



2000 years of history - the Mon language in Thailand and Myanmar

**Seminar on the Continuum of Languages and Dialects in Myanmar
Yangon, 25-26.03.2015**

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2. History of the Mon language and people

3. Mon in Myanmar - Bagan to Mawlamyaing

4. Mon dialects in Thailand and Myanmar

5. Mon influence on its neighbors

6. Mon in the 21st century - chances and challenges

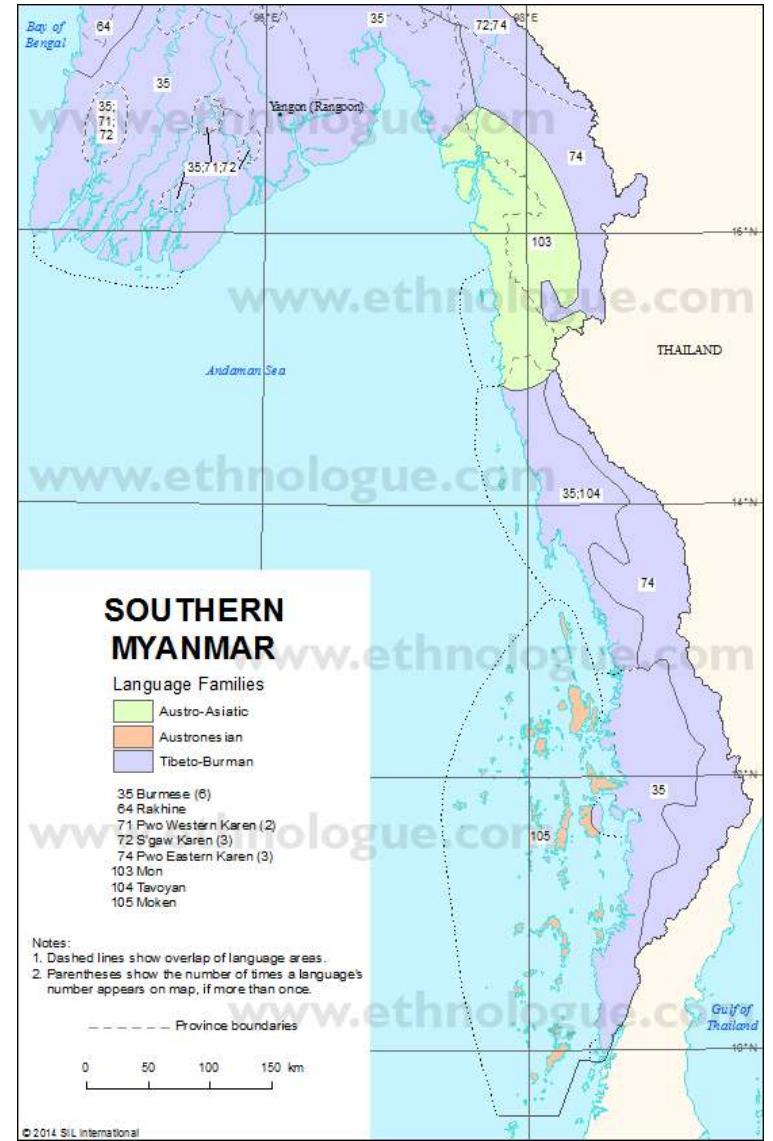
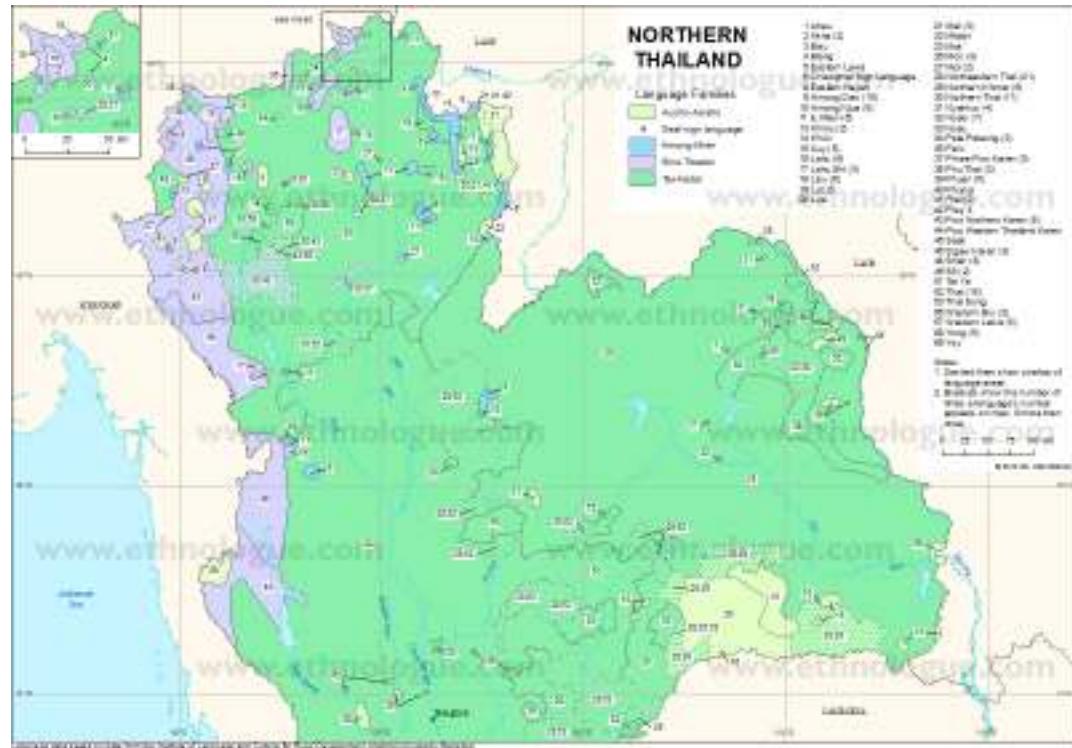
7. Conclusions



1. Introduction

Central Thailand
ca. 80,000 people
(of 60 million)

Southern Myanmar
ca. 750,000 people
(of 50 million)
(ethnologue.com)



Status of the Mon language today (ethnologue.com)

Population: 743,000 in Myanmar (2004), decreasing. Population total all countries: 851,000. Ethnic population: 1,000,000.

