

## **A note on the Tibetan kinship terms *khu* and *zhang*\***

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Tibetan kinship terminology is an important topic, not just for learning about the language and culture of Tibet, but also for learning about the languages and cultures of other Sino-Tibetan peoples. This subject has long been discussed from the standpoints of cultural anthropology, history and linguistics. However, because of limited data and insufficient field work, research results have not yet reached the point where we can gain a comprehensive view of the problem.

Recently, research on the Dunhuang manuscripts (mainly from the 9th and 10th centuries) has progressed rapidly. The Japanese historian Dr. Zuiho Yamaguchi (1983) has succeeded in reconstructing in detail the process of the establishment of the ancient dynasties of Tibet, which had been considered a mystery in the past. Furthermore, new results have been achieved thanks to recent fieldwork by several anthropologists. Thus, it appears that we have finally reached a stage where the system of this kinship terminology can be deduced. In this short paper, I would like to look back at some previous theories concerning Tibetan kinship terminology and marriage practices, pointing out problems in these theories; at the same time, I would like to offer an interpretation of "maternal uncle" which is most deserving of attention in considering Tibetan social structure, based on recent anthropological and historical research.

### **1. A critical examination of the hypothesis of P. Benedict**

Paul K. Benedict's *Sino-Tibetan: a Conspectus* (1972), has been positively evaluated as a wide-ranging analysis by contemporary scholars, although the forms that he has reconstructed for Proto-Tibeto-Burman (PTB) present some problems. Before this volume, he published in 1942 a paper concerning kinship terms in Tibetan and Chinese. We can obtain an overall picture of his arguments from these two publications. Benedict's 1942 paper is especially important as a paper which relates directly to Written Tibetan (WT). The object

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of Benedict's research was to reconstruct kinship terms (and an older layer of meanings of such terms) in Tibetan and various Sino-Tibetan languages by a comparison with literary data, and to elucidate the history of both the overall systems and the individual terms involved. This research was not based on fieldwork.

Benedict proposed WT forms as representing an older layer of Tibeto-Burman (TB) languages. From these forms, Benedict extracted 24 basic kinship terms. Then, analyzing the systematic relationships among these terms, he reconstructed older forms and meanings for the individual terms. Benedict concluded that "we thus are presented, in general, with an exceptionally well-defined picture of an ancient cultural stratum, underlying both the Chinese and Tibeto-Burman cultures, in which cross-cousin marriage<sup>1</sup> was a conspicuous feature" (Benedict 1942:337). However, in the process of reaching this conclusion, Benedict drew inferences from comparisons of TB and Chinese kinship terms, and invoked analogies with the practice of teknonymy (a phenomenon whereby appellations used by children and grandchildren for certain persons are employed by parents and grandparents) seen e.g. in Chinese; accordingly, some problems remain. Here, based on an investigation of the kinship terminology system peculiar to Tibetan, and using historical facts from the recently elucidated ancient history of Tibet as well as results of recent fieldwork in cultural anthropology, we will infer that Tibetan society was a society of patrilineal exogamy.

First, in regard to linguistic facts, a look at kinship terms which reflect this patrilineal exogamy reveals the following:

Table 1

(1)	<i>rus-pa gcig</i>	:	<i>sha gcig</i>
	"same bone = paternal relatives springing from a common ancestor"		"same flesh = relationship created by marriage" (See note 2)
	<i>rus gyud</i> "bone line"	:	<i>sha gyud</i> "flesh line"

<sup>1</sup> Cousin marriages have attracted recent anthropologists' attention because of their high frequency and wide distribution in the world. First cousins are divided into two types—cross-cousins, and parallel-cousins; cross-cousins are the children of siblings of opposite sex, parallel-cousins are children of siblings of the same sex. Thus, ego (man's) father's sister's children, and his mother's brother's children are his cross-cousins; his father's brother's children and his mother's sister's children are his parallel-cousins. Many societies prohibit marriages with the parallel-cousins and prefer or prescribe ones with the cross-cousins, because the former are regarded as violations of the incest taboo or the law of exogamy.

