. The following tables exhibit the three personal pronouns in their various numbers and cases.

Gender is not distinguished.

Singular / Plural

(First Person)

Nom. ဝ / ဝ

Poss. ဝ / ဝ

Obj. ဝါး [pronounced ဝါး by D.P.] / ဝါး [pronounced ဝါး by D.P.]

(Second Person)

Nom. န / နံ

Poss. န / နံ

Obj. န [D.P pronounce it န] / နံ

(Third Person)

Nom. အ / အံ

Poss. အ / အံ

Obj. အ / အံ

56-57. After the verb မဲ့, to be, the objective forms of the personal pronouns are used instead of nominative forms; e.g. မဲ့ယလီ. (not မဲ့ယလီ.) it is I.

58. Besides the regular pronouns, Karen possesses a pronominal affix ဝါ. This is affixed to verbs in the third person, particularly in subordinate clauses. It is also affixed to pronouns of all persons in forming compounds. When ဝါ follow a verb it is never an object; e.g. ဂံလံဝံယလီဝါ, နအံ the house which S' Myat built, have you seen it? There ဝါ refers to the subject, S' Myat, and not to the object, ဂံ. In this construction ဝါ is often used like ဝါ.

59-61. The simple forms tabulated under 55 form a base from which a number of pronominal forms are built up, by means of the particles ဝါ and အ, the word နအံ, self, and the demonstrative adjectives, ယံ this, and နံ that. Such forms are generally self-explanatory. Their cases are indicated like those of nouns. The more common forms are noted below.

Singular / Plural

1st Pers. ယဝါ, ယဝါ / ယဝါ, ယဝါ

2nd Pers. နဝါ, နဝါ / နဝါ, နဝါ

3rd Pers. အဝါ, အဝါ / အဝါ, အဝါ

[ယဝါ and နဝါ are the forms used colloquially.]

62. The absolute forms of the pronoun (like the absolute form of the noun) are generally followed by one of the demonstrative adjectives ယီး and နီၵ and sometimes by the particle ဘီၵ; e.g. ယူၵၵယီး, အဝံၵနီၵ, နူၵဘီၵ.

63. In the absolute forms, ဒၵ is often omitted.

e.g. ယူၵ, ယလုးဝံၵအုၵ, as for me, I cannot go.

64. In the first and second persons, the objective form often takes the place of the proper absolute form.

e.g. ယၵ, ယကဘလုးလီၵ. As for me, I shall have to go.

65. The use of the absolute form is illustrated in the following sentences;

နဝံၵယီး နလုးဝံၵအုၵ as for you, you cannot go.

အဝံၵနီၵ အဂံၵအိၵလၵဝံးတခိးအဖၵလီၵ as for them, their house is in Rangoon.

Intensive Pronouns.

66. Intensive forms of the personal pronouns are formed by adding to the possessive case the word နုၵဆိ, self, and the particle ဝံၵဒၵ. They are as follows.

Singular / Plural

1st Pers. ယနုၵဆိဒၵယဝံၵ / ပနုၵဆိဒၵပဝံၵ.

2nd Pers. နနုၵဆိဒၵနဝံၵ / နဝံၵအနုၵဆိဒၵပဝံၵ.

3rd Pers. အနုၵဆိဒၵပဝံၵ / အဝံၵအနုၵဆိဒၵပဝံၵ, အနုၵဆိဝံၵဒၵပဝံၵ.

67. The forms are used in apposition with a substantive, for emphasis.

e.g. စထိးအနုၵဆိဒၵပဝံၵကလုးလီၵ, S' Tun himself will go.

ယကလုးယနုၵဆိဒၵယဝံၵလီၵ. I will go myself.

68. The same thing may be indicated by affixing the forms ဒၵယူၵ, ဒၵပဝံၵ etc. to the verb. e.g. နဝံၵကလုးဒၵနဝံၵပဝံၵလီၵ. you will go yourselves.

69. The forms mentioned in 68, affixed to nouns which follow a substantive in the possessive, convey the same idea as the English word own; e.g. ယလံဒေယဝု၊ ယလံဒေယု my own book.

Reflexive Pronouns.

70. Reflexive forms of the personal pronouns are made by affixing to the possessive case the word ဘ self. They are as follows.

Singular / Plural

1st Pers. ယဘ / ယဘ

2nd Pers. နဘ / နဘအဘ

3rd Pers. အဘ / အဘ

71. These forms are used as the objects of the verbs, when the person affected by the action is the same as the person performing it; e.g. စမ္ပုဆုလဒုအဘလီ၊ S' Myat stabs himself. These forms always appear as direct objectives, while the intensive forms previously described are generally used in apposition. An intensive pronoun, however, sometimes takes the place of a proper reflexive.

72. The pronoun အ may also be classed among the reflexives. It takes the place of the personal pronoun of the third person in indirect discourse, referring to the speaker;

e.g. ယဖိခွါစံလအကလဒုလီ၊ my son says that he (son) will go.

Possessive Pronouns.

73. The possessive pronouns mine, thine, etc. are formed by affixing ဝု or ဆ to the possessive forms of the personal pronouns;

e.g. လံနိမ္ပဲယဝုလီ၊ လံနိမ္ပဲယဆလီ၊ that book is mine.

74. ဝု and ဆ may be similarly used with nouns in the possessive case;

e.g. လံနိမ္ပဲစမ္ပုဝုလီ or လံနိမ္ပဲစမ္ပုဆလီ၊ that book is S' Myat's.

Demonstrative Pronouns.

75. Properly speaking, the Karen language has no demonstrative pronouns. Their place is supplied, however, by combining the demonstrative adjectives ယီ, this and နီ, that, with the personal pronoun of the third person. အဝါယီ this, အဝါနီ that.

Interrogative Pronouns.

76. The Interrogative adjectives described in [101](#) and [102](#), are used also as interrogative pronouns; e.g. အဝါမဆးနီလဲ what is he doing?
နဒ့ပလာလဂဲလဲ whom do you see?
ဂံနီဖျိနီ နအဲဒိဝေဖျိလဲ, which of the two houses do you like?

77. The interrogative possessive pronoun, whose, is formed by affixing ဝါ or အဆး to the interrogative pronoun ပလာ; e.g. လံအဝါမဲပလာဝါလဲ;
လံအဝါမဲပလာအဆးလဲ whose is this book?

Indefinite Pronouns

78. ဆး is used as the subject of impersonal verbs;
e.g. ဆးဂဲဆးလီ, it rains.