Location: Mon State and Kayin State; also in northern Tanintharyi region.

Language Status: 5 (Developing) [UNESCO: vulnerable]

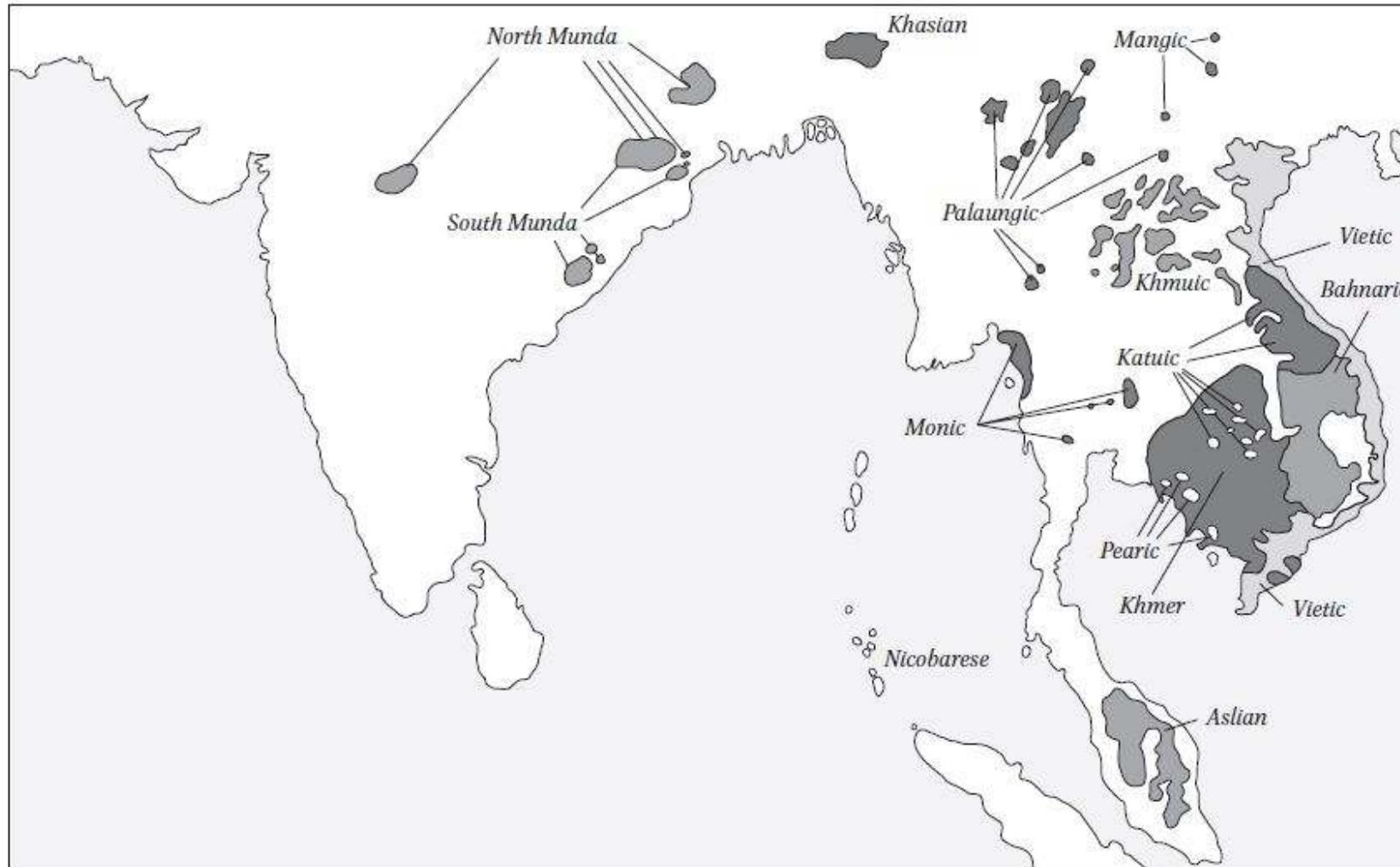
Dialects: Martaban/Moulmein (Central Mon, Mon Te), Pegu (Mon Tang, Northern Mon), Ye (Mon Nya, Southern Mon). Intelligibility between Mon varieties high; between Mon in Thailand and Myanmar 99% (Huffman 1976). Varieties in Myanmar and Thailand “mutually intelligible” (Bauer 1990) but lexical borrowings from Thai and Burmese may cause miscommunication (Guillon 1999). Lexical similarity: 69% with Mon and Nyah Kur [cbn] (Huffman 1976).

Language Use: Vigorous in some rural areas and in Three Pagodas border area. Low or no usage in urban centers. Many domains in some communities; only among the elderly, in the monastery, or not at all in other communities. All ages. Positive attitudes. Widespread bilingualism; some language shift. Also use Burmese.

Language Development: Literacy rate in L1: Some literacy among the older generation; very low literacy rates among those under 40 [total 25% according to some Mon sources]. Taught in some Buddhist monasteries in both Myanmar and Thailand. Some literacy efforts made on Thailand-Myanmar border. Poetry. Dictionary. Grammar.



