

A grammar of Kman [=Miju], a language of Arunachal Pradesh

KAMAN TA SAY NEM

[DRAFT CIRCULATED FOR COMMENT]

Roger Blench Sokhep Kri
McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research
University of Cambridge
Correspondence to:
8, Guest Road
Cambridge CB1 2AL
United Kingdom
Voice/ Ans (00-44)-(0)1223-560687
Mobile worldwide (00-44)-(0)7847-495590
E-mail rogerblench@yahoo.co.uk
<http://www.rogerblench.info/RBOP.htm>

This printout: Tezu, August 24, 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction: the Kman people and language	1
1.1 Identity of the Kman	1
1.2 Location and settlements of the Kman.....	1
1.3 Prior research on the Kman language	1
1.4 Development of an orthography	1
1.5 The classification of Kman	2
1.6 Kman society	2
1.7 Background to this document	3
2. Phonology	3
2.1 Consonants: overview	3
2.2.1 Initials and medials.....	3
2.2.2 Finals	4
2.2 Consonant modification	6
2.2.1 Overview	6
2.2.2 Aspiration	6
2.2.3 Palatalisation	8
2.2.4 Labialisation	12
2.2.5 Rhotacisation	14
2.2.6 Lateralisation	16
2.3 Nasals.....	19
2.3.1 Syllabic nasals	19
2.3.2 Homorganic nasals	20
2.3.3 Homorganic nasal metathesis	21
2.3.4 Velar nasals	22
2.2 Vowels	22
2.2.1 Unmodified vowels	22
2.2.2 Long and doubled vowels.....	22
2.2.3 Nasalised vowels	23
2.2.4 VV vowel sequences	24
2.2.5 V + glide sequences.....	25
2.3 Tones.....	25
2.3.1 Underlying tonal system.....	25
2.3.2 Tone in nominal compounds	26
2.3.3 Tone patterns marking semantic fields.....	27
2.3.4 Tones in loanwords.....	27
2.3.5 Tone patterns as suprasegmentals.....	29
2.3.6 Tones in ideophones	29
3. Morphology	30
3.1 General.....	30
3.1.1 Canonical word shape.....	30
3.1.2 Evidence for former C- prefixes?	30
3.2 Nouns	31
3.2.1 Canonical word shape.....	31
3.2.2 Number marking.....	31
3.2.3 Gender	31
3.2.4 Case-marking suffixes	32
3.2.3.1 Accusative in -wi(?)	32
3.2.3.2 Instrumental with kV-	33
3.2.5 Allomorphy in nouns.....	33
3.2.6 Nominal prefixes with semantic associations.....	34
3.2.7 A formant for persons.....	35
3.2.8 Numeral classifiers	35
3.2.9 Collectives.....	40

3.2.10 Noun-noun compounds	43
3.2.11 Sound-symbolism in nominal codas?	43
3.2.12 Paired collocations standing for nouns	43
3.3 Verbs	44
3.3.1 Morphology	44
3.3.1.1 Structure	44
3.3.1.2 tV(N) verbs, the infinitive	44
3.3.1.2 müN verbs	46
3.3.1.2 Verbal noun stem alternation through nasal incorporation	48
3.3.1.3 Initial consonant mutation	56
3.3.1.4 Vowel stem alternations denoting valency change	56
3.3.1.5 Plural verbs?	57
3.3.2 Verbal auxiliaries	57
3.3.2.1 Overview	57
3.3.2.3 Imperatives	57
3.3.2.3.1 Positive imperatives	57
3.3.2.3.2 Prohibitives, negative imperatives	61
3.3.2.3 Imperative - 'must'	61
3.3.2.4 Capacity	63
3.3.2.5 Iterative	63
3.3.3 Serial verb constructions	64
3.3.4 Verb pair idioms	64
3.4 Pronouns	64
3.4.1 Unmarked subject pronouns	64
3.4.2 Indefinite pronouns	65
3.4.3 Reflexive pronouns	65
3.4.4 Demonstratives	66
3.4.5 Possessives	67
3.5 Interrogatives	67
3.5.1 Question words	67
3.5.2 Polar questions	70
3.6 Adjectives and qualification	70
3.6.1 Descriptive	70
3.6.2 Stative verbs	74
3.6.3 Intensifiers	76
3.6.4 Nominalised compounds	78
3.6.5 Quantifiers	78
3.6.7 Comparison	79
3.6.7 Colours	79
3.6.7 Tastes, textures and odours	80
3.6.7.1 Taste	80
3.6.7.2 Texture in the mouth	83
3.6.7.3 Smells	84
3.7 Numerals	84
3.7.1 Ordinals	84
3.7.2 Counting in groups and sequences	85
3.8 Locatives	86
3.8.1 General	86
3.8.2 Directionals	88
3.9 Adverbs	91
3.9.1 Temporal adverbs	91
3.9.2 Adverbs of manner	92
3.10 Conjunctions and co-ordination	93
3.11 Ideophones and expressives	96
3.11.1 Overview	96

3.11.2 Animal noises	97
3.11.3 Paired collocations.....	97
3.12 Interjections.....	100
4. Syntax.....	101
4.1 Word order	101
4.2 Noun phrase	101
4.2.1 Benefactive/dative	101
4.3 Negation.....	102
4.3.1 Verbs	102
4.4 The verb phrase.....	103
4.4.1 Tense aspect systems	103
4.4.1.1 Overview	103
4.4.1.2 Present.....	103
4.4.1.3 Future	104
4.4.1.4 Imperfective	105
4.4.1.5 Perfective.....	106
4.4.1.6 Pluperfect	107
4.4.2 Equatives	107
4.4.3 Conditionals/subjunctive	109
4.4.4 Reported speech.....	110
5. Specialised language registers	110
5.1 General.....	110
5.2 Hunters' language	111
5.3 Shamanic language	113
5.4 Poetic language	118
5.5 Mediation register	118
5.7 Curses.....	118
5.8 Babytalk register	118
5.9 Moral teachings to children	119
References	120

TABLES

Table 1. Locations of the Kman	1
Table 2. Kman unmodified consonants: initial and medial	3
Table 3. Kman occurrences of /ʔ/	4
Table 4. Kman doubled consonants	4
Table 5. Kman consonants: final	5
Table 6. Kman vowels	22
Table 7. Kman long vowels	23
Table 8. Kman mid-low tone sequences	23
Table 9. Examples of Kman nasalised vowels	24
Table 10. Vw and VwC sequences in Kman	25
Table 11. Kman floating tones	26
Table 12. Mid-Low patterns on verbs to ‘wear/put on’	27
Table 13. Low-Mid-(Mid) patterns on loanwords	28
Table 14. Diverse tone patterns on loanwords	28
Table 15. Mid-Low patterns extended in compound lexemes	29
Table 16. Consistent level tones on Kman ideophones	29
Table 17. Irregular tone patterns on Kman ideophones	30
Table 18. Canonical structures of Kman lexemes	30
Table 19. Canonical structures of Kman nouns	31
Table 20. Kman number marking	31
Table 21. Allomorphy of a <i>haN</i> prefixed element in animal names	34
Table 22. <i>tā-</i> prefixes in Kman for animals	34
Table 23. The <i>kā-</i> agentive formant for persons	35
Table 24. Kman numeral classifiers and their categories	36
Table 25. Kman collectives	40
Table 26. Paired collocations standing for nouns	44
Table 27. Canonical structures of Kman verbal nouns	44
Table 28. Verb stems and corresponding <i>tV(N)</i> prefixed elements	45
Table 29. Allomorphy of the <i>tV(N)</i> auxiliary	46
Table 30. Verbal noun stem tones and outputs on infinitives	46
Table 31. Allomorphs of <i>müN</i> ‘do’	47
Table 32. Verb stems with nasal incorporation	48
Table 33. Coda and output in nasal incorporation	48
Table 34. Allomorphs of <i>kày</i> ‘action’	55
Table 35. Verb roots showing mutation	56
Table 36. Pronominal indexing of <i>châ</i> ‘eating’	56
Table 37. Hortative suffixes	60
Table 38. Pronominal indexing for emphatic imperative	61
Table 39. Kman subject pronouns	64
Table 40. Kman verb paradigm, ‘to come’	65
Table 41. Kman question words	68
Table 42. Kman adjectives with <i>kV-</i> prefixes	71
Table 43. Kman adjectives without prefixes	73
Table 44. Kman verbal nouns with <i>mũn</i>	75
Table 45. Kman quantifiers	78
Table 46. Kman colour terms	79
Table 47. Kman taste terms	80
Table 48. Items described as <i>khâ</i> ‘bitter’	81
Table 49. Items described as <i>sál</i> ‘fruity, sour’	81
Table 50. Foods described as <i>krəp</i> ‘sharp, unripe’	82
Table 51. Items described as <i>sìŋ</i> ‘pungent, spicy’	82

Table 52. Items described as <i>hāmǎk</i> ‘soft but with consistent texture’	83
Table 53. Foods described as <i>címil</i> ‘crunchy’	83
Table 54. Kman lower numerals	84
Table 55. Kman higher numerals	85
Table 56. Kman locatives.....	86
Table 57. Kman temporal adverbs	91
Table 58. Kman conjunctions	94
Table 59. Kman directly repeated ideophones.....	97
Table 60. Kman ideophones with vowel alternation.....	97
Table 61. Kman paired collocations.....	100
Table 62. Paradigm of auxiliaries marking present continuous	103
Table 63. Perfective markers for ‘ to go’	106
Table 64. Kman conditional markers	109
Table 65. Registers of Kman.....	111
Table 66. Kman animal names in hunting register.....	111
Table 67. Kman miscellaneous terms in hunting register	112
Table 68. Shamanic vocabulary	113
Table 69. Kman babytalk register	119

ABSTRACT

This document is a draft grammar of Kman [=Miju], a language spoken around Tezu in Arunachal Pradesh. Kman may be affiliated to the Trans-Himalayan languages, but this remains to be proven. Anthropological and early travel literature is briefly reviewed. The phonology of Kman is very complex, with an elaborate multiple consonant modifications. In a region dominated by isolating languages, Kman exhibits verbal morphology which includes stem alternation as well as pronominal cross-referencing, resembling other regional languages. Kman has an elaborate register system, which includes specialised versions of the language used in shamanic chants, by hunters, as well as poetic vocabulary and forms restricted to mediation. Kman may be under threat, with regional languages including Nepali and Hindi causing loss of competence among the younger generation of speakers.

Keywords: Kman; grammar; Arunachal Pradesh

1. Introduction: the Kman people and language

1.1 Identity of the Kman

The Kman (Kaman, Geman, Miju) people are usually categorised in Arunachal Pradesh as ‘Mishmi’. The term ‘Mishmi’ is used in the travel literature as far back as the early nineteenth century to refer to three distinct peoples, the Kman, the Tawrā and the Idu. While Idu and Tawrā may be related, Kman is not part of the same linguistic group. Nonetheless, the Tawrā and the Kman are considered to share many aspects of their culture, including shamanic practice. This commonality is locally reflected in attempts to write the two languages in a common ‘script’ (i.e. orthography) despite their phonological differences. The possible origins of this mismatch between language and culture are discussed in Blench (fc.)

The Kman people are commonly known in India as Miju, a term found in the early colonial literature (e.g. Robinson 1856). Miju is not used in the vernacular (e.g. Boro 1978 for the Indian side and Li (2003) for the Chinese communities) and local publications have switched to a form of Kman (e.g. Tawsik 2014). Kman is listed as ‘Miju-Mishmi’ [mxj] in the Ethnologue (17th edition) and it is said to have 18,000 speakers on the Indian side and 200 on the Chinese side. This is almost certainly a considerable exaggeration. Even accounting for individuals claiming Kman ethnicity but not proficient in the language, it is unlikely there are more than 3-4000 speakers. The core area of Kman villages is in Lohit district, Arunachal Pradesh, and its effective capital is Tezu, where the Kman and Tawrā are intermixed with settlers from Assam and other regions of India.

1.2 Location and settlements of the Kman

The Kman people live in villages and settlements around and north of Tezu in Arunachal Pradesh, Northeast India. Their settlements stretch into China (Table 1). There may also be villages in Myanmar, as there are certainly Tawrā people.

Table 1. Locations of the Kman

People	India	China
Kman	SE Lohit District	Zayul County, Lower Zayul, 巴安通 Ba’antong village.

Sources: Bradley (p.c.) and Ethnologue (2019)

1.3 Prior research on the Kman language

The Kman language has not been described to modern linguistic standards. The first record appears to be Robinson (1856), which is quite accurate for the period, and his transcriptions are recognisable today. Additional Kman materials are cited in Campbell (1874). Needham (1886) is the first specific vocabulary of Kman (under the name Miju) and the first to compare it with Tawrā. The only modern era publications on the language from the Indian side are Das Gupta (1977) and Boro (1978). These were said to be ‘practical’ guides and the transcription of Kman is highly inaccurate by current standards. Tawsik (2014) is a comparative wordlist of Tawrā and Kman, which uses an idiosyncratic transcription but includes much useful cultural information. Despite the small number of speakers on the Chinese side of the border, there have been several publications on ‘Geman’, the Chinese version of the name. These include Sun (1991, 1999) and most importantly, Li (2003) which is a full-length description of the language. The tonal description and morphology in these works is highly sinicised, with a lack of clarity about bound morphology, since every morpheme is written as a distinct element. Moreover, insights into the highly mobile tonal morphology are restricted by the static nature of Chinese superscript tone-marking.

1.4 Development of an orthography

Kman has undergone an intriguing development in terms of its orthography; a local system of writing used for communication on Facebook has developed which is also used in a children’s book (Dai *et al.* 2013). Separately, a lexical guide has been published covering both Kman and the neighbouring Tawrā [Taraon] language (Tawsik 2014). Based on the analysis in this grammar, an alphabet chart and reading and writing

book were prepared in February 2018, and formally presented at the Tamladu Festival, 15th February, 2018 at Tezu.

1.5 The classification of Kman

Like Tawrā and Idu, Kman has been classified as the ‘North Assam’ branch of Tibeto-Burman, initially by Konow (1902, 1909). This classification has been repeated through various publications (e.g. Van Driem 2001 [under Midzuish]; Bradley 2002; Burling Robbins 2003) despite a signal lack of evidence. Blench & Post (2013) are the first authors to question this affiliation, although they do not present a data-oriented argument. A Tibeto-Burman affiliation of Kman must be treated with scepticism; there are certainly a small number of similarities in basic vocabulary as would be expected in any regional language, but that by the usual methods of historical linguistics, regular sound correspondences, lexical cognates and grammatical similarities, Kman signally fails the test.

The isolated Meyor people who live in Walong and Kibitho, up towards the Chinese border, have also undergone extensive cultural interaction with the Kman and the two languages share many words. However, the underlying linguistic similarities are few and these languages are almost certainly unrelated.

1.6 Kman society

Our knowledge of Kman society is still quite limited and descriptive materials remain scarce. The Kman are discussed in Dalton (1872) under the general name ‘Mishmi’ and the anthropological sketch in Mills (1952) discusses all three ‘Mishmi’ peoples in the same rather general terms. Dutta (2012) is an ethnographic sketch following the pattern of monographs published by the Arunachal Pradesh Research Directorate. It contains useful material, but also much that is misleading.

Kman is a segmentary lineage society, of a type described for Sub-Saharan Africa. The clans trace their ancestry back to patriarchal founders. Clans are paired, so that marriages are prescribed between particular clans, although this system is beginning to break down in the present. Wives from other clans are brought into the household, together with their *bro* or spirits. More than a hundred clans are named, although some are now recognised as extinct. There is no general authority, with an amorphous assembly of elders recognised as a general body of wisdom.

The organising unit of the society is the household, itself based in the longhouse, *büi*., reflecting the polygynous marriage pattern. The house is a structure which has an internal corridor joining as many as fifteen different rooms, some of which may be hearths, representing the wives of the household head. The house is the responsibility of a presiding *bro*, or wealth spirit. The pigs belonging to the household are kept underneath or beside the house. The overall wealth of the household is reckoned in livestock, especially mithuns, which are the key sacrificial animal.

Kman religion is based on shamanism, and society is ordered by a series of ritual managed by a hierarchy of shamans, including the *kambring*, *kätuwat* and their assistants. These chant and sacrifice for the general wellbeing of the community, the health of individuals, and to regulate misfortune caused by the transgression of taboos, or malevolence of spirits of the wild. Hunting and forest gathering plays a major role in Kman identity and individual animal species are subject to prohibitions which hunters must obey.

Kman subsistence is based on slash-and-burn agriculture, with the traditional crop repertoire including a wide variety of millets and tubers, as well as hill and paddy rice. Potherbs and spice plants are grown in kitchen gardens close to the house. A wide variety of wild foods are also consumed. Cash crops are relatively new to the area, but tangerines and kiwi fruits are grown for sale on quite a large scale.

Historically, Kman were active traders, and intermediaries between the Tibetans and the Assamese of the Brahmaputra Plain. Tibetan silver and iron implements were brought down in exchange for skins and the medicinal herb, Mishmi tita, much valued in Tibet. Even today, elaborate silver jewellery in the Tibetan style is highly valued. From the Assamese, bronze pots and iron objects such as knives were major trade

items. The closure of the land border with China after 1962 caused a drastic change in these trade patterns. The continuous settlement of Kman villages up to Tibet was broken and the Kman in India are now disconnected from the villages in Tibet. The road leading up through Walong is closed to outsiders and the whole region highly militarised. As a result, the focus has been on integration with Indian lifestyle and culture.

1.7 Background to this document

This document has been prepared in conjunction with a dictionary and the orthographic materials described above. It is based on five field trips to the Kman area in February-March and November-January 2015 and December-February 2016-2017, 2017-2018, October 2018 and August 2019. It was also possible to visit some villages, such as Changliang, and photograph characteristic Kman material culture. This work represents an active collaboration between the lead author and Mr. Sokhep Kri, whose hospitality and dedicated recording of examples of Kman are the basis of the results given here. Additional assistance was given by Mr. Kruleso Ngadong of Tezu. The present version of the grammar is still unfinished, and awaits further checking and expansion, and should be read in this light. Preliminary presentations of results were made in presentations to CALSOM (Cultural and Literary Association of Mishmi) between 2015 and 2018. A reading and writing book presenting an orthography based on the phonological analysis presented here, and a wallchart were published in 2018.

2. Phonology

2.1 Consonants: overview

2.2.1 Initials and medials

Kman consonants are shown in Table 2;

Table 2. Kman unmodified consonants: initial and medial

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Retro-flex	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p b		t d				k g	ʔ
Fricative		[f]	s z		ʃ			h
Affricate			ts [dz]		tʃ dʒ			
Nasal	m		n			ɲ	ŋ	
Flapped			r					
Lateral			l	[l̥]				
Approximants	w	[v]				y		

Kman consonants are potentially subject to a variety of modifications and their combinations. They include aspiration, palatalisation, labialisation, rhotacisation and lateralisation.

Kman has a series of allophones of specific consonants, realised in individual ways before front vowels, principally /i/. These are;

/w/	[v]
/l/	[l̥]
/s/	[s ^h]

/s/ and /ʃ/ appear to be in free variation in many words, and are probably not distinct phonemes. However, /s/ is systematically distinguished in loanwords from Indo-Aryan languages, so it is on the verge of becoming an independent phoneme.

/z/ and /dz/ are in free variation, and some speakers prefer [z] for particular words. However, there are no minimal pairs, and ‘z’ has been preferred in the orthography.

The affricates /ts/ and /dz/ are clearly sounded in many words including /tsòŋ/ ‘person’, but locally this is written *cong*, which is not appropriate. /p^h/ is in free variation with /f/, which may also be the influence of speaking Indo-Aryan languages.

One of the more idiosyncratic low-frequency phonemes is the glottal stop /ʔ/. It is essential to the grammatical system, suffixed to verb stems to mark the present continuous, but also occurs in a small number of words, as shown in Table 3;

Table 3. Kman occurrences of /ʔ/

Kman	Gloss
lāʔùʔ	swan
chəkhīʔ	blood pheasant
dəʔòw	squirrel
dīʔiŋ	ginger
sòʔ	uncooked arum
tāʔnəm	grinding stone, upper
tāʔyūm	uncooked piece of meat
ʔt	enemy
ʔyəy	conflict, quarrel

In most examples it is in the syllable-coda position, and probably represents a deleted consonant. However, /iʔt/ ‘enemy’ is a highly unusual word-structure for Kman, which does not permit this type of CC sequence. ʔyəy may represent influence from the neighbouring Tawrà language, which has a small class of words with initial glottal preceding the glides /w/ and /y/. The apostrophe ’ has been chosen to represent the glottal stop in the practical orthography.

Kman has a small number of doubled consonants, principally /k/, /b/, /p/, and /w/ shown in Table 4. These are presumed to former morpheme boundaries which have become lexicalised.

Table 4. Kman doubled consonants

Kman	Gloss
dūbbē	bean sp.
əkkəp	pale-capped pigeon
təppəl	imprisonment
tūpphyā	liquid food prepared with a fish stomach
tūwwəy	steep rope bridge

One of these has a minimal pair illustrating its contrastive status;

əkəp	turning over (baby)
əkkəp	pale-capped pigeon

2.2.2 Finals

Kman has a range of consonants in final position, but includes no modified consonants.

Table 5. Kman consonants: final

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Palato-alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosive	p		t			k	[ʔ]
Nasal	m		n			ŋ	
Flapped			[r]				
Lateral			l				
Approximants	w				y		

Voicing distinctions in plosives are neutralised in final position, so only /p/, /t/ and /k/ are retained. Only two examples of /ʔ/ in final position in the main lexicon have been recorded (Table 3). However, final glottal is common in verbal nouns, as a consequence of the inflectional system.

/r/ only occurs in loanwords, such as;

bàjār market

Final /s/ is even more marginal, confined to English loanwords, e.g.;

phīs fees

/p/

āchīp elder brother
 bəp stumbling
 phlāp flat bread

/t/

bāàt grasping (object)
 bāshùt spoon
 bēt small piece of meat

/k/

/k/ only occurs preceded by -w;

byāwk cold; rhume; chill
 chāwk dwelling
 rāwk arm; hand

/n/

bān wool
 brān belt; waistband; girdle
 chhûn greater short-toed lark

/m/

b̄r̄m rib
b̄m̄ mental illness
chēm disappearing in water

/ŋ/

ānthūŋ grass (saw) sp.
b̄antōŋ mortgage
b̄awŋ air

/l/

b̄l sprinkling
chāl mithun

/y/

b̄y spoon; large
b̄y home; house; dwelling
chōphāy green leaf, wild

/w/

ās̄aw many, plenty
áȳaw beside or behind speaker
chh̄w mouth

2.2 Consonant modification

2.2.1 Overview

Kman has an extensive system of consonant modification. Aspiration, palatalisation, labialisation, rhotacisation, lateralisation are all used to make phonemic distinctions and many consonants can undergo multiple modifications.

2.2.2 Aspiration

Aspiration is the most common form of consonant modification and can be applied to all voiceless consonants. The following are distinct phonemes;

/p^h/, /t^h/, /k^h/, /tʃ^h/, /s^h/

/g^h/ only occurs in a few Assamese loanwords.

