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e Terminology of Relationship of the Hos  
of Kolhan.

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THE kinship nomenclature of the Hos is classi-descriptive in character. There are two principal systems of kinship terms; one in which the terms are applicable not to single individual persons, but to classes of relatives which may often be very large, and the other in which the terms denote single individual persons. In reality, however, this latter system of nomenclature is seldom found anywhere. Even in the terminology of relationship of most of the Caucasian peoples, which Dr Rivers speaks of as the family system, sometimes a group of individuals is denoted by one common term so that the difference in the two systems, classificatory and descriptive, may be reduced to one of degree. That is, in the former a term is used to denote a larger number of individuals, while in the descriptive system of terminology, a term refers ordinarily to one single individual. Thus, for example, the Sema Nagas use one word 'âzâ' to denote mother, father's brother's wife, and mother's sister; the same people use 'apu' to denote 'father,' father's brother and mother's sister's husband. Again they use 'ani' to denote father's sister, wife's mother, husband's mother, husband's sister, husband's brother's wife. The Angami Nagas use 'thi' to denote, wife's elder brother, wife's elder sister, husband's elder brother, elder sister's husband, elder brothers's wife, mother's brother's wife, father's brother's wife. Again the term 'Ni' is used to denote father's brother's wife, elder brother's wife, husband's elder sister, etc. Amongst the Hos, mother's brother, father's sister's husband and the father of both husband and wife are all called 'Hoyar.' Again, father's sister, mother's brother's wife and mother of both husband and wife are denoted by 'Hatom'.<sup>1</sup>

According to Dr. Rivers, in the most complete form of the classificatory system, there is not one single term of relationship, the use of which tells us that reference is being made to one person and to one person only.<sup>2</sup>

The question of the origin of the terminology of relationship has been attacked from different standpoints. Some have explained it by referring it to a psychological similarity exist-

<sup>1</sup> For mother's brother they now use 'Kumang' and for wife's mother—'Hanr.'

<sup>2</sup> See Dr. Rivers, kinship and social organisation.

ing between persons denoted by the same term, while others have recognised social functions as determining the terminology of relationship. Dr. Rivers has championed the latter hypothesis, and the kinship nomenclature of both primitive and advanced societies justify his conclusion. The origin of kinship terms from antecedent social functions seems to be the most probable hypothesis formed up till now. When the Hos use the term 'Hoyar' to denote mother's brother, father's sister's husband and the father of both husband and wife, the application of the term can easily be explained by referring to social function antecedent to the use. Thus, the custom of cross cousin marriage is very much prevalent amongst these people, and as a result of this form of marriage, the mother's brother and the father's sister's husband get to the position of fathers-in-law, and consequently they possess only one term to denote mother's brother, father's sister's husband and the father of both husband and wife. Again the mother's sister's husband has no special term of address. This can only be accounted for by the fact that the Hos allow marriage with the mother's sister. So the mother's sister's husband is identified with the speaker, and consequently they possess no special term to denote the relationship. The wife's sister of the Hos has no special denomination. This is not the case with the Hos alone. From the most primitive to the most advanced society, the wife's sister possesses no special term of address. Sometimes it is conventional to address her by a term of endearment or mild reproach as '*SALI*' in Bengali. A reference to the custom of marrying the sister of the wife during the life time or after the death of the latter explains the absence of a special term for the wife's sister.

But undue stress should not be laid on the importance of social functions in determining the terminology of relationship as there are other factors which must be considered. A rich vocabulary is an acquisition of cultured people, and the vocabulary of a people very often determines its cultural stage. When the same term is used to denote a number of relatives male and female, it cannot be explained by reference to any particular social function, the main explanation being the low cultural stage.

#### Sema Nagas :

- Apuzâ—(1) Father's mother.  
 (2) Mother's father.  
 (3) Mother's mother.

#### Angami Nagas :

- 'Thi'—(1) Wife's elder brother.  
 (2) Wife's elder sister.  
 (3) Husband's elder brother.

- (4) Elder sister's husband.
- (5) Elder brother's wife.
- (6) Mother's brother's wife.
- (7) Father's brother's wife.