- (2) *pha mes* "father and grandfather"  
 (*mes* also means ancestor)  
*pha spun* "children of the same father; brothers and sisters"  
*span spun* "relatives"
- (3) *khu* "paternal uncle" : *zhang* "maternal uncle; son-in-law"
- ne* "paternal aunt" : *sru* "maternal aunt"

As is evident from the above examples, a clear distinction between father's side and mother's side, and a continuous vertical line from grandfather (*mes*) to the father's sons (*pha spun*) are emphasized. Written Tibetan kinship terms may be viewed as a system which reflects a patrilineal exogamous social structure. Benedict's reasoning also shows rough agreement on this point, but does not specify at which stage patrilineal exogamy existed in Tibet. Referring to historical evidence recently presented by Yamaguchi (1983) [see Section 2, below], we can find traces of a patrilineal exogamous system in ancient Tibet prior to the establishment of the Tufan 吐蕃 dynasty. In the *Dar rgyas gsal ba'i sgron ma*, which deals with the history of the Bon religion, there are descriptions of "the marriage of the father lord *Phywa* of the country of *Phywa* and the queen mother of the *dMu*", and of "the marriage of the mother *Ngang zang* of the mother *Phywa* and the king father *dMu* of the country of *dMu*", in reference to the *dMu* tribe and *Phywa* tribe (a branch of which later became the ancestors of the *Yar lung* royal family), two of the four major tribes which existed considerably prior to the time of *Nya khri btsan po*, a remote ancestor of the *Yar lung* royal family. Furthermore, details of marriage proposals from the *Phywa* tribe to the *dMu* tribe are also related in Dunhuang manuscripts [Pelliot tib. 126] (Yamaguchi 1983:159-172). Yamaguchi (1983) infers that both the *dMu* tribe and the *Phywa* tribe were patrilineal, and that intermarriage between these two tribes began in the second or third century. Later, the *dMu* tribe became one of the most important tribes related by marriage to the *Phywa* tribe, with marriages taking place repeatedly in successive generations. Therefore, considering metalinguistic facts such as Desideri's description of later marital practices in Tibet<sup>2</sup> and the results of fieldwork in anthropology as

<sup>2</sup> Desideri, who visited Tibet at the beginning of the eighteenth century, described the distinction between *Rupa-cik* (literally, one bone) and the *Scia-cik* (literally, one flesh) as follows: The Tibetan recognize two classes of kinship. The first are called relations of the *Rupa-cik*, or of the same bone; the second, relations of the *Scia-cik*, or of the same blood. They recognize, as relations of *Rupa-cik*, or of the same bone, those who descend from a common ancestor, however remote, even when they have been divided into different

well,<sup>3</sup> we may conclude that Tibetan society has practised patrilineal exogamy from at least the second or third century A.D. up to the present day.

On the other hand, we find a troublesome problem exists concerning "maternal uncle" as a linguistic fact. This problem is important when we consider the ancient history of Tibet or the relation of WT to other TB languages. Benedict reconstructs \*ku as the PTB form for "maternal uncle"; however, the corresponding WT form *khu* means "paternal uncle". In almost all Tibeto-Burman languages, forms corresponding to PTB \*ku indicate "maternal uncle"; Tibetan alone shows an isolated meaning.

Benedict believes that *khu* originally meant "maternal uncle" in Tibetan as well, but that at some point in time this word underwent a meaning shift to "paternal uncle". Benedict sought the reason for this in polyandry, which has been considered peculiar to Tibet. In this case, the "(co-) husbands" are brothers. According to Benedict, since father's brother is also mother's husband under a system of fraternal polyandry, and thus plays an extremely important role, it took over many of the functions originally fulfilled by mother's brother (= father-in-law) under a cross-cousin marriage system. Here, a semantic shift from "mother's brother" to "father's brother" took place (Benedict 1942:317-8).