Aspirated /p^h/ is sometimes heard in free variation with [f]

/p/ ~ /p^h/

pāt	pretence	phāt	vomit
pān	to spin	phān	flower
pāp	goitre	phāp	to fatten
pāt	pretence	phātē?	jail

/t/ ~ /tʰ/

tāʔ	accepting, receiving s.t	thāʔ	keeping
tānggī	beer (raw form)	thānggī	to die by accident
tāw	collision	thāw	pricking
tākām	fog, mist	thāk	obeying
tūn¹	but	thūn	bunch

/k/ ~ /kʰ/

kā	voice, sound	khā	describes sour taste
kān	sulphur used in gunpowder	khān	showing
kāpāt	fast in mind and body, rapid	khāp	lid, cover (vessel)
kālā¹	officer, high ranking person	khāl	ditch, drain
klōʔ	rope bridge, straight, 'twin'	khlōʔ	large bamboo tube used to store water

/gʰ/

Not a native phoneme, only occurs in loanwords from Assamese.

ghòntā	hour
ghòrī	clock, wristwatch

/tʃ/ ~ /tʃʰ/

chân	seriously ill	chhân	bangle
chāwphā	chief	chhāw	cluster [stars, fields]
chākā	grain, sp. unknown	chhāng	disappearing in water
chī	endurance	chhī	lentil
chōŋ	umbrella	chhōŋ	bean, generic, pulse

/s/ ~ /sʰ/

sā	child, offspring, baby	shāʔ	life-force
sām	bee, domestic	shāmù	mane
sāŋ	tree, woody plant	shōn	what?
sāt	killing	shāt	food
sūŋ	describes good smell	shūŋ	putting on, wearing

It seems that convincing contrasts with high front and back vowels are only possible where loanwords are invoked. However, loanwords retain the /ʃ/ palatal rather than being assimilated to /sʰ/ and it is likely this contrast was not native.

sūt	putting, wearing	shùtī	holiday (Assamese)
sīt	egg	shitī	letter (Hindi)

2.2.3 Palatalisation

Palatalisation in Kman is extremely common, although individual combinations may be rare. There is an extremely strong tendency for palatal consonants to be followed by back or central vowels. /p^{hy}/ may be the only exception to this rule. For reasons given below, /l^y/ may not be underlyingly contrastive. The following consonants can be palatalised;

/p^y/, /p^{hy}/, /b^y/, /t^y/, /t^{hy}/, /d^y/, /ʃ^y/, /k^y/, /k^{hy}/, /g^y/, /m^y/, /l^y/, /h^y/

/ɲ/ is treated as an independent unit in the nasal series.

Examples;

/p^y/

Occurs only word-initially except in some reduplicated expressions. Only occurs before /a/, /o/, and /ü/;

pyâm	fertiliser
pyâs	onion
pyōò	to smear a paste on s.t.
pyòŋ	pot of beer
pyük	to milk

A low frequency of this phoneme means examples of convincing contrast are quite rare;

pām	cultivation	pyâm	fertile (field)
pāsày	bird	pyâs	onion
pōŋ	holding s.t	pyōng	vessel of beer

/p^{hy}/

A rare phoneme and almost exclusively word-initial, except where occurring in old compounds.

tūpphyã	liquid food prepared with the stomach of a fish
phyīl	abusive expression, insult, curse
tāphyo	arrowhead
phyùdū	eggplant, brinjal
phyūt	to whistle

/p/ ~ /p^{hy}/

pīt	paper	phyīl	insult, curse
pūlīt	earthworm	phyūl	fine

/p^h/ ~ /p^{hy}/

phô	knock	tāphyo	arrowhead
phāt	vomit	tūpphyā	liquid food
phūn	door	phyūt	to whistle

/bʲ/

Occurs only before central and back vowels.

tàmbyà	tobacco
kàmbyàt	sympathy
byō	always
byōŋ	classifier for long pieces of wood
hāmbyūŋ	banana, plantain

/b/ ~/bʲ/

bàat²	body odour	kàmbyàt	sympathy
bō	maize	byō	often, regular [ly], always
būm	mental illness	byūp	hoof

/tʲ/

Occurs only before central and back vowels and both initially and word-medially.

tyā	to carry with two people
tyōŋ	very
tātyō	troublesome
tyù phrē	very seriously
tyūm	sweet

/t/ ~ /tʲ/

tā	kicking	tyā	carrying s.t with two people or more
tāng	dipping	tyōng	very
tô'	obstacle, blockage	tyōtyō	woodpeckers
tūl	origin	tyù phrē	very seriously

/tʰy/

Occurs only before central and back vowels. Extremely rare, only occurring in the items listed

māthyām	a little
thyò	suffix on pronouns for animates meaning 'certainly, definitely'
thyūp	folding

/t/ ~ /tʰy/

tāmbyə̀	tobacco, traditional	mə̌thyām	a little
tô	now, immediately	thyò	suffix on pronouns for animates
tūpə̌y	bag	thyūp	to fold (cloth etc.)

/tʰ/ ~ /tʰy/

thà	gossip	mə̌thyām	a little
thòʹ	extension	thyò	suffix on pronouns for animates
thūt	coughing	thyūp	folding

/dʲ/

Occurs only before the low central and high back vowels, both initially and word-medially.

dyāw	bird-trap
kōʔdyāŋ	tree frog, generic
dyōŋ shāŋī	fire-capped tit
kāndyūŋ	moist, wet, damp, soggy
ùdyū	peacock

/d/ ~ /dʲ/

dāw	hospitality	dyāw	bird-trap
dāŋ	yard in length	kōʔdyāŋ	tree frog, generic
dō	saying	dyōŋ shāŋī	fire-capped tit
dūŋ	bamboo stemborer	kāndyūŋ	moist, wet, damp, soggy

/ʃʲ/

Occurs only before central and back vowels, both initially and word-medially.

shyā̃	wild
shyōk	inhabiting

/kʲ/

Occurs before central and back vowels and both initially and word-medially. No contrast can be cited to establish /kʲ/ before front vowels, suggesting palatalisation is phonetic in such sequences.

nyā kyā	compulsory or fixed amount		
thàkyà	bee sp.		
k(y)ēpmù nūn	seventeen		
kyōk	brother		
kyūk	thread		
kā	voice, sound	thàkyà	bee sp.
kòpāt	fate, destiny	kyōk	brother
kūrūl	jealousy (general)	kyūk	thread

/k^{hy}/

Precedes all vowel types, although no examples of /^{hy}/ + high vowel are recorded. Only occurs word-initially except in an unusual Assamese loanword

khyām	to touch
khyāp	farming hut
khyēm	Mishmi takin
khyōk	copper
pòrkhyā	examination

/k/ ~ /k^{hy}/

kām	job, work, employment	khyām	to touch
kāp	firing, shooting	khyāp	farming hut
kēmày	wife	khyēm	Mishmi takin
kōŋ	keeping s.o. without food	khyōk	copper

/k^h/ ~ /k^{hy}/

khān	showing	khyām	to touch
khāp	lid, cover (vessel)	khyāp	farming hut
khəl	ditch, drain	khyēm	Mishmi takin
khō?	cutting into small pieces	khyōk	copper

/g^y/

Occurs only before central and back vowels, both initially and word-medially.

gyāl	to run
gyō?	to melt, mix, blend
hāŋgyōŋ	bee sp.
gyūŋ	valley
gyūp	falsehood

/g/ ~ /g^y/

gāl	leaving	gyāl	to run
gō?	cracking, breaking	gyō?	to melt, mix, blend
gūŋ	unitedly	gyūŋ	valley

/m^y/

Very rare, occurring only in these two words

myūm	trunk of elephant
kāmyik	fragile

/m/ ~ /m^y/

mūn	luring	myūm	trunk of elephant
mīk	eye	kāmyik	fragile

/ɣ/

The fact that two of the words where this is attested are modern innovations and the third is before a mid-front vowel and may thus be non-contrastive suggests this is at best a marginal phoneme.

lyàṅā	frying pan
lyārāl	bicycle
lōṅ lyēk	caterpillar sp.

/l/ ~ /ɣ/

lāṅgōṅ	inner corridor	lyàṅā	frying pan
lēp	slicing or sawing across	lōṅ lyēk	caterpillar sp.

/hʏ/

Only recorded in the following word;

hyūṅ bone-marrow

/h/ ~ /hʏ/

hūṅ neck hyūṅ bone-marrow

/wʏ/

Extremely rare. Only recorded in the following words.

wyīl	carrying a child by the side
hōwyīn	spinning
wyīt	selling

2.2.4 Labialisation

Labialisation is far rarer than palatalisation and even where labialised consonants occur there are fewer examples. The following have been recorded.

/kʷ/, /kʰʷ/, /gʷ/, /hʷ/

Except for /gʷ/, all of these occur only before high vowels. Sequences initially heard as labialisation, such as *būy* 'house', are usually sequences of *ü + y*

/kʷ/ occurs in only a small number of items, always in the initial slot, and only before high vowels.

kwī	dog
kwūn	to roll
kwūt	to brush

/k/~ /k^w/

kī	rotation	kwī	dog
kūt	desire	kwūt	brushing

/k^{hw}/

A very rare combination which occurs, like /k^w/, only before high vowels.

sperm	yàŋ khwī
bamboo weeding tool	khwūt

/k/~ /k^{hw}/

kī	rotation	yàŋ khwī	sperm
kūt	desire	khwūt	bamboo weeding tool

/k^w ~ /k^{hw}/

kwī	dog	yàŋ khwī	sperm
kwūt	brushing	khwūt	bamboo weeding tool

/g^w/

/g^w/ occurs in only a small number of items, only before high and central vowels.

gwī	soft, slippery particle in water
pāngwəy	earlier
sāngwōng-kūimūt	poetic expression for slave
chānggwūn	plant (small), gives a bad smell when crushed
mā gwūt	broom

/g/~ /g^w/

gī	turning around	gwī	soft, slippery particle in water
gəy	comic, funny	pāngwəy	earlier
gōŋ	beside, apart, next to	sāngwōng-kūimūt	poetic expression for slave
gùŋ	within, inside	chānggwūn	plant (small)
gūp	husk, shell	mā gwūt	broom

/h^w/

hwī	hunting
hwūl	digging with the hands
hwūt	smoke

/h/~ /h^w/

hī'lùì	piece of material	hwī	hunting
hūlùì	stumbling	hwūì	digging with the hands
hūw	emission	hwût	smoke

2.2.5 Rhotacisation

The following consonants can be rhotacised;

/p^r/, /p^{hr}/, /b^r/, /t^r/, /k^r/, /k^{hr}/, /g^r/

/p^r/

Precedes all vowel types, in initial and word-medial slots.

kāprā	wealthy, rich
prām	to soak
prīŋ	to restrict
pròŋk nāy	to thank

/p/~ / p^r/

pā	bunch of banana, grain	kāprā	wealthy, rich
pām	cultivation	prām	to soak
pīŋ	part; portion; section	prīŋ	to restrict
pōng	father's brother, uncle	pròŋk nāy	to thank

/p^{hr}/

Extremely rare phoneme, only precedes central and high back vowels.

phrân	pulse (body)
phrūì	erosion
phrût	meeting

/p/~ / p^{hr}/

pān	raft	phrân	pulse (body)
pūlīt	earthworm	phrūì	to erode
pūt ²	pushing	phrût	to meet, receive

/p^h/~ / p^{hr}/

phân	flower	phrân	pulse (body)
phùl gòbi	cauliflower	phrūì	to erode
phūphì	bun of hair		
phūtbōl	football	phrût	to meet, receive

The word for 'football' is an evident English loanword, but no indigeous word provides evidence for this contrast.

/bʰ/

Precedes all vowel types, in initial and word-medial slots.

bṝm	rib
br̄uŋ	backbone, spine
br̄uṗ	cheek
br̄ūl	classifier for small trees
br̄oŋ	community
br̄əŋ	lace
br̄ət	pebble

/b/ ~ /bʰ/

bisī mū	forty, 40	bṝm	rib
būŋ	smoke	br̄uŋ	backbone, spine
būm	mental illness	br̄uṗ	cheek
būl	feather; fur; down; quill	br̄ūl	classifier for small trees
bōŋ	classifier for bamboo, generic	br̄oŋ	community
bət	small piece of meat	br̄əŋ	lace
bəŋ	large cloth	br̄ət	pebble

/tʰ/

/tʰ/ occurs word-internally only in borrowings

mōntrī minister < Hindi

/kʰ/

Precedes all vowel types, in initial and word-medial slots.

krāw	to dry over fire
krē	chicken
krəŋ	horn
krīt	to laugh
krōŋ	to feel cold
krū	fish nest

/k/ ~ /kʰ/

kāw	obedience	krāw	to dry over fire
kərəlā	bitter gourd	krē	chicken
kəŋit	wise, learned, intelligent, clever	krəŋ	horn
	no contrast identified	krīt	to laugh
kōŋ	keeping s.o. without food	krōŋ	to feel cold
kūŋ	cost, price, value	krū	fish nest

Contrasts with /e/ are occur only with loanwords, such as the word for ‘bitter gourd’ above.

/k^{hr}/

khrāʔ	sputum
khrē	tax
khrəp	cord denoting traditional invitation
khrī	suffering
khrūw	brass pot
khrūn	extraction (esp. ropes)

/k/~ /k^{hr}/

kâ	voice, sound	khrāʔ	sputum
kèrēlā	bitter gourd	khrē	tax
kəp	starvation	khrəp	cord denoting traditional invitation
kī	I, me, my	khrī	suffering
kūw	classifier for human beings	khrūw	brass pot
kūrūl	jealousy (general)	khrūn	extraction (esp. ropes)

/k^h/~ /k^{hr}/

khā	describes sour taste	khrāʔ	sputum
	no contrast identified	khrē	tax
khəp	bending	khrəp	cord denoting traditional invitation
khīŋ	larvae	khrī	suffering
khūwāŋ	pond, well	khrūw	brass pot
	no contrast identified	khrūn	extraction (esp. ropes)

/g^r/

grā	knife
grək	cricket, cries all night
grəŋ	chest
grūt	to paint
grūt	sugar-cane

/g/~ /g^r/

gāl	discarding	grā	knife
gəŋ	dragging	grək	cricket, cries all night
gôŋ	beside, apart, next to	grəŋ	chest
gūrū gērē	describes walking awkwardly	grūt	to paint
gūp	husk, shell	grūt	sugar-cane

2.2.6 Lateralisation

The following consonants can be lateralised in Kman;

/p^l/, /p^{hl}/, /b^l/, /k^l/, /g^l/

/pʰ/

A rare phoneme, occurring only before central and mid-back vowels, in initial and word-medial position.

plâ	foot
kâplâk	whole
plôŋ	appearance

/p/~ /pʰ/

pā	bunch of bananas	plâ	foot
pān	pluck	kâplâk	whole
pōng	father's brother, uncle	plôŋ	appearance

/pʰʰ/

phlâp	flat bread
phlêŋ	to fill
phlê?	porridge
phlî?	cliff
phlô?	to be late
phlüt	to wash face with hands

/p/~ /pʰʰ/

pâp	goitre	phlâp	flat bread
pān	pluck	phlêŋ	to fill
pê?	to cook a grain into a paste	phlê?	porridge
pî	offering, giving	phlî?	cliff
pô	to wear	phlô?	to be late
pülit	earthworm	phlüt	to wash face with hands

/pʰʰ/~ /pʰʰʰ/

phâp	fattening	phlâp	flat bread
phêŋ	throwing at random	phlêŋ	to fill
	no contrast identified	phlê?	porridge
phî	giving	phlî?	cliff
phô	knocking	phlô?	to be late
phütböl	football	phlüt	to wash face with hands

/b/

blây	tongue
māmblē	bean, flat
blōm	boiling
blōŋ	road

/b~/ /b'/

bây	spoon, large	blây	tongue
bē	noise	māmblē	bean, flat
bəp	stumble	blōm	boiling
bōŋ	classifier for bamboo, generic	blōŋ	road

/k^l/

klām	far away
klē?	porridge
klət	sprain, dislocation
ʃūklīt	mud
klông	high
māklùŋ	firefly

/k~/ /k'/

kām	being, existing	klām	far away
kèrēlā	bitter gourd	klē?	porridge
kōt	action, doing	klət	sprain, dislocation
kīp	centre, middle	ʃūklīt	mud
kōŋ	keeping s.o. without food	klông	high
kūŋ	cost, price, value	māklùŋ	firefly

/k^h/

khlà	weeding
khlē khlē wà	greater rufous-headed parrotbill
khlət	rising (esp. of sun)
khlô?	turning over a vessel so the contents fall out

/k~/ /k^h/

kâ	voice, sound	khlà	weeding
kèrēlā	bitter gourd	khlē khlē wà	greater rufous-headed parrotbill
kōt	action, doing	khlət	rising (esp. of sun)
ko□?, kō?	useless	khlô?	turning over a vessel so the contents fall out

/k^h/~ /k^h/

khâ	describes sour taste	khlâ	weeding
	no contrast identified	khlē khlē wà	greater rufous-headed parrotbill
khəp	bending	khlət	rising (esp. of sun)
khô?	cutting into small pieces	khô?	turning over a vessel so the contents fall out

/g/

glâŋ	hawk
gləŋ	pestle
glòŋ	mortar
glû?	undressing

/g/~ /g'/

gân	yam	glâŋ	hawk
gəŋ	dragging	gləŋ	pestle
gôŋ	beside, apart, next to	glòŋ	mortar
gûn	fishing net	glû?	undressing

2.3 Nasals

2.3.1 Syllabic nasals

Kman has four syllabic nasals;

/m/, /n/, /ɲ/, /ŋ/

/m/

Is extremely common and can occur in initial, medial and coda positions.

mā	place, room
māmāy	elder sister
nēm	procedure

/n/

Is extremely common and can occur in initial, medial and coda positions.

nā	building a house
nyūnìŋ	you pl.
mūn	son's wife, daughter-in-law

/ɲ/

Is common and can occur in initial and medial positions.

nyā who?
mēnyōŋ elephant

/ŋ/

Is extremely common and can occur in initial, medial and coda positions.

ŋā, ŋāl night
pāngwəy earlier
phāchùŋ butterfly

2.3.2 Homorganic nasals

Kman has homorganic nasals, i.e. nasals which agree with the consonant they precede. Thus;

m before bilabials
n before dentals and fricatives
ŋ before velars and velar nasals

/mb/, /mp/

chāmbàŋ ball of cooked grain
chāmphān sorghum

This rule is ignored in the case of reduplicated words;

dāmdēm fly sp.

/nd/,

āndyù abuse, chiding, admonishment, insulting
ānthūŋ grass sp.
əŋjà this
ānsān these
ānzàw mountain

Before affricates, either m- or n- is permitted. This may be the result of a word-medial morpheme break due to an old compound;

pāmjì dew

Counter-examples, such as

pūmtò papaya

may have the same explanation.

/ŋk/, /ŋg/

chōŋkhrà cleft in lip
chānggrà split bamboo

In principle homorganic nasals can occur in any part of the word, initial medial and final. However, if the initial is a minor syllable, a presumed former prefix, then the principle of homorganicity is not applied. Thus;

2.3.3 Homorganic nasal metathesis

Before dentals and fricatives, the nasal is realised as n-;

ndày	cut (with dao)
hōndā	veranda
kāndzày	singer
kāntshij	cold
kōndəŋ	firmly fixed
kānthi	muscle

However, by another rule of Kman morphology, N + dental or velar undergo metatheses, so for example,

nd → dn

earth tremor	ɲay tsʌdn
kidney	ɡadn
cup	wadn

m + bilabial

This occurs in word-medial position;

fox	māmbūw
bright	kʌmbrà
deafness, partial	kmbəŋ
blindness	kumphuŋ

More rarely it is found at the end of words;

grump to decay

ŋ + velar

This combination only occurs in medial position

kāŋgī	falcon, hawk
lāŋkhày	squirrel sp.
māŋŋit	dilemma
áŋgál	face
kaŋkaw	rigid

As with the other homorganic nasals, the rule is ignored in compounds;

kūŋsāy denying politely

2.3.4 Velar nasals

Kman has an unusual rule in respect of velar nasals. When these are word-final position, they undergo what might be described as internal metathesis. The nasal and velar elements are treated as distinct and reversed. In an example of the word for ‘stone’, if it is cited in isolation and followed by a classifier it is realised as /làwgn/. Thus;

làwgn bràt k.sàm
stone CLF three

But if it is part of a compound, it is realised as;

boulder làwŋ móy

Other words where this process occurs are;

insect general klògn
clever krλgn
dumb katagn

We know from comparative grounds that *làwŋ* is likely to be the original form for ‘stone’, and the other two later transformations. These unusual consonant reversals also occur with dentals. For example;

kidney gǎdn
cup wadn

2.2 Vowels

2.2.1 Unmodified vowels

Kman has a seven-vowel system as shown in Table 6;

Table 6. Kman vowels

Vowels	Front	Central	Back
Close	i		ü (u) u
Close-Mid	e	ə	o
Open		a	

The high back unrounded vowel is somewhere between ü ~u and is represented orthographically as ü.

/ü/ does not occur in initial position, whereas all other vowels can occur anywhere in the word.

2.2.2 Long and doubled vowels

Kman has a small number of words where there appears to be an underlying long vowel, shown in Table 7, together with some near-minimal pairs for short vowels;

Table 7. Kman long vowels

Kman	Gloss	Kman	Gloss
māā	losing your way	mā	place, room
phāāt	vomiting	phāʔ	to barricade s.t.
wāā	to embroider	wā	bird, generic
yāā	addict, alcoholic		
Bōō	clan name		
pyōō	merrymaking	pyōŋ	pot of beer

Although these examples present apparently convincing evidence for phonemic status, their rarity suggests they are not part of the underlying phonological system. They may represent traces of an expressive system which have been lexicalised. However, there is an argument for assuming Kman has no underlying long vowels. Where doubled vowels are compounded, they become short;

yūw wasp
yū tì wasp sp.

ī crocodile
ī kəy gharial

The great majority of doubled vowels in Kman consist of Mid-Low sequences, which suggests these are realisations of a suprasegmental tone. Some examples of these are shown in Table 8;

Table 8. Kman mid-low tone sequences

Kman	Gloss
bōō	to low (cow, mithun)
glāāt	village
gōò	plate
sāāt	to murder, kill

The Mid-Low toneme in Kman is extremely common and in many examples where tone appears to be conceptualised as suprasegmental, spread over a Noun Noun sequence. Thus;

Even rarer is the High-Low sequence on two identical vowels, confined to two homophonous items;

báāt¹ cloth to carry child
báāt² to taste hot (as of chili in the mouth)

2.2.3 Nasalised vowels

As with length, Kman has low frequency nasalised vowels. These are;

/ã/, /ẽ/, [ĩ/], /õ/

/ĩ/ occurs in a single ideophone, hence it is at best a highly marginal phoneme. Nasalised vowels are always in final position except for ideophones where they are copied on to an identical vowel in C₁ position. They are in complementary distribution with nasal codas, where the coda is -ŋ. However, unusually, Kman allows medial nasalised vowels to be followed by a nasal coda, -m or -n.

kām being; existing
 kām job; work; occupation

hēnt hēnt wà blue-
 winged
 siva

No examples of phonemic contrast have been recorded; however, the overall numbers of words with nasalised vowels is so low, this might be an unreasonable expectation. Given the high frequency of this type of vowel in Tawrā and Idu, borrowing is an obvious hypothesis. However, none of the Kman words with nasalised vowels appear to be borrowed. The main recorded examples of nasalised vowels in Kman are set out in Table 9;

Table 9. Examples of Kman nasalised vowels

Kman	Gloss
cākrā	triangular drying net
châyā	rectum
dāhā	large-billed crow
gāwā	zigzag
tāṅgā	shoulder-blade
tāṅgrā	basket for vegetables
tūppyā	liquid food prepared with the stomach of a fish
lōṅshāy	large eagle
gēwē	zigzag, twisty
māwē?	herb sp.
gūrū gērē	describes walking awkwardly as if no-one else was on the road
tyū phrē	describes s.t. important
dēwē	crescent shape
wīwī wēwē	describes the noise of a buzzing mosquito
gārō	herb sp.
lāhō	sweet potato
bōō	lowing (cow, mithun)
būibūi bōbō	describes a clear view of round shapes
pōtō	bronze vessel
Bōō	clan name

Sequences of two identical nasalised vowels seem to be confined to two words, *Bōō* and *bōō*, which suggests length contrast for nasalised vowels cannot be phonemic.

