

# A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF SOME SOUTH MUNDA KINSHIP TERMS, I

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## *Part 1*

1. In this paper we present etymologies for a number of South Munda kinship terms.<sup>1</sup> South Munda (SM), one branch of Proto-Munda (PM), branches into Kharia-Juang (KJ) or Central Munda, and Koraput Munda (KM); KM branches into Sora-Juray-Gorum (SJG) and Gutob-Remo-Gta' (GRG). While we have not done anthropological analyses of the Munda kinship systems, we have made use of the anthropological sources in defining and relating kin terms and kin-term sets of the languages and proto-languages.

Our objective has been to provide a linguistic analysis of the SM kin-terms, with a view to reconstructing as much of the original (i.e. non-borrowed) terminology as possible, and to integrate the results into as coherent and plausible a system as we can. Since KM and SM noun morphology have not been analysed and described, we will present a description of SM noun morphology with particular reference to the derivational morphology of full forms (FF), and combining or compositional forms (CF) of Munda kin terms. This will come in the second paper in this series, along with the first full sets of kin-term etyma.

In the first section of this paper we take up and criticise the work of Bhattacharya (1970) and Parkin (1985) on Munda kin terms, and in the second section we discuss how relationship and reciprocity are shown in Munda kin terms.

We have taken our data, the SM kin terms and definitions, from a wide range of existing sources, and from our own fieldnotes. The anthropological sources are fuller in the coverage of the terms and their uses, but are poorer in linguistic transcription, and lack morphological analysis. The linguistic sources provide better linguistic data, but are incomplete and, for purposes of kinship term analysis, poorly organised. A few publications (e.g. Deeney, 1975, on Ho) are exceptional in presenting the kinship system and the kin terms fully and perspicuously in linguistically well-analysed form.

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1. We use the following abbreviations in describing kin terms: M, 'mother'; F, 'father'; P, 'parent'; Br, 'brother'; Si, 'sister'; Sib, 'sibling'; Y, 'younger'; O, 'older'; Hu, 'husband'; Wi, 'wife'; Sp, 'spouse'; So, 'son'; Da, 'daughter'; Ch, 'child'.

The abbreviations for the modern language names are: Sa, 'Santali'; Mu, 'Mundari'; Kher, 'Kherwarian'; Kh, 'Kharia'; Ju, 'Juang'; So, 'Sora'; Go, 'Gorum'; Jr, 'Juray'; Gu, 'Gutob'; Re, 'Remo', and Ga, 'Gta?'. The more common ethnonyms for the KM languages are: Sora: Saora, Savara; Juray: Juray Sora; Gorum: Pareng, Parenga, Parengi; Gutob: Gad(a)ba, Gutob Gadba; Remo: Boṇḍa, Bondo; Gta?: Dīḍayi, Dīḍei, Dire.

There has been widespread borrowing of kinship terms into SM: from languages as diverse as the Dravidian Ollari Gadba, and Indo-Aryan Koṭia Oṛiya, standard Oṛiya, and standard and dialectal Hindi, Bhojpuri and Bengali, and English. Undoubtedly earlier borrowings, particularly from Dravidian, have been missed by us. We hope, for a later paper in this series, to collaborate with a Dravidianist on Dravidian borrowings, early and late, of both kinship behaviour and kinship words. This paper does not deal with kinship terms that are not genetically old in Munda, and that are not likely to have cognates in Mon-Khmer (MK). We propose to present the full set of Munda kin terms with Mon-Khmer (and, possibly, Austronesian) cognates in a later paper.

