CHAPTER III
3.00. The Grammar of the Language

The language in question here is the Khasi language as used officially in Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Before proceeding further about the grammar of the Khasi language, we come to the primary question about the Khasi race itself. It is difficult to ascertain the age and the origin of the Khasi race from historical records, because the Khasis do not possess any written records about the origin of their race. Nevertheless, there are a number of stories, folktales and myths which are preserved to show that the Khasis do have some type of origin. These stories, folktales and myths in the early days were narrated around the hearth to the younger generation sometimes with the accompaniment of ka duitara, a four stringed instrument. In this manner the stories were preserved by the people and the process continued till the language was reduced into writing. The written language in Khasi Hills started only with the arrival of the Christian missionaries and it was after that period that systematic records were kept. Thus, prior to the 17th Century little was known about the Khasis except from the stray records kept by a few traditional rulers and the British traders. Interestingly, the Khasis kept important
The Khasis believe that they came into this world since time immemorial and with a mission. It took them twelve years to reach the hills they are occupying now; that shows that they had migrated to their present habitat from some unknown place. According to the Khasis' legends, God, in the beginning created sixteen families and these were with him in heaven. After God had created everything on the earth and there was need for ruling the animals and other creatures on the face of the earth, God, selected Hynniew Trep (seven families) to come to the world. At that period of time, God, did not send them empty handed; he gave to them the wisdom and a language to communicate among themselves, with nature and with the animal world. Thus, even among the Khasi language existed before any literature was produced and Khasi literature is a child of language. With the help of language the Khasis governed themselves, the animal world and nature. Man commands authority over everything using the language and the language has power and value when honesty (sotti juk) existed. Many linguists believe that the Khasi language belongs to the Austroic family and has close resemblance to the Mon and Khmer languages. Such a belief requires concrete proof especially
in modern times, but till date no Khasi has been to the spot where the Mons and the Khmers reside. Khasi language is as old as the Khasi race itself, since it came into existence with the race who continues to use it. We may also assume that from the time the Khasis came into existence they communicate among themselves in Khasi and that too grammatically. As long as the language was in spoken form, no grammatical explanation was necessary for the language was mainly for communication. Once the language attained the written form then the process of codification became a necessity. By codification we mean, (a) the process of recording the spoken language in a systematic way, (b) setting up rules for the written language, and (c) producing grammar books in the language.

Many people in different parts of the world subscribe to the view that their language was given by God. Among the Hebrews, the languages multiplied when men, in their pride, decided to built the Tower of Babel and God punished them by multiplying the languages; making communication between them impossible. Soso Tham, a Khasi poet, wrote in 1936 that before the fall of man, that is, when honesty (soti juk) was present only one language existed which is understood by men and animals in the Khasiland, (Ü Uriow, u Mrad, u Khla, u Thlen, Kawei ka Ktien ki dang la
In another place Soso Tham wrote that at the time when man was at peace with God, with himself and the other creatures, man decided to have a market place where all the animals could come and exhibit and sell their products. Writes Soso Tham.

It was in that market place that man introduced a language for communication. In that market all the animals, birds and other creatures forget their own languages and spoke perfect Khasi among themselves and with man.

From the above account we could draw two important observations; (i) that the birds, the animals and different things in nature possessed their own methods for communication, (ii) That for the purpose of uniformity, integration and understanding the language of man was adopted to be used in the market place. Unfortunately, that market did not last for long due to the misunderstanding over the sale of tungrymbai (Khasi chutney made out of fermented beans) by the dog. The closing of the market brought about the disintegration and enmity in the animal world especially between the family of the dog and the animal world. To extract his revenge the dog came to live with man and helped

man in hunting down the animals, since their legs has the scent of tungrymbai they had trampled in the market place. The human language was abandoned and a communication gap was created between man and the animal world; man no longer has control over them.

3.01. Definition of Grammar

The word 'grammar' is common and we often hear it on our day to day life. In this section we shall focus our attention on the etymology and the meaning of grammar as presented by linguists. We shall also focus our attention on the views of the Khasi writers on grammar. Etymologically, the word grammar is derived from the Greek word 'gramma', which means the letter of the alphabet. This term is later developed in its plural form 'grammata' to mean the rudiments of writing and learning. In its adjective form 'grammatike' with 'techne' it came to mean as the art of knowing one's letters. Even the Latin word 'grammaticus' is derived from the above word.