Mon as an Austroasiatic language of the Monic branch



(Jenny&Sidwell 2015)



Typologically very different from Burmese, close to Thai

Word order in Mon compared with its neighbors

คนนั้นกินข้าวเสร็จแล้ว

<i>k^hon</i>	<i>nán</i>	<i>kin</i>	<i>k^hâ:w</i>	<i>sèt</i>	<i>lé:w.</i>
man	MEDL	consume	rice	finished	NSIT

မိဘင်္ဂစပုင်တဲ့ယျ။

<i>məníh kòh</i>	<i>ciə?</i>	<i>pʂŋ</i>	<i>toə</i>	<i>ya?</i>
man	MEDL	eat	cooked.rice	finished
				NSIT

အဲဒီလူက ထမင်းစားပြီးပြီ။

<i>?èdi=lu-gá</i>	<i>t^həmìn</i>	<i>sà</i>	<i>pì-bi.</i>
MEDL=man-SBJ	cooked.rice	eat	finished-NSIT



The Mon alphabet - consonants

က	ခ	င	သ	ဋ	ကa?	က ^h a?	ကè?	က ^h è?	ηè?
စ	ဆ	ဇ	္န	ဉ�	စa?	စ ^h a?	စè?	စ ^h è?	յè?
ဋ	၅	၁	ဟ	၈	တa?	တ ^h a?	တa?	တ ^h è?	နa?
ဒ	ဃ	ဒ	ဦ	၉	တa?	တ ^h a?	တè?	တ ^h è?	ညè?
ပ	ဗ	ဤ	၃	၁	ပa?	ပ ^h a?	ပè?	ပ ^h è?	မè?
ယ	ရ	၃	၁	၁	ယè?	ရè?	လè?	သè?	စa?
ဟ	၄	၁၁	၁၁	၄	ဟa?	လa?	ပa?	၇a?	၆è?

ကို	ကုံ	ကုံ	ကျူ	ကျူ	ကဲ့	ကဲ့	ကုံ	၄
kŋ-	kn-	km-	ky-	kr-	kl-	kw-	hn-	



2. History of the Mon language and people

First Mon inscriptions dating to the 6th century CE (Thailand)

၆။ ၁၀၁၄၃၂
၁။ ၁၀၁၄၃၃
၂။ ၁၀၁၄၃၄၃၅
၃။ ၁၀၁၄၃၅၃၆

၁။ ၁၀၁၄၃၇
၂။ ၁၀၁၄၃၈၃၉
၃။ ၁၀၁၄၃၉၄၀

Transliteration

dumpoh cwas

moy dnow

hān klam ti dey

...ra' srañ kyāk wihār

lam-ur sra rāñ

don bār ၃။ 'awo'

...r tam brāw bihār

Translation

seven-ty

one *dnow*

? hundred earth in

... cast Buddha temple

lam-ur silver (?)

shaman two ၃။ this

... tree coconut temple



(Jenny 2005)

Comparison Old Mon - Nyahkur

6th century	Nyahkur	Modern Mon	Gloss
dumpoh	<i>mpɔh</i>	<i>həpɔh</i>	'seven'
-cwas	<i>-cuəh</i>	<i>-coh</i>	'-ty'
moy	<i>m̥yəy</i>	<i>mùə</i>	'one'
dnow	<i>~t̥ɔw</i>	<i>~tèə</i>	'run' (OM with nominal infix)
ti	<i>ti:?</i>	<i>tpə?</i>	'earth'
dey	<i>pədəy</i>	<i>dɔə</i>	'in'
kyāk	<i>kʰəya:k</i>	<i>kyac</i>	'holy object'
bār	<i>ba:r</i>	<i>ba</i>	'two'
tām	<i>tam</i>	<i>tɔm</i>	'tree'
brāw	<i>mpʰla:w</i>	<i>prəa</i>	'coconut' (NK probably from Thai)

Out of 18 words (types) in the first Mon inscription, 10 have cognates in Nyahkur



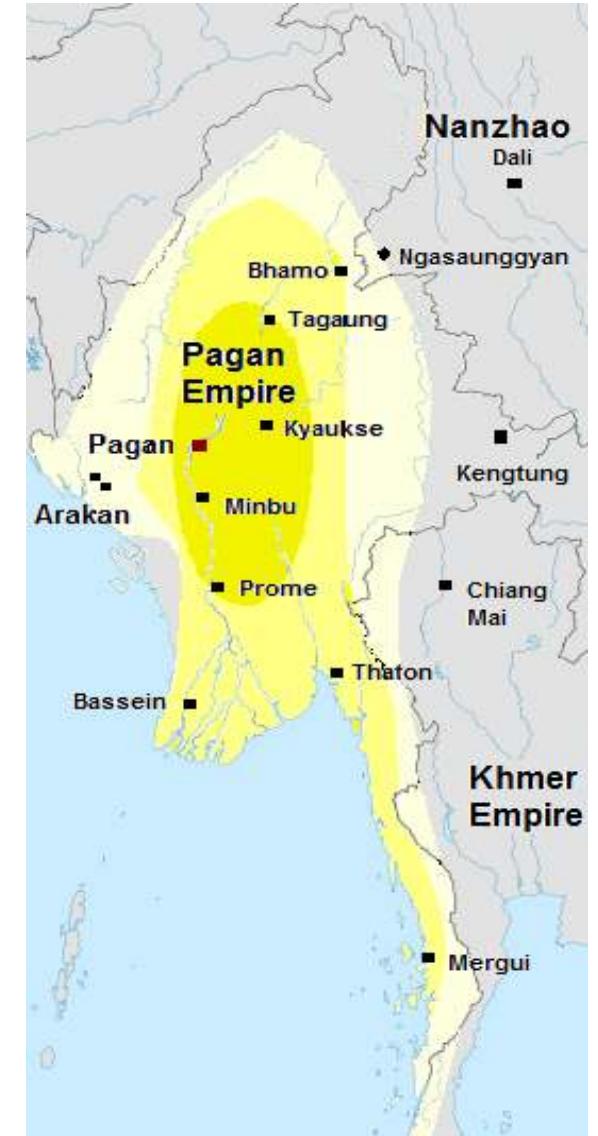
Formerly dominant language in
Central Thailand, parts of
Northeastern Thailand, Northern
Thailand (4th-10th century) -
Dvāravatī





