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Languages of North-Eastern India

Editor's Note



India is rightly called the epitome of the world — which statement, in every consideration, is true, both anthropologically and linguistically. As the country concerned, India is represented almost all the families of the Mongolian, Dravidian, Austric, etc. This position is well known to all who know India. This region, a small part of the country as it is, is about to be investigated by quite a few families and groups.

George A. Grierson

As for example, one may mention the Mon-Khmer family, Ahom of the Chinese-Siamese family, etc. etc.

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Vol. I

It is fervently hoped that the scholars interested in the... East India will find this...

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Languages of
North-Eastern India



George A. Grier

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Editor's Note

India is rightly called the epitome of the world — which statement, apart from other consideration, is true, both anthropologically and linguistically. As far as the languages are concerned, India is represented almost all the families of the world—India-European, Mongolian, Dravidian, Austric, etc. This position is as well true even about North Eastern India. This region, a small part of the country as it is, abounds in languages belonging to quite a few families and groups.

As for example, one may find in this region Assamese of the Indo-European family, Khasi of Mon-Khmer family, Ahom of the Chinese-Siamese family, Miri of the Tibeto-Burman family, etc. etc.

All these languages of the North East, along with their various dialects have been surveyed by the consultants and associates of the illustrious linguist Dr. George Abraham Grierson and the results of the surveys were systematically and scientifically recorded in his monumental work *Linguistic Survey of India*. The said work includes all known languages and dialects of India and is, therefore, too vast for a researcher interested in a particular region to handle and too expensive for any individual to acquire. Nevertheless, the culture, sociology and languages of the North East are gaining growing interest in India and abroad. Keeping these facts in view, these selections from Dr. Grierson's *magnum opus* have been compiled with a view to presenting a complete linguistic picture of the region. Care has been taken so that all predominant families and groups are well represented.

It is fervently hoped that the scholars interested in the languages and culture of the North East India will find this volume useful.

SATKARI MUKHOPADHYAYA

THE MON-KHMER FAMILY

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THE MÖN-KHMĒR FAMILY.

The languages of this family are nearly all spoken in Further India, and thus do not fall within the limits of the present Survey. The home of one important member, Khassi, is, however, in Assam, and hence a brief general description of the family is necessary.

(Linguistic evidence points to the conclusion that some form of Mön-Khmër speech was once the language of the whole of Further India.¹ Incursions, from the north, of tribes speaking Tibeto-Burman languages, and in later times, from Western China, of members of the Tai race, have driven most of the Mön-Khmër speakers to the sea-coast; so that, with a few exceptions, all the languages of this family are now found in Pegu, Cambodia and Anam. The exceptions are some tribes who still hold the hill country of the lower and middle Me-kong and of the middle Chindwin, and the Khassis, all of whom are islands of Mön-Khmër origin, standing out amidst seas of alien peoples.)

The languages of the Mön-Khmër family fall naturally into five groups. The first group includes a number of closely related forms of speech used by the inhabitants of the hill country of the lower and middle Me-kong. The second includes the Mön or Talaing spoken in Pegu, the Anamese of Anam, and a number of minor dialects (including Stieng and Bahnar) spoken in the latter country. The third group consists of the various dialects of the Khmër spoken in Cambodia. The fourth, or Palaung-Wa, group, includes the Palaung spoken north-east of Mandalay, the language of the Was, and a number of other dialects spoken in the hilly country round the upper middle courses of the Chindwin and the Me-kong. Amongst them may be mentioned Kha-mük or Khmu. Lo-met, and Riang. The fifth group consists of the various dialects of the Khassi language. In order to show the connexion between Khassi and the other languages of the family, I have added to the list of words of the Khassi dialects a further list showing the corresponding Mön-Khmër words so far as I have been able to collect them.