79. ပု or ဆး is often used as an indefinite subject to a verb in the third person singular, when we do not know, or do not wish to express, the subject of the verb; e.g. ဆး (or ပု) ဒိဝါလီ, somebody beat him.

80. ပု is often used indefinitely in the objective case to express people in general.

81-82. ဆး is used as an indefinite object to verbs which require one but to which no definite object can be assigned;
e.g. ယဒ့ဆးလီ, I see, literally, I see things.

83. Many of the indefinite adjectives described under 99 are also used as indefinite pronouns;

e.g. နအံ့အာယာတၢ, ပွဲနုယာနးဘံ့ဆံၣ်, if you see any fish, buy me one.

Adjective.

84. Most of the roots which in English would be regarded as essentially adjectival in their signification, are in Karen considered as verbs. Under this head come all the roots expressive of quality; e.g. the root ဂ့, expressive of goodness, means, not good, but to be good. So with many roots expressive of quantity; e.g. ဒိၣ် means, not great, but to be great. And such words are constantly used as verbs, the verbal meaning being the primitive one.

Adjectives of Quality.

85. Adjectives of quality are generally adjective (relative) clauses in an abbreviated form. "A good man" would originally be expressed by ပုလၢအဂ့, a man that is good. But it is commonly expressed in an abbreviated form, ပုအဂ့, the relative conjunction, လၢ, being omitted. It is sometimes still further abbreviated by omitting the pronoun အ, when it would stand simply ပုဂ့, ပုရဲဂ့.

Adjectives of Quantity

86-87. Some adjectives expressive of magnitude are formed by prefixing the particle ဖ (very) to verbal roots. Such adjectives immediately follow the nouns which they modify; e.g. ပုရဲဖဒိၣ် a great man.

Numeral Adjectives.

88. The following are the cardinal numerals.

၁ လၢ, ၂ နံၣ်, ၃ ဘၢ, ၄ လံ, ၅ ယဲ, ၆ ညူ, ၇ န့ၣ်, ၈ ပိၣ်, ၉ ခံၣ်, ၁၀ ကဆံၣ်,
၁၁ ကဆံၣ်လၢ, ၁၀၀ ကယဲ, ၁၀၀၀ ကထီၣ်, ၁၀၀၀၀ ကလၢ,
၁၀၀,၀၀၀ ကကုၣ်, ၁,၀၀၀,၀၀၀ ကခဲး, ၁၀,၀၀၀,၀၀၀ ကဘဲ.

89. A numeral adjective almost invariably follows the noun which it modifies, and is itself followed by an auxiliary word expressing some quality of the noun to which it refers; e.g. ပုရှုယဲဝဲ, five men. ဝဲ is the numeral adjunct used in speaking of rational beings. ပနီၤဘၣ်ဒုး three buffaloes. ဒုး is the numeral adjunct used in speaking of quadrupeds.

90. Numeral Adjuncts.

- ကဲၣ် the bend of a river ထံၣ်ချီၣ်ကဲၣ် or ထံၣ်ကဲၣ်
- ကဲး a strip of bamboo or wood ဝၢကဲး, ဝံၣ်ကဲး
- ကုး a piece of bamboo or wood ဝၢကုး, ဝံၣ်ကုး
- ခဲၣ် a burnt stick ဝံၣ်မုကဲး
- ခု (1) a stick နီၣ်ခုကဲး (2) a petticoat နီၣ်ခု
- ခိၣ် couples, pairs, guns, carts, ပနီၣ်ကိၣ် a yoke of buffaloes, ကျီၣ်ကိၣ် a gun.
- လဲၣ်ကိၣ် a cart.
- ခါ sides of things ခုနီၣ်ခါ two feet
- ချး coils ဂုကချး, ဖျဲကချး
- ခွဲ garlands ဖီၣ်ကခွဲ
- ဝဲ rational beings ပုရှုဘၣ်ဝဲ
- ဝိၣ် a portion of kauk hnyin မုးအဲးကဝိၣ်
- ဝိၣ် two handfuls ဘၣ်ကဝိၣ်, ဂူဆၢကဝိၣ်
- စု one handful ဘၣ်ကစု, ဂူဆၢကစု
- ဆၢ stories, flats ကဆၢနီၣ်ဆၢ
- ဆဲး ears of paddy ဘၣ်ကဆဲး
- ဆၢ verses လံၣ်ကဆၢနီၣ်ဆၢ
- ဆိး races, nations ပုရှုကဆိး
- တၢ baskets ဘၣ်ကတၢ
- ထံၣ် words ဆၢချဲးကထံၣ်
- ထံး trees ဝံၣ်ကထံး
- ထု posts, trees ဝံၣ်ကထု
- ထု bundles ဝၢကထု
- ထူ rolls ချီၣ်ကထူ
- ဒဲး tides ထံၣ်ကဒဲး

ဒုး quadrupeds ထုံ့နံာဒုး
 ဒိး bees, nests နံာကဒိး, ထိာအဝံာကဒိး
 ဒိး group of persons ဂံ့ဖိာကဒိး
 ပိး heaps လီခါကပိး
 ဖး flowers ဖိာဆာဆူနံာဖး
 ဖး openings ပဲးတရါဘာဖး
 ဖါ felled trees ဝံ့ကဖါ
 ဖိး spherical or approximately spherical objects
 (လံာမိာဘကဖိး, ဂံ့ကဖိး, ခါကဖိး, ကဘးကဖိး, လးဆာနးကဖိး)
 တံ့ (1) flat things ယကတံ့/လံကတံ့ (2) fowls etc. ထိာကတံ့ one bird
 တီး cylindrical ဂုကတီး
 မံး a thing ဆာကမံးနံာမံး
 မိး words ဆာချဲးကမိး
 ယိး T.P. ယှ D.P songs and poems ဆာဒးအံ့လယိး, ဆာဒးအံ့လယှ
 လး places ဆံကလး, ပုးကလး

91. There are a number of words denoting portions, quantities or collections, which are used in a similar manner to the numeral auxiliaries; e.g. ထံာကကံး a drink of water, မုးကစူ a handful of sand.

92. When there is no numeral adjunct proper to a noun, and sometimes even when there is a numeral which might be used, the noun itself is repeated after the numeral; ဝံးကဝံး a city, ခးကခး a country, ဂံ့ကဂံ့ a house.

93. Sometimes there is a choice of numeral adjuncts for the same noun; e.g. မုးလဲလတီာ, မုးလဲလဖိး an eye.

94. Numerals are sometimes prefixed to the nouns which they modify; e.g. ကဝံးဘကဝံး from town to town, ယဲနံးပူနံး five or six days.