3. Mon in Myanmar - Bagan to Mawlamyaing

Language of learning for some time
in Bagan (11th-12th century)



Excerpt of the Mon face of the Myazedi inscription (1112 AD, Pagan)

śrī namo buddhāya śrī sās kyek buddha tirley
 glory reverence Buddha.DAT glory religion holy Buddha my.lord
 'Glory! reverence to the Buddha! Glory!'

kuli ?ār moy bñim turow klan̄ bār cwas diñcām cnām tuy
 last go one thousand six hundred two ten eight year finish
 When the religion of the Lord Buddha had lasted for 1628 years

dey dūn ?arimaddanapur wo? smiñ śrītribhuwanādityadhammarāj das.
 in city PN PROX king PN be
 in the city of Arimaddanapura [Pagan], Śrī Tribhuwanādityadhammarāja became
 (king).

gna.kyek smiñ goh̄h moy trilokawaṭaṁsakādewī ?imo?.
 queen king MEDL one PN name
 One of the king's queens was named Trilokavaṭaṁsakādevī.

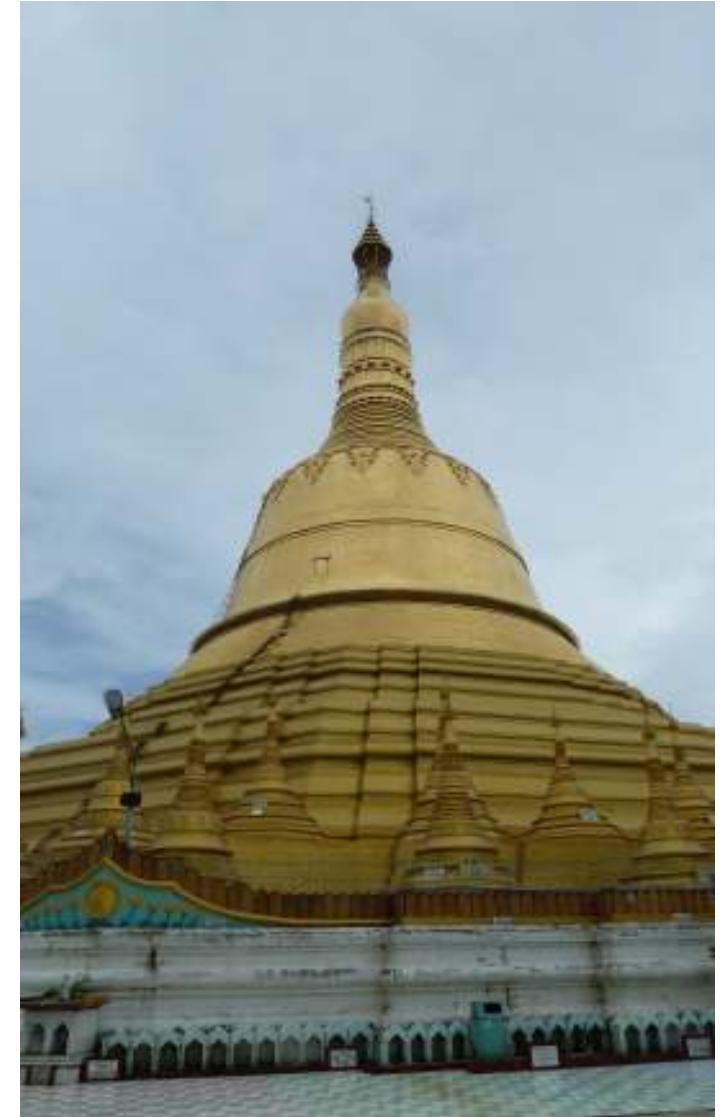
kon gna.kyek goh̄h rāja.kumār ?imo?.
 offspring queen MEDL PN name
 The son of that queen was was named Rājakumār.

smiñ goh̄h kil dik pi twāñ ku gna.kyek goh̄h.
 king MEDL give servant three village OBL queen MEDL
 The king gave three villages of servants to the queen.

(Jenny&McCormick 2015)



Language of State in Hamsavatī (14th-18th century)





Decreasing political power, increasing Burmese influence in the language

Old Mon (Kubyaukgyi inscription)

yal kcit sak ñah ma yām.
if die not.exist person REL weep
'If they die, there is no one to weep for them.'

Conditional clause with clause-initial subordinator *yal* 'if'

Conditional clause with clause-initial subordinator *yow* 'if' and clause-final topic marker *mā*

Middle Mon (Kalyani inscription)

yow dah mā
if be TOP
'if it should be the case that'

Middle Mon (Ajapala inscription)

pday paṭisandhi ey kəp.tlā gah, kwon truh mway ey go? mā ...
LOC confinement 1SG first that child male one 1SG get TOP/if
'If in my first confinement I get a son, ...'

Conditional clause with clause-final topic marker *mā*



Spoken Mon

- a. *yɔ.ra?* *dɛh* *hù?* *klɔŋ*
if 3 NEG come
- b. *yɔ.ra?* *dɛh* *hù?* *klɔŋ* ***teh***
if 3 NEG come TOP
- c. *dɛh* *hù?* *klɔŋ* ***teh***
3 NEG come TOP
'if he doesn't come'



Literary tradition for over 1500 years

Continued use in Lower Myanmar (Mon State)