2.2.4 VV vowel sequences

Rarely, Kman has sequences of two identical vowels articulated separately, but not with an audible glottal stop intervening. For example;

ī.ī ā.ā ideophone describing a pain

Such sequences are common in Idu.

2.2.5 V + glide sequences

Kman allows for sequences of vowel + glide in word-medial and word-final slots. For Vw(c) the following occur as in Table 10;

Table 10. Vw and VwC sequences in Kman

Sequence	Kman	Gloss
aw	jāwpàp lūāpàp	crime
	āsāw	many, plenty
	átāw	in front of speaker
awC	shawk	inhabiting
	byāwk	cold
	dāwng	throwing away s.t. large
	kāsàwng	spring trap for large animal
	kā wāwŋsā	orphan (poetic)
oe	ōw	navel
uw	chīrùw	playing
	Shiruw	super-clan

xxx

the sequence -aw in final position is apparently to confined to unusual poetic expressions. C must be either the velar /k/ or the velar nasal /ŋ/.

For Vy sequences, Kman permits ay, əy, uy and üy. Examples are ;

āmāy	n.	elder sister	<i>addressed by younger sister</i>
āhāy	dir.	there upwards	<i>āhāy thōngshū wà lāpmùn look up there, a bird is perching.</i>
əy	v.a.	negative imperative	<i>nāw wì' mātūn əy kət do not disobey mother.</i>
būy	n.	whirlpool; eddy	
būy	n.	home; house; dwelling	

2.3 Tones

2.3.1 Underlying tonal system

The Kman tone system has three phonetic tone heights marked as follows;

High-	´
Mid	-
Low	`

A macron (ˉ) over a vowel represents mid-tone and not length throughout this grammar. However, of these, only the mid-tone occurs on monosyllabic roots in isolation. However, strikingly, a three-way contrast on monosyllabic roots can be heard in sentence context, since the tone on the verb root may be any of the three heights in context. For example;

The underlying system consists of glide tones which can apply either to single segments but form a system of suprasegmental patterns applied to polysyllabic words and compounds. The glides so far identified are High-Mid, High-Low and Mid-Low, marked as follows;

High-Low	ˆ	Basic
High-Mid	˘	Phonetic only
Mid-Low	˜	Basic
Low-Mid	˘	Loanwords only
Low-High	˘	Basic

High-Mid occurs only in compounds and cannot be regarded as an underlying tone. Low-Mid is strongly associated with a wide range of loanwords, which suggests that speakers perceive tone as having semantic associations, although this is not explicit.

khlöʔ large bamboo tube used to store water

khlöʔ hāy àtì pǎ chā
bamboo tube bring water in

bring water in bamboo tube

Spoken Kman regularly deletes vowels, so that words transcribed with schwa or ü could also be written with floating tones. Thus;

tālùʔ ‘buffalo’ could be transcribed as t̄.lùʔ

This type of notation, although very familiar to Africanists, is not part of the regional tradition and faces strong resistance from speakers. The tones of the deleted segment are clearly perceived by speakers and consistently whistled, so this is in contrast to the consonant clusters which characterise other branches of Tibeto-Burman, notably the Tibetic languages.

Kman is a sesquisyllabic language of a type common in the SE Asian region. Structurally, many words consist of a presyllable or minor syllable plus root. However, as a highly tonal language, this presyllable bears an unpredictable tone. As a consequence, the syllable is transcribed with an underspecified vowel, usually /ə/. Consecutive sequences of consonants without vowels but with floating tones give the transcriptions a problematic appearance and are completely unacceptable within local writing conventions. As a consequence, it is usual to insert schwa, /ə/, or one of the other central vowels, /a/ and /ü/, as an epenthetic tone-bearing segment. Some examples are shown in Table 11;

Table 11. Kman floating tones

Gloss	Sounds	As transcribed
ankle	t̄l̄ŋ	tālùŋ
grass	t̄p̄h̄n	tāphùn
cup	w̄n	wān

2.3.2 Tone in nominal compounds

Kman tones are highly mobile in compounds and sentence contexts. This is almost certainly due to the suprasegmental nature of the tones. Thus;

əmik sun but əmik khlat sunrise

or;

iʔt ‘enemy’ but iʔt tāmpüʔ ‘raid, attack’

Throughout the text of the grammar, tones are marked as heard in context, rather than in citation forms, those cited when a word is pronounced in isolation. However, the dictionary uses the tones in isolation, since these can be agreed between speakers.

Where a loanword is combined with an indigenous word, the tone can fall from Mid-Low to Low. In the following, *dāk* is a borrowing from Assamese, but *būi* is Kman for ‘building’. The tone of the Kman word acts to lower the citation tone of the Assamese borrowing.

dāk mail, letter dāk būy post office

2.3.3 Tone patterns marking semantic fields

Kman speakers either associate some lexical tones with semantic fields, or have normalised the tones of associated items to produce a type of semantic marking. Table 12 shows a wide range of verbs which have the general semantic field of ‘wear/put on’ (clothes etc.), all over which have Mid-Low patterns.

Table 12. Mid-Low patterns on verbs to ‘wear/put on’

Kman	Gloss
chân	to wear (bangle)
dāl	to put on lower part of women’s dress
grōŋ	to put on headtie
hām	to wear (shoes)
jōŋ	to put on (cap)
khlāp	to wear (cloth), dress, wrap
krūn	to wear (necklace)
lūy	to put on (s.t. that hung front of genitals of children)
pō	to wear (cloth that hung front of genitals of adults)
shūŋ	to put on (socks)
sūŋ	to wear (ring)
sūt	to wear (ear-ring)

There is no predictable pattern to this type of semantics/tone convergence.

2.3.4 Tones in loanwords

Assamese loanwords constitute the most significant source of identifiable borrowing in Kman. There are (more recently) borrowings from Hindi, English as well as a few scattered words of Tibetan origin. These loanwords are almost exclusively Low-Mid-(Mid) a pattern which is otherwise foreign to Kman. The few apparently native words with this pattern may well also be borrowings from an unidentified source. Table 13 shows a sample of borrowings from different languages all showing the same pattern.

Table 13. Low-Mid-(Mid) patterns on loanwords

Source	Kman	Gloss
Assamese	bijūlī	electricity
	bògōrī	plum, wild
	dàdārō	doctor
	mùrā	stool
	sākī	lamp
	shàbūn	soap
	shùtī	holiday
	tèṅā	orange, tangerine
	tùrī	mustard plant
Hindi	bèlā	plate
	gārī	car
	jādū	magic
	dùkān	shop
	ālù	potato
	gòdām	store, granary
	jīlā	district
	lòsūn	garlic
English	mīnīt	minute
	sèkēn	second
	tàwūn	town
	tèbūl	table
Adi		
Khamti	màhūēt	mahout, elephant driver
	nùm pèlēṅ	sea, ocean
bàhwī	n.	pentatomid bug

There are occasional exceptions to this rule, the reason for which is unclear. Most likely these are indirect borrowings via a neighbouring language and are not classified as loanwords. Table 14 shows a sample of these exceptional forms.

Table 14. Diverse tone patterns on loanwords

Source	Kman	Gloss
English	thākèlà	spectacles
	bōtəlō	bottle
Khamti	phālāp	tea

2.3.5 Tone patterns as suprasegmentals

Tone patterns on lexemes in Kman should be treated as suprasegmental, in other words, speakers regard the tone as applying not to the individual word, but to the word and its extended or compounded forms. Effectively, tones ‘stretch’ to apply to the conceptual unit. This is most evident when the tone is Mid-Low; the Low tone is shifted to the final unit in the compound form. To show how this works, Table 15 gives a set of examples of basic lexemes and related compound forms. In each case, the Mid-Low is extended to the following noun, the tone of which is overwritten by the Low.

Table 15. Mid-Low patterns extended in compound lexemes

Kman	Gloss
bāwŋ	air
bāwŋ dà	telegram
bāwŋ nàw	storm, tempest
būi	house
būi grày	builder
būi tsòŋ	family member
dāk	stomach
dāk kəp	to starve
dāk sày	stomach ache, dyspepsia
gəy	humour
gəy kətà	humourless person
gəy tà krəŋ	to make fun

As will be seen in the sentence examples, Kman tones are prone to rightwards spreading, reflecting the process of extending tones to conceptual units, since these are not easily established on external grounds.

2.3.6 Tones in ideophones

Kman a rich repertoire of ideophones, describing sensations, sounds and visual experiences, described in more detail in §3.11. These are virtually all reduplicated, usually with a change of vowel in the second element. Perhaps surprisingly, tone is not treated as an iconic element, and is static, always Mid in many of the examples so far recorded. Table 16 provides a sample of these tonally uniform words.

Table 16. Consistent level tones on Kman ideophones

Kman	Gloss
glətglət	sound of snoring
glīŋglāŋ	appearance of gleaming, twinkling (e.g. fish under water)
khŕiŋkhŕiŋ	describes sound of metals striking one another
gēwē	zigzag, twisty
būlū bālā	describes a place covered with flat objects
būŋrūŋ būŋrūŋ	describes a bulging stomach
tyūrū tyōrō	describes a plain scattered with small boulders

Table 17 shows those ideophones recorded with irregular tone patterns, mostly variations on the common mid-low pattern.

Table 17. Irregular tone patterns on Kman ideophones

Kman	Gloss
bōʔī bōʔàʔ	describes a lazy person
brēt həlèt	describes removing s.t. with a twisting action (e.g. skin of an animal)
būībūi bōbō	describes a clear view of round shapes
grūk grōʔ	describes s.t. frightening
hrī hrāw	describes sizzling sound
kəy səy	describes s.t. very urgent

Kman paired collocations, which are similar to ideophones except that the reduplication is less precise, show a corresponding diversity of tone patterns (Table 61).

3. Morphology

3.1 General

3.1.1 Canonical word shape

Kman words are extremely labile and there is no significant difference in word structure between different parts of speech. Although V- initial words are present, only those with an initial central vowel are common. Only a handful of words have initial /e/, /i/, /o/, /u/ and /ü/. There is some evidence for a old nominal prefix a ~ ə (§3.2.6) and some common words such as (ə)ti ‘water’ are present in both variants, which may explain the dominance of central vowels in V- initial structures. Table 18 shows the possible word-shapes so far identified, with examples of each;

Table 18. Canonical structures of Kman lexemes

Structure	Kman	PoS	Gloss
VC	ḗp	n.	tin, small container
VV	īī	n.	crocodile
VCV	ārā	loc.	here
VCVC	āchīp	n.	elder brother
VCVCV	ātèʔmù	quant.	a little, few, a bit
VN	īŋ	n.	ear
CV	kā	v.	voice, sound
CVV	bōō	v.n.	lowing (cow, mithun)
CVC	bḗp	v.i.	stumbling
CVN	bān	n.	wool
CVCV	bālā	a.	flat (as a stone)
CVVC	báàt ¹	n.	cloth to carry a child
CVCVC	bāshùt	n.	spoon
CVCVCV	chākàyā	n.	laughingthrush
CVNCVN	bàntōng	n.	mortgage
CVCVCVC	phòlōlōnt	n.	Taipeh frog

3.1.2 Evidence for former C- prefixes?

At least one stratum of the Kman lexicon has the sesquisyllabic structure common in SE Asia, with one or more minor syllables preceding the root. Kman aligns with regional Sino-Tibetan and Austroasiatic languages in having C- prefixes on many words. Some words have evidence for multiple affixes. Nominal prefixes have weak semantic associations,

The most common prefixes are .

n.grəŋ whimper, sigh of ill person
 n.zàŋ cut (with dao)

3.2 Nouns

3.2.1 Canonical word shape

Kman nouns are predominantly CVC and its reduplicated form, CVCCVC. Nouns beginning with vowels have probably lost them in a process similar to Idu and Tawrà. Trisyllables are exceedingly rare, and the only two native forms, both reptiles/amphibians are given below. All other trisyllables appear to be loans from Assamese or Hindi. Table 19 shows the structures of all the Kman nouns presently recorded.

Table 19. Canonical structures of Kman nouns

Kman	Structure	Gloss
òw	VC	navel
ìŋ	VN	ear
āchīp	VCVC	elder brother
phlāp	CVC	flat bread
báat'	CVVC	cloth to carry child
phāwŋwā	CVNCV	dung beetle
bāfūt	CVCVC	spoon
cāktūy	CVCCVV	tree sp.
bàntōŋ	CVCCVC	mortgage
māgōñŋ	CVCVCVN	Brook's house gecko
phòlōlōnt	CVCVCVC	Taipeh frog

3.2.2 Number marking

Number is not marked on nouns and when plurality can be inferred from the context it is omitted. Plurality is marked with the suffix *sən* for animates and *ənsən* for inanimates (Table 20).

Table 20. Kman number marking

Gloss	sg.	pl.
person	tsòŋ	tsòŋ sən
pig	lɪʔ	lɪʔ sən
mithun	chāl	chāl sən
house	būy	būy ənsən
tree	səŋ	səŋ ənsən
dao	sūt	sūt ənsən

3.2.3 Gender

Like most other regional languages, Kman does not distinguish gender on nouns in a systematic way. Kinship terms are marked for male and female by simply using distinct lexemes. Domestic animals are the main arena where gender must be marked. Indeed, gender, maturity, castration status and fertility are all marked by a series of suffixes or distinct qualifying terms. Femaleness is almost always the same lexeme, *náw*, across the range of species, and this is the usual term for 'mother'. Terms for males are quite varied

and apply to salient wild animals as well as domestic species. The examples below present the main male/female pairings, together with occasional special terms such as ‘castrated pig’.

bull mǎntshūw kəwwà
cow mǎntshūw nàw

Young cattle with no progeny;

young bull mǎntshūw rəhàl
heifer mǎntshūw klòŋ

male mithun chāl ngālōng
female mithun chāl nàw

male pig līʔ rəhàl
castrated pig līʔ dūŋ
sow līʔ nàw

ēmùk monkey
è mùk kəngà male monkey
è mùk nàw female monkey

krē fowl
krē əpəy cock
krē nàw mother hen

pā marks a barren animal (all spp.) e.g. *lī pā* barren pig
sà ‘young of’ (all spp.) e.g.

3.2.4 Case-marking suffixes

Kman has traces of case-marking, mainly accusative, resembling Idu. In some constructions, nouns have bound suffixes which mark their role in the clause.

3.2.3.1 Accusative in -wiʔ

The suffix *-wiʔ* marks the object or patient of a verb. The tone is underspecified and reflects the tone of the pronoun to which it is suffixed. Kman OV word order sometimes makes an accusative marker necessary to disambiguate a sentence. However, it is often omitted from simple declarative sentences. Examples;

kī.wiʔ phí shù
I.ACC give IMP
Give it to me!

wì.wiʔ shyōŋ shù
him.ACC catch IMP
Catch him!

wì.wiʔ phī shù nè
he.ACC give IMP politeness
Give it to him!

wìn.wiʔ shyōŋ shù
 them.ACC catch IMP
 Catch them!

The glottal stop which follows -wi(?) in some circumstances can be shifted leftward to follow the accusative marker, as in;

The same applies when a nominal is substituted for the pronoun. The following two utterances have exactly the same meaning;

kwi shyōŋ shù
 dog catch IMP
 Catch the dog!

kwi.wiʔ shyōŋ shù
 dog.ACC catch IMP
 Catch the dog!

The accusative marker is optional and can be omitted in SOV structures;

jami süi.(wiʔ) puy mün
 cat rat follow do
 the cat chases the rat

3.2.3.2 Instrumental with kV-

Instrumental case is marked with a -kV suffix. Typical word order is;

	S	O2	VN	O1	V
kī sùt.kə wā dzəŋ mǔŋ					
I dao.INST cutting bamboo do					
I am cutting the bamboo <u>with</u> a dao					

àrā kə lèp mǔng
 saw INST sawing do
 I am sawing with a saw

Where the object of the instrumental is mid-tone, kə becomes Low, kə̀.

chə̀rān kə̀ shām mīt mīng
 scissors INST hair cutting do
 I will cut hair with scissors

hàngglāw kə̀ khrūt mīng
 spear INST stabbing do
 I will stab [it] with a spear

3.2.5 Allomorphy in nouns

Nominal compounds can have prefixed elements which affected by allomorphy when followed by different initial consonants. For example, Table 21 shows the realisations of *haN* prefixed element in small animal

names, determined by the following consonant. The focus of many names are species of bees, and it is possible this was generalised to lizards and amphibians. Nonetheless, the exact logic binding this particular zoological set together remains opaque.

Table 21. Allomorphy of a *haN* prefixed element in animal names

Kman	Gloss	Scientific
hámboŋ	beeswax	
hāmbrūl	fish sp.	
hāmùl	mantis	
hāŋ glāt	bee, small, nests in holes in tree	
hāŋ grān	Indian bullfrog	<i>Hoplobatrachus tigerinus</i> .
hāŋ grō	prawn	
hāŋ gyōŋ	bee sp.	
hāŋ khrūk	common garden lizard	<i>Calotes versicolor</i>
hāŋ ŋūm	marbled toad	<i>Bufo stomaticus</i> .
hāy nyām	forest lizard and any green lizard	<i>Calotes jerdoni</i> and <i>C. emma</i>
hāy rūm	blue fan throated lizard	<i>Ptyctolaemus gularis</i>
hāmbyā	bee sp.	
hōndàŋ	bee, lives in rocky areas	

3.2.6 Nominal prefixes with semantic associations

Nominal prefixes with semantic associations are widespread in SE Asia, particularly in Austroasiatic and Sino-Tibetan languages (Blench 2014). This is weakly attested in Kman. For example, Table 22 shows a sample of words with *tā-* prefixes which suggest a link with animal names.

Table 22. *tā-* prefixes in Kman for animals

Kman	Gloss
tālā	Alpine musk deer
tākī	tick
tālām ²	wasp sp.
tālùì	buffalo
tāpūw	tiger
tāsūm krǎ	wild pig, ‘boar’

This subset of names conjoins insects and mammals, but is not attested in other classes, such as fish and birds.

These is fragmentary evidence for a nominaliser, *kV-* which creates nominals from verbal nouns.

èmùŋg	dreaming	kàmùŋg	to dream
tōŋg	supporting s.t.	kātōŋg	bridge

3.2.7 A formant for persons

Kman has a prefixed agentive formant *kā* which creates nominals referring to persons. Although these are numerous, the process is only semi-productive, since their creation is unpredictable. Table 23 presents a sample of these words with proposals for their etymology.

Table 23. The *kā*- agentive formant for persons

Kman	Gloss	Source
kā chōthəŋ	fearful person	
kā əhəwŋ	collector	
kā əlūt	backbiter	
kā ənəw	competitor	
kə gūsūt	objector, litigant, plaintiff	
kā həkṛət	leader	
kā həpə	collaborator	
kā hōŋ	criminal	
kā hūʔ	visitor	
kā in	voter	
kā kətəŋ	speaker	
kā khri	sufferer	
kā kūwəŋ təkət	to disappoint	
kā kūwəŋ	sad person	
kā liŋ	learner, apprentice, imitator	
kā məy	dancer	
kā pəm	cultivator, farmer	
kā pət	pretender	
kā phlūʔ	jumping person	
kā prəkətəy	wealthy man	
kā prəp	lunatic, madman	
kā rùp	collaborator	
kā sày	author	
kā sət	murderer, killer	
kā shùp	customer, buyer	
kā shyòk	inhabitant	
kā sɨ	spy	
kā təsòŋ	messenger	
kā tək	mathematician	
kā thàn	receiver, person who gets s.t.	
kā tūn	person in need	
kā wəwŋ	widow, widower	
kā wyīt	seller	

This formant also occurs as an unproductive prefix for adjectives (Table 42) where it has an allomorph *kā*, but the adjectives do not focus specifically on persons.

3.2.8 Numeral classifiers

Kman has a restricted number of numeral classifiers which refer almost entirely to shape, although they include two human classes. They are obligatory when the head noun is not single. An exception to this is *náw*, which applies to individualised living things and which can take *mo*, ‘one’, after the classifier. The classifiers are placed after the noun but before the numeral. Those identified are shown in Table 24;

Table 24. Kman numeral classifiers and their categories

Kman	Semantic cluster	Shape or class Comment
bòŋ	bamboo, generic, wood	
brāt	oranges, grains, pebbles	spherical things
brūl	small trees, twigs, bamboo splinters	long thin wooden objects
byòŋ	long pieces of wood, bamboo, cane	long broad wooden objects
dūm	short pieces of wood, bamboo, cane	short broad wooden objects
gāw	bamboo split lengthways ¹	half tubular shapes
glā	human beings	
klōŋ	leaves	flat round things
kūw	human beings (used in the context of headhunting and criminality)	
kròŋ	longhouses	
nāw	individualised living animals	not plants
phāl	paper, banknotes, planks	flat long rectangular things
phòŋ	bamboo, grass, leaves	anything growing in clusters
tōŋ	cloth, mats, bags	? fibre household objects
thūŋ	pieces of wood, bamboo, cane	medium size wooden objects
tūl	standing trees, bushes	

Kman contrasts with Idu and Tani in having classifiers for humans. Nonetheless, these are not used for ordinary counting. In counting nominals which do not take classifiers, the numeral follows the noun directly;

sùt kāsəm
 dao three
 three daos

Examples of the individual classifiers in use are given below;

bòŋ

wā bòŋ kàmbrūn
 bamboo CLF four
 four bamboos

brāt

brāt objects are implicitly small to medium-sized, and thus when applied to the noun for ‘stone’, a Kman speaker would know these were pebbles and not boulders.

krē sīt brāt kōtām
 hen egg CLF six
 six eggs

lāvŋ brāt kāsəm
 stone CLF three
 three pebbles

¹ But doesn't apply to a gutter, for example

krūn brāt kāsəm
bead CLF three
three beads

māŋ brāt kəfin
rice CLF five
five rice grains

Additional qualifiers of the head noun follow it directly;

lāwŋ kāyùm brāt kəsəm
stone black CLF three
three black pebbles

brūl

səŋ brūl nūn
wood CLF seven
seven twigs

byòŋ

səŋ byòŋ kəlin
wood CLF five
five long pieces of wood

dùm

səŋ dùm kəlin
wood CLF five
five short pieces of wood

glà

tsōŋ glà kəyin
person cl. two
two people

kūw

tsōŋ kùw kəyin
person CLF two
two men in headhunting-count

klōŋ

Also applied to flat, round objects.

l̄ap kl̄oŋ k̄əȳin
leaf CLF two
two leaves

kr̄oŋ

Applied only to the longhouses which are a distinctive type of Kman architecture ().

bwi kr̄oŋ k̄ət̄am
house CLF six
six longhouses

Photo 1. Longhouse at Changliang



Source: Author photo

n̄aw

cāl n̄aw k̄əȳin
mithun CLF two
two mithuns

sām n̄aw m̄ū
bee CLF one
a single bee

ḡaw

w̄a ḡaw k̄əȳin
bamboo CLF two
two bamboo half-tubes

s̄əŋ ḡaw k̄əȳin
wood CLF two
two wooden troughs

It may not be immediately obvious why a special classifier is required for such a specific shape. If on the other hand, the classifier *ḡaw* is applied to the generic for ‘wood’ *s̄əŋ*, then it will be taken to mean a trough,

such as is used to water animals. Ironically, if you apply the term *k.ray* it does not take a classifier, thus, two seats.

phâl

Applied to flat, long and roughly rectangular objects.

pīt phâl kāmbrūn
paper CLF four
four sheets of paper

āpāy phâl grūn
banknote CLF eight
eight banknotes

sōŋ phâl [kō]mū
wood CLF one
one plank

phòŋ

wā phòŋ kōlīn
bamboo CLF five
five bamboo groves

A tall grass with leaves like sugar-cane also takes this classifier;

ānthūŋ phòŋ kōlīn
grass sp. CLF five
five clumps of grass sp.