95. The numeral adjuncts regularly follow the numerals with which they stand. But when the numeral is ten or a multiple of ten, the adjunct precedes the numeral, and is itself preceded by the particle အ;

e.g. ပုရှ်အဂးနံဆံၤ twenty men.

96-97. The formation of the ordinal numerals will easily be understood from the following examples.

အဆုထံကဂး the first (man) / အဆုထံ means beginning

အဆုထံကမံး the first (thing)

နံဂးကဂး the second (man)

သးမံးကမံး the third (thing)

လံဒုကဒု the fourth (quadruped)

98. Multiplicatives are formed by affixing စ to the cardinal numerals;

e.g. သးစ threefold.

Indefinite Adjectives.

99. The numeral adjuncts form the basis of a number of common idioms expressing ideas of number or quantity.

(1) Certain indefinite numeral adjectives are combined with the numeral auxiliaries, in the same manner as the cardinal numerals. These are အ many, ရှ် few, and တဘျ် several

e.g. မံသးခွါအဂး many boys, မံသးမုဂှ်ဂး few girls, ပုရှ်တဘျ်ဂး several men.

(2) The numeral က or လ one, with an appropriate numeral, often has the sense of the English indefinite article, e.g. ချံကဖျံ a boat.

(3) The numeral က or လ one, with a reduplicated numeral is used in referring indefinitely to a person or thing; e.g. ပုမုကဂး some woman, ဆးကဘံးဘံး some fowl.

(4) The indefinite adjective of quantity, ကနဲ့ or လနဲ့, some, is formed from the numeral က or လ by means of the particle နဲ့.

(5) The reduplicated form ကနဲ့နဲ့ or လနဲ့နဲ့ is used in referring indefinitely to more than one person or thing;

ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ကနဲ့နဲ့ some men, ခဲတၢကနဲ့နဲ့ some pencils.

(6) In a similar way are formed

ကဆံ့s or လဆံ့s, ကဆံ့ဆံ့s or လဆံ့ဆံ့s, a little.

(7) Universality is expressed by placing a numeral auxiliary between က or လ and လါလါ; e.g. ကမံ့လါလါ every thing.

(8) The same idea is expressed by placing a numeral auxiliary between ကိံs and ဒုး; e.g. ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ကိံsကဒုး every man.

(9) Completeness is expressed by placing a numeral adjunct between ထၢ and ယၢ; e.g. ထံထၢဖျိၣ်ယၢ the whole city.

(10) A complete number may be expressed by affixing လူ or ယၢ, to any one of the ordinal numerals; e.g. ဘၣ်မံ့လူ, ဘၣ်မံ့ယၢ all three (things)

(11) Singularity is expressed by placing the numeral က or လ with the suitable adjunct between နှၢ and လီၤ; e.g. နှၢကကလီၤ only one (man)

(12) Identity is expressed by placing the numeral adjunct between က or လ and ဗး, e.g. ပုဂ္ဂိုလ်ကကဗး the same man.

(13) Utter non-existence of a thing is expressed by introducing a numeral auxiliary between နး and အဲ, e.g. ထံ့အီၣ်နးဒုးအဲ there is not a single dog.

100. Certain other indefinite adjectives of quantity are formed independently of the numeral system. Such are ထီးလူ or ထီးအလူ, ထီးလူထီးဆံ့ or ထီးအလူအဆံ့ all, which follow their nouns; e.g. ပုရှ်ထီးလူ or ပုရှ်ထီးအလူ all men. ထီးဒ် whoever, or whatever, which precedes its noun; e.g. ထီးဒ်ပုရှ် whatever man.

Interrogative Adjectives.

101. The common interrogatives are ပလာကက or လက referring to persons, and ဆာနီလမံ့ referring to things;

e.g. နဂဲလ်ဆရာပလာလကလဲ with what teacher did you come?

နအဲဒ်အုဆာနီ အာလမံ့လဲ what fruit do you want to eat?

After ဆာနီ, လမံ့ may be omitted, in which case the construction would be နအဲဒ်အုဆာနီ ဘလဲ.

102. An interrogative with a selective force is formed by prefixing ဝ to the appropriate numeral adjunct;

e.g. နအဲဒ်ဒီးထဘံ့ဘံ့လဲ which knife do you want?

103. Interrogative adjectives of quantity are made by prefixing ဆံ့ to the indefinite adjectives of quantity; e.g. ဆံ့ဒ် how great, ဆံ့အ how much,

how many. နဘုအိဆံ့အလဲ how much paddy have you? These are used

both in direct and indirect discourse. In indirect discourse they sometimes

suffer reduplication; e.g. နစုအိဆံ့အဆံ့အလဲနီ ယဘုယအု, I do not know how much money you have.

104. Interrogative adjectives of number may be formed by prefixing ပွ to the numeral adjunct; e.g. နလံအိပွဘံ့လဲ how many books have you? These also

may be used in indirect discourse.

105-108. The Karen language has two definite demonstrative adjectives, ယိံ, အယိံ *this*, and နိံ, အနိံ *that*. They may modify the substantive element, be it noun, pronoun, phrase or clause. နိံ is used to mark the end of a noun clause, or of a series of adjectival modifiers of a noun; e.g. ပုမုာ်ၵရါအဂုးလၢအအိံဝုၤ လၢဂံၤဖးလၢဂးနိံ, မဲယမိံလိံ, *the good old woman who lives in the house is my mother.*

Adjectival Couplets.

109. Adjectival couplets are affixed to the nouns which they modify. Such a couplet consists of two adjectival roots, each of which is preceded by the particle အ. e.g. ပုရဲအဂုးအဘွဲ *a good man.*

Comparison of Adjectives.

110-111. The comparative degree is expressed by affixing နဲံ to the adjective, e.g. ဘွဲ *white*, ဘွဲနဲံ *whiter.*

112. The superlative degree is formed by affixing ထု to the adjective ဘွဲထု *whitest.*

Verbs.

113. Karen verbs express actions, states, or qualities; e.g. လဲး *to go*, အိံ *to be*, ဂဲး *to be good.*

114. Karen verbs may be divided into transitive and intransitive verbs. Many verbs which in English are regarded as intransitive, in Karen are regarded as transitive and take an object; e.g. the verb လဲး *to go*, is often used with the object ဆဲး.

115. In Karen, a verb which can take an object generally does take one. When no definite object can be assigned, the indefinite object ဆဲး is frequently used; e.g. ယဒဲးဆဲး *I see.* See [81-82](#).