This reasoning, however, is a bit too arbitrary. If an important role can be said to have shifted from mother's brother to father's brother, this presupposes a sudden change in, for instance, the marriage system and social system. Furthermore, there are also problems in the very assumption that fraternal polyandry could be the cause of such a shift.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, in the

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branches during many generations. Relations of the *Scia-cik*, or the same blood, are those created by legitimate marriages. The first, though it may be exceedingly distant, is looked upon as an absolute and inviolable bar to matrimony, and any intercourse between two relations of the *Rupa-cik*, or of the same bone, is regarded as incestuous, and they are shunned and loathed by everyone. The second is also a bar to marriage in the first degree of relationship; thus an uncle may not marry his niece, but marriages with a first cousin on the mother's side is allowed, and frequently occurs. (Japanese translation 1991:296-97).

His description tells us that a primary distinction between father's side and mother's side, that is, patrilineal exogamy exists, and also that Tibetans prefer matrilineal cousin marriage. From the results of recent anthropological fieldwork, Prince Peter (1963:423, 1965:197) points out the distinction between *rus gyud* (bone line) and *sha gyud* (flesh line) which functions as the regulation of affinity. However, *rus* is often used with relation to a clan as a social segmental unit in the reconstruction of the ancient Tibetan society. (See Richardson 1952:50-1, Tucci 1955:204-5). From the recent anthropological point of view, Levine (1981) examines and summarizes the concept of *rus* in detail.

<sup>3</sup> Concerning present results of fieldwork on Tibetan speaking people who practice patrilineal exogamy, see, for instance, Kawakita (1966), Aziz (1974), Levine (1988) and Crook (1994).

<sup>4</sup> According to the results based on the fieldwork by Goldstein (1971, 1978a, 1978b, 1988), Crook (1994) and so on, Tibetan fraternal polyandrous marriage would be an adaptation or a solution to the principle of monomartial stem family connected with the pattern of land use under the Tibetan feudal system. If their interpretation is right, Tibetan polyandry could be considered as a marital form which emerged after the establishment of a land system and

case of fraternal polyandry, the eldest brother has the strongest powers in his family<sup>5</sup>, and it is difficult to believe that an "important role" surpassing these powers was attributed to younger brothers.

Moreover, it is difficult to claim that fraternal polyandry is a peculiarly Tibetan institution. This form of marriage used to be widely distributed around the periphery of the Indian subcontinent and in the northern parts of Eurasia, but we do not always find a similar meaning shift in the languages spoken by these peoples.<sup>6</sup>

Lévi-Strauss (1978:656) thinks that it is more appropriate to view this as resulting from a change in Tibetan society from a matrilineal system to a patrilineal system at some point in time. This may be the most straightforward explanation; at the present time, however, there is little evidence which positively supports this view.<sup>7</sup>

Next, Benedict believes that WT *zhang* was introduced as a term indicating "mother's brother" (which had become a blank). He believes that

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taxation under the feudal system. Moreover, as the forms of Tibetan marriage show a very wide diversity, fraternal polyandry is distinctive but not always the predominant pattern, as has been reported by recent anthropologists.

<sup>5</sup> Grenard regards fraternal polyandry as one form of an absolute patriarchal system (i.e., family unity with the elder son in the center). Prince Peter, who conducted wide-ranging fieldwork on fraternal polyandry in Indian and Himalayan villages, also points out that fraternal polyandry can be most successfully practised under a typical patrilineal society. Goldstein, who collected information from the Tibetan refugee settlement in Mysore, India, concludes that fraternal polyandry emerges as "only one strategy in a larger monomartial pattern" that was characteristic of a certain type of landholding serf and lord strata (1971:64). According to him, the way that the head of a family (usually an eldest son) becomes the representative of the monomartial stem family enables the family of a landholding peasant to prevent partition of the hereditary estate and to maintain the solidarity of the family (1978a). The pressures prescribing the form of this marriage from the outside are the Tibetan ecological situation and the feudal system (1978b).

Therefore, the head of a family is clearly distinguished from polyandrous co-husbands, and the offspring of the marriage all count as the eldest's children, whoever the actual father may be; all the offspring call their co-fathers *a'khu* (uncle) instead of *pha la* (father) in the system of kinship terminology. Moreover, the term *a'jo* or *jo-jo* to denote the eldest brother signifies "father" as well, with the primary meaning being "lord" or "the head of the family" (Stein 1972:95). So, a child often calls his father *pha-jo* "father-lord".