Large leaves used as a plate can takes this classifier;

hāmbyūŋ phòŋ kōlīn
banana CLF five
five clusters of banana plants

tōŋ

gùl tōŋ mū
cloth CLF one
one piece of cloth

NB the k- prefix on ‘one’ is deleted in the presence of the preceding velar.

hāmbūw tōŋ kōlīn
mat CLF five
five mats

tāpāy tāŋ kāmbrūn
 bag CLF four
 four bags

thūŋ

səŋ thūŋ kəfɪn
 wood CLF five
 five medium-sized pieces of wood

tūl

səŋ tūl nūn
 wood CLF seven
 seven trees

3.2.9 Collectives

Apart from the restricted number marking system, Kman has a set of collectives, not dissimilar to English, which typically are applied to groups and clusters of things (Table 25). This is extended in one case to single objects, and there are also collectives for pairs or couples and things in a line. These collective systems are also found in Idu and Tawrā, though none of the lexemes are cognate. In all cases they follow the noun they qualify, and if a numeral is also required, this follows the collective. They are quite distinct from numeral classifiers, which are treated in the previous section.

Table 25. Kman collectives

Kman	Semantics	Etymology
brəŋ	single [thread etc.]	cf. <i>brəŋ</i> rope
cəkhɾəwŋ	bunch	
chəw	cluster [stars, fields]	
cɪrūŋ	line, chain [people, butterflies], range [of mountains]	
cūwəy	necklaces, threads twisted together, flexible things	
grām	head load	cf. <i>grām</i> luggage
māruŋ	large flight [birds], large crowd [people]	
phəw	bunch, small bundle, cloud, swarm	
rəy	small bundle (thatch)	
rəmbəy	pair, couple	
təphəy	large bundle	
thəl	herd, flock, crowd [any person, animal wild or domestic]	

The following short examples show the use of these collectives in the context of phrases;

brəŋ single [thread etc.]

Although this qualifier implies uniqueness, it must nevertheless be followed by the numeral ‘one’. The same is true of *chəw*, ‘cluster’, which is conceptualised as a single unit and can be applied to a bundle of bamboo.

kyɪk brəŋ mù
 thread strand one
 a thread

shyām brəŋ mù
hair strand one
a single hair

khrəp brəŋ mū
cord strand one
an invitation cord

chāw cluster [stars, fields]

ŋācī chāw mù
star cluster one
a cluster of stars

nyà y chāw mù
field group one
a group of fields

cəkhrawŋ bunch

jīmīk cəkhrawŋ bunch of keys
hūtyūm cəkhrawŋ bunch of strawberries

cīrūŋ line, chain [people, butterflies], range [of mountains]

əndzàw cīrūŋ
mountain line
range of mountains

phàcùŋ cīrūŋ
butterfly chain
chain of butterflies

tsòŋ cīrūŋ
person chain
chain of people

cūwāy necklaces, threads twisted together, flexible things

kyīk cūwāy mù
thread bunch one
skein, a bunch of threads

Can also apply to;

krun cūwāy kəyìn
beads CLF two
two necklaces

krun kəsàm
bead three
three beads

grâm headload

məplōŋ grâm kəlèn
bundle of thatch headload five
five loads of thatch

ām grâm kəyìn
mango load two
two loads of mangoes

mərũŋ large flight [birds], large crowd [people]

wà mərũŋ
bird large flight
large flight of birds

tsòŋ mərũŋ
person large crowd
large crowd of people

phâw bunch, small bundle, cloud, swarm

khɾəp phâw bundle of invitation cords See Photo 2
kīk phâw bunch of threads
sām phâw swarm of bees
jũk phâw cloud of mosquitoes
shyām phâw a lock of hair

rây small bundle (thatch)

məplōŋ rây mù
bundle COLL one
one small bundle of thatch

rəmbày pair, couple

tsəhām rəmbày
shoe pair
a pair of shoes

wà rəmbày
bird pair
a pair of birds i.e. breeding unit

**Photo 2. *khɾəp*
invitation cords**



Source: Author photo

tsòŋ rāmbày
person pair
twins

tāphây large bundle

sōŋ tāphây kəlèn
wood COLL five
five bundles of sticks

wâ tāphây mù
bamboo COLL one
one bundle of bamboo

thāl herd, flock, crowd [any person, animal wild or domestic]

māntshûw thāl kəlèn
cow herd five
five herds of cattle

krē thāl kâyīn
chicken flock two
two flocks of chickens

3.2.10 Noun-noun compounds

Where Kman has compounds consisting of two nouns, they exhibit tone sandhi. For example;

kānè copper + brāng wire → kànè brōng copper wire

3.2.11 Sound-symbolism in nominal codas?

There is very limited evidence for word pairs where the meanings are related and the difference is only in the codas.

gyān vein
gyāw artery

3.2.12 Paired collocations standing for nouns

A characteristic feature of Kman and indeed many languages of the region are forms which may be called 'paired collocations'. These are pairs of words which resemble one another, although not in any systematic way. Quite frequently, the second word of the pair with not obviously etymologisable. In Kman, many of these expressions are characteristic of the poetic register (§5.4). Table 26 shows a sample of these expressions.

Table 26. Paired collocations standing for nouns

Gloss	Usual	Poetic	Comment
bribe	tāksūw	kūngphā? dùwphlà	
crime	ḡārāy	jāwpàp lūāpàp	
girl/woman	kāmāy	nūmāy brōmāy	
means of transport, communications	blòḡ kātòḡ	rùḡsì pàḡsì	lit. ‘road’ + ‘bridge’.
non-tribal	mənəl	dāyúsò dāpōsò	
orphan	kēwāwḡsā	dūkhṛī dūwām	
s.o. who is heavily made up and overdressed		mātòḡ màyòḡ	

3.3 Verbs

3.3.1 Morphology

3.3.1.1 Structure

Given the broad diversity of word structures in Kman in general, verbal nouns are far more restricted (Table 27). The V- prefixes on verbs are very rare, so it is problematic to

Table 27. Canonical structures of Kman verbal nouns

Structure	Kman	Gloss
VC	īn	selection; voting; choosing
CV	gō’	cracking; breaking; splitting
CVC	tyūm	being sweet
CVVC	báāt ²	tasting hot, pungency
VCV	āmà’	forgetting
VCVC	ēchəm	pushing

Kman has an extremely rare type of verbal system, typologically speaking. Actual verbs have been reduced to a handful, thereby motivating a rich system of verbal nouns. In previous, rather limited work on the language, these have been classified as verbs, but the absence of morphology and the obligatory presence of the auxiliaries, suggests this analysis is inadequate. The auxiliaries fall into two classes, sentence-final and verb-initial. The great majority of verbs are of the form tV(N) preceding a verbal noun.

3.3.1.2 tV(N) verbs, the infinitive

A large number of verbal roots are preceded by allomorphs of tV(N), reflecting both the initial consonant of the verbal noun and sometimes its vowel. One of the most productive processes in Kman for verb formation is their creation from verbal nouns with the prefixed auxiliary verb tV(N) where V is a central vowel and N broadly homorganic with the following consonant. The application of tV(N) usually denotes agency by humans, animals or spirits. Verbal nouns usually have gerund semantics, but they can be more concrete. Table 28 shows examples of the distribution of allomorphs of the tV(N) auxiliary.

Table 28. Verb stems and corresponding tV(N) prefixed elements

Noun	Gloss	Verb	Gloss
chōŋ	spoiling (plan)	tā chōŋ	to spoil
chūwày	mourning	tā chūwày	to mourn
hēpà	collaboration	tā hēpà	to collaborate
hōŋ	searching	tā hòŋ	to search
tāwŋ	drinking	tā thāwŋ	to drink
blēm	warming up, boiling	tām blēm	to boil
brəl	dropping s.t.	tām brəl	to drop s.t.
būy	wandering	tām būi	to travel
phrūt	meeting	tām phrūt	to meet together
lōŋ	standing	tān lōŋ	to support
dāw	hospitality	tān dāw	to be hospitable
jūl	repayment	tān jūl	to repay
təy	going	tān thīt	to go, proceed
thā	gossip	tān thā	to gossip
zāy	song, music	tān zāy	to sing
chūl	persecution	tān chūl	to persecute
chhūn	seizing	tān chhūn	to pick
tshùt	breath	tān tshùt	to breathe
kāw	agreement	tāŋ kāw	to agree
gāwk	germination	tāŋ gāwk	to germinate (crop)
khāt	elopement	tāŋ khāt	to elope
cākày	enforcement, compulsion	tā cākày	to enforce, compel
cəthəŋ	fear	tā cəthəŋ	to fear
ətāt	beginning	tā ətāt	to begin
təppəl	imprisonment	tā təppəl	to imprison
ūmə?	forgetting	tā ūmə?	to forget
grōng	putting on turban	tāng grōng	to put on headgear
hūw	emission (smoke)	tāng hūw	to emit
hwūl	digging with the hands	tāng hwūl	to dig
krōng	feeling cold	tāng krōng	to feel cold
kūt	desire; need; want	tāng kūt	to desire
rūp	collaboration	tāng rūp	to collaborate

Note several irregular forms such as $t \rightarrow t^h$ in the verb form ‘drinking’ or $təy \rightarrow thīt$ in ‘go’. These are plausibly related to the idiosyncratic paradigms for the small subset of verbs (). There appears to be a strong correlation between disyllabic verb stems and the *tā* marker. No High-Low disyllabic verb stems have so far been recorded. The *tāng* form is far rarer than the other allomorphs of tVN, and unlike its congeners, has no regular tonal correspondence between the form of the verbal noun and the infinitive (Table 28).

Table 29 proposes the rules governing the allomorphs of TV(N). The harmony with the central vowel /ə/ usually over-rides the other rules. However, although a stem-vowel /ü/ obeys the /ə/ rule it does not show harmony with the V of the auxiliary.

Table 29. Allomorphy of the tV(N) auxiliary

Noun	Precedes
tá, t̄ā	Affricates, glottals
tám, t̄ām	Bilabials
tán, t̄ān	All other consonants
táng, t̄āng	Velars
tó, t̄ō	Verbs with ə~ü in the stem
t̄āng	velars, glottal, r

These rules are not exceptionless; sometimes speakers accept two alternative allomorphs of tVN as equally valid. For example;

t̄ān t̄ā / t̄ā t̄ā = to kick

t̄ā (t̄āng) k̄un = to move; to transfer

The tone of the tVN clitic can be either high or mid, as it is driven by the stem tone of the verbal noun. The tone rule is as follows;

Table 30. Verbal noun stem tones and outputs on infinitives

Stem tone pattern	Example	Gloss	Output	Gloss
High-Low stem tone	s̄uy ¹	dying	tá s̄uy	to die
Mid stem tone	t̄ā'	receiving s.t	t̄ā t̄ā'	to receive
Mid-Low stem tone, monosyllable	t̄ā	kicking	t̄ā t̄ā	to kick
Mid-Low stem tone, disyllable	c̄əth̄əŋ	fear	t̄ā c̄əth̄əŋ	to fear
Low -Mid	đ̄ay	squealing (esp pig)	t̄ān đ̄ay	to squeal
Low	tsh̄ùt	breath	t̄ān tsh̄ùt	to breathe

èti t̄ā th̄awŋ h̄ā māŋ
 water to drink safe can
 you can drink the water

k̄ī n̄əy t̄ān th̄it w̄ō?
 I also to go QM
 Should I also go?

These infinitives can also be treated as a type of verbal noun, qualifying another noun. Thus;

t̄ā th̄awŋ br̄ōŋ
 drinkable type
 The type that can be drunk

kr̄āl putting down; unloading
 kr̄ām carrying a load on the back

3.3.1.2 müN verbs

Kman has a major subset of verbal nouns associated with autonomous action and these are triggered by the clause-final *müN* 'do'. This displays complex allomorphy, indexing the subject pronoun (Table 31).

Table 31. Allomorphs of müN ‘do’

Number	Person	Form
Singular	1	mūng
	2	mūn
	3	mūn
Dual		nək
Plural	1	məy
	2	nək
	3	taw

The following examples illustrate the indexing to the subject pronoun and the irregular paradigm of the verbal root *chāwk* ‘living’.

check tones and spelling

ki ara chawk mūng
 I here living do
 I live here

nyu yahəy chəi’ mūn
 you sg. where live do
 Where do you sg. live?

wi? yahəy chawk mūn
 he where live do
 Where does he live?

kin ara chawk məy
 we here living do
 we live here

nyuchin yahəy chəi’ nək
 you two where live do
 where do you two live?

nyuning yahəy chəi’ nək
 you pl. where live do
 where do you pl. live?

win yahəy chawnk taw
 they where live do
 where do they live?

In the sentence below both the basic noun and the verbal noun create a cognate object construction, an excellent illustration of the lability of the verb/noun categorisation.

bāwŋ bāwŋ mūn
 wind blowing do
 the wind is blowing

3.3.1.2 Verbal noun stem alternation through nasal incorporation

An aspect of Kman verbal morphology which has numerous parallels in regional languages is verb stem alternation. In the case of Kman, number marking is indexed to the head through nasal alternation in the stem. This process is only applied to a subset of verbs and is thus not predictable. The output is also atypical, since the result is verbs with final N+C sequences which do not occur elsewhere in the phonology. In Kman grammar, these are verbal nouns or gerunds, since they primary occur with action verbs. A sample of these gerunds is given in Table 32.

Table 32. Verb stems with nasal incorporation

Singular	Nasal	Gloss
$\emptyset \rightarrow -m$		
dō	dōm	saying
kà	kàm	be, is
tārà	tāràm	repairing
-l → -m		
brəl	brəm	falling from a height
gyāl	gyām	running
-y → -m		
təy	təm	going
$\emptyset \rightarrow -m-$		
lōp	lōmp	sitting
gyūp	gyūmp	cheating
shūp	shūmp	buying
$\emptyset \rightarrow -n-$		
chawk	chawnk	dwelling
kət	kənt	doing
krit	krint	laughing
thūt	thünt	blowing
thək	thənk	obeying
ʔ → -nk		
phlôʔ	phlōnk	being late
phlûʔ	phlūnk	jumping

Table 33 establishes the rules governing coda and output with respect to nasal incorporation;

Table 33. Coda and output in nasal incorporation

Coda	Output
- \emptyset , -l, -y	-m, -n
-t	-nt
-k, -ʔ	-nk
-p	-mp

dō saying
kà be, is
tārà repairing
brəl falling from a height
gyəl running
təy going

chawk dwelling
kət doing
krīt laughing
thūt blowing
thək obeying
phlô? being late
phlû? jumping
lāp sitting
gyūp cheating
shūp buying

dō saying
I dō
you sg. doi
he/she dō
we two dôm
we dō
you pl. doi
they dôm

tārà repairing
I tārà
you sg. tārà
he/she tārà
we two tārà
we tārà
you two tārà
you pl. tārà
they tāràm

brəl falling from a height
I brəl
you sg. brəl
he/she brəl
we two brəm, brəl
we brəl
you two brəl
you pl. brəl
they brəm, brəl

give sentence explaining two forms for we two

kī t̄y m̀ng
I go do 1SG
I will go

nyū th̄y sh̀
you sg. go do 2SG
you will go

wì ch̀n tēm ǹng they (two) are going
wìn tēm tàw they are going

gyāl running
I
you sg.
he/she
we two
we
you two
you pl.
they

I
you sg.
he/she
we two
we
you two
you pl.
they

I
you sg.
he/she
we two
we
you two
you pl.
they

I
you sg.
he/she
we two
we
you two
you pl.
they

I
you sg.
he/she
we two
we
you two
you pl.
they

I
you sg.
he/she
we two
we
you two
you pl.
they

I
you sg.
he/she
we two
we
you two
you pl.
they

I
you sg.
he/she
we two
we
you two
you pl.
they

I
you sg.
he/she
we two
we
you two
you pl.
they

I
you sg.
he/she
we two
we
you two
you pl.
they

I
you sg.
he/she
we two
we
you two
you pl.
they

I
you sg.
he/she
we two
we
you two
you pl.
they

I
you sg.
he/she
we two
we
you two
you pl.
they

The primary function of such alternations is to mark plurality. Thus for *gyūp* ‘cheating’, the singular is;

gyūp mūng
cheating do (1 sg.)
I am cheating

but if multiple people are cheating then the stem with incorporated nasal is used for both dual and plural;

wi’chin gyūmp ning
they two cheating do (3p dual)
those two are cheating

gyūmp taw
cheating do (3 pl.)
they are cheating

In a remarkable construction, an ideophone is fronted in the sentence, and the pronoun is deduced from the form of the final auxiliary.

dzūhū dzōhā krīnt taw
like a horn laugh do (3pl)
[Those who] are laughing are making their mouths like horns

However, stems with nasal incorporation have an additional function which is to compensate for the deletion of the verb ‘do’ and its pronominal indexation. Thus;

wi mūnda chawk mūn
he alone live do (3sg)
he lives alone

is equivalent to;

wi mūnda chawnk
he alone live
he lives alone

Similarly with the following pair;

ān nīḡ krīt mūn nīḡ
these dual laughing do dual
these two are laughing

is equivalent to;

ān nīḡ krīnt nīḡ
these dual laugh dual
these two laugh [i.e. are laughing]

Or;

ān nīḡ tāy mūn nīḡ
these dual go do dual
these two are going

and

ān nīḡ tēm nīḡ
these dual go dual
these two are going

Similarly;

ān nīḡ gyàl mūn nīḡ
these dual run do dual
These two are running

and;

ān nīḡ gyàm nīḡ
these dual run dual
these two are running

???

brət twisting, wringing

popong kə kre hung brənt kə
 uncle ? chicken ? wring ?
 uncle has wrung the neck of chicken

Where the complement is an adjective or qualifier, the verbal noun *kəC* is used. Table 34 shows the paradigm of *kəC* ‘action’ or ‘doing’ as used in this construction.

Table 34. Allomorphs of *kəy* ‘action’

Number	Person	Form
Singular	1	kət
	2	kəy?
	3	kət
Dual		kənt
Plural	1	kət
	2	kəy?
	3	kənt

Thus for *phənləŋ* ‘surprising’ the adjective is fronted, and the verbal noun becomes the equivalent of an indefinite pronoun. Thus;

phənləŋ kət mūŋ
 surprising action do.1PS
 I am doing s.t. surprising

nyū phənləŋ kəy? mūn
 you sg. surprising action do.2PS
 you sg. are doing something surprising

For the third person, the pronoun is optional. If it is realised it is suffixed with a glottal stop, thus *wī + ?*;

[wī?] phənləŋ kət mūn
 he surprising action do.3PS
 he is doing s.t. surprising

The plural paradigm is as follows;

kīn phənləŋ kət məy
 we surprising action do.1PP
 we are doing s.t. surprising

ən niŋ phənləŋ kənt niŋ
 you two surprising do dual
 you pl. are doing s.t. surprising

nyūcin phənləŋ kəy? nək
 you pl. surprising action do.2PP
 you pl. are doing s.t. surprising

ən səŋ phən̄lāŋ kənt taw
 they surprising action do.3PP
 they are doing s.t. surprising

3.3.1.3 Initial consonant mutation

A small subset of verbs use mutation of the initial consonant to index pronominal subjects. These usually also correspond to verbs which exhibit nasal incorporation. These are shown in Table 35;

Table 35. Verb roots showing mutation

Root	Mutation	Nasal	Gloss
chā	shā	cham	eating (soft food)
chawk	chəiʔ	chawnk	living, dwelling
do	tho	dom	saying
təy	thəy	tem	going
ka	(kə).kha	kam	existing, being available
dəm		təm	remembering
pī	phī	pīm	giving

mūn thāwk n. diagnosis by a *kətuwat*.

kha only exists in compounded forms with the hortative, not in isolation

chā ~ shā

Table 36. Pronominal indexing of chā ‘eating’

Number	Person	Form
Singular	1	chā
	2	shā
	3	chā
Dual		shā
Plural	1	chā
	2	shā
	3	chā

The following sentence neatly illustrates the forms of təy ‘going’

təy məŋrə thəy lük
 go if go IMP
 go if you want to

3.3.1.4 Vowel stem alternations denoting valency change

Kman has a weak morphological process affecting central vowels, which can change and thereby affect transitivity.

khũp to bend over, stoop khəp to be turned over, turned upside down (vessels)
tā əsày to wake up tā əsày to rise (sun)

ki kə əsey ki
I him wake I
I woke him up

3.3.1.5 Plural verbs?

Kman has a few examples of might be described as plural verbs on the African model;

cùt to poke with sharp point single action cō poking randomly, peck multiple action

3.3.2 Verbal auxiliaries

3.3.2.1 Overview

Verb final
Imperative

2p shù
3ps phū
3pp phūtàw

3.3.2.3 Imperatives

3.3.2.3.1 Positive imperatives

The most common imperative marker is *shù*, which follows the main verb directly. The unmarked form of the imperative is 2nd person singular. When the subject is dual or plural the imperative marker is followed by forms indexing of the number and gender of the subject. For third person imperatives, the allomorph of *shù*, *phù* is used.

ənsāw kət.shù
like this do.IMP
Do it this way!

kūŋ bəl.shù
price increase.IMP
Increase the price!