116. Karen verbs have no inflections, properly so called. The accidents of voice, mood, tense, person, and number, are expressed by particles connected with the verb, or are left to be inferred from the subject.

Voice.

117. Three voices may be recognized in Karen; active, passive, and middle.

118. The verb in its simple and primitive form is in the active voice; e.g. in the sentence ယဒၣအဝုၣ်လီၤ, I see him, ဒၣ is in the active voice.

119-121. The formation of the passive voice is peculiar. A few examples will make it clearer than any explanation.

The following sentences exhibit the passive of the verb ဒိၣ, to strike. ယဘၣဆၣဒိၣယၣလီၤ, I am struck. အဝုၣ်ဘၣဆၣဒိၣဝုၣ်လီၤ, he is struck.

122. When it is desired to convey the idea that the subject voluntarily submits to an action, the passive voice is differently expressed. In this case, the verbal root is preceded by ဒိၣs or ထိၣ and followed by a reflexive pronoun; e.g. အဝုၣ်ဒိၣဒိၣအဝုၣ် he is beaten, he permits himself to be beaten. စမ့ၣထိၣဒိၣအဝုၣ်, S' Myat is beaten, submits to being beaten.

123. Closely allied to this second form of the passive voice is a form used to convey the idea that a thing is in a certain state as the result of an action which has been performed upon it. e.g. ဆၣကွဲၣအဝုၣ် It is written.

124. The middle voice expresses the idea that the subject performs an action upon himself. To express this the active form of the verb is followed by the particle လဲၣ, and a reflexive pronoun; e.g. ယဒၣလဲၣယၣလီၤ, I see myself.

Mood.

125. There are only two moods in Karen, the indicative and the imperative.

126. The primitive form of the verb is indicative.

127. The primitive form of the verb may be used in the imperative;

e.g. လှဲ, go!

128. When a verb is in the imperative mood the sentence (if expressing a command) commonly ends with the particle ဆံ့

e.g. လှဲလှဲအဝူအဝူဆံ့, go to him!

129. The particle လါ is sometimes affixed to the verb in an imperative sentence where the idea is that of entreating a superior;

e.g. ဆိဂုးလါပးဆံ့, bless us.

130. In giving permission, ကဒ် or ဘိ sometimes takes the place of ဆံ့,

e.g. လှဲကဒ်, လှဲဘိ go.

131. A sentence expressing a prohibition ends in လဂုး;

e.g. လှဲလဂုး do not go. In such cases the verb may be preceded by နံ့ and the negative particle ထိး; e.g. နံ့ထိးလှဲလဂုး, do not go.

132. A precative sentence is introduced by the particle မဲ့ and otherwise has the form of a sentence expressing command or prohibition;

e.g. မဲ့ပမဆံ့, let us do it. မဲ့ပထိးမလဂုး let us not do it.

Tense.

133. The verb standing by itself conveys no idea of time. It may refer to past or present time according to the context;

e.g. ယဆးန့လိ may mean I sit, I am sitting or I sat.

134. An action the performance of which is contemplated, is expressed by prefixing the particle က or မိ to the verb. This form is commonly used to express a future action; e.g. ယကလုဒ, ယမိလုဒ I shall go, I will go.

135. The idea of intention or desire is brought but more strongly by prefixing မိ to the verb;
e.g. စမ္ဗမိလုဒလီၤ, S' Myat desires to go, intends to go.

136. Completed action is indicated by affixing the particle ယှ to the verb,
e.g. ယဂါယှ I have come.

137. The same idea is more emphatically expressed by introducing ဂိဒ before ယှ; e.g. ယဒဂိဒယှ, I had seen it.

138. The Karens sometimes use both က and ယှ with the same verb to express an intention to perform an action immediately;
e.g. ယကလုဒယှ I should have gone.

139. To mark the completion of an action previous to a certain moment of past time, ဝဲဒ is affixed to the verb, and is often followed by ယှ;
e.g. ယလချှလုဒဒံဒဘာနီၤ အဝုဒဒလုဒဝဲဒယှ, before I came he had gone.
This usage is analogous to the English pluperfect.

140. An action dependent upon a supposed condition contrary to fact is sometimes expressed by prefixing က to the root and affixing ယှ or ဝဲဒယှ;
e.g. နအုလဂဲၤဘာတၢ် ယကလုဒဝဲဒယှလီၤ if you had not come I should have gone by this time.

Person and Number.

141. The person and number of the verb are to be inferred from those of the subject, but a verb in the third person sometimes takes ဝု after it;
e.g. ပုဒိၤဖၢၤဒိၤလုဒဝုလီၤ the governor goes.

Compound verbs.

142. Besides the simple verbs, each of which consists as a rule of a single syllable, there are compound verbs formed by combining simple verbs with particles, or with other verbs.

143. A verbal couplet is formed by two verbal roots, each of which is followed by a particle; e.g. ဆူထဲနဲနဲထဲ to believe. ဒိာထဲထီထဲ to grow up. ဆံလဲရှဲလဲ to decrease. လီဘာလဘာ to tell. ဆံဝံဝံဝံ to be holy.

144. The Karen language possesses a number of particles which are combined with simple verbs to make new verbs of kindred signification. Many of these particles were originally verbal roots, and are sometimes used as verbs; but in the connection under discussion they are to be considered as particles.

145. The following particles are prefixed to the verb: --

ကျဲ denotes a representing of the action as if done, often only in appearance; e.g. ကျဲနံ to assume the appearance of laughing.

ထီ prefixed to a few verbs, has a causative force; e.g. ထီဂဲထဲ to wake up.

ဒဲ has a permissive or causative force; e.g. ဒဲလဲ to send.

ဖဲ has a permissive or causative force; e.g. ဖဲအထဲ to increase (transitive)

ဘိ prefixed to a few verbs, has a causative force; e.g. ဘိဘာဂဲယာ inform.

မဲ has a causative force, မဲဝံ to kill.

လဲ indicates the subject falls into the state indicated by the verb; e.g. လဲပံ to become tired.

လဒ် has also a causative force; e.g. လဒ်နံ to make one laugh.

ဝါ prefixed to verbs with the negative, indicates that the act is performed imperfectly or in a slight degree; e.g. ယဉ္ဇာယာဝါအံ့, I scarcely know.

146. The following particles are affixed to the verb: --

ကဒ် has a sense of return, retaliation or opposition;

e.g. ထဲကဒ်ထဲ to return.

