CHAPTER 6

Summary and Conclusion

6.1. INTRODUCTION

We shall group them under the following themes:

a) Image of the kǝi (uncle) in Khasi society

b) Authority of the kǝi today

c) The present role of the kǝi

d) Status of the kpa (father) today

e) Authority of the father today

6.2. IMAGE OF THE KǝI IN KHASI SOCIETY

On the image of the kǝi in Khasi society as perceived by the people today, we have arrived at the following generalizations.

a) First, the traditional institution of kǝi-ship is still considered important by the majority. There is still an emotional attachment to this age-old institution. All Khasis irrespective of age groups, gender, levels of educational qualification, religious creed or occupation, still believe that kǝi-ship is still a significant institution in Khasi society. There is however a gradual tendency among all sections of Khasis to consider this institution as no more essential. The level of ignorance about this traditional institution
is also quite high among the younger generation. The agrarian community seems to have a better familiarity with this institution and they are more positive towards it than the urban respondents.

The study reveals that the popular presumption that rural areas are more favourable to *kñi*-ship than the urban areas is mistaken. The analysis shows clearly that the urban setting scores a little higher in this aspect. In fact, with regard to the diminishing status of the *kñi*, the rural area seems to have been more affected as indicated in Table 4.1. Rural area records a higher percentage of agreement with regard to the issue of the *kpa* replacing the *kñi* than urban areas as seen in Tables 5.22 and 5.23.

The study also indicates that the general presumption that the adherents of the traditional religion are more orthodox believers of this institution is also wrong. In general, there is no perceptible difference between Christians and adherents of Khasi religion in their perception of the *kñi*-ship. Table 4.3 clearly indicates that the difference is minimal. When it comes to the question of the *kpa* replacing the *kñi*, the difference of opinion between adherents of the two religions is not much at all as seen in Tables 5.27 and 5.28.

b) Secondly, regarding the authority of the *kñi* over his *kur/kpoh/ing* members, the study shows that still a large majority of the people believe that the *kñi* still exercises his authority. Tables 3.10-3.15 reveal that irrespective of gender, religion, educational qualification or occupation, there is agreement on this question.

c) Thirdly, concerning the *kñi* as the priest of the *kur/kpoh/ing*, Table 3.17 reveals that elderly persons subscribe to this idea more than the younger ones. As seen in
Table 3.19 that those who profess the traditional religion uphold this role of the *kili* more than the Christians. This is not surprising because in traditional religion the priestly role of the *kili* is still relevant and in practice. Among Christians, however, there is no more family religion or family cult. So this particular role of the *kili* has become redundant.

d) Fourthly, regarding the *kili* as the mediator of the kur/kpoh/ing there is general agreement among all about this role of the *kili* as indicated in Tables 3.22-3.27. Table 3.23 shows that elderly persons believe in this more than the younger ones. The agrarian people also display a higher degree of agreement on this issue than those from the urban areas.

e) Fifthly, concerning the role of the *kili* as the one who upholds the cultural heritage of the kur/kpoh/ing the elderly persons are in general more agreeable to this as clearly indicated in Table 3.31. There is a greater degree of ignorance about this aspect among the younger people than among the elderly ones.

f) Sixthly, concerning the role of the *kili* as the instructor and educator of the kur/kpoh/ing members, Table 3.36 reveals that the elderly people are more inclined to agree with this than the younger people. Presumably they are the ones who have had more experience of this particular role of the *kili* for some of them would have been *khis* themselves. However, the study reveals that within the age group 36 to 55 many disagree. This is probably because many of the Khasi fathers today have begun to assume the role of being instructor and educator of their children.

The traditional image and functions of the *kili* is by and large positive. There is general agreement about the role and authority of the *kili* in society. Therefore it is
evident that theoretically the general perception of the k̈i remains traditional. Most Khasis still perceive k̈i-ship as a significant institution and there is doubtlessly a sentimental attachment to this age-old institution. However, judging by the significant number of respondents who do not seem familiar about this traditional institution, it is equally evident that k̈i-ship as a cultural institution is less known today than earlier.