əpāy tīnək phī?.shù
money more give.IMP
Add more money

Dual and plural are indexed with pronominal suffixes, as in;

thāy shù you sg. go
thāy shù nək you two go
thāy shù nīŋ you pl. go

With the second person, zero marking is interpreted as singular, while dual and plural are indexed with *nək* and *nīŋ*.

nyū ləp shù
you sg. sit down IMP
you sg. sit down

nyucin ləp shù nək
you two sit down IMP you two
you two sit down

nyuniŋ ləp shù nīŋ
you pl. sit down IMP you pl.
you pl. sit down

phūn nu? shù
door close IMP
close the door

phūn nu? shù nək
door close IMP you two
you two close the door

phūn nu? shù nīŋ
door close IMP you pl.
you pl. close the door

Where the second argument is a singular pronoun, the tone of the accusative suffix is mid and the tone of main verb, high. The imperative marker is optionally followed by a politeness marker, *nè*, *ngə* [for first person singular]

kīwī phí shù [ngə]
I give IMP PM
Give it to me!

For third person singular and all plural objects the accusative marker has a suffixed glottal stop.

wī.wī? phí shù nè
he.ACC give IMP PM
Give it to him!

However, where the object is plural, the tone of *wi?* is low, spreading to the main verb which then becomes low.

kín.wi? phì shù nè
we.ACC give IMP PM
Give it to us!

ənīng.wì? phì shù nè
you two give IMP polite
Give it to the two of you!

ənsən.wì? phì shù nè
you pl. give IMP polite
Give it to all of you!

wìn.wì? phì shù nè
they.ACC give IMP polite
Give it to them!

wənsən.wì? phì shù nè
those people give IMP polite
Give it to those people!

shì marks a more polite request but only with plural subjects.

lāp shì
sit IMP
you pl. sit

Another way of marking requests or polite imperatives is with final *nè*. Thus;

ən sāw kət shù nè
this way do IMP PM
Please do it this way!

For the third person the request marker *tè?* is added in final position;

wì kālāp phū tè?
he sit down IMP REQ
let him sit down

wìn kālāp phūtāw tè?
they sit down IMP REQ
let them sit down

Request marker *chə?*

mūng chə?
call PREQ
please call him [back]

əsay.shu
get up.IMP
Get up!

ki wi əsay.shù
 I him wake up.IMP
 wake him up!

xxx
 phalap la chə

please bring tea
 phalap la cə na? you two bring tea
 nyuniŋ phalap la cə? all of you bring tea

ki muŋ na ki I call him back

thay! or thay lk Go! you sg.
 thay na? Go! two people
 thay le All of you go!

thay shu niŋ Please go everyone! pl.

thay na shu go back
 muŋ shu call back
 muŋ na shu call s.o. back
 dam na shu beat again

Hortatives, first person singular imperatives, are marked with a verbal suffix and a following cross-referenced pronominal marker (Table 37).

Table 37. Hortative suffixes

Person	Suffix	Cross-reference
1st singular	-cā	yùŋ
1st dual	lòŋ	hək
1st plural	lòŋ	yəy

Sentence paradigms are as follows;

kī bājār hī t̄əy.chā yùŋ
 I market there go.IMP sg.
 Let me go to the market

kīcìn bājār hī t̄əy.lòŋ hək
 We two market there go.IMP dual
 Let us two go to the market

kīn bājār hī t̄əy.lòŋ yəy
 We market there go.IMP pl.
 Let us all go to the market

A stronger imperative for second persons only is indexed both by the form of the pronoun and in some cases by striking verb-stem changes. This is shown in Table 38;

Table 38. Pronominal indexing for emphatic imperative

Number	Person	Form
Singular	1	
	2	lùk
	3	
Dual		nə̃ʔ
Plural	1	
	2	lē
	3	

The singular form is;

thə̃y lùk
 go you sg.
 you sg. go!

The dual and plural are marked by a polar tone inversion on the verb stem, which becomes low as the two imperative markers are mid.

thə̃y nə̃ʔ thə̃y lē
 go you two go you pl.

3.3.2.3.2 Prohibitives, negative imperatives

A negative imperative is marked by ə̃y preceding the verb.

ə̃nsāw ə̃y kət
 like this not do
 Don't do it like this!

shyāt ə̃y chā
 food not eat
 Don't eat food

More polite prohibitives add either ð or nè following the verb. Their meanings seem to be equivalent.

ə̃nsāw ə̃y kət ð
 this way not do PM
 Please don't do it this way!

is the same as;

ə̃n sāw ə̃y kət nè
 3p not do PM
 Please don't do it this way!

3.3.2.3 Imperative -'must'

To express the idea that someone must do something, the extension khrà...sə̃ŋ, which brackets the verbal auxiliary marking potential future action. Unlike elsewhere, the future auxiliary *māng* does not change form in the course of the paradigm. Thus;

ki ēn kōt khrā māŋ sèŋ
I this do must FUT must
I must do this

nyū ēn kōt khrā māŋ sèŋ
you sg. this do must FUT must
You sg. must do this

wì ēn kōt khrā māŋ sèŋ
he this do must FUT must
He must do this

wī ēndām kètàŋ khrā māŋ sèŋ
he about this speak must FUT must
He must speak about this

kin ēn kōt khrā māŋ sèŋ
we this do must FUT must
we must do this

nyuning ēn kōt khrā māŋ sèŋ
you pl. this do must FUT must
you pl. must do this

win ēn kōt khrā māŋ sèŋ
they this do must FUT must
they must do this

khrā...sèŋ has an allomorph, khrā...sō?. This can replace *sèŋ* in any of the sentences above.

wì ēn kōt khrā māŋ sō?
he this do must FUT must
He must do this

However, *khrā* has a allomorph, *khrāy*, which can be used in a short form, but which is used only for third person singular and plural. The tone of *sō?* is lowered to *sò?*.

kōt khrāy màŋ sò?
do must FUT must
[he] will have to do do this

The future auxiliary marker undergoes an expansion to *mànìŋ* for a plural subject.

kōt khrāy mànìŋ sò?
do must FUT must
[they] will have to do do this

brây n. quarrying (pebbles)

lawng khri bray yəy
pebble quarrying ?

let us quarry pebbles

3.3.2.4 Capacity

To mark capacity, i.e. to be able or ‘can’, the suffix *tsūn* is inserted between the verb stem and the auxiliary;

kì ɔ̃n kət tsūn mən̩
I this do can PRES
I can do this

nyù ɔ̃n kət tsūn mən̩
you sg. this do can PRES
you sg. can do this

wì ɔ̃n kət tsūn mən̩
he this do can PRES
he can do this

wìn ɔ̃n kət tsūn mən̩
we this do can PRES
we can do this

3.3.2.5 Iterative

To mark repeated action or iterative, *nà* ‘again’ is inserted between the verb root and the TA suffix.

kì hú? nà mīŋ
I come IT FUT
I will come back again

nyù hú? nāi mən̩
you sg. come IT FUT
you sg. will come back again

wì hú? nà māŋ
he come IT FUT
he will come back again

kìn hú? nà māy
we come IT FUT
we will come back again

nyúchìn hú? nǎi mànək
 you two come IT FUT
 you two will come back again

nyúning hú? nǎi mànìng
 you pl. come IT FUT
 you pl. will come back again

wìn hú? nà mǎngtāw
 they come IT FUT
 they will come back again

3.3.3 Serial verb constructions

Kman allows a restricted number of serial verb constructions, particularly with the verb *sat*, 'to kill'. These always consist of just two verbs, so it may be more appropriate to consider them compound verbs.

kāp sāt
 fire kill
 fire and kill

dāy sāt
 cut kill
 to kill by cutting

3.3.4 Verb pair idioms

As with paired collocations in nouns, Kman has a number of verbs expressed in this manner. For example;

to defeat tām pèy ~ tā tūng sānglōng

3.4 Pronouns

3.4.1 Unmarked subject pronouns

The Kman pronominal system is quite complex due to the indexing system, characteristic of many languages in the region, but particularly further west in Nepal. Kman shows a very thorough singular/dual/plural opposition in both the pronominal and verbal systems. Table 39 shows the basic pronouns with the tones as sounded in isolation.

Table 39. Kman subject pronouns

<u>Singular</u>	<u>Kman</u>	<u>Dual</u>	<u>Kman</u>	<u>Plural</u>	<u>Kman</u>
I	kī	we two	kīcìn	we (inc.) we (exc.)	kīn kīnwì?
you sg.	nyū	you two	nyūcìn	you pl.	nyūnìn
he	wì	they two	wì.cìn	they	wìn

The person and number of the pronoun is cross-referenced to the verbal suffix system (cf. §). Table 40 shows the paradigm for the verb, *tāy* 'to come';

Table 40. Kman verb paradigm, ‘to come’

Person	No.	Gloss	Kman
1	sg.	I go	kí tǎy mùŋ
	dl.	We two go	kícín thēm hłk
	pl.	We all go	kín tǎy mà
2	sg.	you sg. go	nyũ thây
	dl.	you two go	nyũ cín thây nà
	pl.	you all go	nyũ nín thây lè
3	sg.	he goes	vì thēm
	dl.	they two go	vìcìn thēm nìŋ
	pl.	they all go	vìn thēm tàw

3.4.2 Indefinite pronouns

nyā mū somebody

glāāt haylam nyā mū hũ?.la
 village from someone come.PERF
 Somebody came from the village

nyā nyā anyone

nyā nyā kət tsūn.maŋ
 anyone do can.FUT
 Anybody can do it

nyā wì? to whom

èpà y nyā wì? phì cīkə?
 money whoever give xx
 Who did you give the money to?

tyum byuulum pron. something

3.4.3 Reflexive pronouns

Reflexivity is marked with the single pronoun phlōŋ ‘self’ and is apparently invariant between persons. However, the subject pronoun is indexed with a pronominal marker at the end of the sentence

shyāt kí phlōŋ kətsùt ki
 food I self cook I
 I cook food for myself

shyāt nyū phlōŋ kōtsūt shu
food you self cook IMP
You cook food for yourself

shyāt vi phlōŋ kōtsūt kə
food he self cook he
He cooks food for himself

shyāt kin phlōŋ kōtsūt ye
food we self cook us
We cook food for ourselves

shyāt nyucin phlōŋ kōtsūt shu nək
food you dl. self cook IMP dl. you dl.
You two cook food for yourselves

shyāt nyunin phlōŋ kōtsūt niŋ
food you pl. self cook you pl.
You pl. cook food for yourselves

shyāt wìn phlōŋ kōtsūt taw
food they self cook them
They cook food for themselves

3.4.4 Demonstratives

Kman has a small set of invariant demonstratives;

this ǝn these ǝn.sǝn
that wan those wan.sen

The follow the noun they qualify

büy ǝn bwi ǝn.sǝn
house this house these

In addition *anja* ‘this’ applies to s.t. held in hand or very close; the speaker is pointing to it

lawŋ anja
stone this

however, it has no plural.

Where the noun is qualified, in the singular the demonstrative is fronted;

an lawŋ kayim
this stone black
this black stone

But with a plural head, the usual word order is maintained;

lawŋ ansen kayim
stone these black
these black stones

Similar patterns apply to ‘those’

bwi wan bwi wansen
house that house those

and similar

ansaw like this

nyũ ansaw əy kət
you like this not do
Don’t do it like this

Like Tani languages and Idu, Kman has an elaborate set of directionals, which have a demonstrative sense. These are covered more fully in §3.8.2.

3.4.5 Possessives

Possession in Kman is denoted by the pronoun *phaʔ* following the head.

kīn phaʔ
we POSS
It is ours

Possessive adjectives are simply the subject pronoun preceding the noun they qualify.

nyũ kwī
you dog
your dog

3.5 Interrogatives

3.5.1 Question words

Questions seeking information in Kman are introduced with the interrogatives listed in Table 41. Examples of their use are given below.

Table 41. Kman question words

English	Kman	Also
Who?	nyā	
Which person	nyānyā	
Which?	yāwèn	
Where?	yāhəy	
Where to?	yāhi	
What?	shən	
How?	shòw	
How much?	shòwmū	
Why?	shən dè	

Who? nyā

Who is treated like a dummy object.

nyū nyā nəy
 you who IDXP
 Who are you?

əpày nyā wì phi cikə
 money who he ?
 who did you give the money to?

Which person? nyānyā

nyānyā hū? maŋ.taw
 which person come FUT.3PP
 Which of them will come?

Which? yāwèn

khṛāy.shù yāwèn kst
 tell.IMP which good
 tell [me] which one is good?

sā yāwèn glāət.ha hā? thay.la
 child which village up there go.PERF
 Which village did the child go to?

Where? yāhəy

nyū glāət yāhəy
 you village where
 Where is your village?

yāhəy thəy.cə
where go.CP
Where did you go?

yāhì thəy.maŋ
where to go.FUT
Where will you go?

What? shən

nyū əməŋ shən
you name what
What is your name?

nyū kwī əməŋ shən
you dog name what
What is the name of your dog?

What, *shən*, is fronted in the sentence

shən cā.maŋ
what eat.FUT
What will you eat?

How much? shōwmū

taym shōwmū sam.la
time how much happen.PERF
What is the time?

hākùw kùŋ shōwmū
rice price how much
How much is the rice?

krēsīt brāt show.mu
egg CL how much?
how much are the eggs?

Why? shèndə

shèndə ʔyəy nək
Why quarrel you two
Why are you two quarreling?

and with the same meaning

nyūcin shèndə ʔyəy nək
you pl. why quarrel IDXP
Why are you two quarreling?

shèndə ʔyàɣ cikə na
why quarrel PERF you two
Why did you two quarrel?

How? shòw

phālāp show klôŋ cikə
tea how prepare PAST
How did you make tea?

3.5.2 Polar questions

Polar questions which expect an affirmative or negative response are marked with *lə* in final position.

nyū shyāt ca? cikə lə
you food eat PAST QM
Have you eaten?

nyū shyāt ca? maŋ lə
you food eat FUT QM
Are you going to eat?

kā dāt mūn lə
voice hearing do QM
can you hear a voice?

Typical responses are

am yes
may no

ca? kī
eat I

eat I i.e. yes

m.ca? ney not eat I i.e. no

3.6 Adjectives and qualification

3.6.1 Descriptive

Adjectives in Kman do not show agreement and always follow the noun. Adjectives have no very consistent morphological shape. The formant, *kə-* or its allomorphs *ka(N)-*, which occurs with persons (Table 23), often also precedes adjectives. A sample of these is given in Table 42;

Table 42. Kman adjectives with kV- prefixes

Kman	Gloss	Example	
kāmbōŋ	dark, gloomy, obscure	ŋā kām̄bōŋ	dark night
kāmbīŋ	matching, of equal height	see below	
kāmbīŋ	east-west orientation	bwi kām̄bīŋ	east-west house
kāndōŋ	north-south orientation	bwi kām̄dōŋ	north-south house
kāmphlūŋ	white	tàphà? kām̄phlūŋ	white wall
kāʔsāl	red	krē kām̄ʔsāl	red chicken
kāmnyāw	pliable, flexible	brōŋ kām̄nyāw	flexible rope
kānchək	moist, damp, wet	bàŋ kām̄chək	wet cloth
kāndyūŋ	moist, damp, wet	bàŋ kām̄dyūŋ	wet cloth
kāndzāy	solid, hard	làwŋ kām̄dzāy	hard stone
kāndzāwk	raw	shín kām̄dzāwk	raw meat
kānjùl	sharp (point)	grà kām̄jùl	sharp knife
kāntshìŋ	cold	bàwŋ kām̄ntshìŋ	cold wind
kāpāt	fast in mind and body	tsòŋ kām̄pāt	fast person
kāwà	deaf, foolish, stupid, idiotic, dumb, mute	tsòŋ kām̄wà	stupid person
<hr/>			
kōchāwŋ	mean, miserly	tsòŋ kōchāwŋ	mean person
kōkrāy	poor, indigent, destitute	tsòŋ kōkrāy	poor person
kōndəŋ	firmly fixed	tàʔlàwŋ kōndəŋ	firmly fixed pillar
kōrūw	little, narrow	loŋ kōrūw	narrow road
kōrūŋ	difficult	tàn thit kōrūŋ	difficult journey
kōsān	empty, unoccupied	bwi kōsān	empty house
kōtəŋ	deep	ətì kōtəŋ	deep river
kōwək	mature	səŋ kōwək	mature tree
kōŋit	wise, learned, intelligent, clever	tsòŋ kōŋit	wise person
kōrəp	narrow	blòŋ kōrəp	narrow road
kōyū	small	pāhòŋ kōyūk	small horse
<hr/>			
yūk	suppression	kaw	
kōyūk	suppressed, downtrodden	kəkaw	
məyuk	not suppressed	məkaw	
ta yuk	to be suppressed	ta kaw	
<hr/>			
chāwk	presence, existence		
kō shāwk	be present		
mō chāwk	be absent		
tā shāwk	to be present		
<hr/>			
hēmək	tastiness		
<hr/>			
mō hēmək	tasteless		
tā hēmək	to be tasty		

hù? arrival
 kē hù? having arrived
 mē hū? not arriving
 tā hù? to arrive

lēt ability
 kēlēt be able
 mē lēt be unable
 tā lēt to be able

sāl expectation
 kēsāl expecting
 mē sāl not expecting
 tā sāl to expect

tūn obedience
 kē tūn being obedient
 mē tūn being disobedient
 tā tūn to obey

khṛūn contribution
 kēkhṛūn contributor
 mēkhṛūn person who does not contribute
 mēkhṛūn contribution, donation
 tā khṛūn to contribute

təm remembering
 kətəm remember
 mētəm amnesia, forgetting
 mēndēm

kì mētəm yùŋ
 I forgetting do
 I do not remember

mēndēm rə mēkhrā
 forgetting if don't worry
 if you don't remember, don't worry

krō	a.	empty (pack)	<i>biskūt krō</i> 'empty packet of biscuits
mēkrō?	n.	scarcity	<i>shyāt mēkrō?</i> scarcity of food

Table 43 shows a sample of miscellaneous adjectives without a prefix.

Table 43. Kman adjectives without prefixes

Kman	Gloss	Example
bālā	flat (as a stone)	<i>lāwŋ bālā</i> a flat stone
cālām	tasteless due to dilution with water	<i>shī cālām</i> tasteless beer
cən	only	<i>kāmū cən</i> only one. <i>nyū cən thày lūk</i> Only you should go
cūklīt	muddy	<i>blōŋ cūklīt</i> muddy road
dēwē	crescent shape (like moon)	<i>lāy dēwē</i> crescent moon
dīm h(n)yà	no amount, zero	<i>dīm h(n)yà mulaŋ məkə yuŋ</i> nothing amount not have me I don't have money
dūwri	muddy	<i>blōŋ dūwri</i> road muddy
əkhraŋ	tall, high, long	<i>səŋ əkhraŋ</i> tall tree. Does not apply to mountains, which must be <i>klōŋ</i>
gāŋwāŋ	circular	<i>bəlā gāŋwāŋ</i> round plate
gāwā	zigzag	<i>blōŋ gāwā</i> zigzag road
gəy	comic, funny, humorous	<i>gəy lāy</i> funny talk
həwàn	easy, simple	<i>tān thīt həwàn</i> an easy journey
kāhìn kàpà	excessive	<i>shyāt kāhìn kàpà</i> excessive food
kāmbli	smooth	<i>blōŋ kāmbli</i> smooth road
kāmbyāt	kind, merciful, sympathetic	<i>tsòŋ kāmbyāt</i> kind person
kāmphlāŋ	flat (forehead, rocks)	<i>əwà? kāmphlāŋ</i> flat forehead
kāmyik	fragile, delicate, frangible, brittle	<i>səŋ kāmyik</i> delicate wood
kāndyūŋ	moist, wet, damp, soggy	<i>bāŋ kāndyūŋ</i> a wet cloth
kānjul	pointed	<i>grà kānjul</i> pointed knife
kāntshàm	fragile, delicate, frangible, brittle	<i>səŋ kāntshàm</i> delicate wood
kāntshìŋ	cold	<i>bàwŋ kāntshìŋ</i> cold wind
kāŋjìt	other side of the river	
kātsəp	sincere, well-behaved, tidy, disciplined	<i>sā kàtsəp</i> well-behaved child
kātsiì	obedient	<i>sā kàtsiì</i> obedient child
klōŋ	high (mountains)	<i>àndzàw klōŋ</i> high mountain
krəŋ	clever, smart, intelligent	<i>sā krəŋ</i> clever child [note tone]
māndzùŋ	astonishing, surprising, peculiar	<i>ən kùŋsōŋ māndzùŋ</i> this news is surprising
məndà	alone	<i>kī məndà</i> I alone
mətəsòŋ	unpopular	<i>mətəsòŋ tsòŋ</i> unpopular person
mətsəl	weak	i.e. 'not strong' <i>mətsəl tsòŋ</i> weak person
mīk kāmbəŋ	blind	<i>mīk kāmbəŋ tsòŋ</i> blind person
məphān	bad	<i>shyāt məphān</i> bad food
mətūū	to be not fine	<i>lāy mətūū</i> it is not a good idea
mūmbān	to be busy	<i>kī mūmbān</i> I am busy
mūpān	to be busy	<i>kī mūpān</i> I am busy
kəcàn	seriously [ill]	<i>nāt kəcàn</i> seriously ill
rīŋ	beautiful	<i>cāl rīŋ</i> beautiful mithun
rūwmày	bad, unparliamentary, inappropriate	<i>rūwmày lāy</i> inappropriate expression

Kman	Gloss	Example
shyã	wild	<i>cāl shyã</i> wild mithun
tàtyõ	troublesome	<i>tàtyõ tsòŋ</i> troublesome person
tâwŋ	old (thing)	<i>bèlā tâwŋ</i> old plate
thâm	last, end, final	<i>bwi thâm</i> last room of the house
tsāk, tsāk	exact	<i>tsāk lày</i> correct word
tūlū	spherical	<i>làwŋ tūlū</i> a spherical stone

Adjectives usually follow the noun they qualify;

ŋŋ kset
man good

tolwi k.tay
buffalo large

tsòŋ əkhráŋ
man tall

an tsòŋ t.shm kàmbrá
he person liberal

an tsòŋ t.shm kshoŋ
he person honest

bloŋ chuklit
road muddy

bloŋ dówŋí
road muddy

kānè n. copper *kānè brāŋ* copper wire

kəŋit wise, learned, *kəŋit tsòŋ* wise person
intelligent

but if it tsòŋ kəŋit it would mean s.o. who knows people. Also *kantsal*.

jūm jānè wəy a.p. ancient *jūm jānè* is a Tawrā name for a deity, though this is in Kman expressions. *jūm jānè wəy chātōŋ* an animal object. Note this precedes the head noun

kāchā kəntshùm a.p. independent minded *kāchā kəntshùm tsòŋ* independent minded person

3.6.2 Stative verbs

Another class of qualification is where the verb *mūn* must be used. The Kman forms are probably best treated as verbal nouns, and the construction is ‘do x-ing’. Table 44 provides a sample of these forms.