The only published general treatments of Munda kin terms are those of Bhattacharya (1970) and Parkin (1985), and the relevant sections of Pinnow's *Versuch* (1959), as updated by him in 1960 in his unpublished monograph on Juang. We show that Bhattacharya's weighting of semantic similarity at the expense of sound correspondences leads him to lump together forms that are semantically very close, but not cognate.<sup>2</sup> Parkin, an anthropologist who has written a dissertation on Austro-asiatic kinship, needs to use linguistic evidence. He makes use of Bhattacharya's material, but is sometimes misled by Bhattacharya's methods of analysis and presentation of data. Parkin also takes rough phonetic similarity as indication of genetic relationship, and uses the—usually spurious—'cognition' to support anthropological arguments about kinship. He sometimes ignores Bhattacharya's conclusions (e.g. about *bare* (Bhattacharya's Set 66. (1970: 455), *Ga bare*; ZZ \*bōHrē,<sup>3</sup> 'a woman's brother') and mistakenly connects reflexes of this \*bōHrē (e.g. *bo're*, *bok're*) with \*bōkō, YSib. By doing this he misses the importance of PM \*bōHrē and the existence in PM of terms restricted to male or female speakers, e.g. GRG \*bō(b)rē, 'a woman's brother', \*bVlon, 'a woman's sister', \*bVyan, 'a man's brother', and \*tonan, 'a man's sister'. We need the anthropologist to make kinship sense of the meanings of cognate sets where we cannot reconstruct a properly precise meaning for the PM term, much less account for the change in meaning in NM and SM and the modern languages. The example of Northern Munda (NM) \*hili, OBrWi, and KM \*hVli SpYBr will be discussed in some detail later in the paper. Bhattacharya has confused the issues by putting NM \*hili and KM \*hVli into different semantic-cognate sets because their meanings are not close enough.

We should note that anthropological studies of Munda kinship have flourished in the past fifteen years; we are thinking of the work of S. Bouez, Deeney, Parkin, Pfeffer and Vitebsky. However, most of these

2. He implies that they are sufficiently cognate for his purposes.

3. ZZ = Zide & Zide; our reconstructions, e.g. PM \*bōHrē, or, better, \*b<sup>(h)</sup>H(b)rē, differ in general reliability from proto to proto. SJG reconstructions are more solid than KJ reconstructions. In the \*bōHrē example, the first reconstruction can be considered to be an abbreviation for the second, which shows more questions and possible answers. Since the reconstructions given here will not be evaluated and justified, they should be considered abbreviations of a fuller treatment of the comparative phonology and lexicon.

analyses do not bear directly on the linguistic problems with which we are concerned, and no further reference will be made to most of these.

Bhattacharya's survey paper is very useful in that it presents and begins to organise his own rich field data. He is less thorough in abstracting the published literature. His analyses, his semantic-cognate sets, observations on borrowings, etc., are usually perceptive. In some cases he is more conservative than he needed to be, e.g. in putting Ho *haam*<sup>4</sup> 'old man, husband' in one set, and the reflexes of GRG \*hV-n-ɖam (e.g. Ga *handā*, etc.) in another. Had he noted Mundari *haram* (same meaning as the Ho and the GRG), he would have been compelled to put all these forms in one semantic-cognate set. In other etyma, particularly where he brings in possible cognates in Mon-Khmer, he is too indiscriminately accepting. (But then, he is the only Indian Munda scholar who has paid any attention to Mon-Khmer.) Bhattacharya knows several of the Munda languages, and he knows Indo-Aryan and some Dravidian. Parkin, when he disregards Bhattacharya, usually goes wrong.

Parkin is conscientious in examining long lists of kinship terms, and he turns up interesting forms not earlier appreciated (e.g., Remo *N-kwi*, YSi, which Bhattacharya also records). He can be perceptive about borrowings, e.g. noting that KM *mama*, MBr (in some languages SpF), is borrowed (along with kin behaviour) from Dravidian, and not directly from Indo-Aryan. But his use of rough phonetic similarity as evidence of cognation is self-defeating. We do not quarrel with Parkin's anthropology. It is true, as Parkin says (1985: 705) that the absence of studies of comparative Munda kinship constitutes 'a major gap in south Asian studies', and that Parkin has done a considerable amount of serious work in filling that gap. We give three examples of the sorts of things we object to:

- (1) his Table of 'Basic forms of typical NM and SM terminologies';
- (2) *boko* and *bare*; and
- (3) *ɛŋga*, 'mother'.

After this we take up the confused (mostly by Bhattacharya) case of Juang *ini-bo*, HuYBr.