6.3. AUTHORITY OF THE K̈I TODAY

On the authority of the k̈i in present day Khasi society as perceived by the people today, the present study shows the following.

a) Concerning the down-sliding status of the k̈i today, the study reveals that the k̈i today has lost much of his status that he had before. It is interesting to note that the rural respondents feel this changing phenomenon more than the urban respondents. The reason is probably because the rural people experience more dispersion of the kur/kpo[h]ing members which affects more tangibly the role of the k̈i. Again the women seem to feel such a phenomenon more than the men as seen in Table 4.2. Table 4.3 also shows that Christians in general feel the weakening status of the k̈i more than those who still profess the traditional Khasi religion. This is probably because the role of the k̈i in Christian families is considerably diminished especially in matters related to religious rituals. For example, even if the k̈i still upholds the traditional religion, he would not be able to exercise his religious role in the families of his kur/kpo[h]ing if they are Christians. But this is a normal practice if the families of his kur/kpo[h]ing are still upholding the Khasi religion.
b) When it comes to the relationship between the ḱii and the younger members of the kur/kpoh/ing the analysis shows that there is a growing number of young people who do not know much about their ḱii anymore. Again this phenomenon seems to have affected the rural areas more than the urban ones. Presumably the dispersion of the kur/kpoh/ing members, for reasons of work, education etc, has led to the estrangement of the young people from their ḱëis. Often, they would meet the ḱëis only on rare occasions like the death of someone and a wedding. Significantly, the Christians seem to have been more affected by this than the traditional religion followers.

c) On why many ḱëis today do not know their roles anymore, Table 4.10 clearly shows that most Khasis agree with this. This makes a ḱii merely a nominal figure without any sense of responsibility towards his kur/kpoh/ing members. In the rural areas this phenomenon is felt more than in the urban setting.

d) Concerning the educational qualifications of the ḱii, Table 4.4 shows that there is a consensus among all sections of Khasis that many ḱëis are illiterate or poorly educated. This phenomenon is more acutely felt in the rural areas. In general male literacy is lower in the rural than in the urban areas of Khasi-Jaiñtia Hills. This consequently leads to generations of illiterate ḱëis in different kur/kpoh/ing. As Table 4.5 indicates the situation seems to be better among Christians probably because of the Church’s contribution towards the education of its members.¹

e) Concerning whether the ḱii who is more educated wields more influence, not many ascribe to this opinion as Table 4.6 indicates. However, an educated ḱii in the rural area is probably more influential than the one who is in the urban area. This is
reasonable because an educated person in the rural area is looked upon with more respect and honour.

g) Tables 3.28 and 3.29 also reveal that a kñi who holds a high position in the society need not necessarily be more respected or more influential. However, such opinion seems to be more acceptable for people in the rural areas and among men than in the urban areas and among women.

h) Concerning whether the kñi who is economically better off commands more respect and influence, Tables 4.8 and 4.9 show that not many ascribe to this view. Such kñis in rural areas seem to have more respect and authority than in urban areas. As it usually happens, the rich kñis in villages become benefactors of the poorer members of their kur/kpoh/ing especially in times of need. Consequently they earn the love and respect of their members.

i) Regarding whether the eldest kñi has more authority than the younger kñis or the kñi-synrop (classificatory uncles), Tables 3.1-3.3 indicate that majority subscribe to this opinion. By tradition among the Khasis, this has always been observed. There is more spontaneous respect and obeisance shown to the eldest kñi than to the kñi-synrop.

Evidently, with regard to the authority of the kñi today, the study indicates that there is a significant decline. This situation varies according to settings (rural-urban), religion (Christians, traditional religion believers), educational qualifications etc. In general the role of the kñi has diminished significantly in urban areas than in rural areas and among Christians than among believers of traditional Khasi religion. On the other
hand, educational qualification is also playing a great role in influencing the image and authority of the kňi today.

6.4. PRESENT ROLE OF THE KŇI

On the role of the kňi in Khasi society, the findings are as follows:

a) Table 4.12 reveals that most of the kňis seldom visit their kur/kpoh/ing members. Very few of them do so frequently. What is interesting to note is that this phenomenon is common in both urban and rural areas. However, the situation seems better among those who uphold the traditional religion than the Christians. In general the kňis today do not visit their kur/kpoh/ing members as frequently as they used to do before.

b) One of the principal roles of the kňi in Khasi society is to admonish or counsel the members of his kur/kpoh/ing, especially the younger ones. Table 4.14 indicates that this role is weakening among the kňis today. Undoubtedly there is a connection between this and the frequency of visits the kňi makes. This role appears to be more evident among those who still profess the traditional religion than the Christians.

