KHASI KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

+ Lili Rabel-Heymann

Irawati Karve, the acknowledged authority on Indian kinship, who admits to unfamiliarity with the Khasi language, lists twelve Khasi words in her study of kinship (Karve 1965), but none of these words are included in U.R. Ehrenfels (1953) paper, nor are they recorded in the four Khasi dictionaries (Nissor Singh 1906, 1920; Leemuel 1965 (= Diengdoh); and Kharkhongngor 1968) known to me. Since these same twelve words were also never mentioned by any of my Khasi informants, they should probably be considered as non-existent in the Khasi language; Karve's erroneous listings may be understandable, however, as her only sources were Roberts (1891), Grierson (1904), and Gurdon (1914). U.R. Ehrenfels' article (1953) is, therefore, the only modern treatment of Khasi kinship terminology; it had apparently not come to Karve's attention.

Ehrenfels includes an almost complete list of kinship terms in four dialects -- Plateau Khasi, that is, the standard language; War Khasi; Pnar (or Jaintia); and War Jaintia -- indexed under 43 English glosses, the purpose of which was one of comparison. Although the author collected the vocabulary in an actual field situation, aided by native interpreters, his spellings are not always reliable and the literal meaning of most terms remains hidden from the reader unfamiliar with the language. I, therefore, see my task as that of amplifying Ehrenfels' work, of correcting some errors, especially in the orthography, and of explaining the underlying morphemes occurring in the incredibly complicated Khasi system.

Khasi kinship terminology is based on three principles:

(1) a differentiation between blood relatives and relatives by marriage;

(2) classification by relative age of each member with regard to the person they are related to; and

(3) distinction between terms of address and terms of reference.

Khasi society is generally considered to be matrilineal and matrilocal; the kinship system could be called 'bifurcate merging' since mother is equated with mother's sister, father with father's brother, while mother's brother and father's sister are denoted by distinct terms. Ancestry is traced through the
mother's clan, *ka kur*, often used as an 'imitative'³ *ki kur ki kmie* (lit. 'the clans the mothers'). Gender number⁴ morphemes (called 'prefixes' by the Khasis) must precede each noun; *ka* indicates feminine, *u* masculine singular; *ki* is used for plural number and *i* for respect, endearment, and smallness, the latter two not distinguishing gender.

Upon marriage, the husband remains in his mother's clan while his children belong to his wife's clan. *kur* is used in three phrases: *jadei kur* 'to have a relationship on the mother's side, to be related within the same clan'; in the compound *para kur* 'children of mother's siblings', and in the verb *tait kur tait jaid,⁵* an imitative 'to be banished from the clan' (lit. 'reject clan, reject kind, caste').

The most respected member in the clan is the mother's elder brother, *u kfi or kfi rangbah* (*rang-bah* translates as 'adult male, an elder' and is composed of *rang*, the combining form of *shynrang* 'man' and *bah* 'older brother', probably based on the verb *bah* 'to be big'). The *kfi* is addressed as *mama* or *ma*, a word which seems to be of Indo-European (IE) origin since Hindi, Bengali, and Assamese use it for 'maternal uncle' as well. The *kfi* is consulted on all important decisions and acts as the ultimate arbiter in disputes. Mother's other brothers are referred to as *kfi pdeng* 'middle brother' and *kfi khadduh⁶* 'mother's youngest brother, the very last' respectively. The latter two uncles are addressed as *ma-deng* and *ma-khadduh* or *ma-duh; duh* 'the last, the youngest' is used for blood relatives only, never for those related by marriage.

The word for 'mother' has two forms which are probably not related morphologically (see discussion below). *kmie* is used for reference and *mei* for address; mother's sisters are also addressed as *mei* plus the appropriate modifier for age-ranking.

Father is referred to as *i kpa* and addressed as *papa* or *pa*, a term strangely familiar to speakers of Indo-European languages. His brothers, as well as the husbands of his sisters and of his mother's sisters are all referred to as 'fathers' (*pa*—used in compounds is explained below). Father's sisters are all addressed and referred to as *kha*. *kha* is based on a verb meaning 'to give birth', thus, according to Ehrenfels (1953: 408), apparently recognizing the father's biological function in procreation. *kha* also functions as the second constituent in compounds designating father's mother, *kmie-kha*, and cousins on the father's side, *shi para kha-shi* is the numeral 'one' used for units and measurements (as opposed to *wei* 'one'); *para* designates brothers and sisters of one's own generation.

