INTRODUCTION TO MESCALERO APACHE KINSHIP TEMS

In this file, we present words and phrases that people use when talking about their relatives or to their relatives. We include: (1) words that relatives use when speaking to or about each other; (2) words for describing kinship relationships; and (3) words for husbands, wives, and in-laws. We will begin by addressing some basic issues about these words.

First, most Apache language words and English language words for relatives are not equivalent; they do not translate one-to-one. For example, in English the term "grandfather" means "parent's father." English speakers use this word to mean both a "father's father" and a "mother's father." In Apache, there is one word for a "father's father" (**shindálé** [**shin.dá.lé**] "my father's father") and a different word for a "mother's father" (**shitsúyé** [**shi.tsú.yé**] "my mother's father"). The English word "grandfather" does not mean exactly the same thing as either **shindálé** or **shitsúyé.** Moreover, neither **shindálé** "father's father" nor **shitsúyé** "mother's father" means exactly the same thing as the English word "grandfather." We expand and modify this discussion below.

Second and related to the first point, Apache words for relatives through one's father are not the same as words for relatives through one's mother. We use the term "paternal" to mean relatives who are connected through a person's father or son; that is, relatives connected through the male line. We use the term "maternal" to mean relatives who are connected through a person's mother or daughter; that is, relatives connected through the female line. In the Mescalero Apache language, people call their paternal and maternal grandparents, uncles, aunts, and grandchildren by different names. In English, paternal and maternal relatives are not distinguished. For example, in English the term "uncle" means "parent's brother." People use this word to mean both "father's brother" and "mother's brother." In Apache, there is one word for "father's brother" (**shidà'é** [**shi.dà.'é**] "my father's brother") and a separate word for "mother's brother" (**shiwúyé** [**shi.wú.yé**] "my mother's brother"). The English word "uncle" does not mean exactly the same thing as either **shidà'é** or **shiwúyé.** Moreover, neither **shidà'é** "father's brother" nor **shiwúyé** "mother's brother" means exactly the same thing as the English word "uncle." We also expand and modify this discussion below.

Third, also related to the first point, exact equivalents of the English words "brother" and "sister" do not occur in the Mescalero Apache language. That is, in Apache there is no word that exactly means "brother"

and no word that exactly means "sister", as English speakers define and use these terms. To explain this point, we need to introduce the word "sibling." By "sibling", we mean either a brother or a sister. "My sibling" is either my brother or my sister. "Your sibling" is either your brother or your sister. In Apache, no words exactly mean "brother" and "sister." Rather, there are words that mean "same-gender sibling" and "different-gender sibling." A man or boy uses the term **shik'is** [**shi.k'is**] ("my same-gender sibling") to talk and refer to his "same-gender sibling" -- roughly, his "brother." A woman or girl also uses the same word **shik'is** ("my same-gender sibling") to talk and refer to her "same-gender sibling" -- roughly, her "sister." A man or boy uses the term **shilà** [**shi.là**] ("my different-gender sibling") to talk and refer to his "different-gender sibling" -- roughly, his "sister." A woman or girl uses the same word **shilà** ("my different-gender sibling") to talk and refer to her "different-gender sibling" -- roughly, her "brother."

Fourth, in Apache there is no word for "cousin." In English, "cousin" means roughly "child of my parent's brother or sister." My parent's child (other than me) is my "sibling." In English, my parent's sibling's child is my "cousin." In Apache, "cousins" are not separated from "siblings." People that a person would call "cousin" in English are called "same-gender sibling" or "different-gender sibling" in Apache. A man or boy calls his same-gender "cousins" ("male cousins") **shik'is**. He calls his different-gender "cousins" ("female cousins") **shilà**. A woman or girl calls her same-gender "cousins" ("female cousins") **shik'is**. She calls her different-gender "cousins" ("male cousins") **shilà**.

Fifth, returning to our introductory discussion of terms for "grandparents", we can now add some details. (1) **Shitsúyé**, which we defined earlier as "my mother's father", also means "my daughter's child", when a man is speaking. If a child calls a man **shitsúyé**, he calls that child **shitsúyé**. (2) **Shindálé**, which we defined earlier as "my father's father", also means "my son's child", if a man is speaking. If a child calls a man **shindálé**, he also calls that child **shindálé**. (3) If a child calls a woman **shichú**, that woman calls the child **shichú** ("mother's mother -- daughter's child"). (4) If a child calls a woman **shich'ine**, that woman calls the child **shich'ine** ("father's mother -- son's child"). Here is a summary:

- **Shitsúyé** [**shi.tsú.yé**] does not mean "grandfather" or even "mother's father." **Shitsúyé** means, "maternal grandfather / maternal grandchild" (if a maternal grandfather is speaking).
- **Shindálé** [**shin.dá.lé**] does not mean "grandfather" or even "father's father." **Shindálé** means, "paternal grandfather / paternal grandchild" (if a paternal grandfather is speaking).

- **Shichú [shi.chú]** does not mean "grandmother" or even "mother's mother." **Shichú** means, "maternal grandmother / maternal grandchild" (if a maternal grandmother is speaking).
- **Shichine** does not mean "grandmother" or even "father's mother." **Shichine** means, "paternal grandmother / paternal grandchild" (if a paternal grandmother is speaking).