Table 44. Kman verbal nouns with m̄n

Kman	Gloss
dāk̄ɿŋ	to be hungry
kāwŋ	to last
kāphlèŋ	to be full
khā	to have a sour taste
krəp	to have an unripe taste (green apple etc.)
kròŋ	to feel cold
lāt	to be able
nīŋ	to be pungent, smell bad (liquid)
nyàm	to be pungent, smell bad (solids)
phənlāŋ	surprising
prō?	to be enough, adequate, sufficient
sūŋ	describes good smell
tūū	to be fine

nyàm sūŋ m̄n
 sesame smell good do
 sesame smells good

lāy tūū m̄n
 word be good do
 it is a good idea

wān [ɿ ətì kəphlèŋ
 cup that water full
 that cup is full of water

təsòŋ s.v. popular *tàsòŋ m̄n tsòŋ* popular person

shyàt prō? là I have enough food
 such as faeces or rotting animal corpse. tək̄hūy nyàm m̄n faeces smell bad
 gàyùŋ krəp m̄n the pear tastes unripe

kròŋ m̄n
 feeling cold do
 I feel cold

kī kāwŋ mīŋ I will last for a long time

‘stomach’ + ‘hunger’

kī dāk̄ɿŋ m̄n
 I hunger do
 I feel hungry

pāwā kha m̄n

Mishmi tita tastes sour

cf. hā

kì tā thīt lèt mūn I can walk
esp. urine.

tāshīt nīŋ mūn
urine smelling pungent do
the urine smells pungent

phōnlāŋ kət mūn he is doing s.t. surprising

chān a. only

kī chān = me only

nyū chān = you only

wī chìn chān = two of them only

kīn chān = we only

wìn chān = they only

kāmū chān only one.

nyū chān thāy lùk Only you should go

wi' màndà chān tānthīnt mày he should not go alone

3.6.3 Intensifiers

Kman has a set of intensifiers which qualify other adjectives. Those so far identified are;

hātày very

bàjàr hāy tsòŋ hātày dān
bazaar there people very plenty
many people are in the bazaar

shyāt bwì hāy shyāt hātày dān kāmūn
kitchen there food very plenty be available
there was plenty of food in the kitchen

māysā hātày kāsūt
girl very beautiful
the girl is very beautiful

hātày can also qualify adverbs;

wī? hātày phēphē gyāl mūn
he very quickly run do
he is running very quickly

tyāŋ very

nyù tyāŋ kāsūt
you very good
you are very good

tā thīt tyāŋ mālōt
to go very difficult
walking is very difficult

tshəl la lə
identify QM

Can you identify it?

kəcoŋ person who spoils < coŋ to spoil
kəthum dead person

kantshal person who identifies

kambiŋ in parallel, of equal height

tsoŋ kəyin sawro? kambij
person two equal matching

tsoŋ kəsam sawro? kambij
person three equal matching

A large range of adjectival phrases are compounded with

ən tsòŋ t.shm bwi ma.mn
that person thoughtful is

an tsoŋ t.shm m.sàm lay ktaŋ.mən
he person unpleasant talk

pro.la to be enough

shyāt pro.la lə?
food be enough.PERF QM
Is the food enough?

uninflected qualifiers and stative verbs. Many types of qualification in English are achieved through stative verbs in Kman. Such verbs can be identified by the potential to add morphological suffixes.

kācā hì? lāp shū

sit in the other place.

kācā hi? ləp.shù
 other there sit.IMP

sit in the other place

3.6.4 Nominalised compounds

Kman has a productive process of creating nominalisations applying to persons from adjectives and verbs. So in this expression

rām kàchàwŋ tsòŋ ‘mean like an otter’

the *kàchàwŋ tsòŋ* is a miserly person and can be used in comparisons, in this case with the proverbially stingy otter.

3.6.5 Quantifiers

Kman has a small set of quantifiers, shown in Table 45. Quantifiers always follow the head noun. A subset requires the numeral ‘one’, *mo*, to follow them.

Table 45. Kman quantifiers

Kman	Gloss
<i>ātè?mù</i>	a little, few
<i>māthyām</i>	a little
<i>mûŋ</i>	all, every, complete
<i>māt mù</i>	small piece of s.t.
<i>tālāy mù</i>	half
<i>yōŋ mū</i>	some

krē sīt ātè?mù
 hen egg few
 a few eggs

brêŋ māt mù
 rope piece
 a piece of rope

tèŋā tālāy mù
 orange half
 half an orange

tsòŋ mûŋ
 people complete
 the whole people

nyây mûŋ cāpui
 earth whole everywhere
 the whole world

ōti mōthyām
 water little
 a little water

shyāt ātèʔmù phi.shù
 food little give.IMP
 give me bit of food

tsōŋ yōŋ mū
 people some
 some people

3.6.7 Comparison

Kman can make comparisons by simply adjoining the two nouns in question;

rām kèchàwŋ tsòŋ
 otter mean person
 [s.o. is] mean like an otter

The otter is proverbially mean.

Good, better best

3.6.7 Colours

Kman has some eight basic colour terms, shown in Table 46. Dervied colours and those recently borrowed from Assamese are discounted.

Table 46. Kman colour terms

Kman	Gloss	Comment
kāʔyũm	black, grey	
kāʔsàl	red	
kāmphlūŋ	white	
hũmè	purple	
hāngày	green	
kyĩk nyà	blue	earth
kyĩk nyà kàʔyũm	dark blue	like dark soil
dyōngshā	pink	
kũrũm	brown	
hāngāy kũrũm	teal	
krēlōʔ	yellow	
bàygōn	violet	< Assamese

Such a large range of colour is uncommon among unwritten languages and almost certainly reflects the culture of weaving. *kyĩk* implies a colour recognised by weavers.

sĩplũ faded kãʔsàl sĩplũ faded red

Colour terms always follow the noun they qualify;

bàŋ kǎʔyùm
 cloth black
 black cloth

krē kǎʔsəl
 chicken red
 red chicken

tàphàʔ kāmphlūŋ
 wall white
 white wall

3.6.7 Tastes, textures and odours

3.6.7.1 Taste

Kman has quite a rich vocabulary to describe tastes, textures and odours. They are all framed in the same way syntactically, with the use of the all-purpose *mùn* ‘do/does’. The terms to describe these sensory experiences are thus a type of verbal noun. Surprisingly, sensory experiences are poorly reflected in ideophones, although a few for taste are noted at the end of this section.

Bartoshuk (1978) proposed that there were four ‘basic’ taste qualities, ‘bitter, sweet, sour, salty’, and the basic Kman taste terms fall into these classes, with the other terms recorded here applying to recent introductions.

Table 47. Kman taste terms

Kman	Gloss
báàt	pungent, sharp
hāmǎk	tasty
khā	bitter
krəp	sharp, unripe
sál	fruity, sour
shyá	pungent, sharp
sìŋ	pungent, spicy
soʔ	alkaline
təm	sweet, salty

təm ‘sweet, salty’

təm is in some ways an archetypical taste sensation, since it applies to two tastes which would be sharply differentiated in the Euro-American lexicon, salty and sweet. The strong similarity to the word for ‘salt’, *tāmìn*, makes it possible that this underlies its etymology. Examples of the term in use are given below:

tāmìn təm mùn
 salt saltiness does
 salt tastes salty

shùnīŋ təm mǔn
sugar sweetness does
sugar tastes sweet

khā ‘bitter’

This term is applied to a rather specific range of plants as well as the stomachs of fish, as listed in Table 3. The scientific names of the plants are given in the second column.

Table 48. Items described as *khā* ‘bitter’

bitter gourd	<i>Momordica charantia</i>	kèrēlā
Mishmi tita	<i>Coptis tita</i>	pāwā
fish stomach		áŋŋá hlèy

This is exemplified in:

pāwā khā mǔn
Mishmi tita bitterness does
Mishmi tita tastes bitter

Mishmi tita is a well-known medicinal plant, gathered wild in the mountains and exported to Tibet.

áŋŋá hlèy khá mǔn
fish stomach bitterness does
‘fish stomach tastes bitter’

shyá ‘pungent, sharp’

This term applies to chili and other peppery plants, as in.

bìcī shyà mǔn
chili pungency does
chili tastes pungent

An equivalent term is *báàt*, exemplified in;

bìtsī báàt mǔn
chili pungency does
chili tastes pungent

sál ‘fruity, sour’

Items that are described as *sál* are listed in Table 49.

Table 49. Items described as *sál* ‘fruity, sour’

tomato	shāw sāl
green oranges	téŋá kámbròŋ
bamboo shoots	t.wóŋ

shāw sāl sál mìn
 tomato fruitiness tastes
 tomato tastes fruity

krəp ‘sharp, unripe’

Items that are described as *kráp* are listed in Table 50, and the exemplified in (10).

Table 50. Foods described as *krəp* ‘sharp, unripe’

green apple	ápél k.tí
betel nut	támùl

gəyùŋ krəp mìn
 pear sharpness does
 pear tastes sharp

Interestingly, both of the items these tastes apply to are relatively recent introductions. Apples were introduced by the British, as the name suggests, and betel nut is from Indian (‘mainland’) culture and also borrowed. A different term, *sál*, is used for green oranges, indicating that unripeness is not in itself a defining character.

sìŋ ‘pungent, spicy’

This term is applied to spices and fried food such as those listed in Table (6).

Table 51. Items described as *sìŋ* ‘pungent, spicy’

garlic	pəlūw
ginger	dəʔìŋ

As in;

pəlūw sìŋ mìn
 garlic pungency does
 garlic smells pungent

soʔ ‘alkaline’

This word is only applied to uncooked taro (gəl). Taro, *Colocasia esculenta*, is a tuber crop which must formerly have been of considerable importance, but which is being displaced by rice and other cereals. Fresh or poorly cooked taro is extremely alkaline and can irritate the throat.

gəl soʔ mìn
 raw taro alkaline does
 raw taro tastes alkaline

shūŋ wāŋ tasty
 hīhī hùhù describes taste of hot chili

3.6.7.2 Texture in the mouth

The following terms are recorded for textures in the mouth.

ləbən ‘soft-textured, watery’

Applied to any food which is soft, pounded and watery, such as kedgery or dal, as well as mushrooms, *cìnúŋ*, as exemplified in (13):

cīnūŋ	lɪbən	mũn
mushroom	soft	does
mushrooms feel soft in the mouth		

həmək ‘soft but with consistent texture’

Applied to solid food, particularly staple starches, as those listed in Table 52:

Table 52. Items described as həmək ‘soft but with consistent texture’

cooked rice	hākùw
potato	əlù
maize beer	bò sũ

hākùw	həmək	mũn
cooked rice	softness	does
cooked rice feels soft in the mouth		

bō	sũ	həmək	mũn
maize	beer	taste good	does
maize beer tastes good			

címíl ‘crunchy’

Applied to foods that come in small hard pieces, such as those listed in Table 53:

Table 53. Foods described as címíl ‘crunchy’

peanuts	àyàyà sít
popcorn ²	bo phum

àyàyà sít	címíl	mũn
peanuts	crunchy	does
peanuts feel crunchy in the mouth		

² Popcorn might not immediately seem to be hard like peanuts, as prepared in Europe or America. However, local popcorn is significantly more difficult to bite into.

3.6.7.3 Smells

brūi smelling

ān tsòŋ brūi mēphān
 this person smelling bad
 This person has a bad smell

The smells that have a distinctive term in Kman are restricted mainly to urine and faeces.

nīŋ ‘smelling of urine’

tāshìt nīŋ mūn
 urine uric does
 urine smells like piss

nyàm ‘smell of dung, faeces’

This word is applied to the smell of human excrement and animal dung, as in;

māntshūw tēkhūy nyàm mūn
 cow dung smelling harsh does
 cow dung smells of shit

However, the term *báat*, which applies to the pungency of chilis, can also be used for animal smells;

təpuw báat nyam mūn
 tiger odour smelling harsh does
 the smell of a tiger is sensed

3.7 Numerals

3.7.1 Ordinals

Kman basic, abbreviated and cardinal lower numerals are shown in Table 54;

Table 54. Kman lower numerals

Gloss	Kman	Short	Cardinal
One	kūmū	mù	būy mù
Two	kūnīn, kūyīn	yùn	būy kūyīn
Three	kūsēm	səm	būy kūsēm
Four	kāmbrūn	brūn	etc.
Five	kūlèn	lèn	
Six	kūtām	tām	
Seven	nūn		
Eight	grūn		
Nine	nōtmù		
Ten	kyēpmū, mētyāmū		

The notion of zero, 0 is not traditional, but the following term is proposed, *dyūmhyǎ*.

mātyāmū is used in business transactions

Kman higher numerals are given in Table 55. Up to 19, they have a simple additive form based on ‘ten’. However, above that, they seem to undergo a complete shift, as if adopted from another language, forming decadal numerals based on *mù*, apparently standing for ‘ten’. Above a hundred, *wāyè*, they revert to multipliers of the primary numeral decade. The *mù* makes a brief return with one thousand.

Table 55. Kman higher numerals

Gloss	Kman
11	kyēpmù kūmū
12	kyēpmù kūyīn
13	kyēpmù kūsēm
14	kyēpmù kāmbrūn
15	kyēpmù kūlèn
16	kyēpmù kūtām
17	kyēpmù nūn
18	kyēpmù grūn
19	kyēpmù nèt
20	kūtāl mù
21	kūtāl mù kūmū
30	hāṅgyāp mū
40	bīsī mū
50	wāping mū
60	kāndām mū
70	kánūw mū
80	kāṅgrūw mū
90	nōtsī mū
100	wāyè mù
200	wāyè kūyìn
300	wāyè kūsēm
400	wāyè kāmbrūn
500	wāyè kūlèn
600	wāyè kūtām
700	wāyè nūn
800	wāyè grūn
900	wāyè nōtmù
1000	hīṅ mū
100,000	lōk mū
1,000,000	zūp mū
10,000,000	krōr mū

3.7.2 Counting in groups and sequences

kūnīn, kūyīn

glà kūsōm hā?
 CLF three group
 group of three people

The use of the classifier glà tells you this is about people.

chāl nāw kūsōm hā?
 mithun CLF three group
 group of three mithuns

tèngā brāt kūsōm hà?
 orange CLF three group

dam = in sequence, individually, one-by-one

dam hi dam.shu

beat them in sequence

3.8 Locatives

3.8.1 General

Kman has a rich system of locatives and directionals. Table 56 shows the locatives so far identified in Kman;

Table 56. Kman locatives

English	Kman
above, on top of, up	lūn hāy
ahead of, in front	pāŋ hày
behind, back	glāwk hày
far behind, back	māl
far down	klām lūk
below, down, underneath	l̄i
down from speaker	lūk
beside, next to	gōŋ
everywhere	cēpuì
here	ārā
inside	gùŋlī
near	gāy
outside	kōnān

Locative is not a clearly defined category in Kman, as the position of individual locatives within the clause is highly variable. Following each example of a locative is a summary of the clause structure.

above, on top of, up lūn hāy

tê? lǔn āy pīt krāl nøy
box on top book putting down AUX
the book is on the box

O-LOC-S-V-AUX

krē hāŋ glùŋ lǐ mân mǔn
chicken courtyard down staying do
the chicken is staying down in the front yard

S-O-LOC-V-AUX

chāl kī pāŋ hày tēy mǔn
mithun me ahead going do
the mithun is going ahead of me

S-O-LOC-V-AUX

kētəm bǔi glāwk hày kam
granary house behind up is
the granary is in front of the house

S-O-LOC-LOC-V

Lāŋgòŋ māl rə Kāndī hǔ? mǎŋ
January next February coming do.FUT
February comes after January

O-LOC-S-V-AUX

jāmī cǎŋ lǎp lǐ
cat bed lying under
the cat is under the bed

S-O-V-LOC

hul gǎy hi əy lǎp
guest beside do not sit
do not sit beside the guest

O-LOC-V-AUX-V

tǎlùì gòŋ hi əy lôŋ
buffalo beside is not stand
do not stand beside a buffalo

O-LOC-V-AUX-V

əpày tê? gùŋlǐ kǎ mǔn
cash box inside is do
the money is inside the box

O-S-LOC-V-AUX

sāwāy klām hi əy būi
son far is not roam
Son, don't wander far away

S-LOC-V-AUX-V

āti kətəŋ lūk əy təy
water deep down not go
Don't go in the deep water

O-LOC-LOC-AUX-V

āti cəpui hay kām
water everywhere there is
there's water everywhere

hay in, higher up from the speaker
li
lk lower than the speaker
inside, within, into
inside
lənhay

3.8.2 Directionals

Like many languages this area, Kman has a rich set of directionals, terms which combine a demonstrative aspect with a precise placing in the landscape. As Kman topography is dominated by the contrast between the mountains and the plains, this involves both up/down contrasts, both relative and absolute.

here ārā
there

pīt ārā kam
book here is
The book is here

ārā hu.shù
here come.IMP
Come here!

shyāt āhāy kām
food there have
the food is there

āhi? they.shu
 there go.IMP
 Go there!

wanhay kə arət hu.shu
 there from here come.IMP
 Come here from there!

wanhi əy ləp
 there not sit
 Don't sit there

Tibet wan Teju ln.hay
 Tibet is Teju north

Tibet wan Teju pɔŋ.taw
 Tibet is Teju north

ki Tibet tut tay.miŋ
 I Tibet up go.FUT
 I will go north to Tibet

ki Tibet ha tay.miŋ
 I Tibet up go.FUT
 I will go up to Tibet

tut forward and up
 yut back and down

ha forward and up
 lk back and down

kī Dibrugarh lük tay.miŋ
 I Dibrugarh down go.FUT
 I will go down to Dibrugarh

əmək lùŋ taw.lam əmík klat mün
 East up sun rising do
 The sun rises in the East

tāw	dir.	North	up there in front. cf. <i>tūt</i> .
tūt	dir.	North	up there in front. cf. <i>tāw</i>
Yāw	dir.	South	and backwards
yūt	dir.	South	and backwards

əmək lùŋ n.p. East et. 'sun + source'. These are not used as

directionals, but a geographic expressions.

The sun rises in the East

ə̀mĭk sàm yŭ̀t lam ə̀mĭk ŋāp mŭn
West South/down sun setting do
The sun sets in the West

dir. West lit. 'sun + set'. *ə̀mĭk sàm yut.lam ə̀mĭk ŋap.mn* The sun sets in the West

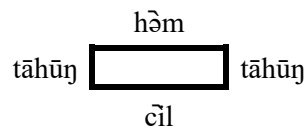
ali here below speaker
ara here level with speaker

ataw there straight ahead
ataw'li straight but far

ahay there above or to the left or right
ahay'li further away

North tāw, tŭt up there in front
South yāw, yŭ̀t back
East ə̀mĭk lŭŋ sun + source
West ə̀mĭk sàm sun + set

Agricultural field



left kə̀wà̀y
right kə̀yèn

ki bwi wan k.yèn hi.lam
I house is right towards

My house is on the right-hand side

k.wà̀y hi.lam thay.shu
left towards go.IMP

Turn to the left!

à̀yà̀w there

àyàw kam
there it is

àyàw lam hu.shu
that side towards come
Come from that side

ali kam
here it is

there
there East or West
there North
there South

3.9 Adverbs

3.9.1 Temporal adverbs

Kman has a wide range of temporal adverbs shown in Table 57;

Table 57. Kman temporal adverbs

English	Kman
after	mālhi?
afterwards, next time	mālgrè
again	lā? nèk
always	byò
annually, every year	lāw dàŋ
before	pāŋwəy
day after tomorrow	hāŋ ŋit rāwŋ
day before yesterday	bāy ŋit
at once	būi mēndà
last year	bāyləm
late	phlô?
long ago	rəŋwəy
never	shāwrè lāŋ
now, immediately	tô
often, regular [ly], always	byò
sometimes	lāhā?
this year	tōŋ gləm
today	tōŋit
tomorrow	tōrāwŋ
tonight	tōŋà
two days from now	hāŋit rāwŋ
yesterday	ŋāŋit
three days from now	kōŋ bāy rāwŋ
long ago	rəŋ wəy
late	rāŋ

after mal.hi
afterwards mal.rə

laŋgoŋ mal.rə kandi hu.maŋ
January after February come.FUT

again na

kat.na shu
Do it again

regular [ly], always byo *vi kɨ bwì rát byo hù.mn* he comes to my house
regularly *bus Roing hí byo tà.y.mn* the bus goes
to Roing regularly

before paŋway

Roing m.tay.nay paŋway bajar tay.miŋ
Roing NEG.go.NEG before bazaar go.AUX
I will go to market before going to Roing

day before yesterday bànyit

ki bànyit way Roing hay the ye.ə
I day before y. PAST Roing there go sg.

kin bànyit way Roing hay the ye?
We day before y. PAST Roing there go pl.

day after tomorrow hàŋnyìròŋ

never sh.way laŋ *vi Teju sh.way laŋ m.hu* He never comes to
Teju

lăw daŋ annually,
every year *vi Teju lăw ndaŋ hu.mn* He comes to Teju
annually

phlo late *vi tahu phlo pu* he arrived late

3.9.2 Adverbs of manner

lāndōŋ	adv.	suddenly	<i>wi lāndōŋ tnt.pu</i>	he suddenly arrived
tāʔməy	adv.	slowly	<i>wi taʔməy tay.mn</i>	He walks slowly
khərūt	adv.	strongly		
gūŋ	adv.	for all		
kāmbṛān	adv.	quickly, powerfully	<i>kāmbṛān thày shù</i>	Go quickly!
klā	adv.	quickly	<i>klā thāy shù</i>	Go quickly!
nīʔshà	adv.	silently, quietly	<i>nīʔshà ləp shù</i>	Sit quietly!
pāʔmōndà	adv.	unitedly		
phēphē	adv.	quickly	cf. klā. <i>phēphē thāy shù</i>	Go quickly!
tāʔrūŋ	adv.	describes leaving midway	<i>ākūŋ tāʔrūŋ sàmlà</i>	the farming was left off midway
kyūk	adv.	loudly		

kyūk nəkə kətəŋ mūn
 loudly do speak do
 He is speaking loudly

gūŋ kəŋ kət mīŋ
 wholly for do I
 I'll do it for all of us

pāʔmōndà tshūm būi yəy
 unitedly think to we
 Let us have the same opinion

kātsəp adv. in a disciplined way *kātsəp tà shòk kəsūt* to live in a disciplined way is good

əti khərūt táy.mn
 water strongly flows

púi generations counting back

one lifetime

also t.màn

3.10 Conjunctions and co-ordination

Table 58 shows the principal conjunctions found in Kman;

Table 58. Kman conjunctions

English	Kman	
and; with; as well; but; although; after; when	kə	
although	kəɾə	
and	kəɾə	
as soon as	phây	
because of	təphī	
but	tun	
either...or	māyɾə	
if	mənɾə	
if	màŋɾə	
if	tārə	
since	nəy	
but	sāwkə	
then	wənɾə kə	
when	lūk rə	
yet	toway	
xxx		
kə	and; with; as well	<i>bàjār tāynə kə hākùw shùp mìnŋ</i> I will go to market and buy rice.
kə	but; although	<i>wì' hū'mìnŋ dō nə kə mə hù'</i> he said he will come but he did not
kə	after; when	<i>tāy nə kə tàmblà māy</i> don't return back after you have left <i>māngīt nà y kə āydō</i> don't say when you don't know
kəmā nāy	although; even if;	<i>shān mākā kəmà nà y tàhù' hāmàng</i> you must come even if you have nothing to offer
kəɾə	and	<i>hù' nə kəɾə thāy kəlò</i> he came and went
lūk rə	when	<i>bùy tūt lūk rə àràng shù</i> wait when you have reached home
nəy	since	<i>nyù kəsūt sà nà y āy</i> 'yèy since you are a good boy don't quarrel
phây	as soon as,	<i>pām ngū' lūk phây hū' nà shù</i> come back as soon as you finish your work
sāwkə	but	<i>wì' hū' kə sàwkə mātāy nà</i> he came but didn't go back
təphī	because of	<i>nyū tàphī sēmīlā</i> it happened because of you
wənɾə kə	then	<i>bùy ung hāy thi' nāy wənɾə kə gyāl kəlò</i> he was hiding inside the house then he ran away

The following sentences exemplify their use;

although kəmā nāy

əwàŋ sō? kəmā nāy kī būi tay mùŋ
rain fall although I house go do
although it is raining, I'm going home

kəkrəy ŋə kəmā nāy kəsūt ŋə
poor I although happy I
I am happy though poor

If just two nouns are conjoined there is very often no word for ‘and’

kə̌ ‘and’ is used to join two clauses which report two separate events.

ki bājār tay.nay kə̌ sāngsìt shùp yəʔə
I bazaar go.PERF and fruit buy PERF
I went to the market and bought some fruit

wənrā kə̌ is used in completing lists

kwī jāmī wənrā kə̌ krē
dog, cat and chicken
dogs, cats and chickens

əwāysa kəmāysā wənrā kə̌ kəshiksā
man, woman and child
men, women and children

təphī ‘because’

ki iskūl the.ki təphī pūrī tsūn mūŋ
I school go.I because read can do
Because I went to school I can read

since nəy

nyū kəshik nəy əy yèy
you child since do not quarrel
since you are a child, do not quarrel

nyū kəsūt sà nəy kəsūt pūrī shū
you good boy since good study IMP
since you are a good boy you should study well

if mənṛə

jōʔ mənṛə dēm shù ngə̌
can if beat can PM
beat me if you can

nyū Tèjū tāy mənṛə shīn tī shùmp shù
you Tezu go if meat some buy IMP
If you go to Tezu, you should buy [me] some meat

māyrə ‘either...or’

kàʔyùm māyrə kāmphlūŋ lā shù
black or white bring IMP
Bring either the black or white

jāmī māyrə kwī
cat or dog
cats or dogs

mànrə 'if'

tāy mànrə thōy lùk
go if go IMP
go if you want to

if tārə

gārī mēthān tārə plà lām tāy mīŋ
vehicle not get if foot by go I
If I cannot get a vehicle, then I'll go by foot

kōtūwāt bwī hūlà phày kīklà
shaman house came then shout
the shaman came to the house and then began to chant

əwàŋ sōʔlà phày tēphàl phāl lā
rain fell then flood come
the rain fell, then came the flood

but tun

bus ranta tun ki Teju tayi māsən tha
bus miss but I Teju go cannot IMPF
I wanted to go to Tezu but I missed the bus

so sāwkə

bàjār tāy yèy sāwkə shīn shüp yèy
market go let us so meat buy let us
let us go to the market so that we can buy meat

3.11 Ideophones and expressives

3.11.1 Overview

Kman has iconic expressions which have either a sound-symbolic component, or are fixed collocations combining two nouns or adjectives. Ideophones divide into two main types, those where a single element is repeated without variation and those where the repetition is varied, usually by changing the vowels.