ကဒ်ယှ has a concessive force;

e.g. နှစ်ဆာနီ မဲကဒ်ယှ admitting the truth of what you say.

ခါ indicates that the act is performed by way of trial; e.g. မဒ်ခါ to try.

ခဲ denotes that the action results in a separation; e.g. မဒ်ခဲ to take away.

ဂဒ် denotes that the act is performed by way of assistance;

e.g. လဒ်ဂဒ်, to go together with one.

ဂု denotes that the action is done carefully, or stealthily;

e.g. ယိဂု, to watch closely.

ပု denotes that several persons or things act together;

e.g. မဒ်ပု to work together.

ပိ denotes that several persons or things act in company;

e.g. အံ့ပိလဒ်မဒ် to eat rice together.

ဝဲ denotes that the act is done from a distance;

e.g. ယိဝဲ to look away. ဒ်ဝဲ to behold afar off.

ဆး denotes that the action is performed by way of assistance;

e.g. @ယကကဆးနး, I will help you reap.

ဆိ denotes that an act is done before some event takes place;

e.g. ယဒဆိအဝါအဂ် I saw his house first.

ရှ် denotes that the act was done unintentionally;

e.g. ကိရှ် to utter an involuntary cry;

တတ shows that the action is hastened; e.g. အတတ eat quickly.

ထ denotes that the action results in making secure; e.g. မထထ to hinder.

ထ့ indicates an upward motion; e.g. လထ့ to go up.

ထ့ is affixed to a few words denoting separation; e.g. လထ့ to fall off.

ထိး denotes that the action results in arriving; e.g. လထိး to arrive.

ဒ indicates that the action results in forsaking; e.g. စဲဒ to forsake.

ဒ indicates independent action; e.g. ယကမဒယှ or ယဝါ I will do it myself.

ဒလ indicates that the subject defers some other action to perform the one indicated by the verb;

e.g. အိခိဒလ wait a bit. ယကမိဒလ I will sleep first.

ဒ occasionally denotes certainty;

e.g. ဆကမဒအာဘဲနီလီ, It will be sure to happen so.

န့ indicates that the action results in observing; e.g. န့ထ့ to remember.

န့ indicates that the action results in obtaining; e.g. ဒၟန့ to find.

ဖိး indicates that the action reaches unto its object; e.g. လ့းဖိး to go unto.

ဖျိၵ indicates that the action results in going through;
e.g. လ့းဖျိၵ to go through.

ဘၵ indicates that the action passes over to an object;
e.g. ယကလိးဘၵန့း I will tell you.

ဘၵ indicates that the action results in an ascent; e.g. ထ့ဘၵ to reach up.

လ့ indicates a downward motion, literal or figurative;
e.g. လ့းလ့ to descend, ရ့းလ့ to decrease.

လိၵ indicates that the act is performed by or for imitation;
e.g. ဝိၵလိၵ to teach, မးလိၵ to learn.

လိၵ indicates reciprocal action;
e.g. ပကြိးအဲၵလိၵပဝးလိၵ, we should love one another.

ဘ့ indicates an incipient action;
e.g. ထိးအ့ၵကဲၵဘ့ပုၵိၵဖးဒိၵနိၵ, when he had just become governor.

အ့ affixed to several verbs. See Dictionary Part I pages 161–164.

Dependent Verbs.

147. A verb depending on another, follows it immediately, without undergoing any change of form; e.g. အ့ၵကကျ့းစိးမးဒ့ၵလိၵ, he will try to do it. This is the common construction for expressing suitability, necessity; etc.

e.g. ပကြိးလ့းလိၵ, I should go, နဘၵလ့းလိၵ, you must go.

148. Where in English two verbs are connected by the conjunction and, in Karen the second verb may immediately follow the first, without a conjunction; e.g. ယကလုဒအ့ဖီမုဒလီ၊ I will go and cook rice.

Idioms in the Use of Verbs

149. The causative verb အ့မာ့ and the permissive verb ပျဲ permit the dependent verb to be preceded by a subject;

e.g. အ့ဝါအ့မာ့ယမဒလီ၊ he caused me to do it.

ပျဲအ့ဝါလုဒဘိ၊ let him go.

The dependent verb and its subject may be regarded as a substantive clause, forming the object of the causative or permissive verb.

150. Verbs expressing ability stand at the end of the sentence (or clause) preceded by the verb expressing the act in question, with its subject and object if it have one; e.g. အ့ဝါကွံလံလုဒလီ၊ he can write. The verb and its subject may be regarded as a substantive clause forming the subject of the verb of ability.

151. The following list exhibits the common verbs of ability, with their meanings and examples of their use.

ကဲ ability, considered with reference to physical health, or inclination;

e.g. ယခ့ဆါ, ယကဖကဲအ့, my foot is sore, I cannot walk.

ကိ ability, considered with reference to the sufficiency of the subject;

e.g. ဆမအလါ, ယမကိအ့, there are too many, I cannot do them.

ချု ability, considered with reference to leisure;

e.g. ယဆမအ, ယလိကုချုအ့, I am busy, I have no time to play.

ပံလု ability, considered with reference to the sufficiency of the subject; e.g.

ဆမအလါ, ယမကပံလုအ့, the work is too much, I cannot do it alone.

ပွဲထွဲ ability, considered with reference to the sufficiency of the subject;
e.g. ဆာမးအာလံာ် ယမးပွဲထွဲအံ့, the work is too great, I cannot do it.

န့ ability, considered with reference to effectiveness of effort; e.g.
အံ့အဆာမးအံ့, ယအံ့လံးအံ့န့အံ့, he has work, I cannot hire him.

ဘာ ability, considered with reference to accomplishing the end proposed;
e.g. လံးလံးကလံာ်, ယဖီဘာအံ့, this book is too difficult, I cannot read it.

ဂ့ ability, considered with reference to skill, also the generic expression of
ability; e.g. ယဒာဘာန့ကက့တ, ယမးဂ့လံာ်, I saw it only once yet I can do it.

152. The ideas of suitability, agreeableness etc. are often expressed in a
similar manner to that of potentiality;

e.g. နမးဆာယံးဘု့ဇေ, dare you do this?

ယထူးပနီမုအံ့, I do not like to ride a buffalo.

ပမးဆာယံးမဲအလဂ့ဘာဇေ, had we not better do this?

ယမးဆာယံးကြံးဇေ, is it proper for me to do this?