c) Regarding the role of decision-making in important matters in the kur/kpoh/ing, Tables 4.16 and 4.17 reveal that the kňis in rural areas and those who belong to the traditional religion play more active role than those in the urban areas or those who are Christians.

d) Concerning the issue of the kňi presiding over marriages of his kur/kpoh/ing members, Table 4.18 reveals that this particular role of the kňi is still largely practiced
more in rural areas than in urban areas. It is interesting however to note that this practice is almost equally present among Christian and followers of the traditional religion. However, the intensity of presence of the *kñi* is different between the two groups. His role is more prominent in marriages of members who still uphold Khasi religion because he is the presiding priest. In Christian marriages, however, the *kñi* has a peripheral role of being merely a witness.

e) The study further shows that in matters of feuds within the *kur/kpoh/ing*, the *kñi*’s role as a mediator of reconciliation is more prominent in rural areas and also among those who still belong to the traditional religion than their counterparts. However, his role is still largely felt among members of his *kur/kpoh/ing* irrespective of place and religion.

f) With regard to the *kñi-synrop* the study reveals that there is still great respect for them. Their influence however depends very much on their proximity to their nephews and nieces. But there is a tendency among them to distance themselves from their *kpoh/ing* members after the death of their immediate sisters.

g) Theoretically, the concept of *kñi*-ship is still tenable and relevant. This is evident from the positive opinion regarding this traditional institution at the perception level. However, when it comes to the practical or experiential level there is a critical outlook at *kñi*-ship today.

With regard to the exercise of his traditional role, the *kñi* today has become less aware of his duty. The conflict of roles in a Khasi man between being a *kñi* and being a *kpa* is evident. There is a gradual tendency towards being a *kpa* more than being a *kñi*. In
this transition there are many contributing factors like Christianity, education, migration to the cities and influence of other cultures. Christianity proves to be a major influence in this change because of its emphasis on the role of the father than of the uncle. In fact, in any Christian ritual the presence of the father is obligatory and not that of the uncle. Moreover, the growing social interactions with other cultures who follow patriliny has had a gradual impact on the psyche of the Khasi people.

6.5. STATUS OF THE KPA (FATHER) TODAY

On the present status of the kpa (father) in Khasi society, the study has the following findings:

a) The status of the kpa among the Khasis in general has gone up. His importance and role are being recognized. Table 5.10 reveals that the status of the kpa is much higher in urban areas and particularly among the more educated (Table 5.14) and those who have better employment (Table 5.15). This shows the general perception today that the kpa has become a more influential person in the family.

b) Table 5.16 reveals that the number of educated kpas is on the rise both in the urban and rural areas. In the urban areas the percentage of educated kpas is higher than in the rural areas. The rise in education of the kpas is closely related to the rise in their status and importance in the families and society at large.

c) Regarding whether the children obey their fathers, Table 5.1 shows a positive tendency. Today it is evident that children show more respect and obedience to their fathers. The kpas in urban areas (Table 5.1) and those who are more educated (Table
5.2) and better placed in society (Table 5.3), command more obedience from their children. With the declining influence of the kői, the kpa seems to have substituted his place in the family.

d) Concerning whether the kpa is closer to his children than the kői, Table 5.4 reveals that a vast majority of people agree that today the kpa is closer to his children than their kői is. This phenomenon is experienced more in urban areas (Table 5.4) and among Christians (Table 5.6). Probably as indicated earlier, the kői in Christian families does not have much role as he has in families of the traditional religion. This explains why the position of the kpa is stronger in Christian families.

e) On whether the kpa has more authority in his children’s house than in his mother’s house, Tables 5.7-5.9 show that a vast majority of Khasis today agree with it. This vindicates the growing image of the kpa in Khasi families today.

f) Concerning the vital question regarding if the kpa should replace the kői today in their roles, Tables 5.22-5.30 indicate that many of the Khasis feel that this is right. Such opinion is even more positive in rural areas (Table 5.22), among elderly (Table 5.24), among Christians (Table 5.27) and among more educated people (Table 5.29). Interestingly, the women support this idea more than the men (Table 5.25). Probably the women are the most affected by the responsible or irresponsible behaviours of their husbands. Naturally they feel that when the kpa assumes more responsibility towards the family, the family situation will improve.