The number of paired alliterative ideophones is quite small, compared with African languages. Those so far identified are shown in Table 59;

Table 59. Kman directly repeated ideophones

Kman	Gloss
gl̥t̥gl̥t̥	sound of snoring
gl̥ŋgl̥āŋ	appearance of gleaming, twinkling (e.g. fish under water)
khriŋkhriŋ	describes sound of metals striking one another
rāwŋrāwŋ	cackling of fowl
rēŋrēŋ	sound of a metal wheel
jēŋjēŋ	in sequence

3.11.2 Animal noises

bṑ ̀ lowing (cow, mithun)

chāl bṑ m̀n
 mithun lowing does
 the mithun is lowing

3.11.3 Paired collocations

Table 60 shows a sample of Kman ideophones.

Table 60. Kman ideophones with vowel alternation

Kman	Gloss
bṑŋ bṑʔàŋ	describes a lazy person
brēt həlēt	describes removing s.t. with a twisting action (e.g. skin of an animal)
bū̀ibū̀i bṑbṑ	describes a clear view of round shapes
bū̀lū̀ bālā	describes a place covered with flat objects
bū̀ŋrū̀ŋ bū̀ŋrū̀ŋ	describes a bulging stomach
chhū̀ŋchhū̀ŋ chhàŋchhàŋ	describes running on a wet surface
dū̀ŋwū̀ŋ dāŋwāŋ	describes a space covered with multiple spherical or circular objects
dzāhā dzōhā	describes the shape of projecting horns (not of animals)
dzū̀wū̀ dzāwā	describes a shape like a skirt but in disarray
gīwī gāwā	describes zigzag, gentle bends
grū̀grū̀ gràgrà	describes the felling of trees
grūk grṑʔ	describes s.t. frightening
grū̀ŋgrū̀ŋ grāgrā	describes clear, pellucid water
glū̀glū̀ glōglō	describes water bubbling out of something
gū̀ŋlū̀ŋ gōŋlōŋ	describes a place where there are many hemispherical objects
gū̀ŋrū̀ŋ gōŋrōŋ	describes a place covered with thorny and curved objects
gū̀rū̀ gērē	describes walking awkwardly as if no-one else was on the road
gū̀rū̀ŋ gērēŋ	describes a moustache which turns up at the ends
hāwkrī hāwkrā	describes an unfit person
hālīŋ hālāŋ	describes s.o. inconsistent
hīhī hū̀hū̀	describes taste of hot chili
hrī hrāv	describes sizzling sound

Kman	Gloss
ī ī ā ā	describes a pain
jīrī jārā	describes rough-edged, sharp like broken rocks
jīrī jērē	describes s.t. similar but smaller than <i>jīrī jārā</i>
jūlū jālā	describes a shape like an axe
jūmū jāmām	describes an untidy beard
jūrū jārā	describes a place covered with sharp-bladed objects
kāmphlūŋ kāmhlīt	describes s.o. attractive
kāngyūi kàngyài	describes zigzag, gentle bends
kānmān kàndàn	describes a mature person
kāykī? kāykō?	describes zigzag with sharp bends
kāy sāy	describes s.t. very urgent
kūlūŋ kūlāŋ	describes a vista of bald heads
kāytī kāytyō	describes a curving pathway
kōrūw kōtāy	mixture
khīlīŋ khōlōŋ	describes s.t. rough, like a tree-bark
khṛūdū khṛēdē	describes a roughly tubular shape
khṛīŋkhṛīŋ khṛāŋkhṛāŋ	describes s.t. producing sound
kyāw nyà	politely
kyūk rəhàŋ	describes shouting
lōŋ sām	here and there (e.g. river)
līŋlīŋ lyāmlyàm	describes s.t. shining and smooth (s.t. polished)
mətōŋ məyòŋ	describes s.o. who is heavily made up and overdressed
pəlīn pəlyūn	describes s.t. slippery and difficult to catch hold of (e.g. fish)
pətīŋ pətyūŋ	describes skipping
pəchī pəchəl	describes bursting of stomach of rotten fish
phīlī phālā	describes fluttering paper or leaves
phlī? phlāŋ	rocky
phlūpphlūp phlāpphlāp	describes flapping sound of sandals etc.
phṛūbrū phṛēbrē	describes small scattered round objects
phūlū phālā	describes fluttering paper or leaves
phūnphūn phənphən	describes how s.t. shakes, such as a stick fixed in the river
phūiphūi phāŋphāŋ	describes swimming and slapping the water
phūtsū phātsā	describes a shape like a torn shirt
pīŋpīŋ pyōŋpyōŋ	describes the bobbing of heads when many people are jumping up and down
pīt chīnīt	describes a shy person
pūlit pūlet	describes s.t. slippery (as a path)
sīsī məlməl	describes a child who is hyperactive
shīshī lùlù	describes a s.o. telling s.t. hurriedly
shīshī shāŋshāŋ	describes a loud noise
shūŋ wāŋ	tasty
thūm s ^ŋ	risking life, working very hard
tīlī tūlū	describes small round things
thīŋthīŋ thēŋthēŋ	sound of two pebbles striking together
tītshī tyōtshō	describes worn out bags seen from the back
tīŋgīŋ tūŋgūŋ	describes how an old person is bent
tūŋgīŋ tūŋgāŋ	describes s.t. crescent-shaped
tūhrū tyōhrō	describes s.t. conical

Kman	Gloss
t̄ŋl̄ŋ t̄ŋl̄ŋ	describes a place where there are many spherical objects
t̄ŋl̄ŋ t̄aml̄am	describes conical things
tyū phr̄è, tyù phr̄è	describes s.t. important
tyūr̄ū tyōr̄ō	describes a plain scattered with small boulders
w̄īw̄ī w̄ēw̄ē	describes the noise of a buzzing mosquito

It is notable that the tone is flat and mid in most ideophones. The major exceptions are usually mid-low, although there are idiosyncratic tones. *phūnphūn phànphàn* being the only exception recorded until now. As can be seen from *jīrī jārā* and *jīrī jērē*, Kman has limited size symbolism in relation to vowel quality, with the central vowel marking larger size. However, this is not systematic in the language.

Placing of ideophones within the clause is relatively free. In this example, the ideophone is in clause-final position.

ənzàw bl̄ŋ wan k̄ayk̄ī k̄ayk̄ō
 mountain road is zigzag
 The mountain road zigzags

Whereas it is fronted in;

dzəh̄ə dzōh̄ā krint taw
 like a horn laugh do
 They are laughing and their lips project outwards

But *sa t̄ŋl̄ŋ t̄aml̄am* means a healthy child

b̄ŋr̄ŋ b̄ŋr̄ŋ describes a bulging stomach

tsòng k̄əpr̄ā b̄ŋr̄ŋ b̄ŋr̄ŋ
 person wealthy bulging stomach
 wealthy people have bulging stomachs

Apart from alliterative ideophones, Kman has what are called here paired collocations. Two words are put together which have either some phonetic similarity or form a rhythmic pattern. These are very characteristic of SE Asian languages, and Idu also has many of these. A sample of those identified are shown in Table 61;

Table 61. Kman paired collocations

Kman	Components	Semantics
kəy səy	very urgently	
grūk gròʔ	frightening	
kyāw nyā	politely	
shūŋ wāŋ	spicy	
phlīʔ phlàn	rocky	upright + flat
lōŋ sām	here and there (e.g. river)	source + end
kāmphlūŋ kāmphlīt		white + bright
thūm sᶑī	risking life, working very hard	death + death
kārūw kətày	mixture	small + big
tyū phrᶑ, tyū phrᶑ	serious	
blòŋ kətòŋ	connections, communications	road + bridge

Example sentences;

kārūw nəy kətày nəy la shù
 small both big both bring IMP
 bring both big and small

thūm sᶑī thèy kī
 risk life go I
 I risked my life

blòŋ kətòŋ cìpuì kəsūt
 communications all good
 communications are working well

ki Itanagar hay gari lən thəy ki

I went to Itanagar by car

3.12 Interjections

Kman has a small number of interjections or exclamations, words or short expressions which represent coherent utterances in themselves. The most important and these are

am yes
 may no

Others include;

Kaymay! expression of worry or surprise

As in;

Kaymay! gārī brāl kəlo
 Oh! vehicle fall happen
 Oh! The car has crashed

Kaymay! Ki amay hula
Well! My sister has come

Some interjections are standalone, like mild swearing and do not require a sentence context.

Yakat nay!
Shwuy yo də!

both express annoyance, for example if you stumble in the road

4. Syntax

4.1 Word order

Kman has remarkably flexible word order for a language with such limited morphology. It is likely the constantly changing tones provide hearers with clues as to the intention of the speaker. The basic constituent order is SOV.

kātūwāt bǔi hū.là
shaman house come.PERF
a shaman came to the house

However, many other word orders are possible. As is common in this area, OV structures arise from deletion of initial pronouns. The pronoun is then re-inserted in sentence final position.

Consider the following sentence with two arguments;

chāl tǎn thān hi? mǎndōng bǎntōng kī
mithun to get then gong mortgage I
I mortgaged a gong for a mithun

Bound morphology follows the verb, except in the case of negation;

But qualification of the verb, especially in adverbs of manner, is typically fronted in the sentence;

pā? mǎndà tshūm bǔi yèy
unitedly think we
Let us have the same opinion

4.2 Noun phrase

4.2.1 Benefactive/dative

Benefactives in Kman are marked by the independent particle *kàŋ*, which take part in an unusual syntactic structure;

kī kàng ǝti lā shù
I for water bring IMP
Bring water for me

i.e. DAT-BEN-O-V-AUX

dative pronoun

kīwì? me, to me

4.3 Negation

4.3.1 Verbs

Verbal negation is marked by the prefix *m(V)-*, where V is an underspecified vowel in harmony with the vowel of the verb stem. In a simple declarative sentence, negation is marked by a *ma* preceding the verb. This applies to first and third persons. For example;

ki ma.tay yuŋ I do not go
 kicin ma.tay hək We two do not go
 kin ma.tay yey We all do not go

vi ma.tay he does not go
 uicin ma.tay niŋ they two do not go
 uin ma.tay taw they all do not go

bwì guŋhay tsoŋ m.ʃok
 house in man NEG.be
 There is no man in the house

However, for second persons, the pattern is quite different. The negative imperative marker, *ay*, precedes the verb stem.

nyû ay thay you sg. do not go
 nyû cin ay thay na you two do not go
 nyû nin ay thay niŋ you all do not go

Negative imperative

The negative imperative is marked by a clitic, *āy*, preceding the verb;

āy byām chākīt mǔn
 do not touch tickling do
 do not touch, it tickles

āy tay
 do not go
 Do not go!

lay āy kətaŋ
 word do not speaking
 Don't speak a word!

phun āy nu
 door do not shutting

4.4 The verb phrase

4.4.1 Tense aspect systems

4.4.1.1 Overview

kəhaw ti.klo
 thief escape
 the thief escaped

əsày miŋ
 get up FUT
 [I] will get up

4.4.1.2 Present

Table 62 shows the paradigm of auxiliaries marking present continuous as well as the stem changes in the verb;

Table 62. Paradigm of auxiliaries marking present continuous

Auxiliary	Go	Kman	Gloss
mùŋg	təy	kì táy mùŋg	I am going
hək	tém	kīcīn tém hək	We two are going
məy	təy	kīn təy məy	We all are going
mùn	təy	nyù təy mùn	you sg. are going
nək	təy	nyùcīn təy nək	you two are going
məy	təy	nyùnùŋ təy məy	you pl. are going
mùn	təy	wì? təy mùn	he is going
mənīŋ	təy	wìcīn təy mənīŋ	they two are going
also			
nìng	tēm	wìcīn tēm nìng	they two are going
mətāw	təy	wìn təy mətāw	they all are going
also			
tāw	tém	wīn tém tāw	they all are going

ha tapē tha.de
 rice ? eat.PCONT

I am eating rice

gārī rānt tà, mōŋgrūl kət là
 vehicle x x upset doing PERF
 I missed the vehicle, so I am upset

4.4.1.3 Future

Future is usually marked by a clause-final auxiliary, allomorphs of *mVN* in most persons. Table 65 shows the paradigm as it is expressed with the main verb ‘go’. In the first person, the use of *chā* indicates to the hearer the implicit pronoun

kì shāt chā mǐng
I food eating do.FUT
I will eat food

nyù shāt chāy mǎng
you sg. food eating do.FUT
you sg. will eat food

wì? shāt chā mǎng
he food eating do.FUT
he will eat food

kwì shát chā mǎng
dog food eating does.FUT
the dog will eat food

but;

kwī shāt chā mǎng
dog food eating does.FUT
he/she will eat dog food

kīchìn shāt chā mǎhōk
we two food eating do.FUT
we two will eat food

kīn shāt chā mǎy
we food eating do.FUT
we all will eat food

nyùchìn shāt shā shùnōk
you two food eating do.FUT
you two will eat food

nyùnìng shāt shā shùnīng
you all food eating do.FUT
you pl. will eat food

wīchìn shāt chā mǎnīng
they two food eating do.FUT
they two will eat food

wìn shāt chā mǎng.tāw
they food eating do.FUT
they will eat food

tāwng mīng
drink 1PS.FUT
I will drink

nyū thāwng shū
you sg. drink 2PS.FUT
you sg. will drink

he will drink

kīn tāwng māy
we drink 1PP.FUT
we will drink

you two

nyū nìng thāwng shī
you pl. drink 2PP.FUT
you all will drink

wìn tāwng mǎng tāw
they drink 3PP.FUT
they will drink

However, for the subset of verbs which show consonant-initial mutation (), future is already indicated.

nyū shāt shā shyū
you sg. food eating FUT
you sg. will eat food

ha tapē tha ne
rice ? eat FUT
I will eat rice

4.4.1.4 Imperfective

Kman does not mark the imperfective in a manner distinct from perfective. Sentences in the imperfect in English often translate with the Kman perfective marker, là;

blòng tō? là hi? blà lē
road be blocked PERF ? cancel IMPF
we cancelled [our journey] as the road was blocked.

nyu bajar hi? tøy mün rat nyu miro? phrut là
I market there go do IMP you friend meet PERF
when you sg. were going to the market you met your friend

4.4.1.5 Perfective

The common perfective marker is *lā/là*, placed after the main verb. Examples;

kō nāt khrāw lā
 person sick recover PERF
 the sick person has recovered

hāmbyūng phyàwk kī rē tāāl nā lā
 banana ? I after regrow cut PERF
 the banana has regrown again after I cut it

shāt wèn mūng chèpù y thyā lā
 food which everyone everyone give PERF
 food has been given to everyone

rāk kō thāl wān brāp là
 bone be fractured that heal PERF
 that fractured bone has healed

kī bājār hī? tēy mūng rāt kī mīrò? phrūt là
 I market there going do IMP I friend meet PERF
 when I was going to the market I met [my] friend

However, with the irregular verbs, the perfective markers have rich paradigms, cross-referenced to the pronoun. Table 63 shows the paradigm for the verb ‘to go’;

Table 63. Perfective markers for ‘to go’

Number	Person	Perfective
Single	First	yəʔ ³
	Second	cəyā
	Third	yə
Dual	First	yəhəʔ
	Second	chəkəkè nèk
	Third	əyè, yə̀nìng
Plural	First	yəʔ
	Second	chəyəʔ
	Third	yə, yə̀tāv

Exemplified in sentences;

kì thé yəʔ³
 I go PERF
 I went

nyù thé cəyā
 you sg. go PERF
 you sg. went

wì thé yà
he go PERF
he went

kìcìn thé yàhó?
we two go PERF
we two went

nyùchìn thē chəkəkə nək
you two go PERF
you two went

wìchìn thē àyà
they two go PERF
they two went

Also;

wìchìn thē yānìng
they two go PERF
they two went

kīn thē yà?
we go PERF
we [all] went

nyùnìṅ thē chàyà?
you pl. go PERF
you pl. went

wìn thèō yà
they all go PERF
they went

Also;

wìn thē yǎtàw
they all go PERF
they pl. went

4.4.1.6 Pluperfect

The pluperfect marker is *lùnk*;

kī thāy lùnk māl phày búi hōy kī kəmày nāt là
I go PLU after as soon as home there I wife sick PERF
I had already left home when my wife fell sick

4.4.2 Equatives

tsòng cháwk mǔn
person dwell do.3PS
somebody is there

tsòng cháwnk tāw
person dwell do.3PP
some people are there

Also for animals

For inanimates the verb kà(m) is used

pīt kà mǔn
book is do.3PS
a book is there

pīt kàm tàw
book are do.3PS
books are there

(k)ə.khā phū
let.exist IMP
let it be (there)

kə.kət phū
let.do IMP
let him do [it]

kə.kət phū.nìng
let.do IMP.they
let those two do [it]

kə.kət nīng
let.do they
let those two do [it]

kə.kət phū.tàw
let.do IMP.they
let them do [it]

kə.kət tāw
let.do they
let them do [it]

The k is obligatory in the above, but optional with;

(k)ə.khā phū
existing IMP
let it be (there)

4.4.3 Conditionals/subjunctive

Conditional sentences are marked by one of several conditional markers, all containing the element *rə*.

Table 64. Kman conditional markers

Kman	Approximate gloss
mũn rə	if
tārə	when
rə, rə	if
māyrə	if
nəy	since
kəmə nəy	although; even if; though

mũn rə

kā mũn rə phī shù
 there is if give IMP
 give it to me if there is some

məhà tūn mũn rə chīt shū
 fine need if penalise IMP
 if you have a good reason then penalise him

tārə

mākā tārə kì.wi' khrāy shū
 NEG.be present if I.ACC tell IMP
 tell me when it is finished

rə

mākā rə tō kùngsày kàt
 NEG.be present if to deny ?
 if there isn't any, tell him no

məndəm rə məkhrā
 NEG.remember if NEG.worry
 if you don't remember, don't worry

māyrə

wən māyrə mətùn
 that if NEG.wanting
 if it is not what I want, I don't require it

Roing māyrə Tezu tāy mìnġ
 Roing if Tezu going do
 if I don't go to Roing then I will go to Tezu

nəy since

nyù kāsūt sà này āy ’yèy
you good child since NEG quarrelling
since you are a good boy don’t quarrel

kə after; when

māngīt này kə āydō
NEG.know when if not.say
don’t say s.t. when you don’t know [about it]

kāmā nāy although; even if; though

shān mākā kəmè này tà hù’ hāmàng
? NEG.be present even if to come ?
you must come even if you have nothing to offer

4.4.4 Reported speech

Reported speech is introduced by mākət ‘that’;

nyū dòy mākət wī? bājār hī? tāy màng
you tell that he market there go will
you were saying that he will be going to the market

5. Specialised language registers

5.1 General

A particular feature of Kman, and indeed all the three Mishmi groups is the use of registers, or parallel languages, in specialised contexts. These include a language used by hunters while engaged in hunting, a language used by shamans reciting during rituals and a poetic vocabulary. All of these are sufficiently different from everyday language, as not to be comprehensible to someone who is unfamiliar with them. Hunting and poetic language are substitution languages, whereby ordinary lexemes are replaced by new and unfamiliar items, but the syntax and morphology is preserved. Shaman’s language is more complex, since it includes elaborate periphrastic expressions, and fixed expressions which do not always conform to ordinary usage. These registers are summarised in Table 65;

Table 65. Registers of Kman

Register	Characteristics
Hunters	Spoken during hunting. Names of most animals and some common lexical items substituted either by periphrastic expressions or lexemes of unknown origin. Mostly unknown to speakers who are not hunters.
Poetic	Lexical substitution of common words by periphrastic expressions or lexemes of unknown origin. Used in song texts and rhetorical discourse. Known to almost all speakers, though understanding varies.
Shaman	Shamans are required to recite lengthy chants in a language generally not understood by everyday speakers. Common lexemes replaced by complex expressions, but also unusual syntax. Some replacement lexemes understood by mature adults.
Requests	When a shaman is requested to attend for a ceremony, requests, or briefings are made in the form of Rǎ, formulae incorporating a specific register. At the end of the ceremony, the shaman returns with əwət, the response from the rite

It seems that none of the languages are ‘secret’ in the sense that speakers are unwilling to discuss them. However, knowledge is extremely patchy and it is clear that further research is required to define their status more exactly. If register is a ‘variety of a language used for a particular purpose or in a particular social setting’ then what happens in Mishmi goes rather beyond this. Certainly in terms of comprehensibility, the language of hunters and shamans are distinct languages.