Grammar has a long history associated with it right from the times of the Greeks. It is generally believed that

Plato (427–347 BC) was the first to speak on grammar and to realize that a sentence of a language possessed a noun and a verb. Plato's discussion on grammar is found in his *Cratylus*. David Crystal made the following observation on the book of Plato, writes he,

> [Cratylus] is the earlier surviving linguistic debate: a wide-ranging discussion about the origins of language and the nature of meaning, in which considerable attention is paid to the study of the origins of words (etymology).⁴

Aristotle did not ignore the subject, he devoted Chapter XX of the *Poetics* to language study. He presented his views in the following words, "Language in general includes the following parts: Syllable, Connecting word, Noun, Verb, Inflexion or Case, Sentence or Phrase."⁵ He also offered a brief explanation to each of the parts he found in language.

Dionysius Thrax who lived about the first Century BC, wrote a book entitled, *Techne Grammatike* (Grammatical Technique). In the book he defined grammar as the "technical knowledge of the language generally employed by poets and

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writers."\(^6\) Thrax, initially observed that there are eight parts of speech; Noun, Verb, Article, Adverb, Particle, Pronoun, Preposition and also he included Conjunction.\(^7\)

It is clear that Thrax had added five more parts than Plato and Aristotle, but he did not stop at that, he went beyond his predecessors and also recognized the existence of Case, Gender, Number, Person, Tense, Voice and Mood in a language. Thrax like Aristotle offered a brief explanation to the parts of speech he found in a language. Thrax's *Techne Grammatike* influenced the grammatical thinking of the West for many Centuries; but for the treatment of syntax, it is believed that Appolonius Dyscolus had contributed to a great extent.

Thus, in the study of grammar, the Greeks led the way, the Romans followed them and the English followed both. The Khasi writers of grammar books followed the English, because it was in their schools that they came face to face with their language in the written form. It was from them that they got the written script and the first grammar books which later develop in them the love for their language and study it in depth.

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7. Ibid.
It is claimed that the oldest grammar that had been preserved is Panini's, now the question arises, could it be possible that the Sanskrit grammar of Panini influenced the Greeks especially Plato, Aristotle and Thrax. Before drawing any conclusion the following argument could be considered,

Panini is considerably later than Yaska (probably about 500 B.C.), whom he mentions, and between whom and himself a good number of important grammarians intervene. On the other hand, Panini is much older than his interpreter Patanjali, who probably dates from the latter half of the second century B.C., the two being separated by another eminent grammarian, Katyayana. Panini himself uses the word yavanani (i.e. Iones or Greeks). Now it is not at all likely that the Indian should have become acquainted with Greek writing before the invasion of Alexander in 327 B.C. But the natives of the extreme north-west, of whom Panini in all probability was one, would naturally have become acquainted with it soon after that date. They must however, have grown familiar with it before a grammarian would make a rule as to how to form from Yavana, 'Greek', a derivative from meaning 'Greek writing'. It seems therefore hardly possible to place Panini earlier than about 300 B.C.

Thus, from the above it is clear that the grammar given by the Greek is earlier than the Sanskrit grammar, unless, other later finding proves otherwise. This is the field where a lot of investigation is going on basing on historical records and evidences.

Karl W. Dykema in the article "Where Our Grammar Came From" discussed at length about grammar, writes he,

The etymology of grammar shows rather sharp changes in meaning: it starts with Greek gramma letter (of the alphabet), itself a development from graphein, draw or write. The plural grammata develops in meaning through letters to alphabet to the rudiments of writing, to the rudiments of learning, the adjective form grammaticke with techne meant the art of knowing one's letters. From this form comes the Latin grammaticus.