The points of resemblance between the Mön-Khmër vocabularies and those, on the one hand, of the Mundā languages of Central India, and, on the other hand, of the Nancowry language of the Nicobars and the dialects of the early inhabitants of Malacca,² have often been pointed out. They are so remarkable and of such frequent occurrence, that a connexion between all these tongues cannot be doubted, and must be considered as finally established by the labours of Professor Kuhn. At the same time the structures of the two sets of languages differ in important particulars. The Mön-Khmër languages are monosyllabic. Every word consists of a single syllable. When, in Khassi for instance, we meet an apparent dissyllable we find on examination that it is really a compound word. On the other hand, the Mundā, Nancowry, and Malacca languages contain many undoubted polysyllables. This is a very important point of difference, for one of the marks by which languages are classified is the fact that they are monosyllabic or polysyllabic. Again, if we take the order of words in the Mundā languages and compare it with that of Khassi and Mön, we find another important distinction. The Mundā order is subject, object, verb, while in Khassi and Mön it is subject, verb, object. The order of

¹ It is not intended to suggest that its speakers were the autochthones of this region. They probably immigrated from North-Western China, and dispossessed the aborigines, as they, in turn, were dispossessed by the Tibeto-Burmans and the Tais.

² These are the language of the so-called Orang Utan, or Men of the Woods, Sakei, Sémang, Orang Benus, and others.

words in a sentence follows the order of thought of the speaker, so that it follows that the Mundās think in an order of ideas different from that of the Khassis and the Mōns.

Owing to the existence of these differences we should not be justified in assuming a common origin for the Mön-Khmēr languages on the one hand, and for the Mundā, Nancowry, and Malacca languages, on the other. We may, however, safely assume that there is at the bottom of all these tongues' a common substratum, over which there have settled layers of the speeches of other peoples, differing in different localities. Nevertheless, this substratum was firmly enough established to prevent its being entirely hidden by them, and frequent, undeniable, traces of it are still discernible in languages spoken in widely distant tracts of Nearer and Further India.

Of what language this original substratum consisted, we are not yet in a position to say. Whatever it was, it covered a wide area, larger than the area covered by many families of languages in India at the present day. Languages with this common substratum are now spoken not only in the modern Province of Assam, in Burma, Siam, Cambodia and Anam, but also over the whole of Central India as far west as the Berars. It is a far cry from Cochin China to Nimar, and yet, even at the present day, the coincidences between the language of the Kōrkūs of the latter District and the Anamese of Cochin China are strikingly obvious to any student of language who turns his attention to them. Still further food for reflection is given by the undoubted fact that, on the other side, the Mundā languages show clear traces of connexion with the speeches of the aborigines of Australia.

This ancient substratum may have been the parent of the present Mundā languages, or it may have been the parent of the present Mön-Khmēr languages. It cannot have been the parent of both, but it is possible that it was the parent of neither. Logan, writing in the early fifties, believed that it is the Mön-Khmēr family of which it was the parent, and that the speakers were a mixture of two distinct races, *i.e.*, that Eastern Tibetans, or Western Chinese, came across the Himalaya, and mingled with the Australo-Dravidians of India proper, who are now looked upon as the aborigines of India. Forbes, in his Comparative Grammar, avoids the question, and contents himself with proving, what is now not a matter of doubt, that the Mundā and Mön-Khmēr families had no common parentage. Kuhn is more cautious than Logan. He proves the existence of the common substratum, but does not venture to state to what family of languages it belonged. Thomsen does not deal with the question directly, but it may be gathered from the paper quoted below that his opinion is that most probably the substratum is a Mundā one, and that a population akin to the Indian Mundā races originally extended as far east as Further India. This was before the beginnings of those invasions from the north which resulted, first, in the Mön-Khmēr, and, afterwards, in the Tibeto-Burman and Tai settlements in that region.

AUTHORITIES—

The following writings deal with the general question of the Mön-Khmēr races and languages:—

LOGAN, J. R.—The series of papers on the *Ethnology of the Indo-Pacific Islands*, which appeared in the *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*, may all be studied with advantage, though much has been superseded by later inquiries. Special attention is drawn to the paper on the *General Characters of the Burma-Tibetan, Gangetic and Dravidian Languages*, on pp. 186 and ff. of Vol. vii (1853).

¹ So Kuhn in the *Beiträge* quoted below.