Parallel cousins and cross-cousins are distinguished both in terminology and in marriage practices; marriage between
parallel cousins is sang 'taboo', while marriage between cross-
cousins is permitted though not common. Mother's 'brothers'
children are also referred to as ba-kha, since by definition his
children will belong to their own mother's clan.

All brothers and sisters within the immediate family
are designated by terms that specify whether they are older or
younger than the speaker; there are also terms to indicate a
'middle' brother or sister and terms for the youngest brother
and sister (Table 1).

The oldest sister is kong or kong ielt, 'sister-
beloved', the oldest brother is bah bah 'brother big', or bah
rangbah 'brother grown-up man', terms that show a position of
respect occupied by the elder siblings. There are actually two
homophonous morphemes bah, one meaning 'brother', the other 'to
be big'; and since modifiers follow the noun in Khasi, kong ielt
would have to be translated as 'sister who is beloved' and bah
rangbah as 'brother who is grown-up'.

Unfortunately, Table 1 shows some gaps. Also, no two
of the young Khasi speakers who recently supplied me with
information agree on all terms; they have all been living abroad
for a long time and have become accustomed to our simplified
Western terminology using aunt, uncle, cousin, etc. One speaker
also suggested that address by name is coming into vogue among
the younger generation.

khynnah 'child' is used for the youngest brother, bah
khynnah 'kid brother'; j rit (lit. 'little one') and i duh (lit.
'the last one') are best rendered by 'kid sister'. One word
glosses for hep and hymne are difficult to suggest; older
people, even non-relatives, can address young people as hep; it
is a term of endearment and is roughly equivalent to the American
usage of 'sonny' or 'kid' when used by men for little boys, or
'dear' when used by old ladies for younger women. The morpheme
hyn- occurs in several other Khasi words that relate to 'time
past, ago': folk-tales always begin with hyndai-hynthai...
'once upon a time...'; hymne means 'a short time ago', hymnin
'yesterday', so that hymne could perhaps be rendered by 'born
before, born some time ago'. The morpheme -men occurs in tymmen
'old man or woman', so that it may mean 'old human being'.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Elder S/B*</th>
<th>Middle S/B</th>
<th>Younger S/B</th>
<th>The Youngest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sister</td>
<td>'kong ieit'**</td>
<td>kong-deng</td>
<td>'hep'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kong, hymmen kynthei</td>
<td></td>
<td>i rit, i duh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S's husband</td>
<td>'hymmen kynsi'</td>
<td>kong-deng</td>
<td>'para kynsi'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kong heh, hymmen kynsi</td>
<td></td>
<td>'hep kynsi'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(by female)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(by female)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>kyn-um (by male)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brother</td>
<td>'bah, bah bah, bah heh'</td>
<td>'bah khynnah'</td>
<td>'bah duh'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'bah rangbah'</td>
<td>hep (by female)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B's wife</td>
<td>hymmen shynrang</td>
<td>'kong kynsi'</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Abbreviations used here and in following tables are: B = Brother, F = Father, M = Mother, S = Sister
** Quotation marks indicate terms of address

Table 1: Khasi sibling terms of address and of reference
kynsi and kyn-um are best translated by 'in-law'; the minor syllable\(^6\) kyn- occurs in so many words, nouns and verbs alike, that it is impossible to assign a definite lexical meaning to it.\(^9\) Ego's, i.e. the speaker's, maternal and paternal aunts and uncles are, as Table 2 shows, classified according to the same system as siblings; older or younger than parent referred to, in-between the older and the younger aunt or uncle, and a designation for the youngest aunt or uncle. Mother's and father's in-laws take their age-ranking appellations from their respective spouses rather than from their actual age. Terms of address and terms of reference are usually identical in the second and third ascending generation (grandparents and great-grandparents), and for the first descending generation (children, nephews, and nieces): terms are, however, as Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate, differentiated for ego's siblings and for ego's parents and their siblings. The term of address is often a shortened or reduced variant of the full term which is used for reference; the shortened variant, also used in compounds, is derived by loss of the initial consonant (usually k-), or loss of the initial syllable in bisyllabic words. Examples are: pa vs. kpa 'father', rád vs. kynrád 'lord, master', mei vs. kmie 'mother', -rang vs. shynrang 'adult male'.\(^10\)

Most family members, it will be noticed, are not addressed or referred to by name but by their kin classification; even husband and wife have traditionally referred to each other as 'the mother (of) [oldest child's name]' e.g. i kmie u Dan, and i kpa u Dan 'the father (of) Dan'. One woman informant told me that a woman can also address her husband's sister's husband, i.e. her brother-in-law, as the kpa of the first-born child. Husband and wife address each other by phi, the polite second person pronoun 'you'. Younger Khasis state that nowadays husband and wife may use names for addressing each other. Another Khasi friend gave me the terms of ka lok for 'wife' and u lok for 'husband', but a young man said: 'lok is a harsh word, don't use it.'