As time passed the meaning of the word came to "the science of letters". According to Noam Chomsky, grammar is a "device of some sort for producing the sentences of the language under analysis." To the above definition David Crystal adds... "that the sentences produced must be grammatical ones, acceptable to the native speakers." Frank Palmer, in the discussion about grammar spoke about homo grammaticus, because in man "it is grammar that makes language so essentially a human characteristic." To Palmer grammar is meaningful if it conforms to his view that,

An Englishman might well be said to know the grammar of French perfectly if he spoke it as grammatically as a Frenchman, but had never attended a class or about French.\textsuperscript{14}

Palmer also adds that grammar,

\begin{quote}
describes what people do when they speak their language; it is not something that has to be found in books, written down or learnt by heart.\textsuperscript{15}
\end{quote}

Thus, according to Palmer it appears that grammar is within a language and those who are born in a particular linguistic community acquire it automatically without any efforts. If that be the case we really do not need grammar books but we need the time to spend and learn the language with the people who spoke it and as they spoke it. David Crystal offers a different angle of looking at grammar. According to him, it is divided into two sections, a specific sense and a general one. Writes he,

\begin{quote}
The specific sense is the more traditional; here, grammar is presented as just one branch of language structure, distinct from phonology and semantic.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

The same view had been expressed by Palmer in the following words,

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15. Ibid. \\
\end{flushright}
Within linguistics, 'grammar' is normally used in a technical sense to distinguish it chiefly from PHONOLOGY, the study of the sounds of a language, and SEMANTICS, the study of meaning. 17

Palmer is also aware that 'grammar' among some scholars includes in some degree, both phonology and semantics, with the term 'syntax' used for the central portion. He made his stand in the following words,

But I use the term in the narrower, more traditional sense, and this book contains therefore no detailed discussion of sound systems or of meaning. 18

According to Crystal, the general sense of the term grammar, was popularised by Chomsky. In the general sense, the term grammar,

subsumes all aspects of sentence patterning, including phonology and semantics, and introduces the term 'syntax' as the more specific notion. 19

John Lyons, in his discussion about the term grammar agrees that it is derived from Greek but states that according to the Greeks, it "meant nothing more than the art of

18. Ibid.
reading and writing." According to him, the Greek grammarians had viewed grammar in that light since they were primarily concerned with the language of literature and not the everyday spoken language. Thus, the understanding of grammar is something to be taught formally at schools and they gave little or no importance at all to the grammar of the spoken language. But in modern times we know that "languages that have never been committed to writing are no less subject to grammatical description than languages that have long been used for literature." Another way of looking at grammar is that it "must be prescriptive in orientation and purpose; that the grammarian's task is to formulate the rules of 'correct' speech and writing." In modern times we have to draw a clear cut distinction between descriptive and prescriptive. Once that distinction is drawn then grammar can be defined as,

the study, and subsequent description, of the way in which people actually speak rather than as the prescription of how, in our or anyone else's view, they ought to speak.

In his findings, the term grammar interpreted in the narrower sense by modern linguists, "covers syntax,

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21. Ibid., p. 58.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
accidence and word-formation; or, to use more modern terms, syntax, inflexion and derivation." But according to his understanding, the term grammar may be defined as, "that part of the systematic description of language which accounts for the way in which words are combined to form sentences."  

3.02. Definition of Grammar by the Khasis

The Khasi grammarians, because of the influence of the Christian missionaries who taught them in schools still cling on to the traditional view of grammar. William Pryse in An Introduction to the Khasi Language (1855), defined grammar as "a compilation of rules, founded upon the established principles and usages of a language, with a view to facilitate the acquisition thereof." Hugh Roberts, who wrote A Grammar of the Khasi Language in 1891, writes, "GRAMMAR is the science which teaches how to speak and to write correctly in any language." Both the authors offered the prescriptive definition of grammar.

24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
The Khasi writers who wrote after the missionaries did not care to offer any definition of grammar taking for granted that it is known to readers. The need of teaching grammar to students was felt since 1965 when F.M. Pugh expressed in the Preface of *Ka Jingiar Ka Ktien Khasi* the view that the Khasi students failed to produce grammatical sentences even in Khasi. The book of F.M. Pugh is perhaps the first book that could be considered as a sort of grammar in Khasi. It is not a grammar book as we understand and know it now.