Hos :

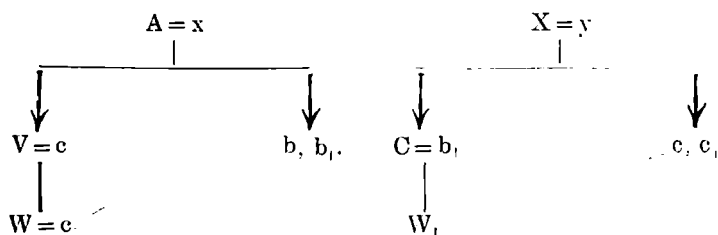
- 'Gungu' — (1) Father's elder brother.
- (2) Father's younger brother.
- (3) Father's elder brother's wife.
- 'Tangain' — (1) Elder sister's husband.
- (2) Husband's younger brother's wife.
- (3) Husband's elder brother's wife.

An imperfect language is the outcome of an imperfect civilisation, for language only fulfils the wants of those who speak it. When the Australian language is said to be poor, it is meant that the stage of civilisation which the Australians have reached is a low one, and the language subserves the simple wants of those who speak it. So the poverty of the vocabulary may be accounted for by the material civilisation of the people. Requirements decide what the wealth of language shall be.<sup>1</sup> So the terminology of relationship has sprung up from social functions conditioning the use and the requirements of the people who speak the language.

A few words about the Ho terms of relationship are necessary for further research on kinship. Father's sister's children have no special terms in Ho terminology, they are called (*e*) Hatom hon or (*y*) Hatom undi, *i.e.*, father's sister's children. The Mother's brother's son is classed with the father's sister's son and is denoted by 'Hoyar hon'. The husband's sister's child, wife's brother's child, wife's brother's daughter, daughter's son, daughter's daughter, are all denoted by the term 'gaing', but when addressing these relatives, the personal name of the addressee is preferred. The use of the term 'gaing' to denote two generations is significant when it means husband's sister's child, wife's brother's child, how is it possible that the term is applied to the daughter's son or the daughter's daughter, which are one generation below the former? It has been said above that the Hos are very fond of cross cousin marriage. Formerly this form of marriage was compulsory. In case a man for any reasons cannot marry his cousin, he has to give presents to the mother's brother, and without this no marriage is regarded as valid. In the same way, the mother's brother also has to satisfy his nephew before he can marry his daughter to a chosen bridegroom. Marriage with the mother's sister is also common amongst the Hos. So to account for the use of the term 'gaing' these two

<sup>1</sup> See Ratzel, *History of Mankind*, Vol. 1, Chapter on Language.

social functions are to be taken into consideration. A reference to the following diagram will be of help in understanding the significance of the term 'gaing'.<sup>1</sup>



Let 'A' man marry x woman, X man, the brother of x woman, marry y woman. Let the issues of the first pair be 'V' man and  $b, b_1$  girls and those of the second pair be 'C' man and  $c, c_1$  girls. Again let 'V' man marry 'c' girl and C man marry  $b_1$  girl, and the issues are respectively W and  $W_1$ . Now V is the father's sister's son of C and C is the mother's brother's son of V and therefore

$$H.S.Z = V = M.B.Z = C.$$

[By cross-cousin marriage] [Z denotes son]

$$W = D.Z \text{ of } X.$$

$$W_1 = D.Z \text{ of } A.$$

To prove that  $V = C = W$ .

If W marries  $c_1$ , the mother's sister of W.

Then W is C's sister's husband.

or V's wife's sister's husband.

∴ V.C.W. possess the same social position and therefore husband's sister's child, wife's brother's child and daughter's child are all denoted by one term, e.g., "gaing".

#### THE KINSHIP TERMS.

Father's father } Tata.  
 Mother's father }  
 Father's mother } Jiyam.  
 Mother's mother }

Father—âpu.

Mother—ângâ.

Father's elder brother—Gungu.

Father's younger brother—Gungu.

Father's brother's wife.

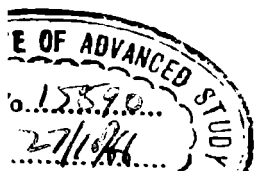
{ elder—Gung  
 { younger—Gaing.

<sup>1</sup> H=husband, S=sister, M=wife, B=brother.



Sister's child—Hon or personal name.  
Husband's brother's child—Hon. or personal name.  
Husband's sister's child—Gaing.  
Wife's sister's child—Hon.  
Wife's brother's child—Gaing.  
Wife's brother's daughter—Gaing.  
Daughter's husband—Erâ.  
Son's wife—Hon kimin.  
Son's son—Jai or garam.  
Daughter's son—Gaing.  
Son's daughter—Jai.  
Daughter's daughter—Gaing.

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