g) Regarding whether the educated kpa exercises more influence on the family, Table 5.17 reveals that not many believe this as an influencing factor. However, people
in rural areas and those who are less educated or illiterate (Table 5.18) tend to believe in this more than the others. Probably education is still a major factor in rural areas and educated persons are still held in high regard which may not be the reality in urban areas.

h) Concerning whether the kpa hailing from rich and influential families have greater influence, Table 5.21 shows that not many ascribe to this opinion. However, such belief seems to be more applicable to rural areas. Interestingly, less women subscribe to this opinion than men.

i) Concerning whether greater earning kpas exercise more influence in the families, Tables 5.19 and 5.20 reveal that this too is not accepted opinion by many. Nevertheless, the people in rural areas seem to subscribe to this more than those in urban areas.

The study clearly shows the growing image, importance and influence of the kpa in Khasi families. Education and better employment are among the primary factors contributing to the growing image of the kpa. The role of Christianity cannot be ruled out. In fact the emphasis that Christian teachings give to the father as head of the family is largely responsible for the rise of kpa-ship in Khasi society. There is at the same time a growing shift of allegiance of the Khasi man from his kur to his children. This is evidently a cultural transition keeping in mind the fact that in the past the Khasi man was closer to his clan members than to his children.
6.6. EXERCISE OF AUTHORITY/ROLE OF THE KPA TODAY

The following generalizations can be drawn on the present exercise of authority/role of the kpa (father) in Khasi society.

a) With regard to whether the kpa today cares and nurtures his children, Table 5.31 reveals a very positive response. It is evident that the role of the kpa today as the one who nurtures his children is well accepted. So the traditional concept of the kpa as the one who merely begets children (u nongai khun), is gradually disappearing. Instead the kpa is seen as someone who assumes full responsibility for his children.

b) Concerning whether the kpa is the one who admonishes his children, Table 5.32 shows that most Khasis today have accepted this fact. This further proves the growing influence of the kpa in his children’s house. This is a significant cultural transition considering the fact that in the past it used to be the kñi who exercised such role. The study however reveals that most of the kñis or kñi-synrop still admonish their nephews and nieces but on rarer occasions. In cases of the khatduh’s family where the bachelor kñi still resides in his mother’s house, the kñi then plays an active role in disciplining the younger members of his kurlkpoh/ing. In such a situation, the kpa’s role is limited to a great extent.8

c) Concerning whether the kpa is the one who supervises family affairs, Table 5.33 is very positive. It is evident that most Khasis today believe that the kpa and not the kñi should be the one to supervise matters related to his children’s family.

d) With regard to whether the kpa is the one who makes decisions in family matters, Table 5.34 reveals that most Khasis today accept such view. Irrespective of any
setting, it is clear that the role of the *kpa* as the one who makes decisions in his family affairs is gaining strength from day to day. In the genealogical study of a few families, it is seen that the present generation of *kpas* do exercise their authority in decision making in their family affairs. Only in matters connected with the *kur/kpo/ing* the *kñit* continues to exercise his authority even today.

e) Concerning whether the *kpa* today visits his *kur/kpo/ing* members, Table 5.35 shows the decline in the frequency of such visits. Most people agree that such visits are seldom made. This would not have been the situation a few decades ago. So it is evident that the bond of men to their children’s families is growing stronger from time to time. The obligation of men towards their matrikins as *kñits* is becoming weaker while the obligation towards their children is gaining importance.

f) Regarding the *kpa-synrop* (classificatory fathers), the study shows that there is respect for them from their nephews and nieces. However, their visits are often restricted to a few occasions. The degree of relationship is often conditioned by their relationship which they maintain with their sibling brother.

The study confirms the well accepted idea today that the *kpa* has begun to assume a greater responsibility in the family today. First of all, it is evident that the Khasi father today remains more with his children than in the past and he exercises more conscientiously his role as the father more than the *kñit* now does. Secondly, it is seen that the *kpa* today, in the growing absence of the *kñit*, has taken upon himself the role of being a bread earner, a disciplinarian and an administrator of the family affairs. Thirdly, it is seen that the *kpa* today plays a greater role in decision making on matters related to
his family. Therefore we see a growing authority of the *kpa* in the Khasi family today. There is a general feeling that the *kpa* today must assume the role played by the *kïi* in the past with regard to his own family and children. He has to fill in the vacuum left by the *kïi*. This transition of role between the *kpa* and the *kïi* is taking place gradually and it is bound to lead to greater changes in the Khasi society.