In his Table, Parkin gives 'typical' NM and SM terminologies, and includes the terms for SpF, SpM, ChCh, same sex SibCh (of the same sex as Ego), and FSibCh of same sex as Ego, opposite sex SibCh (of opposite sex to Ego) and of PSibCh, BrWi, HuSib, SiHu and WiSib, etc. What is a 'typical' terminology, and how and why does one compare typical terminologies? 'Typical' would seem to mean 'well-described', or 'well-known'. The NM and SM forms given in the table are of little value. To a linguist, the forms to be compared would be the reconstructed NM and SM forms. These turn out to be closer to each other than Parkin's typical forms from typical modern languages—when they are cognate. NM

4. We have—without marking these forms—retranscribed some of Bhattacharya's transcriptions in order to indicate morpheme boundaries, and to prune dubious and excessive phonetic detail. We will give Bhattacharya's transcriptions and comment on them in the full data sets in later papers in this series. The form transcribed by us *haam* was transcribed *ham* by Bhattacharya, and *hām* by Deeney.

\*kankar and NM \*kinkar, SpM, are fairly similar whereas Parkin's Mu *hanar* and (KM ?) \*kinar are less so—perhaps because Korku, Kharia and Juang, which reserve PM \*k, are not typical enough. Parkin's *jai* 'grandchild' (in Mundari-Ho) was selected as the representative NM form because he wanted to connect it with *jia*, 'grandmother'. The connection is dubious. A better word for NM 'grandchild' than *jai*, found only in the Kherwarian branch of NM, would be *kVrar/kVrar*, found in both branches (Korku *kurar*, Santali *korar*). The data can be found in Bhattacharya.

2. Both in the table and elsewhere Parkin notes the important distinction between sibling terms where one must know whether the speaker is of the same or opposite sex to the kin-term referent. What seems important—to generalise the case—is not same or opposite sex, but whether the set of terms is sensitive to speaker's and referent's sex. That is, we have in KM a set of four terms where this feature is marked ('a woman's brother', 'a woman's sister', 'a man's brother', 'a man's sister'). This set contrasts with another set of terms where this feature is absent, but where we mark relative age of the speaker and referent, i.e. OBr, YBr, OSi, and YSi. Parkin's *boko* belongs to this second set (and perhaps should be defined not YBr, but YSib) and the others of the sibling terms in his table *tonan*, *bokre* (from \*bōHrē, Bhattacharya's *bare* set) and *misi* belong in the first set. It is possible (as the NM data suggest) that there were only two sex-sensitive terms in PM in this first set, and these were both opposite-marking terms, but this needs to be demonstrated. Parkin takes *bokre* as cognate with *boko*, and not with *bare*, \*bōHrē which leads him to miss the one cognate in PM of the sex-sensitive set. Since such terms go back to PM (however many may have to be reconstructed), we want to know what the distinctive functions of these two sets of sibling terms were—in earlier times and protos—and what they are now. None of the anthropologists we have read takes up this important problem.

If one wants to use linguistic evidence in kinship arguments, then it is necessary to be able to recognise the historical depth of an etymology. \*bōHrē can be reconstructed for PM; this is noteworthy. It is possible that \*bōHrē at some more distant level—perhaps PAA—can be shown to have a morpheme in common with \*bōkō, but good MK evidence of this would be needed to make such a case. One has to be able to recognise that \*Vʔ(g)-lɛñ is a good KM etymology for 'grandchild', but not a good SM or PM etymology.

3. Lastly, Parkin's treatment of 'mother'. Parkin writes that 'the standard NM and KM term for "mother" is *ɛnga*...'. *ɛnga* is only standard in one branch of NM, Kherwarian. If one wants an etymological formula for PM 'mother', it would be *V-ya-N*, *V-ɣɔ-N*. Korku has *ayom* in one dialect, the more archaic *ayan* in others; the reduced form of this before *-teʔ* is *an-*; Santali has *ɛnga* and *ayo/ayɔ*; Mundari-Ho has *ɛnga*, but