4. Mon dialects in Myanmar and Thailand

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Mon: [*] həməs	Ro:/heməg/(Po), /fiməg/(Cc), /həməg/(Ks) Rao:/heməg/(Sho), /heməg/(Sl), /həməg/(Wd), /heməg/(Mt), /həməg/(Mm), /həməg/(Pk), /heməg/(Hd), /həməg/(Md), /həməg/(Lt), /həməg/(Kw,Ks,Po), /həməg/(Pn,Kp), /həməg/(Wr) /həməg/(Wk), /həməg/(Ak), /həməg/(Pr), /həməg/(Ss,Ri,Ph); /həməg/(Ck)
Thail:	/həməg/(Ch), /həməg/(Bk), /həməg/(Nd), /həməg/(Sak)
Lit.M:<hamā, khamā> (Sak):<hamā>	
V226. *k[]mur	NyK: <i>to roof (a house) (with e.g. thatch)</i> [V.tr] Mon: <i>to roof a house</i>
NyK: [*] kemūr	N:/kemūl/(NL), /mul/(HK), /khemūl/(TD) C:/kemūr/(TP,Lt,SH) S:/kemūr/(TC,PB,Tk) /kamuy/(MKle,MKp), /pemuy/MKlu
Mon: [*] kamī	Ro:/zemei/(Po), /?emei/(Cc), /kemei/(Ks), /zemei/(Kb), Rao:/kemei/(Sho), /keməe/(Sl,Wd), /kempe/(Mt), /?eməe/(Mm), /keməe/(Pk,Hd,Md), /?eməf/(Lt), /?eməf/(Kw), /?eməf/(Ks), /keməe/(Pc,Pn), /keməe/(Kp,Wk,Nk), /keməe/(Ak), /keməe/(Pr), /keməe/(Ss), /?eməe/(Ri,Ph). /?eməe/(Ck)
Thail:	/?eməe/(Ch), /keməe/(Bk), /hme/(Nd), (Sak):<kəməl>
Kyanz.ON:<kumir>; Lit.M:<kamT>; (DOMI:p.48)	
Note:	this is possibly a morphological derivate of *kur NyK:/kur/ hill. Further extensions to account for the ethnic name of the Khmer, *kmeer,... seem phonologically tortuous at the moment. See Ferlus(1978).
V227. *c[r]muur	NyK: <i>to roll (e.g. a mat, a cigar...) into a roll</i> [V.tr] Mon: <i>to roll up (e.g. a mat)</i>
NyK: [*] chemuur	N:/omuul/(NL), /hmui/(HK), *(TD) C:/chemuir/(TP) S:/khamuir/(TC), /chemuir/(PB)
Mon: [*] hamuu	Ro:/hemao/(Po) Rao:/hemao/(Sho,Pk), /hemau/(Lt), /heməu/(Kw,Ks), /hemao/(Ss,Ri) Thail:/hemao/(Ch,Bk,Nd), /heməu/(Sak)
Lit.M:<samu, thamu, khmo>, Sak:<hamhu>	

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V228. *jwoor	NyK: <i>[tuber] to reach deep inside the ground</i> [V.Intr.] Mon: <i>(liquid) to flow</i>
NyK: [*] chuar	N:*(NL) C:/chuar/(TP) S:/oyer/(TC)
Mon: [*] khwo	Ro:/khwo/(Po) Rao:/hwg/(Sho), /hwgu/(Lt) Thail:/fwgo/(Nd), /fwg/-/fg/(Bk), /hwp/(Sak) Mid.M:<jwɔr>; Lit.M:<jwow>; (DOMI:p.131)
V228a. *j-[]-woor	NyK: <i>to slowly lower down (e.g. a bucket) on a rope</i> [V.tr]; typically used in honey-gathering: a rope is passed over a branch and the honey-container is lowered to oneself. Mon: <i>to cause to flow, allow to flow</i>
NyK: [*] chuar	C:/chuar/(TP)
Mon: [*] hewo	Ro:/hawo/(Po) Rao:/hawo/(Sho), /hawgu/(Lt)
Mid.M:<jawar>; Lit.M:<jawow>; (DOMI:p.120)	
V229. *sier	*(NyK):cf:V229a. Mon: <i>to grind (e.g. paddy); (Ri): to thin rattan, (Sak): to cut into bits</i>
Mon: [*] se	Ro:/sei/(Po) Rao:/se/(Sho), /sei/(Pk,Lt,Ss,Ri) Thail:<(Ch), /sse/(Nd), /se/(Sak) Lit.M:<sew, se>
V229a. *s-[]n-ier	NyK: <i>curry [Noun]</i> Mon: <i>green vegetables</i>
NyK: [*] cheniar	N:*(NL), /hniar/-/hñiar/(HK), /hniel/(TD) C:/hñiar/-/hñiar/(TP), /hñiar/-/hñiar/(SH) S:/kheniar/(TC), /cheniar/(TK), /seniar/(MKle), /khenway/(MKp), /khenlay/(MKlu), /ceniar/(PB)
Mon: [*] hene	Ro:/hene/(Po) Rao:/hene/(Sho), /henei/(Pk,Lt,Kw,Ri) Thail:/hane/(Ch,Bk,Nd), /hene/(Sak) Lit.M: <sawew, snew, thnew, khawew, khnew>; (Sak):<sne,khne,hane>
V230. *sar	NyK: <i>(person, standing object) to be short; (the top of : e.g. mountains, clouds, sky) to be low down [V.Intr.]; low [Adv.]</i> Mon: <i>be low to the ground, short of stature</i>

Dialects in Myanmar:
Mon Rao vs. Mon Ro

or

Mon Da (Martaban)

Mon Nya (Ye)

Mon Tang (Pegu)

(Diffloth 1984)

Variation in pronunciation among the dialects and Literary Mon (Jenny 2005)

	LM	Wangka	Kaw Dot	Kanni	Kaw Khapoun
‘event’	<poy>	<i>pua</i>	<i>pua</i>	<i>pua/pwa</i>	<i>pua</i>
‘hand’	<tay>	<i>tɔa</i>	<i>tɔa</i>	<i>tuə/twə</i>	<i>tuə</i>
‘finished’	<tuy>	<i>tɔa</i>	<i>tɔa</i>	<i>tuə/twə</i>	<i>tuə</i>
‘sand’	<btī>	<i>hətɔa</i>	<i>hətpi</i>	<i>hətɔə/hətuə</i>	<i>hətuə</i>
‘Buddha’	<kyāk>	<i>tɕ'aⱽc</i>	<i>tɕ'aⱽc</i>	<i>caⱽk</i>	<i>tɕ'aⱽc</i>
‘be torn’	<cāk>	<i>tɕaⱽc</i>	<i>tɕaⱽc</i>	<i>caⱽk</i>	<i>tɕaⱽc</i>
‘return’	<kaleñ>	<i>ɻəliəŋ</i>	<i>ɻəliəŋ</i>	<i>kəliəŋ</i>	<i>kəliəŋ</i>
‘six’	<tarau>	<i>ɻərao</i>	<i>ɻərao</i>	<i>kərao</i>	<i>kərao</i>