6.7. INTERPRETATION OF THE GENEALOGICAL STUDY

The genealogical data from four *kpohs* (2 in Marbisu and 2 in Mawroh) based on interviews with the eldest members of the lineages have yielded some interesting results which are as follows:

a) There are distinctive differences between the earlier generation *kïis* and the present one. The difference is seen especially in the quality of roles they played earlier and do now.

b) The *kïis* of the earlier generations, as far as they could recollect, were more conscious about their traditional responsibilities. They maintained a close relationship with the members of the *kpoh* through visits almost on daily basis. The earlier *kïis* had a great sense of attachment to their sisters’ families especially that of the *khatduh*.

c) The succeeding generations of *kïis* tend to make their visits to the family members of their *kur/kpoh* less frequent or even occasional. Consequently the sense of attachment and responsibility of the *kïis* towards their *kur/kpoh* have diminished with the passage of time.
d) In cases where the kñis are still bachelors or divorced from their wives, they remain in the khatduhs' houses even otherwise the frequency of their visits increases.

e) The study also shows that in the past a Khasi man's roles of being a kñi and a kpa simultaneously always tilted towards the former while in the present generation, the emphasis has shifted towards kpa-ship. With more emergence of nuclear families this tendency is likely to be more favourable for kpa-ship.

f) The random graphs depicted as inset figures in the genealogical charts are based on the descriptive data provided by the respondents to the investigator during the interviews. These graphs clearly reveal a common phenomenon, namely, the diminishing role of the kñi in the Khasi society down the line of generations.

The genealogical study has thrown a lot of light on the traditional institution of kñi-ship as it was practised then and is practised now. The result of the interviews with the oldest members of each of these kpohs has shown that there is a significant difference between the kñis of the past and the present kñis in terms of image, authority and influence.

6.8. SUMMARY OF ANALYSIS

The previous chapters have demonstrated that while conceptually the institution of kñi-ship is still unaffected, the actual exercise of the kñi's role has changed considerably. Kñi-ship is gradually turning into an ideology of the past and kpa-ship that of the present.
First, the study shows that due to many socio-cultural and economic factors, the traditional role of the kñi has been affected adversely. Christianity has been a major influence on the Khasi society. By adopting this new religion, many of the cultural traditions in the family have been affected. The law of inheritance enacted by the British government has practically given the right of ownership of ancestral property to the khatduh. In this manner the kñi who used to be the traditional administrator of the ancestral property has lost much of his authority over his clan members.11 Because of these factors kñi-ship in particular has been adversely affected while kpa-ship has gained more importance. Today the kñi as the present study has shown, does not wield as much authority and influence over his kur/kpoh/ing members as he used to do in the past. In general, his authority is gradually waning away and has become nominal.

Second, the study has shown that the influence of the kñi over his nephews and nieces is diminishing due to his inability to exercise his traditional role of being regularly present in his sister’s house and to supervise the affairs related to the kur/kpoh/ing or to admonish his nephews and nieces. Physical absence has been responsible to a large extent for the diminution of his authority and at times it has led to weakening of kinship bond especially with the younger generation as familiarity between the kñi and his nephews and nieces is on the decline.

Third, the study shows that while a Khasi man’s role as a kñi in his sister’s house is diminishing his role as a kpa in his conjugal family is on the rise. This is clearly seen in the quality time that he spends with his children than with his nephews and nieces. His growing absence from his nephews and nieces implies an increased presence with
his wife and children. This consequently has strengthened *kpa*-ship in Khasi society today. In fact, the traditional role as ‘biological’ (as begetter only) father has practically given way to his role as ‘social’ (nourisher) father. Thus a Khasi man today has become less an uncle in his family of origin and more a social father in his conjugal family.¹²

Fourth, the study shows that many Khasis today are of strong opinion that the *kpa* should assume more authority and responsibility in his children’s house than the *kñi*. It is the feeling of many that the *kpa* is the natural guardian and disciplinarian of his children on account of his consanguinal relationship with his children. Laxity in exercising their roles on the part of the *kñi* today and the influence of Christian teaching on paternal responsibility are some of the factors that have accelerated this type of thinking.