- FORBES, C. J. F. S.**—*Comparative Grammar of the Languages of Further India, A Fragment.* London, 1881.
- KUHN, E.**—*Ueber Herkunft und Sprache der transgangetischen Völker.* Festschrift zur Vorfeier des allerhöchsten Geburts- und Namensfestes Seiner Majestät des Königs Ludwig II. Munich, 1883.
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- SCHMIDT, P. W., S.V.D.**—*Die Sprachen der Sakei und Semang auf Malacca und ihr Verhältniss zu den Mon-khmer-Sprachen.* *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Ned.-Indië*, 6^e Volgr., Deel viii, pp. 401 and ff. 's Gravenhage, 1901.

KHASHI.

The connexion of Khassi with the other languages of the Mōn-Khmēr family was recognised so long ago as the year 1853, when Logan, in his paper on the *General Characters of the Burma-Tibetan, Gangetic and Dravirian Languages*,¹ spoke of it as 'a solitary record that the Mon-Kambojan formation once extended much further to the North-West than it now does.' This statement of opinion seems to have escaped the notice of subsequent students of the language, for though a few scholars have once and again referred to the connexion with Mōn-Khmēr, the usually accepted account of Khassi has been that it is an entirely isolated member of the Indo-Chinese languages.² It was not till 1889, forty years after Robinson published the first Khassi Grammar, that Professor E. Kuhn, in his masterly *Beiträge zur Sprachenkunde Hinterindiens*, first seriously attacked the question, and showed conclusively the true affinity of this interesting form of speech.

The home of Khassi is the district of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the head-quarters of which are Shillong, the seat of Government in Assam. Speakers of it are also found in the adjoining districts of Sylhet and Cachar. The standard dialect is that spoken round Cherrapunji in the South Khasi Hills. It will be dealt with at length further on. Besides this three other dialects have been reported for this Survey, viz., (1) the Lyngngam, or the language of the south-western corner of the hills, bordering on the Garo Hills; (2) the Synteng or Pnār, or the language of the upper portions of the Jowai subdivision, east of Shillong; and (3) the Wār, or dialect of the low Southern valleys, opening out on to the plains of Sylhet.

Specimens of these three have, it is believed, never before been printed, and those now given afford the only materials for exhibiting their differences from the standard and peculiarities of grammatical structure. Synteng approaches the standard dialect much more nearly than the others.

The following figures have been reported as the estimated number of speakers of each dialect:—

Dialect.	Where spoken.	Number of speakers.
Standard	Khasi and Jaintia Hills	113,190
Lyngngam	Ditto	1,850
Synteng or Pnār	Ditto	51,740
Wār	Ditto	7,000
Unspecified	{ Sylhet	3,200
	{ Cachar	313
	<hr style="width: 100px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/>	3,513
	Total	<hr style="width: 100px; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> 177,293

The³ interest attaching to the Khassi language is due chiefly to the isolated position which it occupies among the aboriginal tongues of India, and especially among the Tibeto-Burman group which encloses it. This isolation, it may be added, is equally

¹ Quoted as an authority in the Introduction to the Family.

² So Schott, as quoted below, p. 427; Cust, *The Modern Languages of the East Indies*, p. 117; and Roberts, *Khasi Grammar*, p. xvii.

³ For the following account of the Khassi language, I am indebted to the kindness of Sir Charles J. Lyall, K.C.S.I., who has not only written the introductory remarks and the grammatical sketch which follow, but has also revised the specimens and given me invaluable advice and assistance in preparing them for the press.

conspicuous in the social institutions of the Khassi race, and in the physical characteristics of the individuals who compose it. While the general type, both of speech and physical frame, is undoubtedly Mongolian, the morphological character of the language differs too much from that of other forms of speech found within the Indian boundaries, to admit of its being classed with any one of them.]