5.2 Hunters’ language

The use of a specialised language spoken by hunters while engaged in the hunt was first reported in Sun (1999). Sun only provides a short table of examples of hunters’ terms and interestingly, no animal names, which are at the core of this practice. Although all the hunters’ names were eventually etymologised, even the components of their names are sometimes rather obscure and arcane words, only known to older people. Table 66 shows the names of animals in the hunting register;

Table 66. Kman animal names in hunting register

English	Kman	Hunters’	Comment
Mammals			
male musk deer	tə̀lā	bə̀p	
female musk deer	tə̀lā	shāw	
takin	khyām	brīmā kāyōŋ	
goral	sāl	brê	
serow	rāʔāy	sék kálēŋ	
bear	kūm	hēm wə̀rtōŋ	
deer	pāhì	hī tàmbroŋ	
wild pig	t̄s̄`m	cùl kə̀nūŋ	
monkey I	ə̀mùk	d.hyùcī d.hyū ŋān	
monkey II	ə̀mùk	mə̀hūì	
elephant	m̄n.yōŋ	sək tōyōŋ	
Birds			
??	tənəm	tārp̄hùy	
red tail	məkòŋ	kāmphiyik	
??	mə̀ŋāy	kāmphya?	
?	ʃə̀ki	dʒīl khra?	
?	mūŋ khri	mə̀ʔām	
	wārək	mərək	

Table 67 shows miscellaneous terms in hunting register;

Table 67. Kman miscellaneous terms in hunting register

English	Kman	Hunters' register	Comment
Food and drink items			
food	shyàt	mūk k ^h wī (monkey faeces)	mūk k ^h wī h` .yà mīŋ I will eat N. shyàt cà mīŋ
wild spice found in high places like chili but not hot	Shyūtō? biŋfī	kāsāy	biŋfī in isolation
chili	biŋfī	kāsāy	
garlic	təmà?	mā?kāw	
salt	təmīn	blāy k` .pà	
ginger	dī?iŋ	yēlkā	
rice	hākù	dāp kàmbī?	
maize	bō	kāwyūŋ	
millet	d.rōò	kāŋgrāw	
meat	s ^h in	l`m	l`m zúl mīŋ I will eat meat N. s ^h in thàm mi`iŋ
wine, beer	s ^h i	sh ^h ù kàmbòŋ	
Hunting			
hunters' camp	tā?pāwŋ	lāmp ^h òk	
gun	sīŋshūl	khūŋzè?	
fire gun!	kāpshū	zē?shù	
trap	tāŋgàm	tāsīl	
trap	kāsàwŋ	tāsīl	
trap	dyāw	tāsīl	
weapon	tshûn	rōsī rōdā	
Weather and environment			
rain	ōwàŋ	rēhàm	rēhàm krāl m`n It is raining N. òwàŋ sō? m`n
snow	sō?	khram khàw	
star	ŋāfī	yāwkràŋ	
cloudy	kàmày b`m m`n	rùwùn sūk m`n	i.e. it is cloudy
water	ōti	rēhàm	
sun	ēmik	lētūt	
lake	ts ^h āw	tāmbòŋ	
mountain	āndzàw	brók t` .wā	
stone	lāwŋ	mōlēt	
firewood	sāgn = sàŋ	phèn [phèdn]	
light fire	māy phrāl	kàmày tōpùn	
dao	sūt	blāy	tongue
stone used for sharpening dao	t` .mà	blāy dèp	tongue + flat

English	Kman	Hunters' register	Comment
deity	Shyütō?	Kōnàŋ, Shūmāy	
latrine	təkhə	rāʔāy	word for serow
I will drink water	əti tāwŋ	rəhəm təpyīl mīŋ	
urine	mīŋ təs ^h it	rəhəm tənʃi	rəhəm ʃi mīŋ I want to urinate təs ^h it dīn mī ^h ŋ/mīŋ
fish	āŋā	sāmbliŋ	
cloth	bāŋ <i>or</i> gūl	glūp	
trivet, stone	pāsū	təpəl	
singing and dancing	tāmāy tāndzāy	prāw tənʃ ^h əm	
dream	kāmùŋ	mōlām	
stumble	dīl	gōlòŋ/ khrāmzəm	
utensil	kēcùŋ	məkàw	
to smoke	tāmbūŋ	sāmbūl	
female	kəmàysā	b ^h .l.māy	
male	əwāysà	b ^h .l.sā	
old man	kənàŋ	b ^h .l.nāŋ	
spoon	bāshùt	mūk māy	
hair	shyām	sāwŋ mūl	
tobacco pipe	tāmbyā kēcùŋ	āmūk dīn (testes of monkey)	<i>āmūk dīn khəp mīŋ</i> I want to smoke N. <i>tāmbyā búŋ mīŋ</i>
dog	kwī	mīŋ gwī shyā lūŋ	

5.3 Shamanic language

Shaman's chants are easy to record but complex to transcribe. The typical chant may last for many hours, performed by the bed of a sick person, and since the chants are learnt, not even the shaman may be able to gloss every line. Table 68 shows a sample of the language of the shamans, with the usual and shamanic forms contrasted. The examples show the shamanic terms in paired utterances, most of which are almost identical except for the paired words.

Table 68. Shamanic vocabulary

Gloss	Usual	Shamanic	Examples
generation (timeline)	tsōŋ tùmààn	əyì tùmààn	
soul	hāŋ	hāŋ kùw	<i>hāŋ kùw tālānt mày</i> soul should not be disturbed
bad event	məphān	bāt bōŋ	
origin (place)	tùl	hənūy //hərēŋ	<i>hənūy tūt hāyām kàyùw</i> <i>hərēŋ tūt hāyām kàyùw</i> do not destroy the source of power
lifespan	khrəp	khrəp // bòn	<i>khrəp kətùn tākə mày</i> <i>bòn kətùn tākə mày</i> life should not be shortened
becoming wealthy	kəprà	chūt thūrī	<i>chūt phìshù</i> <i>thūrī phìshū</i> bring fortune in business
in a disguised form	hələk	lək səlày	<i>lək səlày əykət</i> do not appear in a disguised form

Gloss	Usual	Shamanic	Examples
mirage, illusion, vision	mān-tshāl	mīk zēm, ngàl zèm	<i>mīk zēm tākà' mày</i> <i>ngāl zēm tākà' mày</i> do not confuse with a vision
sky	nyâw	nyūrī āmbāwng	
bribery	tāksùw	kūngphā' dūwphàlà, tāksūw mām̀b̀p	<i>kūngphā' tã' kãyũw</i> <i>dũphàlà tã' kãyũw</i> do not take bribe
problems, obstacles	mūlù, mūng- lùw	mèpùk mūlù	
complaint	kāpùw	kāpùw kàdũ	
wet, marshy land	dòlāũ	dòlāũ tũpplāng	<i>dòlāũ kāshā tāmphr̀nt mày</i> <i>tũpplāng kāshā tāmphr̀nt mày</i> to not encounter with marsh land spirit
war	māhà	mèshùw māhà	<i>mèshùw māhà tàràw mày</i> not to engage in wars
soul	hāng	hāng kũw	
trade, business, commerce	sōng	sōng lāy	
handcuff	lũwà	kh̄rũ lũwà	
weapon	tshũn	tshũn ẽwāt	Khūngzē' (hunter's language)
food	shāt	tān tshō'// màyphyìn	<i>tāntshō' kētũn tāngkà mày</i> <i>màyphyìn kētũn tāngkà mày</i> there should be abundant food
imposing penalty	tānchit	tānchit tãpãp	
super clan	Shīrũw	tshõ-mèrẽ	under Shiruw clans like Kri, Krong, Chaitom, Tawsik, Samba etc comes.
ancestral hero	Dērũwkùw	Pong Dērũwkùw	giant man who came with a big hammer from coastal area and flatten the land.
living place	hèdyò	hèdyò tãwà	
flower (NEG)	phān	phān tãràw'	<i>phān tàràw tàràw' mày</i> not to meet with accident
shining things (NEG)	sūngmũn	māglũng màglẽ	<i>māglũng hĩ' tãthõ mày</i> <i>māglẽ hĩ' tãlẽ mày</i> not to be attracted to shining things
contribution	mākh̄r̀n	mākh̄r̀n m̀hò'	
retribution	ẽsùw	ẽsùw-ẽnà'	<i>ẽsùw tākè' mày-ẽnà tākè' mày</i> not to revisit with a trouble
Verbs			
to spoil	tānchõng	tānchõng tāmphõng	
falling	kh̄lũu	bāng tà' mà	<i>bāng tà' mà tãngkh̄lim mày</i> not to cause to fall
Illness			
illness	ngây	ngây-kèshà	(on killing tabooed animal) <i>ngây tãmb̄lãw mày</i>

Gloss	Usual	Shamanic	Examples
			<i>káshá tāmblāw mày</i> not to get trapped with tabooed animals
mental illness/ depression	tshūm gùng hōy tānàt	būm thènà	<i>būm tākē mày</i> <i>thóná tākē mày</i> not to have depression
madness, mental illness	prâp	prâp kândàt	<i>prap kandat takē' mày</i> not to be inflicted with mental illness
madness	prâp	tshāy rāmbày	<i>tshāy rāmbày tākē' mày</i> not to cause madness
stomach ache	dāk sày	khṛūt pàtsà	<i>khṛūt pātsā tāmphrùnt mày</i> must not encounter with spirit that cause stomach ache
Death			
death house	krēm	khṛūw lāmjàw	<i>khṛūw tāngkhàn may</i> <i>lāmjàw tāngkhān mày</i> keep away from from <i>krēm</i>
tomb	krēm	krēm-kùlèp	<i>krēm tānthō mày</i> <i>kùlèp tānthō mày</i> do not watch at the graveside
fresh tomb	krēm hā-ngày	krēm-kùlèp hā-ngày	denotes the approaching death of somebody very soon.
death due to accident	thānggī	àsà' // thānggī	<i>àsà' tārāw' mày</i> <i>thānggī tārāw' mày</i> not to meet with an accident
Spirit attack			
harming s.o with shamanic power	kèruy	kèruy // kèshà	<i>kèruy tārāw' mày</i> <i>kèshà tārāw' mày</i> not to be harmed by shamanic power.
observation of taboo due to animosity prospective enemy	Tünəm ît	Tünəm Tūrui kləm kândà	people don't eat and drink in an enemy's house <i>kləm pūn mūn thəl</i> <i>kândà pūn mūn thəl</i>
poisoning (by non-shaman)	kēchāl	tāchāl // tápùng	those who are preparing attacks <i>tāchāl tāmphrùt mày</i> <i>tāpūng tāmphrùt mày</i> not to be poisoned
spiritual attacks by the Meyors	Təlòng kōrūy	prāwk mūnà təlōng mūnà	<i>prāwk mūnà tārāw' mày</i> <i>təlōng mūnà tārāw' mày</i> not to be under evil attack from Meyors.
1. inaction by friend causing death 2. inaction by Bro' spirit from being attacked	kūw thà'	kūw thā' hā gāl	<i>kūw tānthā' mày hā tànggàl mày</i> protection from friendly attacks

Gloss	Usual	Shamanic	Examples
bad intention	kēchòng	phāw kēsày	<i>phāw mǔn thəl</i> <i>kāsāy mǔn thəl</i> having evil eyes
preparing to attack	tshùn	àjìng āmù	<i>àjìng pūn mǔn</i> <i>àmù pūn mǔn</i> preparing to attack
bad intention (referring to bile)	mēt	mēt kèwà	<i>mēt kànùng kēwā kànùng tāmphrunt</i> <i>mày</i> keep away form poisonous snake
bad intention (referring to moss)	māwàn	kùt māwàn	<i>kūt kànùng-màwàn kànùng tāmphrunt</i> <i>mày</i> keep away from mountain spirit. (spirit who uses moss as his hat). ₂
offering parts of the animal	zèn	zèn hōnì	<i>zèn lūn-hànì lūn</i> <i>chūt àchày mǔng, thūrī àchày mǔng</i> in lieu of this offerings, i pray for your blessings
Good and evil			
evil	māphān	mūtyāng-mūshyā	<i>mūtyāng taraw' may</i> <i>mūshyā taraw' may</i> not to invite evil
evil	māsày	māsày mēthō'	(following inappropriate act like knocking against a tripod)
source of good fortune	āshūw àphò' tùl	hōnūy hārēng	<i>hōnūy tārāy mày hārēng tārāy mày</i> not to affect good fortunes
good luck	kòpāt	bāt bòng	<i>bāt bòng phī shū</i> shower good luck
good luck, good fortune	māmnūw	māmnùw- māmhyùl	<i>māmnùw phīshū</i> <i>māmhyùl phīshù</i> give luck
good fortune	tān thān kòpāt	sē-lā	
good fortune; blessings		tàhyü-ōmà	<i>tàhū phīshù òmà phīshù</i> shower blessings
blessings with wealth	tānthān kòpāt	dùng phāl	<i>dùng phāl phīshù</i> bless with wealth
prosperity	tsāwng kòpāt	sōy lā	<i>sōy phīshū lā phīshū</i> bless with wealth
Household			
town	bājār	shūrī-rèyǎ	
pasture	thāt	thāwng phà	<i>thāwng kòpāt phā kòpāt</i> give luck of animals
granary	kētəm	kètəm prō'ngà	<i>kètəm phlāng prō'ngà phlāng</i> granary be full
sacred area in house	chènggrèng	chènggrèng- wālùng	during Kasək ritual kətuwat sit in the Chènggrèng area.
compound	lōngmà	tùy lōngmà	

Gloss	Usual	Shamanic	Examples
fire (traditional torch)	māytūt	māytūt mūngrà	
Spirits, deities			
dwarf spirit in the forest	sūn	sūn pā-tsā	
evil spirit	wāchīk	mīwūk māndān	
witch	wāchīk	bōshyù-wāchīk	<i>bōshyū tārāw' mày</i> <i>wāchīk tārāw' mày</i> not to be attacked by witch
Goddess Mətay's youngest sister, who lives in faraway place	Dūmày Gīmày	āpāwng Mətày	This Mətay desired everyone to send her weaving tools (<i>tho' tshul, ənawng təhal</i> etc). Hence, whoever does this ritual has to offer these items. Note: Ritual pig (<i>əpawng lūy'</i>) has to be bound with lace of loincloth (<i>lapo</i>) over teeth of the pig. This ritual, basically is death ceremony conducted for all the deceased under the family tree. There is yet another ritual called <i>əpawng Kəsəl</i> . A person having trouble with this deity feels thirsty all the time.
Goddess Mətay's middle sister	Pōmày Sūkrəlmày	Chənggrəng Mətày	This ritual (Chənggrəng) is prosperity ritual. All the household deities (Bro') are prayed together apart from Chənggrəng ritual.
Goddess Mətay's eldest sister	Shārōmày Mārāmày	Tànō Mətày	During this ritual, only household deities (Bro') is assembled together and offered prayers.
Animals			
takin	khyəm	ka'yong	<i>khyəm kā'yōng phīshù</i> give takin
fowl	krē əpây	tūt-rəsing dā krày pāo krày	
hen	krē tàyùl	phāw lèchù	
sow	lūy'klòng	hāy lāmày	
boar	lūy' rəhəl	hūl-mùrùng	
bull	məntshùw ngəlōng	tūng kūnəm lūpā kūnəm	<i>yəl tàmbòng kàpət nài</i> you plough field
cow	məntshùw nàw	mənùl tsàwng mūntshām tsàwng	
mithun	chāl	shūng mīkùì hāmīng khrūngsà	mithun came from Adi community; <i>shō' thàwng Pāndā thàwng</i>
Tibetan ox	Tālōng məntshùw	grēm chūlà	
buffalo	tālùi	brōmīng chūt bròtò chùt	

5.4 Poetic language

Unlike the language of hunters, the etymologies of the poetic vocabulary are not obvious to speakers of everyday language.

5.5 Mediation register

This is called *pharay kthay* (mediate + talk). Also used for marriage settlements, disputes, murder discussions. No specific expressions, not unusual language.

5.7 Curses

Cursing language is called *athap* and mixes in elements of shaman language. Many of the words are quite different from the everyday speech register, but do not constitute a regular substitution, as in hunters' language.

kamaw g.lat hi phyil cilon
ghost village there go he/she
Go to Hell!

phyil alternative word for go
cilon alternative 3rd person pronoun

t.pow kə k.tham ra
tiger that eat let
Let a tiger eat you!

ra alternative word

shyāt kə tawk shyā.shu
food that be poisoned you.IMP
May your food be poisoned!

shyā alternative pronoun

5.8 Babytalk register

All languages probably have a few words used by parents when speaking to infants, usually reduplicated and avoiding complex consonants. However, Kman has quite a significant number of these words, as shown in Table 69. While some forms are clearly versions of their normal counterparts, others seem to bear no relationship to them.

Table 69. Kman babytalk register

Gloss	Kman	Babytalk
Baby	sā	ŋǎ?
Beat	dλm	mámá?
YBr to EBr	cāpmī	ācīp
Si to Ebr	kyōk	āshū
Don't go near the fire	kāy	kikí?
Dirty	kásò?	ā?
Don't do it!	áy.kət	tyátyá?
Eat	shyā	hǎm
Father	pāy	pāpā
Food	shyāt	cácá
Meat	shīn	cicík
Mother	nāw	nūnū
Parent	nāw pāy	nūnū pāpā
Sister (by a older female)	cūpmāy	māmāy
Sleep	ŋí	shishínk
Stand	lōŋ	dyaŋ
Sweet	tīm	títimp
Urine	tāshīt	shīshī
Walk	tāy	tāytáy
Water	āti	bū

5.9 Moral teachings to children

njal toŋ nayrə cāmbā lo?.mn.da
 spittle spit when tapeworm lick
 When we spit at s.o. a tapeworm will lick [our face]
 i.e. don't speak badly of others or it will rebound on you

The idea is that the face will go white [with tapeworm spittle] when you badmouth others

cahaŋ ne lap nayrə məshu məha plaŋ.mün.də
 space between open legs ? sit when war overflow.PRES.
 If you sit with your legs apart around the hearth, there'll be war
 If you take up too much space by the fire then you cause friction

Roughly, show consideration to others

bloŋ hi tāshīt din nayrə may hut pui.mn.də
 road in urine urinate when smoke chase.PRES
 If you urinate in the road, then the smoke will follow you
 ? sense

t.khay ŋən taw thoŋ nayrə iŋ pradn.mn.də
 faeces dump see when ear tear open
 If you see s.o. defecating, your ear will tear
 ? sense

shyāt praw bral nayrə paʔpaw plaŋ.mn.də
food piece scatter when eating when knee become stiff.PRES
If you scatter pieces of food when eating, your knees will become stiff
? sense

k.shik ət̪i paŋ thaŋ nayrə T.loŋ kwi sak.mn.də
junior water first drink when Meyor dog bite
If a junior person drinks water first then a Meyor dog will bite [them]
? sense

əkhlət paŋ hi thaŋthit may
senior front in NEG.walk NEG
Don't walk across the path of seniors

You must always walk around them

əkhlət vi rak tanam may
senior he hand lay down NEG
Don't lay your hand on an older person

tsoŋ vi taŋgal may
person he step over NEG
Don't step over s.o. [lying on the ground]

kyok samay cok nayrə duʔduʔmn.da
brother sister live together when attract insects
If a brother and sister live together it will become infected
i.e. warning against incest

References

- Boro, A. 1978. *Miju dictionary*. Shillong: Research Secretariat.
- Brown, N. 1837. Comparison of Indo-Chinese Languages. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 6: 1023-1038.
- Brown, N. 1850. Aborigines of the North East Frontier. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 19: 309-316.
- Campbell, G. 1874. *Specimens of Languages of India: Including Those of the Aboriginal Tribes of Bengal, the Central Provinces, and the Eastern Frontier*. Calcutta: Printed at the Bengal secretariat Press.
- Dalton, E.J.T. 1872. *Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal*. Calcutta: Office of the Superintendent of government printing.
- Dutta, D.K. 2012. *The Miju-Mishmis of Arunachal Pradesh*. Itanagar: Arunachal Pradesh Research Directorate. [NB Despite the publication date this did not become available until 2016]
- Griffith, W. 1847. *Journals of Travels in Assam, Burma, etc.* Calcutta.
- Konow, Sten 1902. Note on the languages spoken between the Assam Valley and Tibet. *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, 1902: 127-137.
- Li, Daqin. 2002. *Geman yu yan jiu. (Zhongguo xin fa xian yu yan yan jiu cong shu)* [A study of Geman]. Beijing Shi: Min zu chu ban she. [Beijing: The Nationalities Press.]
- Macgregor, C.R. 1887. Journal of the Expedition under Col. Woodthorpe, R.E., from Upper Assam to the Irrawadi and return over the Patkoi Range. *Proc. Royal Geographical Society*, 9: 19-42.

- Mills, J.P. 1952. The Mishmis of the Lohit Valley, Assam. *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 82(1):1-12.
- Needham, Jack F. 1886. *A few Dîgârô (Târoan), (Mîjû) M'jû, and Thibetian Words*. Shillong.
- Robinson, W. 1856. Notes on the languages spoken by the Mi-Shmis. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 24: 307-324.
- Rowlatt, E.A. 1845. Report of an Expedition into the Mishmee Hills to the N.E. of Sudyah. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 14, 2: 477-493.
- Sun, Hongkai 1983. *The languages of the peoples of the Six River Valley Region and their genetic classification*. [In Chinese]. Mínzú Xuébào. Kunming: Yunnan People's Publishing Company.
- Sun, Hongkai 孙宏开 (ed.) 1991. 藏缅语语音和词汇 *Zang Mianyu yuyin he cihui*. [Tibeto--Burman phonetics and vocabulary]. Vocabulary 49 北京中国社会科学出版社 Beijing: Zhōngguó Shèhuì Kēxué Chūbǎnshè [Beijing : China Social Sciences Press].
- Sun, Hongkai 1999. On the Himalayan languages of the eastern Himalayan area in China. *Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman Area*, 22: 61-72.
- Sun, Hongkai et al. 孙宏开 孙宏开 1980. 们巴, 珞巴, 僮人的语言 [Menba, Luoba, and Deng peoples' languages], 174--231. 北京 Beijing: 中国社会科学出版社 China Social Sciences Press.
- Wilcox, R. 1832. Memoir of a Survey of Assam and the neighbouring countries executed in 1825-6-7-8. *Asiatick Researches*, 17: 314-469.
- Young, E.C. 1907. A Journey from Yunnan to Assam. *Geographical Journal*, 30(2): 152-180.
- Cooper, T.T. 1873. *The Mishmee Hills: an account of a journey made in an attempt to penetrate Thibet from Assam to open new routes for commerce*. London: Henry S. King & Co.
- Purkayastha, Jayaditya 2013. *An amateur's guide to reptiles of Assam*. Guwahati: Eastern Book House.
- Ahmed, M.F., Das, A. & S.K. Dutta 2009. *Amphibians and reptiles of Northeast India*. Guwahati: Aaranyak.
- Inskipp, C., Inskipp, T. & R. Grimmett 1999. *Birds of Bhutan*. London: Christopher Helm.
- Menon, Vivek 2014. *Indian mammals: a field guide*. Gurgaon: Hachette.
- Choudhury, Anwaruddin 2013. *The mammals of North East India*. Guwahati: Gibbon Books.