Fifth, the study reveals that in reality the process of transition in Khasi patriarchy is already in motion and it is gaining momentum with the passage of time. There is a gradual transition from patriarchy traditionally held by the *kñi* to the present form of patriarchy centred around the father of the family. This phenomenon is equally prevalent both in the urban and rural areas and across all sections of Khasi people.

Sixth, this particular study also reveals that more Khasis today are of the opinion that the *kpa* should formally assume the role of the *kñi* with regard to the affairs of the family except those related to the *kur/kpoh/ing* where the *kñi* is still considered the authority. The verdict is that the *kpa* should replace the role of the *kñi* in the affairs of the *ing-tnat* (nuclear family).
Seventh, the study shows that the image of the *kpa* is gaining more respect and recognition and the *kpa* himself is beginning to assume all responsibilities related to the family. He is no longer a nominal head but de facto the head and supervisor of his own family.\(^{13}\)

Hence the present study clearly demonstrates that there is a change in patriarchy in the Khasi family, namely, that there is a gradual transition of roles from the maternal uncle to the father of the family.

**6.9. IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

This research has confirmed the main thesis about the transition in patriarchy from the *khi* to the *kpa* in Khasi society today. This may have the following implications for the Khasi society in near future:

a) The image of the *kpa* will be perceived in a better light. His role and status will be better accepted and appreciated. The *kpa* will be seen as a natural substitute of the *khi* in matters related to the family. With a better recognition of his status and authority, the *kpa* is expected to exercise more authority and accept more responsibilities towards his family.

b) The rise in status of the *kpa* is likely to affect the image of the *khi* further. In fact, the present study has indicated that the status and role of the *khi* are experiencing a down-sliding movement. In many cases the *khi* has become a stranger to his nephews and nieces. The bipolar tension of roles between a *khi* and *kpa* in a Khasi man has tilted in favour of the latter.

c) The changing patriarchy in Khasi families will probably be perceived as one decisive step in the elaborate process of socio-cultural transformation of the society itself. In the long run
the possibility of change in the lineage system cannot be ruled out. However, such a change in the existing system calls for internal debate and deeper understanding of the Khasi culture and identity.

NOTES

1 This is not surprising because we see that in the history of education among the Khassis, the Christians were the first beneficiaries of it. In fact most of the Khassi luminaries in the early history were Christians. This proves the great contribution that Christianity has made towards education of the Khassis.
2 Probably the Khasi Christians often have recourse to priests or pastors in order to resolve their disputes and quarrels other than their khis. Moreover, their religious doctrines teach about reconciliation more than other religions do.
3 Interview with B. Lyngdoh (Upp. Shillong: November 12, 2011).
4 Interview with Dr. Baphershisha Kharjana (Mawprem: November 12, 2011).
5 The interviews conducted by the investigator with many persons also reveal that almost all of them agree that the father today is closer to his children than their uncle. The father lives with his children and he assumes responsibility to bring them up.
6 Moreover, Christianity is a male-centred religion and the emphasis on family life has been on the central figure of the father. Paternal responsibility towards the children is an important teaching of this religion. The father is also considered a family priest.
7 It is common knowledge that fathers in the rural areas enjoy less authority, respect and influence than their counterparts in urban areas. This is probably the reason why the people in rural areas feel that the kpa should replace the kis and assume more authority in families.
8 This fact has been established by C. Nakane in her study on Matriliny among the Khassis. However, one cannot generalize on this aspect for when the kpa is a responsible person and a man of integrity, he can still exert his authority and so he is respected by his wife and in-laws. So even if it is the khasah's family, he can still command respect and authority with regard to his family and children.
9 Interview with B. Lyngdoh (Upp. Shillong: November 12, 2011).
10 Interview with Dr. Baphershisha Kharjana (Mawprem: November 12, 2011).
12 Cf. R. Khankrang, Matriliny on the March, 97.
13 However, it must be said here that in cases of a man marrying the heiress, the husband is often controlled by the in-laws. The grand-mother or the brother-in-law (uncle) becomes a hindrance to his exercise of authority. Yet a lot of change is also seen in these cases where at times the husband of the heiress commands the affairs of the family. This depends very much on the personality of the man or his ability to shoulder responsibility.