Sixth, Apache speakers also use the words for "grandparents/grandchildren" to refer to and address other people. For example, if I call a man **shitsúyé,** I also call his "same-gender siblings" (including "cousins") **shitsúyé** and they call me the same. If I call a man **shindálé,** I also call his "same-gender siblings" (including "cousins") **shindálé** and they call me the same. If I call a woman **shichú,** I also call her "same-gender siblings" (including "cousins") **shichú** and they call me the same. If I call a woman **shich'ine,** I also call her "same-gender siblings" (including her "cousins") **shich'ine** and they call me the same.

Finally, the points that we make about the words for "grandparents" and "grandchildren" are also true for "uncles", "aunts", "nephews", and "nieces." People do not call their paternal "uncles" and "aunts" (father's brothers and sisters) by the same terms that they use for their maternal "uncles" and "aunts" (mother's brothers and sisters). Further, people also use these terms to label paternal "nephews" and "nieces" (brother's children") and maternal "nephews" and "nieces" (sister's children).
- **Shiwúyé [shi.wú.yé]** does not mean "uncle" or even "mother's brother." **Shiwúyé** means, "mother's brother / sister's child" (if a maternal uncle is speaking). "Mother's brother" also includes her "different-gender cousins."
- **Shikà'é [shi.kà.'é]** does not mean "aunt" or even "mother's sister." **Shikà'é** means, "mother's sister / sister's child" (if a maternal aunt is speaking). "Mother's sister also includes her "same-gender cousins."
- **Shidà'é [shi.dà.'é]** does not mean "uncle" or even "father's brother." **Shidà'é** means, "father's brother / brother's child" (if a paternal uncle is speaking) "Father's brother" also includes his "same-gender cousins."
- **Shidee'dé [shi.dee'.dé]** does not mean "aunt" or even "father's sister." **Shidee'dé** means, "father's sister / brother's child" (if a paternal aunt is speaking). "Father's sister" also includes his "different-gender cousins."

Among fluent speaking tribal members, the traditional image of an "in-law" is a person who carries a bundle or pack-like object over the shoulder for another person. This is an image of work and responsibility. It is not an image of oppression, as might be conveyed by the term "burden." A "son in-law", for example, is a person who "carries a bundle over the shoulder" for his wife's relatives. He has responsibilities to them. He should work for and assist them whenever possible.

The words for "in-law" are verbs or verbs turned into nouns by adding the enclitic -**õ** "the person who" or the enclitic -**õde** "the people who." **Shá'iyé** [**shá.'i.yé**] means, "he/she carries a bundle over the shoulder for me" or "he/she is an in-law to me." **Shá'iyé-õ** [**shá.'i.yéõ**] means, "he/she is the one who carries a bundle over the shoulder for me" or "he/she is the person who is an in-law to me." **Shá-** in these words means, "for me." People use **shá'iyé** to refer, for example, to "my daughter's husband", "my wife's brother", "my sister's husband", and "my husband's father, and "my husband's mother."

Bá'ishyé [**bá.'ish.yé**] or **bá'ishxé** [**bá.'ish.xé**] means, "I carry a bundle over the shoulder for him/her" or "he/she is my in-law."
Bá'ishxé-õ [**bá.'ish.xéõ**] means, "he/she is the one for whom I carry a bundle over the shoulder", "he/she is my in-law", or "he/she is the person for whom I am an in-law." **Bá-** in these words means, "for him/her." People use **bá'ishyé** to refer, for example, to "my wife's father", "my wife's mother", "my wife's brother", and "my wife's sister."

Here is a summary of terms for in-laws from a woman's perspective:
- I call my husband **shighaa'stìì'** [**shi.ghaa's.tìì'**]
- I call my husband's relatives **sháda'iyé-õde** [**shá.da.'i.yéõ.de**]
- My relatives call my husband and his relatives **sháda'iyé-õde** [**shá.da.'i.yéõ.de**]
- My husband and his relatives call me and my relatives **báda'ishxé-õde** [**bá.da.'ish.xéõ.de**]

Here is a summary of terms for in-laws from a man's perspective:
- I call my wife **shighaa'sdzââ'** [**shi.ghaa's.dzââ'**] (or) **shii'sdzââ'** [**shii's.dzââ'**]
- I call my wife's relatives **báda'ishxé-õde** [**bá.da.'ish.xéõ.de**]
- My relatives call my wife and her relatives **bá'ishxé-õde** [**bá.'ish.xéõ.de**]
- My wife and her relatives call my relatives **báda'iyé-õde** [**bá.da.'i.yéõ.de**]

A final point about Apache words for "in-laws" concerns the form of verbs that are used. Apache verbs convey information about the "state of action" that they describe. The "state of action" may be, for example, incomplete, complete, or repetitive. The verbs that people use to name their "in-laws" convey information that the action is "usual", "customary", or "habitual." **Shá'iyé** actually means, "he/she customarily or habitually carries a bundle over the shoulder for me." **Bá'ishyé** or **bá'ishxé** actually means, "I customarily or habitually carry a bundle over the shoulder for him/her." To us, this indicates that the responsibilities of being an "in-law" are not over in one moment. Being an "in-law" creates obligations of support and assistance that last through time -- such obligations are usual and customary.