<sup>6</sup> Among various tribes on the periphery of the Indian subcontinent (in the Himalayas, Central Asia, Ceylon and so on) it can be ascertained by field research that this type of marriage was widespread in the past and still exists. Among the most comprehensive reports are Briffault (1927, 1969:647-76) and Prince Peter (1963), etc. Lévi-Strauss (English trans. 372) cites a publication of Sternberg, where it is stated that "the Gilyak practise fraternal polyandry without giving the father's brother a special place in the terminology."

<sup>7</sup> Stein describes it as a peculiarity of the first line of kings, "the Seven Thrones," that their names are derived from those of their mother. They are thus, perhaps, to be included in the seventh tribe, described as "maternal uncle" (Stein 1962, 1972:48). So it cannot be declared that there was never a survival of the matrilineal system in ancient Tibet. However, for the moment it is almost impossible to shed light upon these mythical times, so that it would be better to consider that there is little evidence to support the former existence of a matrilineal system.

this term originated from PTB *\*zrang*, and that it can be compared with (for example) Kuki *t-rang*, *m-rang* "father's sister's husband, husband's father" and Burmese *a-hrang* < *\*srang* "feudal lord, master" (Benedict 1942:318). However, there are few examples of parallel correspondences. In the case of the Burmese form cited, the final part of the syllable shows agreement, but the initial consonant cluster ordinarily corresponds to an initial with a high pitch in WT, and would not appear to correspond to WT *zh-*.

There is a gap of several thousand years between the time of the PTB forms reconstructed by Benedict and the time that a directly confirmable Tibetan literary language was established around the 7th century A.D. It is difficult to specify at what stage during this interval the semantic shift in question occurred. As we indicated in our introduction, if we use the new information deduced from Dunhuang manuscripts and the recent findings of historians and cultural anthropologists, it appears that the semantic shift of PTB *\*ku* from "maternal uncle" to "paternal uncle" can be traced to some extent.

## 2. Tibet Prior to the *Tufan* Kingdom

It is well known that the *Tufan* kingdom, which was very powerful militarily, engaged in a long power struggle with the Tang, and that the *Tufan* occupied Chang-an 長安 for a time (in 763). However, conditions in Tibet prior to the *Tufan* have remained in the realm of speculation. With the advances made in the study of the Dunhuang manuscripts, though, light has been shed upon areas formerly regarded as belonging to the world of myth, and it has become possible to reconstruct certain events as valid history. In order to gain an understanding of appellations for "uncle", let us summarize Tibetan history prior to the *Tufan*. Unless otherwise noted, the historical description below is based on Yamaguchi (1983, 1988).

The predecessor of the *Tufan* dynasty was the *Yarlung* family. In the first half of the sixth century, the house of *Yarlung* unified the various tribes of what is now central Tibet, thus establishing the foundations of the later *Tufan* dynasty. The ancestors of the *Yarlung* royal house were apparently located in the *Zhangzhung* region northeast of Mount Kailāsa far to the west. The forerunners of the *Yarlung* were the *sPu* clan of the *Phywa* tribe. The *Phywa* tribe was situated in lower *Zhangzhung*, and from the second or third century on repeatedly intermarried with exogamous tribes located there, mainly the *dMu* tribe, thus gradually expanding its power. These tribes became amalgamated to the point of being referred to as the "*dMu-Phywa* tribe". At the time of the *lha rabs mched bzhi* (lit.: "gods of four brothers," ca. end of the third century), three branches of the *Phywa* tribe or the composite *dMu-Phywa* tribe moved eastward (leaving one branch behind). One of these three branches

became the ancestors of the royal family of *Yarlung*, and settled at the eastern end of what is today the *dBus* 衛 region (central Tibet). According to monument inscriptions preserved in Kompo, there was a further eastward advance two or three generations after this migration, in the time of *Nyag khri btsan po*, the direct ancestor of this royal house, with this ruler reigning over six clans of the same tribe in the *Khams* 康 region (around the end of the fifth century). The mother of this ruler was from the *dMu* tribe, and the ruler himself was born in his mother's village, and was thus called "the maternal nephew of *dMu*".