The following are the principal points of difference between the Khassi family and the other non-Aryan languages of India :—

- (1) It possesses a complete system of gender. To every substantive in the dialects which together form the language is ascribed a masculine or a feminine quality, irrespective of its representing an object actually having sex; and this distinction of gender is carried, by means of the determining prefix, through the adjectives and verbal forms which, together with the substantive, build up the sentence.
- (2) As in other non-Aryan languages of India, grammatical relations are denoted by position, or, more often, by the use of help-words with more or less attenuated meanings. But the important point of difference is that in the Khassi dialects these help-words are invariably *prefixes*, that is, they stand before the word they modify. On the other hand, the Dravidian, Mundā, and Tibeto-Burman forms of speech prefer suffixes, that is, the help-words follow the words they modify. The other Mōn-Khmēr languages follow the same system as the Khassi, while the Tai family uses both systems. The possessor is placed after the thing possessed in the Khassi, the Tai, and the other Mōn-Khmēr languages, but before it in the other languages named. The result of this peculiarity is that the order of the words in a Khassi sentence is altogether different from that which prevails in the Tibeto-Burman family, its neighbour on three sides; and, as the order of words corresponds to the order of ideas, the speakers of Khassi are thus differentiated in a very important respect.
- (3) The possession of a relative pronoun distinguishes the Khassi dialects from most of the non-Aryan languages of India, a peculiarity which it shares with the Cambodian and Anamese languages (as well as with those of the Tai family), but not with Mōn.

VOCABULARY.—The greater part of the words used in Khassī appear to be native to that tongue, though there may have been borrowings and interchanges with its Tibeto-Burman neighbours.¹ The two test-words, for *water* and *fire*, and the numerals, which run through the whole of the Tibeto-Burman family with only dialectic variations, have no representatives of the same type in Khassi. Many words have been borrowed from Bengali, Hindōstānī and English, being required to express ideas and instruments of civilization and culture acquired from outside; but the language has considerable power of abstraction, and has proved adequate to the expression of very complex relations of thought.

It has received much cultivation during the past half-century, entirely through the agency of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Mission, settled in the Khasi Hills since 1842, with its head-quarters first at Cherrapunji, and afterwards at the provincial capital of

¹ Mikir or Arleng, the nearest Tibeto-Burman neighbour of Khassi on the East, has a fairly large number of roots identical with Khassi; it is not possible at present to say which has borrowed from the other.

Shillong; and, besides translations of the Scriptures, a considerable number of books have been published in it. The standard dialect is considered to be that of Cherrapunji and its neighbourhood, where the first efforts to give the language a literary form were made; and the education imparted by the missionaries, who have now occupied with their schools every part of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, has contributed to spread the use of that dialect throughout the Khasi-speaking area. Khasi is the official language of the courts, and is recognised by the Calcutta University, students from the Hills offering themselves for matriculation being examined in it as a second language in addition to English.

The best account of it is contained in the Grammar by the Rev. H. Roberts; but, as the list below shows, there are many works from which a knowledge of it can be gained.

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- SOLOMON, U-JOB.—*The Reader's Companion, being an easy guide how to speak and write Khasi.* Shillong, 1895.

SKELETON KHASI GRAMMAR.

PRONUNCIATION.—The language has been provided with a written character—the Roman—by the Missionaries, who have used a system for expressing sounds partly derived from their own Welsh. Thus words in Khasi as written do not agree with the scheme of representation adopted elsewhere in this Survey. According to the established system the following vowels have sounds not represented elsewhere by the same means :—

a is not the Aryan *a*, but the Aryan *ā* somewhat shortened, as in Bengali and Assamese (German *a* in *Mann*).

e short and *ē* long both occur.

o represents the abrupt *o* in 'gone,' 'pot'; *o*, the sound in 'bone'.

y is used for the obscure vowel, not exactly the short *a* of Aryan, but something between it and the German *ö* or the French *eu*, but shorter than these.¹ Very rarely it is long, and then=the French *eu* in 'heure.' *Y* is never used as a consonant, its place being taken by the vowel *i*, as *ia*=*ya*.

w is used in diphthongs for vocal *u*; elsewhere it is a consonant.

Diphthongs—*ai*, *āi*, as in Aryan; *aw*=Aryan *au*; *āw*=Aryan *āu*; *ei*=not exactly Aryan *ē*, but with the *i*-sound distinctly audible; *ew*=Aryan *ēu*; *iw*=Aryan *iu*, but pronounced together so as to make one syllable; *oi* as in 'boil'; *ui*, *ūi*, each sound separately heard, but as one syllable.