The reference terms for parents-in-law, kiaw for 'mother-in-law' and kthaw for 'father-in-law', do not distinguish between maternal and paternal ancestry. The terminology for grandparents is structured parallel to that of one's own parents; however, distinctions between terms of address and of reference are not as varied. 'Mother's mother' is mei-rád, 'mother's father' is pa-rád; their respective siblings add -heh for the older sister, -deng for the middle sister, but the youngest is simply another mei-rád. Great-grandparents on the mother's side are mei-buh and pa-buh;\(^11\) father's mother and father are kmie-kha and pa-kha respectively. Referential terms for parents in all generations take the respectful 'prefix/article' i.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Mother</strong></th>
<th>'mei'</th>
<th>Older than M/F</th>
<th>Middle S/B</th>
<th>Younger than M</th>
<th>The Youngest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i kmie</td>
<td></td>
<td>mei-san</td>
<td>mei-deng</td>
<td>mei khynnah</td>
<td>nah rit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M's Sisters</td>
<td></td>
<td>pa-san</td>
<td>pa khynnah</td>
<td>pa khynnah</td>
<td>pa khynnah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M's Ss' Husbands</td>
<td></td>
<td>'mama rangbah'</td>
<td>'ma-deng'</td>
<td>'ma, mama'</td>
<td>'ma khadduh'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M's Brothers</td>
<td></td>
<td>kﬁi rangbah</td>
<td>kﬁi pdeng</td>
<td>kﬁi</td>
<td>kﬁi khadduh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M's Bs' Wives</td>
<td></td>
<td>ﬁia</td>
<td>ﬁia</td>
<td>ﬁia</td>
<td>ﬁia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Father</strong></th>
<th>'pa, papa'</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i kpa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F's Brothers</td>
<td></td>
<td>pa san</td>
<td>pa-deng</td>
<td>pa khynnah</td>
<td>pa-duh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F's Bs' Wives</td>
<td></td>
<td>nah</td>
<td>nah</td>
<td>nah</td>
<td>nah</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F's Sisters</td>
<td></td>
<td>kha rangbah</td>
<td>kha-deng</td>
<td></td>
<td>kha-duh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F's Ss' Husbands</td>
<td></td>
<td>pa-kha? mama?</td>
<td></td>
<td>mama?</td>
<td>mama?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For the unfilled slots definitive information is lacking.
Quotation marks indicate terms of address; terms of reference have no quotes. When only one term is listed, address and reference are the same.
Khali usage of hyphens is not systematic; my own usage is to hyphenate 'reduced' morphemes.

Table 2: Khali terms for maternal and paternal aunts and uncles.
Parents refer to and address their children's spouses as pyrsa, the term also used for maternal nephews and nieces, pyrsa kurn (kurn 'wife'); uncles and great-uncles on the mother's side refer to a child as pyrsa ksysw while the child addresses his great-uncle as ba. ksysw, or khrn ksysw, are the terms for 'grandchild', and ksysw tun for 'great-grandchild'. Great-grandchildren are referred to as khrn miah (lit. 'cat children'), and great-great-grandchildren as khrn khni (lit. 'mouse children'). Step-children are referred to as khrn ruj /khuon ruj/ and 'stepfather' is kpa nах according to Nissor Singh (1906: 38, 45). Unfortunately, no sources of information, informants or dictionaries, could provide a literal meaning for tun or ruj.