Differences between Thailand Mon and Myanmar Mon (Sungkaman 2006)

TM *hnikɔi* *hra:n* *kwi:* ***nɛŋ.***

MM *neh.kɔh* *ran* *nèŋ* *ka.*
 who buy come car come
 'Who bought the car?'

TM ***nem*** *?aw* *kጀ?* *ciə?*

MM *hù?* *kwጀ?* *ciə?* *nem.*
 yet NEG get eat yet
 'I haven't eaten yet.'

TM *tət* ***yay*** *nɔ?* *k^hɔh* ***kwa:.***

MM *toc* *pጀm* *nɔ?* *k^hph* *ra?*.
 sleep manner PROX good COMP FOC
 'It's better to sleep like this.'



5. Mon influence on its neighbors

Probable Mon loanwords in Thai (Jenny 2013)

<u>Old/Middle Mon</u>	<u>Thai</u>	<u>Gloss</u>	
<i>kwel</i>	[kwel]	<i>kwiən</i>	'cart'
<i>brāw</i>	[braw]	<i>máʔ-p^hrá:w</i>	'coconut'
<i>blān</i>	[blain̩]	<i>p^hla:ŋ</i>	'(at the same) moment'
<i>kindam</i>	[kəndɔm]	<i>krət^ham</i>	'do, build'
<i>dek/dik</i>	[dik]	<i>dèk</i>	'servant, inferior'
<i>bley</i>	[blɔj]	<i>p^hlɔ:j</i>	'pearl'
<i>blāy</i>	[blaj]	<i>p^hla:j</i>	'young male (elephant)'
<i>bañā</i>	[bəŋa]	<i>p^həja:</i>	'title of rulers'

Khmer or Mon?

lá? 'leave, abandon; ENUMERATIVE particle'

OK, OM *lah* 'separate, leave'

p^hre: 'satin'

Khmer *prɛ:*, Middle Mon *brer, brew*



Mon loans in Burmese (Jenny 2013)

<u>Old/Middle Mon</u>		<u>Burmese</u>	
<i>kindo?</i> / <i>kindo?</i>	'pay respect'	<i>gədó</i>	'beg pardon'
<i>kindar</i> / <i>kandar</i>	'wife'	<i>gədɔ</i>	'wife of official'
<i>kanā</i>	'pavilion'	<i>kənà</i>	'pavilion'
<i>clec, clac</i>	'ornament on roof'	<i>səli?</i>	'flame ornament'
<i>tāl</i>	'7 cubits'	<i>ta</i>	'7 cubits'
<i>pūjāw</i>	'worship'	<i>puzɔ</i>	'worship' (Pali <i>pūjā</i>)
Some shared function words, where the connection and direction of borrowing is unclear.			
<i>mā</i>	'TOPIC marker'	<i>hma</i>	'TOPIC marker'
<i>tūn</i>	'return'	<i>toun</i>	'particle denoting ALTERNATING act'
<i>to?</i>	'PLURAL suffix'	<i>tó</i>	'PLURAL suffix'
<i>lew</i>	'ADDITIVE particle'	<i>lè</i>	'ADDITIVE particle'
Particle <i>lè</i> also found in Shan (<i>lɛ</i>), maybe connected with Thai <i>lé?</i> ?			



Mon syntax in local Burmese

ကျွန်တော် ပြောမတတ်ဘူး။
təənɔ *pyì* *mə-taʔ-pʰù.*
1SG.M speak NEG-able-NEG

အဲဟို ဟုံလေပုဟ်။
?uə *hpm* *hù?* *lèp* *pùh.*
1SG speak NEG able NEG

မင်း မလုပ်ထိတော့ဘူး။
mìn *mə-louʔ-tʰí-dá-bù.*
2SG NEG-do-touch-CONTR-NEG

ငဗ္ဗဲ့ ဟုံဒေးကော်ရဲ။
pèh *hù?* *tèh* *klon* *raʔ.*
2SG NEG touch do FOC

ကျွန်တော် လုပ်မထိတော့ဘူး။
təənɔ *lou?* *mə-tʰí-dá-bù.*
1SG.M do NEG-touch-CONTR-NEG

အဲ ကော်ဟုံဒေးရဲ။
?uə *klon* *hù?* *tèh* *raʔ.*
1SG do NEG touch FOC



Burmese (colloquial)

အမေ သားကို ရွှေးပေးသွားတယ်။

?əme θà-go zè pè-θwà-de.

mother son-OBJ market give-go-NFUT

‘The mother allows her son to go to the market.’

Burmese (standard)

အမေ သားကို ရွှေးသွားခိုင်းတယ်။

?əme θà-go zè θwà-k^hàin-de.

mother son-OBJ market go-order-NFUT

‘The mother allows/orders her son to go to the market.’

Mon

မိက္ခိကောနအာဖြူ။

mi? kp kon ?a phya.

mother give offspring go market

‘The mother allows/orders her son to go to the market.’