153. The verb မိ, expressing desire, takes ဆာ for its subject and is followed
by a verb denoting that act the performance of which is desired. This latter
verb is followed by ဘ, self, with the possessive case of a pronoun denoting
the person who desires to perform the action. Then comes the object of the
verb of action, generally introduced by လာ,

e.g. ဆာမိဒာယာလအံ့လံာ်, I want to see him.

အံ့ဒာမိပွဲပနီလဒဲလံာ်, he wishes to buy a buffalo.

154. Possession is expressed by the verb အံ့, to be in the following ways:

(1) The possessor stands as the subject and the thing possessed follows
the verb, with which it is connected by the preposition ခဲ.

e.g. ယအံ့ခဲတံာ်ကဘိး, I have a pencil.

(2) The thing possessed, modified by a possessive pronoun or noun, may stand as the subject of the verb; e.g. ယလံအိကဘံ့, I have a book.

Adverbs.

155. Karen adverbs are mostly derived from other roots, though a few strictly adverbial roots exist.

Adverbs of Manner.

156. Adverbs of manner are regularly formed by duplicating adjective roots; e.g. ဆိ့ဆိ့, strongly, ဖျဲဖျဲ, quickly.

157. Adverbs so formed very commonly take the affix လု; e.g. ဆိ့ဆိ့လု, very strongly.

158-160. Sometimes an adjectival root is used in an adverbial sense. This is commonly the case when it is itself modified by another adverb; e.g. အဝုဖျဲဖျဲမု, he runs very fast. ယဝဲဖျဲဖျဲအု, I do not run swiftly.

161. Many adverbs of manner are irregular in their formation; e.g. လုထံးလုဆု, exactly.

162. Demonstrative adverbs of manner are formed by combining the preposition ဘဲ, like, with the demonstrative ယိ and နိ, or with လဲ; e.g. ဘဲယိ, ဘဲယိအဝိ, ဘဲနိ, ဘဲနိအဝိ, thus ဘဲဝုလဲ, how, ဘဲအံးဘဲအိ, somehow. See [202](#).

Adverbs of Place.

163. Adverbs of place may be formed from the demonstrative adjectives ယိ and နိ in combination with the prepositions ထိး, လု, ထ or ခိခိ. They are exhibited in the following table, ထိးယိ here, ထိးနိ there, ထလဲ or ခိခိလဲ where. ထိးယိထိးနိ or ထိးအံးထိးအိ here and there. လုယိ here. လုနိ there. ထလဲ where. လုအံးလုအိ, here and there.

လယ်၊ hither. လာနီ၊ thither. ထလဲ၊ whither. လယ်လာနီ၊ hither and thither.

164. The preposition လာ forms adverbs of place in combination with such roots as ယာ front, ခဲ back, ထေ above, လေ below, ဝါ beyond and ခါ side, e.g. လာယာ forward, လာခဲ behind, လာဝါခါ beyond.

Adverbs of Time

165. Certain adverbs denoting past time are formed by the prefix လာ in combination with roots denoting time, as follows: --

လာဂီအံ၊ this morning

လာမုနအံ၊ last night

လာမုဂအံ၊ yesterday

လာအခီကနွံအံ၊ last week

လာလခီကဘံအံ၊ last month

လာမဂနံအံ၊ last year

166. Adverbs expressing future time may be formed in two ways: --

(1) By the prefix [ကဲ T.P] [ကံ D.P]

ကဲမုဆါ/ကံမုဆါ, today.

ကဲမုဂ/ကံမုဂ, this evening.

ကဲမုန/ကံမုန, tonight.

ကဲဂီ/ကံဂီ, tomorrow.

ကဲတဂီ/ကံတဂီ, the day after tomorrow.

ကဲခဲ/ကံခဲ, in the future.

(2) By the prefix နး followed by ဒိs.

နးနံဒိs, next day

နးနွံဒိs, next week

နးနံဒိs, next year

(3) By the use of the preposition လၢ, cf. 164.

လၢခဲၣ်/လၢခဲၣ်ထဲၣ်, afterwards.

လၢယၢ/လၢယၢခါ, in the future.

ထီးယီၤလၢယၢ, henceforth.

167-168. လၢ is prefixed to some temporal adverbs when the idea of futurity is not implied; e.g. လၢမုဆါခါ, by day. လၢဖျိးလၢခဲၣ်, of old.

169. Many adverbs of time are not formed in accord with any rule;

e.g. ချဲၣ်ချဲၣ်, quickly, ထံၤပး, always.

170. The roots ဒံၤ, still, yet, and လၢဒဲ, any more, are adverbial by virtue of their intrinsic signification. The following examples will illustrate their use;

အဝံၤဆီၣ်မိၣ်လၢအကဲၣ်ဒံၤတဘျုးဘျုးလီၤ, he thinks he will still come several times.

ယလဲၣ်ဒံၤအံၤ, I have not yet gone. အဝံၤအဘျုးအံၤလၢဒဲအံၤ, he has no more paddy.

Numeral Adverbs.

171. Adverbs denoting how many times are formed from the cardinal numeral, in combination with the affix ဘျုး; လဘျုး, once. နံၤဘျုး, twice.

172. ဘျုး is treated like numeral auxiliaries, and may enter into all the combinations of which numeral auxiliaries are capable;

e.g. လဘျုးပး, simultaneously, at once (က့ၤက့ၤ)

လဘျုးဘျုး sometimes

ကိၣ်ဘျုးဒဲၤ, every time

လံၤဘျုးယၢ, as many as four times.

173. Adverbs denoting which time are formed like ordinal numerals;

e.g. အခ့ၣ်ထံၤလဘျုး, the first time, ဘၣ်ဘျုးလဘျုး, the third time.

174. The particle က့ၤ, ဖၢၤ and ဘျုး enter into certain irregular formations;

e.g. ထီးနီၤကက့ၤ, ထီးနီၤလဖၢၤ, ထီးနီၤလဘျုး, then, afterward, after that.

Adverbs of Degree.

175. Some adverbs of degree are formed like the adverbs of manner described in [156](#) and [157](#); e.g. ဒိပ်ဒိပ်လုလု, greatly. အာအာလုလု, much.

176. The indefinite numeral adjectives described in [99](#). ([4](#)) ([6](#)) ([13](#)) are often used with an adverbial force;

e.g. ယအဲဒ်ဒိပ်မဒ်ဆာမဒ်အဝုာ်ယိဒ်နးဆိာ်အုလု, I do not like doing this work at all.

177. The following adverbs are intensive, ခိလု, နုဒ်, and မဒ်.

They are used with adjectives denoting smallness or fewness.