Diacritical marks of length are seldom used in writing, and the long vowel *ī* is sometimes expressed by doubling, *ii*, e.g., *sim*, bird; *siim* (*sim*), chief: *dīng*, fire; *dīing*, tree. Occasionally the diæresis is used to denote long *ī*, thus, *ī̄*. *Ie* is also used for a sound hardly distinguishable from long *ī*.

Aspirated Consonants.—*Bh*, *kh*, *dh*, *jh*, *ph*, *th*, *ng*, as in Aryan; only one *d* and *t* (not two, dental and cerebral) are used, as in English; *sh* as in 'shun.' The language does not contain the sounds of *f* (except as a dialectic form of *ph*), *g* (except in foreign words), *ch* or *z* (except in the Lyng-ngam and Wār dialects).

Ng is frequent as an initial, and after initial *s*, as *sngi*, *sngem*, *sngūr*. The *g* is never heard separately.

Tones.—Khasi possesses tones, like the other languages of the Mōn-Khmēr family, Tai, and Chinese. The accurate representation of these in writing has not yet been consistently provided for, though they are distinctly differentiated to the ear. One tone, however, the abrupt, is expressed by the use of *h* after the vowel; e.g., *la*, the particle for the past tense; *lah*, the particle of potentiality. Wherever *h* follows a vowel, this is to be understood to be its force.²

Aphæresis.—Khasi abounds in initial consonants (not, however, exceeding two³); but the effect of abrasion produced by rapid utterance is to reduce these compounds by the omission of the first; *blang*, goat; 'lang-brot, kid: *shnong*, village; 'nong-kseh, village of the pine-trees: *brīw*, man; *soh-'riw*, a tall kind of millet: *ksah*, ring; *kti*, hand; 'sah-'ti, finger-ring.

GENERAL STRUCTURE.—The elements of the Khasi vocabulary are monosyllabic, and the language, as the specimens show, is still distinctly monosyllabic in character, each syllable, for the most part, having its definite and proper force. But there are certain syllables—in the Standard Khasi all prefixes—which have lost their separate individuality, and are used to form compound roots. These have almost invariably the weakest vowel, *y*, which they tend to lose and to coalesce with the following consonant. Thus *khymāh*, *khmāh*; *kypa*, *kpa*; *kymi*, *kmī*. The compounds thus formed tend to aphæretise the first element, and we have *pa*, *mī* (*mei*) as the residuum. In verbs these syllables (*pyn-*, *pyr-*, *kyr-*, *kyn-*, *tyr-*, *syr-*, etc.) play a considerable part in producing secondary roots. Compound roots, in which each element retains its force and is distinctly

¹ *Y* combined with *r*, as in the prefixes *kyr-*, *syr-*, *tyr-*, etc., appears to represent very accurately the vocal *r* of the old Aryan alphabet, still retained in some of the Slavonic languages. It is most frequently in contact with the liquids, *l*, *m*, *n*, *r*.

² In a large number of cases the *h* represents a lost consonant, usually *k*. Thus *barok*, all, is in Lyng-ngam *prok*; *bhak* (Synteng), share, stands for *bhak* (Bengali *bhāg*). Compare also the Khasi (*ky*)*pok*, belly, with the Mikir *pok*, and the Khasi *shok*, beat, with the Mikir *shok*. The abrupt tone is due to the disappearance of this consonant.

³ Aspirated consonants, *ng*, and *sh*, are here treated as single letters.

felt in the common idea, are extremely numerous, and add greatly to the power of the language as the means of expression. Thus *kyn*, causal prefix, *māw*, stone; *kyn-māw*, mark with a stone as memorial, remember: *khmāh*, look at, watch, *lynti*, road; *khmāh-lynti*, expect, await: *sngow*, feel, *bhā*, good; *sngow-bhā*, be pleased.

ARTICLE.—The pronoun of the third person is commonly described as an article. Its forms are, singular, masc. *u*, fem. *ka*, diminutive or familiar, *i*; plural (com. gen.) *ki*. One of these must precede every noun. It has not, however, the force of our article, either definite or indefinite, but only indicates the gender and number of the associated noun. The ‘article’ is omitted in idiomatic sentences when no ambiguity is caused by the omission.