In 1971, Mrs. D. Franklin Basaiawmoit brought out a grammar book entitled *Ka Grammar Khasi*; the book was intended for the use of students at schools and that too at the Middle English section. She felt that the need of the hour was a Khasi grammar but in the Khasi language itself. The aim was of helping the student to get a better understanding of grammar and to produce grammatical sentences in Khasi. The author followed the English grammar closely and attempted to spell in the Khasi pronunciation the technical terms. The grammar book follows the traditional grammar and the author followed the English grammar closely while writing it. The author defined grammar as the knowledge that teaches how to speak and write properly the language.28

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One of the resolutions adopted by the Khasi Teachers and other assembled personages of the Extension Lecture Course on 9.8.76 to 16.8.76 was,

(c) That there should be a special teaching in respect of grammar and composition in the language class, in a most systematic manner from middle level onward and to avail suitable books for this purpose. 29

Even after taking such a resolution, we are not aware of any systematic method in the teaching of grammar and composition for Khasi student in the language classes. We are not aware of any writer who came forward to supply the need of the Khasi students by writing a Khasi grammar book. The book written by Nissor Singh in 1900 continued to be in the syllabus and the grammar of the Khasi language continued to be taught in that light. We notice, too, that the teaching of grammar and composition are treated on the same footing and such a treatment will confuse the students.

In the proceeding paragraphs our concentration will be on the traditional grammar among the Khasi writers. We shall study the views of the Khasi authors on the grammar of the Khasi language. The period which will be covered in our analysis will be from 1900 till 1995, though the period

should have been till 1980 but because of the search for a
definition of grammar by a Khasi we need to cover 1987.

From 1980 the study of Khasi took a new direction.
We shall examine this 'direction' in a separate section.

3.03. The New Direction

For practical purposes we have to leave those
authors who are no longer with us; and come to the one who
may still be writing, he is H. Warmphaign Sten. He never
claimed that he is a Khasi linguist. Sten made a skeletal
definition of grammar in his State Award winner, Ka Histori
Ka Ktien Khasi (1980). In the book, he gave a short history
of the Khasi grammar and he holds that grammar is part of
the study of any language that is developed; such a study
has no end. He also holds that we will not know a language
fully without knowing the rules that governs it. Hence
knowledge of grammar in acquiring any language properly is
necessary. Sten also maintains that it is grammar or the
rules of writing and speaking of our own language that
teaches us of what is right, we may or may not
possess such type of book in our language, hence, grammar is
not a book. In 1980, Sten maintained that it was the English

30. H.W. Sten, Ka Histori Ka Ktien Khasi, (Shillong: Ropeca,
who brought out a book on how to read, write and speak Khasi. Since the English taught the Khasi grammar, it is quite natural that they adopted the English grammar as close as possible. Sten in that book stated that there are specific reasons why we need to know the grammar of a language, "(1) To discover an explanation of how words are formed into sentences; (2) To discover what is correct and what is not in writing." Sten was aware of the need of a Khasi grammar by a native speaker because that will make the study of the Khasi language complete and meaningful.

In 1987, that H.W. Sten brought out a Khasi grammar under the title *Ka Grammar*. In the Preface of the book gave a brief history of the Khasi grammar and states that all the writers followed the traditional grammar. He was also the first to define grammar among the Khasi writers. According to him, grammar is not a literature though there are dictionaries which offer to call it as the literature of power. To Sten, grammar is a science that teaches to write and speak the language in the manner that the native speaker accepts as correct or grammatical. It is a study that has its own sets of rules as any other scientific studies.

31. Ibid.
Thus, according to Sten, grammar of any language in order to be meaningful, has to take the opinion of the native speakers. It is the native speakers who will be in a position to give a judgement whether the grammar is acceptable or unacceptable. The study of grammar also has to be scientific, that is, as the language operates with all its peculiarities. Sten also holds the view that a description of a language is same as grammar. \textsuperscript{33} H.W. Sten, even in 1980 was aware of the existence of the other types of grammar, writes he,

> When the English and other people in the West are reading about Structural Grammar, Grammar of Remedy, Transformational Grammar and Generative Grammar, ours is still in the infant state.\textsuperscript{34}

From the above discussion we can make the following conclusions, the linguists who studied different languages took pain to search for a definition of grammar since it is a part and parcel of the study of language. The Khasis who wrote on the Khasi language did not care to define grammar taking for granted that it is understood by the readers. H. W. Sten, perhaps, is the first Khasi who thought that it was necessary to define grammar and the definition he gave

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid., p. 115.
\textsuperscript{34} Ka Histori Ka Ktien Khasi, p. 106.
is universal, acceptable and clear. In modern times the linguists do not ignore the native speakers; their views are taken into account in research for the development of the language they spoke.