6. Mon in the 21st century - chances and challenges



Mon cultural activity is well alive





Mon National Schools

2011 statistics (Lall&South 2012):

Schools 272

Teachers 808

Students 36,227



Primary: all subjects in Mon

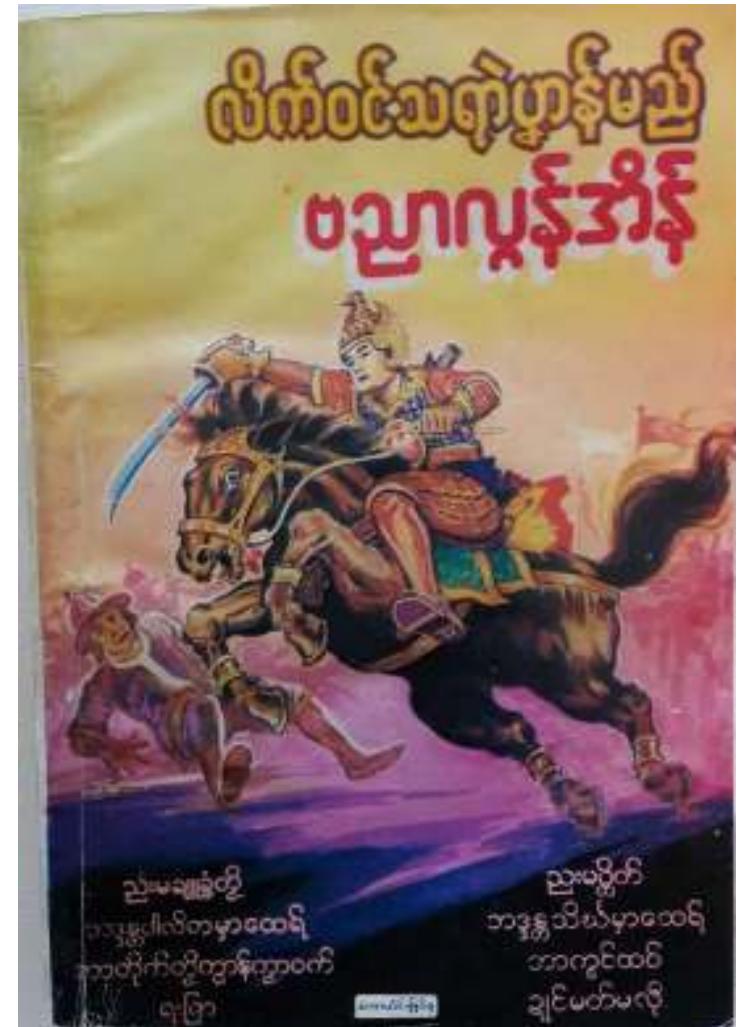
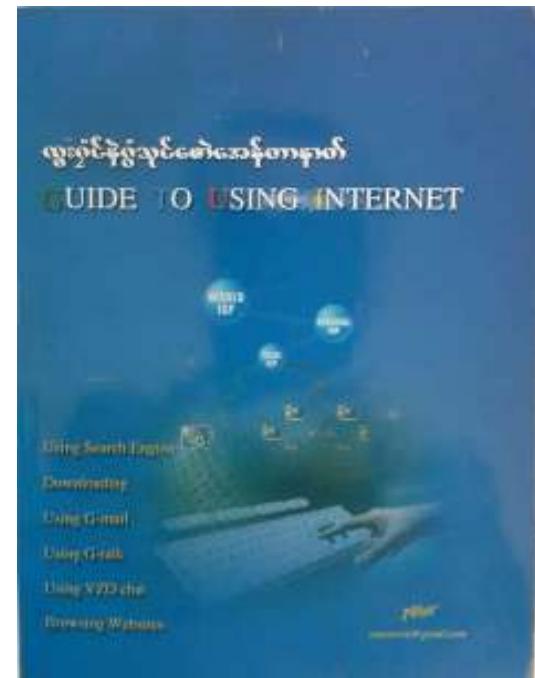
Middle: geography and history in Burmese, explanations in Mon, Mon modules

High: all subjects in Burmese, explanations in Mon, Mon modules



Literary and cultural activity in Mon ...

Popular literature (magazines, modern poems, short stories) and online resources



... in a changing environment for ethnic languages

Ethnic media call for recognition

Monday, 29 April 2013 18:13 - Myat Kyaw Thu



Myanmar's ethnic reporters, editors and publishers are calling for more recognition for the role of ethnic media in the country, and have urged Parliament to address the status of ethnic publications and broadcasting.



Ethnic conference in Strand Hotel in Minskshire on April 2013. Photo: Mitznef

At the first conference of its kind in Myanmar—held at the Strand Hotel in Mon State capital Mawlamyine [Moulmain] from April 25 to 27—more than 100 representatives of various ethnic media gathered to exchange views and discuss the difficulties that minority groups face in Myanmar's emerging media sector.

Concluding the conference, the assembled ethnic representatives called for a new media law set at an international standard whereby ethnic media work together with ministries to promote all forms of media in minority regions.

The groups also called for de facto freedom to work in radio and television broadcasting.

Ko Min Lett, the editor of the Mon-based *Than Lwin Times*, told *Mizzima* that ethnic media groups have an insufficient number of reporters, a lack of news sources, and rising costs to deal with.

Other minority journalists addressed the matter of reporting in their own language

"Many of our people cannot read or write Burmese," said one. "Why would we want to publish in a language that readers or listeners would not understand?"