Kinship terms are generally assumed to be of native stock, along with body parts and numerals. However, Khasi has borrowed extensively from the geographically surrounding languages with many loans so well integrated into the native sound structure that their detection is difficult, if not impossible. Three words may be of Indo-Aryan derivation: (i) pa (see above), but a prefixed k either indicates a very early borrowing or would be counter-indicative; (ii) para (see above) is listed by Karve (1965) under Hindi, Sindhi, and Punjabi as referring to blood-related maternal/ paternal grandparents, while in Khasi this word is used for younger relatives on the mother's side; and (iii) kurn 'wife', has an unchecked long vowel in the first syllable which, according to my earlier findings, points to Indo-Aryan origin; kurn 'wife' and kur 'clan' are definitely not related.

GLOSSARY

The following is a complete inventory of all kinship terms with which my informants supplied me, many of which are listed in Nissor Singh's famous dictionary (1906). The alphabetical order is that commonly used for European languages; it deviates from the established Khasi alphabet in three respects: the aspirated stops kh, ph, and th are treated as separate phonemes and are, therefore, not arranged within the k, p, and t listings; k and kh are listed after letter j and not after letter b as in the Khasi alphabet; ng /q/ follows n instead of taking the place of g.

bah to be big; u bah 'big brother'; a polite form of address for any man older than speaker /ba?/

bah bah, bah heh, bah rangbah 'older brother' /ba?he?/, ba?-ra?bah?

bah duh, bah khynnah 'youngest brother' /ba?dw?/, /ba? khnna?/

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ba-kha children of mother's brothers; relationship between mother's children and maternal uncle's children (Nissor Singh 1906:6), also includes 'paternal aunt' (qv. also Kharkhong-ngor 1968:10b).

bih form of address for a young girl (bi?/)

bu affectionate form of address for a young boy (not common)

deng from pdeng 'in the middle, between', used in compounds /pdeñ/

kñi pdeng referring to mother's middle brother
kha-deng addressing father's middle sister
ma-deng addressing mother's middle brother
mei-deng addressing mother's middle sister
pa-deng addressing father's middle brother

duh from khadduh 'the last one, the youngest' /khad-du?/

ñia khadduh 'mother's youngest brother's wife' /ñia-khad-du?/

i duh 'the youngest sister, baby sister'

heh 'big'

hep a polite way of addressing and referring to anybody younger than the speaker; used for younger siblings; woman addressing and referring to brother-in-law if married to younger sister; same as kong hep kynsi, woman referring to younger sister's husband /knsi/

hynmen i referring to elder sister /hnmen/

u referring to elder brother

hynmen hynbew (imit.), elder brother or sister /hnbeñ/

hynmen kynsi younger sister addressing older sister's husband

hynmen kynthei referring to elder sister

hynmen ñnrañ referring to elder brother /hnmen ñnrañ/

ieit 'to love, to be loved' /³eit/

mei ieit addressing mother's mother

pa ieit addressing mother's father

kong ieit addressing elder sister

ing, iing, ying 'house'

ka iing, ka sem household, family (ka sem 'stable, shed, shelter') /ka yëeq ka sem/ (imit.)

kiaw mother-in-law
kmie 'mother' when referred to (reduced form i mei) /kmi/

kmie hep referring to father's mother

ki kmie ki kpa 'parents' (imit.)

kmie kha referring to father's mother

kmie-nah referring to mother's younger sister; stepmother
also: i mei-nah khadduh /'i mey-na' khat-du?/

kmie-rād referring to mother's mother /kmi-raat/

kmie-san referring to mother's elder sister

kmi u, i mother's eldest brother (=kmi rangbah, p.44 above),
the most respected person in the clan; he is addressed as ma
or mama

ki kmi ki kpa relatives on mother's side (imit.)

kmi a ka, i mother's brother's wife; in compounds kmi /kmə/

kmi-kha addressing and referring to father's sisters

kmi-kha rangbah father's oldest sister

kmi-khadduh father's youngest sister /kmi-khat-du?/

kmi-pāeng father's middle sister

kong ka, i addressing and referring to older sister; man
addressing wife's female relatives; polite form of address for
any woman older than speaker; in compounds also used for males

kong-deng husband of middle sister, brother-in-law

kong heh woman addressing and referring to brother-in-law

kong kynsi addressing older sibling's spouse

kpa u, i referring to 'father', pa when addressed and in most
compounds

kpa-nah referring to step-father, nah from khynnah

kpa-rād referring to father's father; /raat/ from knraat/
'lord'

pa-buh i great-grandfather on mother's side
pa-deng father's middle brother

pa-īeit addressing mother's father /pa-īeit/

pa-kha referring to father's father (cf. Nissoor Singh 1906:
147; "pakha, u, n. a male relative (father's side)"