NOUNS.—Gender is indicated in the singular by the ‘article’, in the plural, where necessary, by words denoting sex. The great majority of inanimate nouns are feminine; all abstracts (formed either by the prefix *jing*, or the adjective with or without *ba*) are feminine. The sun, day, is feminine, *ka sngi*; the moon, month, is masculine, *u bynai*. Sometimes the word varies in meaning according to the gender: *u ngap*, bee; *ka ngap*, honey. Diminutives are formed by the prefix *i*: *u brīw*, a man; *i brīw*, a dwarf; *ka īng*, a house; *i īng*, a hut.

Number is indicated only by the article.

Case is indicated by prefixes. Thus:—

Case.	Singular.	Plural.
Nominative	<i>u brīw</i> , a man	<i>ki brīw</i> , men.
Accusative	<i>ia u brīw</i> , a man	<i>ia ki brīw</i> , men.
Instrumental	<i>da u brīw</i> , by a man	<i>da ki brīw</i> , by men.
Dative	<i>ha, sha</i> , or <i>ia u brīw</i> , to or for a man	<i>ha, sha</i> , or <i>ia ki brīw</i> , to or for men.
Ablative	<i>na u brīw</i> , from a man	<i>na ki brīw</i> , from men.
Genitive	<i>jong u brīw</i> , of a man	<i>jong ki brīw</i> , of men.
Locative	<i>ha u brīw</i> , in a man	<i>ha ki brīw</i> , in men.

N.B.—The prefix of the Accusative (*ia*) and of the Genitive (*jong*) are often omitted, the position of the word indicating the case.

ADJECTIVES.—All are formed by prefixing *ba* (the particle of relativity or purpose) to the root. Thus, *bhā*, goodness; *ba-bhā*, good: *snīw*, badness; *ba-snīw*, bad. Often *ba-* is dropped and the root joined immediately to the noun, but in this case there is generally some difference of meaning, and the word has become properly a permanent compound noun. Thus, *u brīw babhā*, a good man: *u' rīw-bhā*, a rich man. The ‘article’ may be repeated before the adjective or omitted at pleasure, *u brīw u bastād* or *u brīw bastād*, a wise man.

The adjective always follows the noun.

Comparison is effected by inserting *kham* between *ba* and the root for the comparative, and by adding *tam* to the positive, either with or without *kham*, for the superlative:—*ba-eh*, hard; *ba-kham-eh*, harder; *ba-eh-tam*, *ba-kham-eh-tam*, hardest.

Numerals.—The forms are given in the list of words. Here it is to be observed (1) that in Khassi the cardinal number always *precedes* the noun (e.g., *ār-ngut*, two persons; *lāi-lyngkhot*, three pieces), whereas in Tibeto-Burman it *follows* it; (2) that in Khassi there is no trace of the class-determinatives used in Tibeto-Burman and Tai with numerals when applied to different groups of things.

PRONOUNS.—The **Personal Pronouns** are *ngā*, I; *ngi*, we (both of common gender); *mē* (masc.), *phā* (fem.), thou; *phī* (com. gen.), ye; *u* (masc.), *ka* (fem.), he, she, it; *ki* (com. gen.), they. All are declined as nouns. *Ma-* prefixed emphasises the pronoun; *ngā la ong*, *ma-ngā*=I said, even I. Observe (1) that in these plurals alone are found in Khassi traces of inflexion, and (2) that in the second and third persons the common plural is formed from the *feminine* singular. The feminine is also used where we should use the neuter, as in impersonal verbs: *ka dei*, it is necessary; *ka la slap*, it rained; *ka-ne*, this; *ka-ta*, that, of sexless things.

The pronouns of the third person are converted into **Demonstratives** by the addition of particles denoting the position of things with reference to the speaker. These suffixes are:—(1) near=this, *ne* (*u-ne*, *ka-ne*, *i-ne*, *ki-ne*); (2) in sight, but further off=that, *to* (*u-to*, etc.); (3) further off, but still visible=that, *tai* (*u-tai*, etc.); (4) out of sight, or only contemplated in the mind=that, *ta* (*u-ta*, etc.). After these, the 'article' must be repeated before the noun: this man=*u-ne u briw*.