3.04. Traditional Grammar in Khasi

The term traditional grammar is used to summarize the range of attitudes and methods found in the period of grammatical study before the advent of linguistic sciences. The "tradition" in question is over 2,000 years old, and includes the work of classical Greek and Roman grammarians, Renaissance writers, and 18th century prescriptive grammarians. The term from the linguistic point of view refers to the unscientific approach to grammatical study. We shall consider some definitions of Traditional Grammar by some known linguists. J.M.Y. Simpson writes,

By 'traditional grammar' we mean that type of analysis which until recently characterized all school grammar books (of English and of foreign languages) and which remains that commonly found in language teaching. Indeed many people are under the impression that it reveals the 'real', structure of language.35

The definition of Simpson merely portrays traditional grammar as a type of analysis. David Crystal also offers a

definition. Writes he,

The phrase 'traditional grammar', if it means anything, attempts to summarize a state of mind, a spectrum of methods and principles which appear in various combinations and emphases over the years, associated with many schools of thought.  

Commenting on the definition, Sten says that Crystal was trying to philosophies when he expects it to summarize also "a state of mind", but he believes that he refers to the mind of traditional grammarians as that 'mind' reflects itself in their treatises on grammar. Further, Sten presents his view on traditional grammar. Writes he,

By tradition we mean knowledge and principles transmitted from generation to generation. When the word is changed into adjective and used to qualify such noun as 'grammar' to get the phrase 'traditional grammar', we mean a grammar which had been followed or taught from one generation to another until, as Simpson writes, "recently" when newer approaches to the study of language have been made available to the people.  

In the traditional grammar, the languages were analysed in terms of Latin, with scant regard for empirical facts. The

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38. Ibid., pp. 24-25.
modern interest in the study of traditional grammar is part of the historical linguistics.

In Khasi traditional grammar by a Khasi writer started with Nissor Singh when he brought out a book Hints on the Study of the Khasi Language in 1900. The author confessed in the 'Preface' that he was aware of the presence of a Khasi grammar book by Hugh Roberts. He found the book "highly elaborate" and its "contents rather difficult to digest," so he thought of presenting "a less elaborate and a more convenient book of Khasi grammar." In presenting a new book Nissor Singh was directly responsible in throwing out the book of Hugh Roberts from the syllabus. His book was prescribed and it continues to enjoy this position till date at the High School level. Though the book is about the Khasi language it was written in English and the author justified it with these lines:

I have ventured to write it in that language [English] with a hope that my humble attempt may serve to have pave [sic] the way to a complete and exhaustive work hereafter.

In writing the book in English the author certainly became popular with the British officers. In promising a complete

40. Ibid.
and exhaustive book, the author might have found that his book was incomplete and inexhaustive. He may also had other writers in mind to follow his efforts and bring out such exhaustive work.

Nissor Singh has his own specific objectives in writing the book and these are:

1. To give a stimulus to the Khasi youths to get at a thorough knowledge of their mother tongue and at the same time to get a knowledge of the English language; 2. To give facility to foreigners to acquire a fair knowledge of our tongue, and 3. Because of the importance now attached to it - for it is recognised as one of the frontier languages of Assam and a second language in the Examination of the Calcutta University.

The first objective and perhaps the most important in the list of priority is to help the Khasi youth. The medium he employed to impart that help which is "a thorough knowledge of their mother tongue" is English. Though he had justified why he wrote in English still it does not seem proper to impart a thorough knowledge of Khasi to Khasi students through English. Thus, according to this, Khasi youth in order to understand their own language has first to study and know English. Thus, it stands to reason that the second

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41. *Ibid.* (It is yet to be ascertained which the other languages are).
part of the first objective could have been assigned priority. According to our experience, a thorough knowledge of Khasi should be presented to the Khasis in Khasi rather than in English. In that way the Khasis will appreciate their language and work for its development.