pa-khynnah addressing father's youngest brother and mother's
youngest sister's husband

pa-rād i addressing father's father, mother's father

pa-raat/

pa-san addressing father's older brother, also mother's
older sister's husband

ksiew ka, u, i grandchild /ksiw/

ksiew tun great-grandchild

khūn ksiew i referring to grandchild; is addressed by name
para ksiew mother's mother's sister's son (grand-nephew)
pyrsa ksiew man referring to sibling's grandchildren; a grand-niece or grand-nephew on mother's side

k thaw addressing and referring to father-in-law /kthaaw/

kur ka clan; ka kur ka jaid* (imit.), a relative on mother's side /ka jai/

ki kur ki karo, ki kur ki kmie (imit.), considered obsolete
iadei kur to be related within the same clan (lit. 'come together (in) clan') /yadey/
para kur member of the same clan, children of mother's siblings
tait kur tait kmie (imit.), obsolete, and tait kur tait jaid* (imit.), to be banished, excommunicated from the clan; /taj/ from /kntaj/ 'to reject, set aside'

kurim ka wife, spouse; to have intercourse (probably of Indo-European origin)

kiaw kurim ka mother-in-law (Singh 1906:40)
shong kurim to marry (lit. 'lie with wife')
shong kurim shong kupa (imit.) kupa = ? from Hindi ?
jingshong kurim marriage (lit. 'lie with wife') /jiŋšong/

kynsi addressing and referring to brother- or sister-in-law

hep kynsi = para kynsi woman referring to younger sister's husband
hynmen kynsi woman referring to elder sister's husband
kong kynsi woman addressing elder sibling's spouse

kyn-um u, i man addressing and referring to sister's husband /kn?um/

kha to give birth, to bring forth

kha deng father's middle sister
kha-duh father's youngest sister
kha-rangbah father's older sister
kmie-kha referring to father's mother; she is addressed as mei-kha
para kha (shi) father's brother's children; cousins /ši/ 'one' (numeral)

khadduh to be last /khat-du?/ see duh

kñi khadduh referring to mother's youngest brother
ma-khadduh, ma-duh addressing mother's youngest brother
pa-duh addressing father's youngest brother

* From Hindi, see n.5. (Ed.)
khun ka, u, i child, girl, boy, baby /khun/
khun kseiw grandchild (maternal uncle’s child)
khun khaei great-great-grandchild (lit. ‘mouse child’) /khun khnaay/
khun miai great-grandchild (lit. ’cat child’) 
khun ruid step-child /khun ruj/

khynnh nka, u, u i to be young; girl, boy /khnna?/

pa-khynnh addressing and referring to father’s younger brother, also to mother’s younger sister’s husband (cf. p.45
khynraw u referring to a young man
ka referring to a young woman
u khynraw u samla (imit.) (arch.)

lok friend (arch.,)
ka llok wife
u llok husband
para llok friend

lud to be young (arch.) = khynraw /luot /

mama, ma addressing mother’s older brother who is referred to as u km

ma-deng addressing mother’s middle brother
ma-kadduh, ma-duh addressing mother’s youngest brother
ma-Rangbar (or: mama--) addressing mother’s oldest brother

mei i mother, alternate form for kmie, used in all compounds

mei-buh great-grandmother on mother’s side
mei-deng addressing mother’s middle sister
mei-hep respectful appellation of an older woman (Nisor Sing 1906:131)
mei-ieit addressing mother’s mother
mei-kha addressing father’s mother
mei-khynnh referring to mother’s younger sister
mei-nah addressing mother’s younger sister and father’s younger brother’s wife
mei-rud referring to mother’s mother
mei-san addressing mother’s oldest sister

myngkew ka, i used by wife when referring to husband’s older sister (arch.)

nah reduced form of khynnh to be small, be the youngest (used in compounds)

mei-nah i addressing mother’s younger sister; also father’s younger brother’s wife; addressing stepmother

nah rit mother’s youngest sister

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Mia reduced form of kMia, referring to mother's brother's wife
/k/Mia/

Mia kha, ka addressing father's sister
Mia kha rangbah referring to father's older sister
Mia kha khadduh referring to father's younger sister
Mia kha pdeng referring to father's middle sister