178. A moderate degree is expressed by coupling two contradictory roots, each of which is modified by a negative;

e.g. လဒိပ်လဆိာ်, လအာလရုဒ်, moderately.

179. Other adverbs of degree are irregularly formed.

e.g. နးဆိာ်အုလု, not at all, ဖိာ်ဘိာ် about, လိပ်, ထလုဒ် or လိကဲဒ်ကဒ်, too.

180. Equality is expressed by မိာ်ပိဒ် or မိာ်မိာ် e.g. အဝုာ်ဖိလံဖါထိာ်မိာ်ပိဒ် or မိာ်မိာ်ဒဲမိထိာ်လိာ်, he reads Sgaw Karen equally with Pwo Karen.

181. Inequality is expressed by combination of two contradictory roots

expressive of quantity; e.g. အဝုာ်ကြိာ်အဲဒ်ဒိပ်ဆိာ်အာရုဒ်အဖိာ်လဖာ်အုလု, he should not love his children unequally.

Interrogative Adverbs.

182. Interrogative adverbs of time and place may be formed from the interrogative particle လဲဒ်;

e.g. ခိာ်ခိာ်လဲဒ် or ထခိာ်လဲဒ် where; ဆိာ်လဲဒ် when, whence, whither.

183. These are reduplicated in indirect discourse;
e.g. အဝုၤဂဲၤခိၤခိၤလဲၤနီၤ ယဝုၤယၢအူၤ, or အဝုၤဂဲၤထိၤခိၤလဲၤခိၤလဲၤနီၤ ယဝုၤယၢအူၤ,
I do not know whence he comes.

184. Interrogative adverbs of quantity are formed by prefixing ဆံး to
adjectives of quantity; e.g. ဆံးအၢ, ဆံးဒိၤ how much.

185. These are also repeated in indirect discourse. e.g. အဝုၤဒၢအဲၤဒိၤဝုၤ
ဆံးအၢဆံးအၢလဲၤနီၤ ယဝုၤယၢအူၤ, I do not know how much he wants it.

186. The interrogative adverb of reason is ဘၢနီၤ, why?
e.g. ဘၢနီၤနုၤလအုၤဘၢမ့ၤလဲၤ, why do not you eat rice?

Adverbs of Affirmation and Negation.

187. Assent is expressed by မွဲ or အံၤ.

188. Negative is expressed by affixing အူၤ; e.g. အဝုၤဂဲၤအူၤ, he has not come.

189. A denial is expressed by a negative sentence,
e.g. အဝုၤဂဲၤစၢ, ဂဲၤအူၤ, has he come? No.

190. Adverbs of probability are irregular in formation;
e.g. ဘၢလဘၢ, perhaps. တၢၢ် or ရၢမး certainly.

Conjunctive Adverbs.

191. The following are conjunctive adverbs of time ထိး, when
e.g. ထိးယဒၢဘၢနုၤဖါနီၤ ယကလိၤဘၢလီၤ, when I see your father I will tell him.

လချုး before;

e.g. လချုးပလုၤဒံးဘၢတး ပကအုၤဆိၤဒၢလုၤမ့ၤလီၤ, we will eat rice before we go.

အဘိဋ္ဌာန, အထေးဖျား, while; အဝှာလှေဆရာအဘိဋ္ဌာနတစ်ဆယ့်နှစ်နှစ်အားလုံး, he was hungry while he was going. See [222](#).

192. ဒ် is used as a correlative conjunctive adverb; e.g. ယဒ်မေးလိလိ ယဒ်အဲဒ်မေးလိလိ, the more I study, the more I wish to study.

Adverbial Couplets.

193. Adverbial couplets are common; e.g. လာအာလှာအခုထိ, in the beginning. ထိးအံးထိးအံး, here and there, ရှိရှိ slowly.

Comparison of Adverbs.

194. Adverbs which are derived from adjectival roots are susceptible of comparison. An adverb in the comparative or superlative degree is in form exactly the same as the corresponding adjective in the same degree; e.g. အဝှာစဲပျဲပျဲနဲ့အဖါ, he runs faster than his father.

Prepositions.

195. The Karen language has several prepositions, e.g. ဒဲ, စိလှာ, လှာ, ထိး, ပံးလှာ, ဝေဖိး.

196. ဒဲ means with, it governs the objective case.

197. စိလှာ means to or towards; it governs the objective case, but စိ is often omitted.

198. လှာ means at or from, according to the context. It seldom governs a substantive directly, but usually governs a substantive in the possessive case. လှာ in itself is extremely indefinite, and the secondary nouns are brought in to make the meaning more definite.

199. The more common of the secondary nouns are exemplified below: --

လအဝှာအအိ၊ from him.

လဆရာအကဲ့ဝံ၊ by or near the teacher.

လပုဒိမာဖဒိမာအဆူဝံ၊ at the governor's feet.

လယနဲ့ဝံ၊ by my side.

လဘရီအမုယ၊ in front of the chapel.

လတဝှာအလးခဲ၊ behind the village.

လယချိုလခိ၊ on my back.

လက့ခိချို၊ on the earth.

လအဝှာအလိ၊ on him.

လကံ့ဖး၊ in the house.

လစပွဲခိ၊ လစပွဲအဖးခိ၊ on the table.

လယခိ၊ on my head.

လကံ့ဖးလ/လကံ့ဖးအဖးလ၊ under the house.

လပုရှကျး/လပုရှအကျး၊ among the people.

လတဝှာအဘိဆး၊ between the villages.

လတဝှာအနဲ့ဝံဝဝ၊ round about the village.

လယဖိခိအကိ၊ for my son's sake, for my son.

လဆးနိအကိ၊ an account of that, because of that.

လဝံးတခိအကိ/လဝံးတခိအကိအဖး/လဝံးတခိအကိအကိ၊ about Rangoon.

လထံဖးခိ၊ on the surface of the water.

200. ထိး means in. It may govern the objective case.

201. ပံ့လု၊ throughout, ဝဝ၊ round about, govern the objective.

202. ဘဲါ like, as, always govern the secondary noun ဝိ, the object of comparison being placed in the possessive case;

e.g. အဖိမး ဘဲါဖါအဝိလိ၊ the son acts like the father.

Sometimes the object of comparison is a noun clause, when ဘဲါ corresponds in meaning to the English as; e.g. အဖိမးဝှာ ဘဲါအဖါမးဝှာအဝိနိလိ၊ the son does as his father does. See [228](#).

Conjunctions.