The second objective is that of providing facility to foreigners to acquire a fair knowledge of the Khasi language. It was necessary since a lot of foreigners were in Khasi Hills both as missionaries and government officials. As missionaries they were involved in preaching to the Khasis who had accepted Christianity and teaching the children and the youth in the schools. As government officials they have to run the administration and they need to know the language for communication. The book, in the light of the confession of the author, appears to be an outcome of the author's "experience as a tutor in the Khasi language to some of the Europeans." If that be the case then the author will certainly be accepted as an experienced person to teach the Khasi language to the foreigners.

The third objective is important since it serves as a document for other researchers. Even at that time the Khasi language occupied an important place in Assam and at

\[42. \text{Ibid.}, \text{p. ii.}\]
the Calcutta University. Certainly, it is a matter of pride for every Khasi to know that Khasi was recognized as one of the frontier languages of Assam and as a second language in the examination at the Calcutta University as early as 1900. The language enjoyed the same status under the Gauhati University since 1957. But with the establishment of the North-Eastern Hill University in 1973, the position of the Khasi language began to improve. In 1976, the University introduced the Honours course; and in 1981 it established the Khasi Department for post graduate and research studies. Though the language has made a lot of progress and development, it is yet to be recognized by the Sahitya Akademi as one of the literary languages of India and also yet to be included in the Eighth Scheduled to the Constitution of India.

From the Preface it appeared that there was a lot of discussion even in those days on the orthography and the author was aware of it. Hence, in writing the book the author had to follow certain convention which was acceptable to the readers. Even in spelling the author adopted the accepted form and was constant and regular at it, writes he, "... I have throughout, as far as possible, adopted usual phonetic way of spelling."\(^4^3\) It is interesting to note that

\(^4^3\) Ibid.
this writer referred to the 'phonetic way'. We must not equate this 'way' with phonetics we know now.

Another important Khasi author who wrote on the line of traditional grammar was Mondon Bareh. He wrote a book entitled *Khasi-English Course and Grammar*, in 1929. Mondon Bareh was aware of the presence of some grammar books but found them to be defective, writes he,

In the few books already published on the subject, words are classified according to the old-fashioned methods based on arbitrary rules and definitions borrowed from foreign grammars, resulting in the straining of the language to fit in with the rules laid down.\(^4^4\)

We tend to believe that the criticism is directed against his fellow Khasi grammarian Nissor Singh, who tried to fit in the Khasi language the rules of the English grammar. Regarding the arbitrary rules and definitions, perhaps the attack is on the missionaries, for it was in their books that such rules and definitions were found. He discovered that in describing the Khasi language Nissor Singh had adopted the principle of the English language, and that has perhaps resulted in the straining of the Khasi language.

Mondon Bareh too has his own objectives in writing the book and they are spelt out as:

In compiling this book I have a two-fold in view: (1) To help foreigners, European and Indian, to speak and write the Khasi language by means of simple, interesting, and therefore, more rapid methods, and (2) to assist the Khasi students in schools and colleges, at once to master their own mother tongue and to translate into English thought well expressed in Khasi.45

What was the second objective in Nissor Singh became the first objective in Mondon Bareh, the only difference is that the term foreigner was divided into European and Indian. As part of his advertisement, he promised the learner of simple, interesting and a more rapid method. What was the first objective in Nissor Singh became a second objective in Mondon Bareh and that objective is to assist Khasi students to master their own mother tongue. The objective is a good one but the mean does not justify the end. It will be difficult for Khasi students to master the Khasi language through the medium of the English language, [ante p.101]. The author even in those days was aware of the necessity of translation of thoughts well expressed in Khasi into English and vice versa.

There could be other considerations why both Nissor

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45. Ibid.
Singh and Mondon Bareh wrote their books in English. The English language at that time was the language of the rulers and so writing in English was much more out of political affiliation than conviction. Books written in English received government assistance easily in getting them published; and have a wider circulation since there were a number of educated people in the British community than among the Khasis. The authors who wrote in English were highly appreciated, honoured and praised. Soso Tham was fully aware that the Khasi reading public needed to learn from Greek wisdom by translating *Aesop's Fables* in 1920. He found it difficult to market the printed copies and he had to go from door to door requesting and sometimes begging people to buy a copy.