The **Relative Pronoun** is, in the same way, the personal pronoun of the third person followed by the adjective or relative particle *ba*—*u-ba*, *ka-ba*, *i-ba*, *ki-ba*. E.g., 'there was a man who had two sons'=*la-don u-wei u-briw u-ba la-don ār-ngut ki-khūn shinrang*. *Ba* is sometimes used as a relative without the 'article.'

The **Interrogative Pronoun** is the 'article' followed by *no* or *ei*, (*u-no*, *ka-no*, *ki-no*, who? which? *u-ei*, *ka-ei*, *ki-ei*, id.). *Ei* is often used without the 'article'; and *-no* (which is restricted to persons), when declined, regularly drops the 'article', e.g., *jong-no*, whose? *ia-no*, whom? *sha-no*, to whom? What? neuter, is *aiuh*, and also *ka-ei*.

The **Reflexive Pronoun**, referring to the subject of the sentence, is *la*, for all persons.

VERBS.—The verbal root (which never varies) may be simple or compound. The compound roots are (1) **Causals**, formed by prefixing *pyn* to the simple root; *iap*, die; *pyn-iap*, kill; (2) **Frequentatives**, formed by prefixing *iai*; *iām*, weep; *iai-iām*, weep continually; (3) **Inceptives**, by prefixing *man*; *stād*, be wise; *man-stād*, grow wise; (4) **Reciprocals**, by prefixing *ia*: *ieit*, love; *ia-ieit*, love one another; (5) **Intensives**, by prefixing the particles *kyn*, *lyn*, *syn*, *tyñ*. Any noun or adjective may be treated as a verbal root by means of a prefix of these five classes. Thus, *kajia*, a quarrel (Hindōstāni loan-word, *qazia*); *ia-kajia*, to quarrel with one another; *bynta* (Hindōstāni loan-word), share; *pyn-ia-bynta* (reciprocal-causal), to divide between several persons; *'riwbhā*, rich man; *man-'riwbhā*, to grow rich; *bhā*, good; *pyn-bhā*, to make good.

There are two verbs for 'to be,' *long*, implying existence absolutely, and *don*, implying limited existence, and also meaning 'to have.'

Conjugation.—There is only one form of conjugation for all verbs. Tense and Mood are indicated by prefixes, number and person by the subject. When the subject is a noun, the pronoun is inserted before the verb.

PRESENT.		PAST.		FUTURE.	
Singular.	Plural.	Singular.	Plural.	Singular.	Plural.
<i>Ngā long</i> , I am .	<i>Ngī long</i> , we are.	<i>Ngā la long</i> , I was.	<i>Ngī la long</i> , we were.	<i>Ngā'n long</i> , I shall be.	<i>Ngī'n long</i> , we shall be.
<i>Mē</i> (masc.) or <i>phā</i> (fem.) <i>long</i> , thou art.	<i>Phi long</i> , ye are.	<i>Mē</i> or <i>phā la long</i> , thou wast.	<i>Phi la long</i> , ye were.	<i>Mē'n</i> or <i>phā'n long</i> , thou shalt be.	<i>Phi'n long</i> , ye shall be.
<i>U</i> (masc.) or <i>ka</i> (fem.) <i>long</i> , he or she is.	<i>Ki long</i> , they are.	<i>U</i> or <i>ka la long</i> , he or she was.	<i>Ki la long</i> , they were.	<i>U'n</i> or <i>ka'n long</i> , he or she will be.	<i>Ki'n long</i> , they will be.

These simple tenses are rendered more definite or emphatic by various devices. *La*, sign of the past, when added to *lah*, sign of the potential, has the sense of the complete perfect: *ngā la lah long*, I have or had been. *Yn* (apocoped after a vowel to 'n), with *sa* added, emphasises the future. In the subjunctive mood (after *haba*, if), *da* is inserted to indicate a hypothetical condition: *haba ngā da long*, if I be; *haba ngā da la long*, if I were. Other complex tenses are similarly formed with other particles.