မွန်စာ မူလတန်း တိတန်း သင်ရိုးညွှန်းတမ်း
ရေးဆွဲပြုစီပါးဖြစ်

ယဉ်စနိုင်း | ယသေခြံရမှု သလေ ကု ရဲ၏ ပုသ္တ ရန် ဘုရား ရန် ဘုရား ရန်



အမိန့်ပြု (အရှေ့)၊ ၁ ကျော်သီဥပ္ပါဒ်တွင် ဖုန်းစောင် ထို့ကြောင်းများ ရှုချင်နေ ဖုန်းကောင် တော်ပုန် ထို့ကြောင်းများ အားလုံး ကျိုးကြောင်းသာ ဖုန်းပုံစံတွင်ပူးများ ပေါ်မဲ့ပြီ ရောင်း ပြုပြီ ဖြစ်ကြပါ၊ ဖုန်းပုံစံများ ပေါ်မဲ့ပြီ အောင်ဆောင်း ၁၁ ကျော်အတွင်း

ପ୍ରକିଳା ଦୁଇତମ୍ଭ ଉଦ୍‌ଯୋଗିତାଙ୍କୁ (ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ପରିମାଣରେ ଉଦ୍‌ଯୋଗିତାଙ୍କୁ) ଲାଗିଥିବା ପ୍ରାଚୀନ ପରିମାଣରେ ଉଦ୍‌ଯୋଗିତାଙ୍କୁ

အဆင့်မြှုပ်နယ် ရရှိပေးပါသွား ဖုန်းတိုက်ချေသူများအတွက် တော်ဝန်ဆောင်ပြုပါသည်။

ବ୍ୟୋଧାରୀ ହାତରେ ଅନ୍ତିମାଳାରୀଙ୍କାରୀ ଦେଖି ଫଳକ ପାଇଁ ପୁଣ୍ୟବେଶରୀ ଦେଖି ଦେଖିଲୁଛାଏହି ଅନ୍ତିମାଳାରୀଙ୍କାରୀ ଦେଖିଲୁଛାଏହି ଅନ୍ତିମାଳାରୀଙ୍କାରୀ ଦେଖିଲୁଛାଏହି



Popular Music, including subtitled Karaoke videos, Movies





Opportunities for the Mon language - past and present

Sangatea (classical Mon story; Jenny 2011)

There was a town, a big land, prosperous and good. Velukaccā was its name. Woodcarvings adorned the houses, and windows of melted gold. The palace was decorated with gemstones, a truly noble place. A crystal cave was there, shining like the sun. The palace in the park was made of gold, surrounded by white elephants, pure like jasmine petals. The buildings were all arranged in perfect order. Light-footed horses trotted daringly and straight. Soldiers carrying lances and swords stood lined up on every side of the city wall. **Many tongues were spoken, all languages were heard, the place was filled with Chinese and Haw, Siamese, Mon, and Burmese, Indian, Chin, and Parsi.** Wells and ponds were abundant in all quarters of the city.

နွဲချင်လွှေ့မဲ့ ပြသနကျိုး၊
တရိုနတ္ထဲ ဗတင်ထပ်လဲဒီ၊
ဂိုဟ်သုံးမတိုက် သလိုက်ယဲ့၊
ဆွဲနွဲ့ဘင် ညံ်ထာင်မာလီ၊
ချေးပြုဟိုင်သာ ရွှံးအာညီး၊
ဂုတ်နိုဟိုင်မဲ့ တူဥ္တမီ၊
ပင်မင်္ဂလာရွှေ့ စိန်ဟင်တရီ၊
ကဗြိုင်ကူ့ ဇွာပ်ခန်လွှာဒီ ... ။

- Long standing literary tradition, rich history
- Mon National Schools in operation for 20 years
- Literacy programs in schools and monasteries
- Possibility of internet publications (low cost, fast, easily accessible)
- Increased production of popular material, less censorship
- Decreased pressure from central government to shift to Burmese



Challenges for the Mon language

Social challenges: In spite of a strong national/ethnic feeling of being Mon

- Mon National Schools don't enjoy a high reputation everywhere
- Mon is not seen as a useful means of communication
- Literacy in Mon is not seen as necessary
- Low or no presence in the media and modern technology (no Mon font for chats)
- Low budget and low return of investment for Mon-specific productions
- Mon no longer seen as means of soft opposition against Burmese

Linguistic challenges: In spite of more freedom and less pressure towards Burmese

- Improved communication in Mon State means more exchange → dialect leveling
- No generally accepted standard for the written and spoken language, no center
- Lack of vocabulary in many domains → increasing number of Burmese loans
- Increased popularity of Burmese media leads to more influence of Burmese
- Not much regional and international attention (no university level teaching)

Burmanization of Mon syntax

Increasing verb-final structures in modern prose

S 0

[Gmail *wù?*] [file *həkao təŋχ̥ə* *tɔ? kɔh*] *hot* *nù* *pəriəŋ-kχ̥m.klɒm*
Gmail PROX *file* kind some PL MEDL reason ABL NML-secure

<i>swak</i>	<i>c&hənèə</i>	<i>?ɔntərəy</i>	virus	<i>toə</i>	<i>dəh</i>	(S)	V
for	prevent	danger	<i>virus</i>	SEQ	3	NEG	give

?əkhoŋ *pray]* *ra?*.
 permission send FOC

‘For security reasons, in order to prevent the danger of viruses, Gmail does not allow some kinds of files to be sent.’ (*Guide to using internet*)

7. Summary and Conclusions

- Mon as one the oldest documented languages of Myanmar and Southeast Asia has a long history and literary tradition
- Important language in the past (transmitter of Indic culture and religion)
- Source of linguistic features in neighboring languages (Thai, Burmese, Karen)
- No independent political unit since the 18th century, varying degrees of autonomy and language use
- Increasing divergence of Thailand and Myanmar varieties
- Increasing convergence among Myanmar varieties and with Burmese

Mon needs

- more media and literary activity
- more academic attention, both internal and external

Chan Mon Chan Nai (Hongchan)

There are many Mon in this world, working in different ways for the people. Some believe in knowledge, some use their strength to work, almost reaching the goal.

One can say that you understand and cherish your people. You love your people, who else could do that?

“Dogs that bark don’t bite, dogs that bite don’t bark” - have you ever heard this saying?

Hey, you do your job, the streets are full of drunk white shirts and red longyis. Do you know what you’re doing? Have you ever thought about it? Only when you’re drunk you know you’re Mon, that’s really too bad.

Hey, whatever job you do, don’t think the Mon people will love you each time that you love the Mon. Let the Mon love you just as you love the Mon. Love the Mon people, let the Mon people love you so we can work together in harmony.