The awareness that Mondon Bareh had was far better than those of Nissor Singh, he was aware even of the crisis the language was passing through, writes he, "The Khasi language is now in a state of flux and its lines of development cannot yet clearly be determined." The state of flux created at that particular period of time was the social conflict among the Khasis on different issues especially religion. If we view it from the history, the Khasi language

46. Ibid.
was about eighty eight years old only when Bareh wrote; and perhaps it was too early to determine its development. Another point to consider was the attitude of the Khasis towards their own language they neglected their own language and failed to encourage authors who wrote in Khasi.

Mondon Bareh was aware of the role and importance of the Adverb in Khasi, write he, "the Adverbs form the crux and, from one point of view, the strength of the Khasi language; and to treat them fully it would require perhaps a book."\(^{47}\) The view that Khasi is rich in the Adverbs has been expressed even by earlier writers like Hugh Roberts but he was aware of the fact that if a proper treatment is to be given to Adverbs in Khasi then a book is required. This is an eye-opener for researchers in the Khasi language who would like to devote their time and energy in the study of the Khasi Adverbs.

According to Mondon Bareh, "All the Khasi verbs may be used as nouns to show a certain mode or manner of being or action."\(^{48}\) If the above view is to be accepted, the problem we will face in modern analysis of a language is the class structure. How do we explain the sentence given below?

\(^{47}\) Ibid., p. iii.
\(^{48}\) Ibid., p. 19.
Ka leit jong nga (my going).

We are not aware if the Englishman is ready to accept my going as a noun; but certainly not in Khasi. The sentence is composed of different elements termed in modern linguistics as class structure.

Mondon Bareh was aware of the existence of ia as a prefix and that it conveys a different sets of verb when it is connected to a main verb. Unfortunately, he did not supply any name to it, but in modern study of language we call it reciprocal verb. Mondon Bareh also made a statement which demands an inquiry, writes he, "we may say that in Khasi the verbs are the roots from which not only the nouns but all the adjectives, are manufactured."49 It is difficult to accept the statement, how can a Khasi noun like ka masi (cow) be a manufactured of a verb? If so, which verb? Even in a sentence like ka masi iong (black cow), Masi is treated like a noun and iong as adjective being an attribute to a noun. Thus, we may state that a verb generates a verb and not a noun or an adjective as maintained by Mondon Bareh.

Mondon Bareh was aware of the fact that "the fine distinction of time connected with the sequences of tenses

in advanced languages is not known in Khasi. But even after making such a statement, he still maintained that Khasi has three tenses. It will be difficult for a man at that period of time to differ from the missionaries who were considered as 'learned men'.

Mondon Hurbh nino wrote about the purity of the language he used in his writings, perhaps, it would mean that he used only the accepted words of time. He avoided the use of vulgar words and wrote as far as possible in the written language as introduced by Thomas Jones.

The book Model English Translation, Book I, Part I to III, by D. Nihon Singh Wahlang, was ignored by many researchers as containing nothing for research work. To our utter surprise we discover that the author has some original ideas on the Khasi language. The book was brought out in 1930 with the chief aim of teaching the children translation and composition. He also confessed that the "Khasi words and sentences used in the lessons are such as the Khasi boys and girls need in their daily life and conversation." But the target of the author is not to create the interest in

50. Ibid., p. 39.
52. Ibid., p. v.
the knowledge and development of Khasi but at "an increasing desire for a careful study of the English language which is indispensable to them, in many ways, in their later life." At that time it appeared that knowledge of English was indispensable to have a bright future and a bright career. According to the author the book is to be used in the Middle English Schools and the Middle Classes of High Schools. In writing the author kept the foreigners in mind who might desire to learn Khasi as it is written and spoken.

After Sib Charan Roy Jaitdikhar, D.N.S. Wahlang is the first Khasi to define the different parts of speech as they were known then. Sib Charan Roy, had stated a Noun as ka kyrteŋ, a Verb as jingong and an Adverb as jingong khamban. The definitions given by D.N.S. Wahlang are a bit longer and clearer for understanding. The awareness created by this author are found mainly in the footnotes and it is in analysing those that we get a better understanding of the author.