203. The Karen language has but few conjunctions, their place being supplied by phrases which are equivalent to conjunctions. These together with the more important conjunctive phrases will be found below.

Copulative.

204. ဒဲ and, connects words and phrases. It may stand at the close of the preceding clause or at the beginning of the following one.

ဒဲ--ဒဲ both-and.

e.g. ယွဲတဲးလဲးဒဲမုဲဒဲလဲး, the Lord God created both sun and moon.

ငါ--ငါ and -- also, e.g. နားငါပုခွာ, ယားငါပုခွာ, ပာမဲအဲ, you are a man and I also am a man, we are not afraid.

မဒဲဒဲလဲး, again.

လဲးယိး (or နီ) အမုဲယာ moreover.

လဲးယိး (or နီ) အဟဲခိ moreover.

မဲးနဲ only.

Adversative.

205. အ့မဲ (at the beginning of a clause) but

လါနဲ, လါနဲတဲ, လါနဲဘိး, but

အ့လမဲဘဲတဲ, or else

မဲးဂဲ--မဲးဂဲ, either -- or

ဂဲးဂဲ--ဂဲးဂဲ either -- or

e.g. ခဲတဲမဲးဂဲ လဲးမဲးဂဲ ပွဲးနဲယားလဲးမဲးမဲးဆဲး, buy me either a pencil or a book.

Illative.

206. မဲးဘဲနီတဲ, အခိးမဲးဘဲနီတဲ, မဲးအာဘဲနီတဲ, အယိးတဲ, အနီတဲ, and a few other phrases, take the place of the illative conjunction therefore.

207. The temporal adverbs ထိးနီလဲး, and ထိးနီလဲးဘဲ, ထိးနီကဲ, then, sometimes have the force of illative conjunctions.

Causal.

208. အဂဲးဘဲာယီ, because.

အကိုး because. This stands at the end of its clause; e.g. ယစုးရှုးအကိုး
ယဗ္ဗုးလံးန့အု, I cannot buy a book because I am short of money.

209. ထီး when.

အ့ if. In this sense အ့ stands immediately after the subject. See [223](#).

လါန့ though, stands at the end of its clause;

e.g. အဗ္ဗုးဒိာလါန့ ယကဗ္ဗုးလီ, although the prize is high, I shall buy it.

မဲ့လါန့ဘဲာနီာတ, nevertheless.

Telic.

210-212. လာ that. See [220](#). ဘဲာဝိး in order that. See [225-226](#).

Particles.

213. Most of the particles have been treated under the various parts of speech. A few which cannot be so treated to advantage are described here. They are used at the end of sentences to indicate the character of the sentence.

Affirmative Particles.

214-215. လီာ is used with simple affirmatives. ဘဲာါ implies that the statement is a matter of course. ယှုး implies assent or concession.

Interrogative Particles.

216. ဧ့ is used when the answer expected is yes or no;
e.g. န့ဒာအဝုးဧ့, do you see him?

လဲ့ is used when other answers are expected;

e.g. န့မးနီာလဲ့, what are you doing?

ေ-ေ, is used in a direct alternative question.

နဲးဒီးလံးေ, ခဲာတ့ေ, do you want a book or a pencil?

but ေ-လဲ is used if the question is indirect;

e.g. အဝဲာလဲးလားတဲးခဲးေ, လားမိာလဲးမဲးလဲးနီ, ယဲးယာအဲ,

I do not know whether he goes to Rangoon or Moulmein.

Imperative Particles.

217. ဆံး, marks a command; လဲး a prohibition;

ဘီ, a permission or a somewhat urgent request.

Precative Particles.

218. ဘီ at the end of a declarative or imperative sentence, asks for consent. Hence it softens a command into a request;

e.g. ပကထဲးလားကံးဘီ, let us go home, shall we not?

Syntax of Subordinate Clauses.

219. Subordinate clauses are not only introduced by a conjunction or some equivalent part of speech, but where they do not stand at the end of the sentence they are also terminated by a conjunction or other particle.

220-221. Noun and adjective clauses are introduced by လဲ and terminated by နီ; e.g. အဝဲာယာ လားအဲာကအဲာနီ အဲ, he does not know that his father will eat it. လဲးလားယဲာကဲးနီ အဲာလားပဲးခဲးလီ, the book which my father wrote is on the table.

222. Some adverbial clauses are introduced by လဲ or ထိး and terminated by a temporal particle, or by နီ;

e.g. လားယဲးအဲာနီ ယဲးပုရဲးနဲးကဲးအဲ, while I was going I saw nobody.

အဝဲာအဲာအီ ထိးယဲးအဲာအီဝဲာအီလီ, his house is where my house is.

223. Conditional clauses are introduced by အံ့, which stands immediately after the subject, and are terminated by တး; e.g. ဆးအံ့ဂဲဆးတး နကဘစီလီ, if it rains you will get wet.

An apparent, but not a real, exception to this rule is found in the case of complex sentences, in which a subordinate noun clause will come before အံ့; e.g. နလးအံ့ဘတး လးဘီ, if you can go, go by all means.

224. အံ့ is occasionally used to introduce a concessive conditional clause ending in လီနဂ့, or လီန; e.g. ဆးအံ့ဂဲဆးလီနဂ့ နကဘလးလီ, even though it rains you will have to go.

225. Clauses of purpose are introduced by ဘဲါဝဲ and when not standing at the end of the sentence are terminated by တး; ယထဲထဲလးဂံ့ ဘဲါဝဲယကအံ့မ့လီ, I returned home that I might eat rice. ဘဲါဝဲနကအီဆီထဲထဲတး, နဘအီခံ့ပံ့လီ, in order that you may recover, you must take medicine.

226. Negative clauses of purpose take the form of a prohibitory clause preceded by ဘဲါဝဲ, and terminated (when necessary) by တး; e.g. ဘဲါဝဲနထီးဆးလဂ့တး, နဘအံ့ခဲးဘအံ့အံ့, in order that you may not get sick, you must not eat unripe mango.

227. Negative clauses of purpose are sometimes left without an introductory particle, and are terminated by ဘဲါဝဲ or ဘဲါဝဲး; လးဘူးလးထံာဖးနီလဂ့, နကလးထဲဘဲါဝဲလီ, do not go near the well, lest you fall into it.

228. Clauses of comparison are introduced by ဘဲါ and terminated by အဲါနီ; e.g. ဘဲါအဖါမးဝဲါအဲါနီ, အဖါမးဝဲါဘဲါနီအဲါဆဲါ, as the father does, so does the son also. See [202](#).