Pa father, reduced form of kPa, used in compounds

Para ka, u, i, ki children, brothers and sisters of same
generation

Para ar kmie mother's sister's children (lit. 'children
(of) two mothers') /para ?aar kmi/

Para brie w u having no relationship either by blood or by
marriage; fellow human being

Para ksiew mother's mother's sister's son, i.e. grand-
nephew on mother's side

Para kur member of the same clan, mother's sister's
children

Para kynsi referring to wife's younger sister and her
husband

Para lok friend

Para mynshong u wife's sister's husband

Para shong-kha husband's sister's husband, two men marrying
into the same family

Para tr?i ka, u brothers and sisters of the same parents

Para kha shi children of father's sisters and brothers,
first cousins and half-siblings on father's side

Pyrsa referring to one's own children and to sister's children;
and nephews and nieces on mother's side

Pyrsa ksiew mother's mother's brother referring to speaker,
i.e. great-uncle on mother's side referring to speaker
Pyrsa kurim referring to child's spouse

Phi 2nd person pronoun (polite), used by husband/wife in
addressing each other

Rangbah to be grown-up; an older respected person, an elder

Ba rangbah addressing older brother

Mama rangbah addressing mother's oldest brother (even if
younger than mother)

Kha rangbah addressing father's oldest sister

Räd reduced alternate of kynräd 'master, lord' used in compounds

Kmiec-räd, mei-räd mother's mother
Kpa-räd, pa-räd mother's father
rit small
i rit = i duh the youngest sister
nah rit mother's youngest sister

samla marriageable young person

san to grow up, grown-up
mei-san mother's older sister
pa-san father's older brother, mother's older sister's husband

(sang taboo)

tnga ka wife, when referred to (arch., 'a harsh word')
u husband, when referred to

trái u lord, master /?u traay/
para trái ka, u, i brothers and sisters of the same parents

NOTES

1. This article represents a thoroughly revised version of a paper delivered at the American Oriental Society Annual General Meeting in Toronto, Canada, 11 April 1978.

2. Bowing to Khasi preference, I have decided to abandon my usual practice of using phonemic transcriptions for Khasi sounds; I use instead established Khasi spelling and only add transcriptions in those cases where the standard spelling system fails to indicate vowel length or vowel quality. Sometimes it will be necessary to separate morphemes by means of hyphens, although some of these hyphens are not used by the Khasis themselves. Certain morphological features, necessary for the reader's better understanding, will be explained at the appropriate places.

3. 'Imitatives', which I called 'redundants' in Rabel (1968), consist of two nouns whose combined meaning is equal to that of the first constituent alone; the meaning of the second constituent is often unknown to the native speaker. Sometimes the second word is a borrowing from Indo-European.

4. The Khasis call the four gender/number indicators 'prefixes'; I called them 'articles' in Rabel (1961). Neither term is entirely adequate since these words are free morphemes which also function as 3rd person pronouns.
5. \textit{jaid=}/jaj/, with a short vowel, is of Hindi origin.

6. \textit{khadduh=}/khat-\textit{du}/, is a compound of /khat/ 'to dole out' + /\textit{du}/ 'to be last.'

7. \textit{deng} is the reduced form of \textit{pdeng}; see n.10 below for loss of initial consonant.

8. 'minor' syllables have no full vowel nucleus, the second consonant -- a liquid or nasal -- functioning as the vocalic element; they are always unstressed.

9. Referring to n.10, it may be derived from (\textit{k + stem}) + infix -\textit{n-}.

10. A theory first proposed by Pater Wilhelm Schmidt (1904) and elaborated by Henderson (1976) states that initial \textit{k} should be considered a fossilized prefix denoting living things (kinship terms, body parts, animals, plants). Since simplification of initial clusters is otherwise never accompanied by vowel change, it seems unlikely that \textit{mei} 'mother' is related to \textit{kmie}.

11. Dictionaries do not list \textit{buh}; one speaker pronounced this word /bu/, two others said /bu/.\textit{?}/.

12. Khasi kinship terminology is, as we have seen, an interesting topic and remains, as this paper demonstrates, a subject of varying interpretation and discussion. Not all of the terms mentioned in this article are included in its glossary, or vice versa, nor do they correspond precisely when they are; nor, for example, do they always agree with the dictionary definitions (when these occur) of U Nissor Singh (1906) or E. Bars (1973), among others. This is, however, the most recent study of the question and makes it most intriguing and informative. (Ed.)

REFERENCES