The *Imperative Mood* is either (1) the simple root, *long*, be, or (2) *tō long*, or (3) *tō long hō* (emphatic).

The *Infinitive of Purpose* is composed of *ba*, the relative particle, and *yn*, the future particle, prefixed to the root: *ba'n long*, to be, or, for the purpose of being. The *Infinitive of State* is *ka jing long* or *ka ba long*, being.

Participles.—*Ba long*, being; *ba la long*, been.

Noun of Agency.—*Nong long*.

There is no *Conjunctive Participle*, such as plays so great a part in the syntax of Bārā and other Tibeto-Burman languages.

The *Passive Voice* is formed by using the verb impersonally and putting the subject into the accusative case with *ia*. In the present, *dang* (particle of continuance) is prefixed to the verb: thus (*ieit*, to love),—I am loved=*dang ieit ia ngā*; I was loved=*la ieit ia ngā*; I shall be loved=*yn ieit ia ngā*.

Potentiality is indicated by the verb *lah*, and *Necessity* by the verb *dei*, both used impersonally, with the feminine 'article' (for the neuter) *ka*, and followed by the relative particle *ba*. Thus, *ka lah ba ngā la long*, I might be (*lit.* it is possible that I was): *ka dei ia ngā ba'n long*, I ought to be (*lit.* it is necessary for me to be). *Lah*, in the present, is construed personally (*ngā lah ba'n long*, I can be), and impersonally only in the past and future: *dei* is impersonal throughout.

Dang and *da* indicate the *Indefinite Present*: *ngā da trei*, I am working.

The *Negative* sign is *ym*, apocoped after vowels to 'm: *ngā'm long*, I am not. In the past tense *shym* is used in addition to *ym*: *ngā'm shym la thoh*, I have not written. In the future *ym* follows the future particle *yn*: *ngā'n ym thoh*, I will not write.

In the *Imperative* the *Negative* is *wat*: *wat thoh* or *wat thoh mē*, write not.

Order of words.—The usual order of words is (1) subject, (2) verb, (3) object; but very often, for the sake of emphasis, the verb (usually preceded by the 'article' or pronoun) is put before the subject: *u la wan u briw* or *la wan u briw*, the man came. Generally, it may be said that when emphasis is desired, the word to be emphasised is brought *forward* (*i.e.*, nearer the commencement) in the sentence.

The following examples of Khasi in its various dialects have been provided by the Deputy Commissioner of the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. I have already expressed my indebtedness to Sir Charles Lyall for the revision of the proofs. I must also take this opportunity of acknowledging the kindness of the Rev. H. Roberts, the author of the well-known Khasi Grammar and of other excellent works dealing with the language, who has likewise gone through the proofs, and has cleared up many points regarding which we were in doubt. His intimate knowledge of the various dialects of the language, which he has ungrudgingly placed at my disposal, has rendered it possible to represent them with considerable accuracy.

India is rightly called the epitome of the world –which statement is true, apart from other consideration, both anthropologically and linguistically, As far as the languages are concerned, India is represented almost all the families of the world—Indo-European, Mongolian, Dravidian, Austric, etc. etc. This position is as well true even about North Eastern India. This region, a small part of the country as it is, abounds in languages belonging to quite a few families and groups. As for example, one may find in this region Assamese of the Indo-European family, Khasi of MonKhmer family, Ahom of the Chinese-Siamese family, Miri of the Tibeto-Burman family, etc.

All these languages of the North East, along with their various dialects had been surveyed by the consultants and associates of the illustrious linguist Dr. George Abraham Grierson and the results of the surveys were systematically and scientifically recorded in his monumental work *Linguistic Survey of India*. The said work includes all known languages and dialects of India and is, therefore, too vast for a researcher interested in a particular region to handle and too expensive for any individual to acquire. Nevertheless, the culture, sociology and languages of the North East are gaining growing interest in India and abroad. Keeping these facts in view: these selections from Dr. Grierson's *magnum opus* have been compiled with a view to presenting a complefe linguistic picture of the region. Care has been taken so that all predominant families and groups are well represented.

It is fervently hoped that the scholars interested in the languages and culture of the North East India will find this volume useful.

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