D.N.S. Wahlang was aware of what we call in modern linguistics as number markers; writes he, "we simply put 'ki' before a singular noun in Khasi and we have plural."
He was the first Khasi unless proved otherwise to be aware that the Adjective in English is placed after a noun while in Khasi it is placed after a noun. Further on Adjective writes he, "In Khasi an Adjective agrees with its Noun or Pronoun which it qualifies in GENDER and NUMBER." The sign of an Adjective is the presence of 'ba' in front of a word, hence we have 'baliek', 'baangaid' etc. The discovery of D.N.S. Wahlang, proved that he studied the Khasi language as a Khasi and analyse the language as it is spoken. Regarding the syllable 'shi' he explained that it conveys the meaning of 'one' and it should be joined to a word. On the issue of tense writes he, "In Khasi there is little or no difference between the Present and Past Tense. Often times 'la' is omitted in the Past Tense in Khasi." It is so in Khasi because the Khasi verb does not have a morphological change, hence there are only markers to indicate the time the action is performed. What he commented is that the language is understood from its context rather than from the change in the verb form or depending on the markers. It appeared that he was aware of the absence of Tense in Khasi but was afraid

57. Ibid., p. 45.
59. Ibid., p. 62.
of declaring it openly. In the article, "The Growth of Our Khasi Language", he stressed that Khasi should have as far as possible common of similar words with other languages in regard to scientific and technical term. He spoke about word-building which in modern linguistics is known as word formation and affixation.

In 1956, H. Elias brought out Ka Grammar Khasi, the booklet was designed to be used at the primary classes. The author was aware of the non-existence of a Khasi grammar book in Khasi, so he brought out the booklet. In the booklet, he followed traditional grammar but he did not explained the different parts of speech. The booklet could be treated as a type of workbook and the students require the assistance of a teacher who knows grammar well.

Ms. D. Franklin Basaiawmoit brought out two grammar books in Khasi. In 1971, Ka Grammar Khasi was published and it was meant for the Middle English classes, that is, classes IV to VI. While in 1974, a thicker book was published under the same title, and the book was meant for the students at high school and college levels. The author was aware of the fact that many Khasi students failed in the vernacular. In order to assist the Khasi students to do well in their vernacular the books were published; hence, the books were for the purpose of imparting proper Khasi grammar.
to the Khasi students. In her books she followed traditional
grammar very closely and the names of the different parts of
speech were spelt in Khasi. What interest us most in her
books is her definition of Tense. Writes she, "Tense means
time - the word which tells us the time of the action
performed or will be performed." Hence, according to her
Tense is time and not a morphological change of the verb.
She illustrates her point by pointing to _la_ before a verb
for the past tense and _un sa_ or _yn sa_ for the future tense.
At present we treat _la_ and _sa_ as auxiliaries. Though the
books are written in Khasi, yet because the author followed
the English grammar closely, students using it will require
an English grammar close by.

We have discussed the belief of the Khasis regarding
the origin of their language and found that it was God who
gave them their language to rule and be master of the
universe. We went through briefly on the history of the
grammar and found that the root is from the Greek. We also
analysed a few definitions on grammar by prominent linguists
and also discussed the definition of grammar given by the
Khasi scholars and found that Steu's definition is universal

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60. _Ka Grammar Khasi_, p. 31. (Ka Tens ka mut ka por - Ka
ktien ba lathuh la ka por ha kaba la leh ne yn sa leh ka
ka kam).
and acceptable. We discussed briefly on traditional grammar and then studied traditional grammar as presented by the Khasis. We found that the Khasi writers of the late 19th Century and early 20th Century, wrote their grammar books mainly in English and we gave a few possible reasons. Among the Khasi authors who wrote on grammar we found that Mondon Bareh and D.N.S. Wahlang were aware of certain areas which differ from the English language; unfortunately, they did not master enough confidence and courage to speak out their view clearly. Interestingly, the view and ideas of D.N.S. Wahlang, on the language were found mostly in the form of footnotes in his Model English Translation (1930). We found that from the 1950s the Khasi who wrote grammar books wrote them in Khasi because they became aware of the need of a grammar book in Khasi written by the Khasis themselves. It was unfortunate, that even those authors who wrote in Khasi failed to describe Khasi language, they instead, followed the English language closely. We found that the book of Nissor Singh, though written in English, continues to be prescribed as a textbook at the high school level; the framers of the syllabi are not aware of the difficulties the students face in studying the book. Finally, we are aware that Khasi grammar has to go with the time and update itself, the Khasi language is a developing language, it requires constant attention and observation by the scholars from the Khasi community itself.