Separate from these intermarrying tribes of the affinal *dMu* and *Phywa* clans, there was a country called *Nüguo* 女國 in upper *Zhangzhung*<sup>8</sup>. Although the time cannot be specified, some of their descendants moved eastward and intermarried with descendants of the 'O *de gung rgyal* branch of the *Phywa-dMu* tribe (who had similarly migrated eastward); the former also formed connections with the *rLang* or *gLan* clan and the *sGo* clan, and founded *Don Nüguo* 東女國 in what is now northwestern Sichuan 四川 Province at the end of the fifth century. This is the *sBrang* clan, which later came to have an intermarrying relationship with the family of *Yarlung*.

*Khri sde yag pa*, who was five generations later than *Nyag khri btsan po*, intermarried with this *sBrang* clan. As a result, the son of *Khri sde yag pa*, *Dri gum btsan po*, was also called "the king of the army of the *sBrang* clan". Freely using the army of his maternal relatives as a powerful ally, he expanded his power and advanced into *Yar lung*; afterward, he imprudently tried to conquer the West, which led to his ruin. Subsequently, there was a revival by two children of *Dri gum btsan po*, and the two houses of *rKong po* (or *Kong po*) and *Yar lung* were established. The founder of the latter was the first king of the *Tufan* Kingdom, *sPu de gung rgyal*. In the time of *Khri slon mtshan*, of the sixth generation following this king, there was an event that disrupted the balance of power in Central Tibet. Using this as an opportunity, the king of *Yar lung* seized power in the region. A few years later, King *Khri slon mtshan* was poisoned, and *Srong btsan sgam po* acceded to the throne (circa 596 A.D.). This king succeeded in unifying the country in the first half of the seventh century, resulting in the foundation of the *Tufan* Kingdom.

<sup>8</sup> There were two 女國 both on the east and the west sides of Tibet, but some confusion can be seen in Chinese historical records. Yamaguchi presumes that one 女國 located in the region of *Zhangzhung* in western Tibet must have been to the north of *Ladakh*, and that the other eastern 女國 was founded by the people who had moved eastward from the western 女國, about which Moriyasu's brief summary of the studies by Sato (1958) and Yamaguchi (1983, 1988) is very useful.

### 3. Terms for "Uncle" during the Yarlung Period

How are terms for "uncle" used in these historical sources?

In the examples presented by Yamaguchi (1983, 1988) and Sato (1977), *khu* denotes "paternal uncle", and *zhang* is "maternal uncle", so that both terms agree in form and meaning with Written Tibetan. If only these forms are considered, there is no evidence that *khu* once meant "maternal uncle".

Nevertheless, there is a strong probability that *khu* was a term denoting "maternal uncle" (corresponding to PTB \*ku) in a previous stage of Tibetan, i.e., so-called Pre-Tibetan, which is later than PTB.

WT has the forms *spad*, *smad* and *skud* as secondary kinship terms. They appear in compounds, as in *ma-smad*. If we combine the entries found in the dictionaries of Jäschke, Schmidt and Das, the meanings of these terms are as follows:

*spad* "father's child"

*smad* "mother's child", or "children in relation to their mother"

*skud* "brother-in-law"

Morphologically, these terms can all be analyzed as s- -d. The respective root elements appearing in the blank are *pa* < *pha* "father", *ma* "mother", and *ku* < *khu*. Following the prefix s-, the oppositions of *p-* vs. *ph-* and *k-* vs. *kh-* at the head of a nuclear syllable are neutralized (WT *sph-* and *skh-* do not occur in the orthography); accordingly, *skud* becomes "child of *khu*".

Meanwhile, if *khu* is interpreted as "paternal uncle", as implied by the examples of both Yamaguchi and Sato, then *skud* must be "paternal uncle's child". However, the common meaning of this term as noted in the dictionaries of Jäschke, Schmidt, Das and others is "brother-in-law". Furthermore, Das also gives the meaning of "wife's brother" for *skud*. In addition, *skud po* has the meanings of "father-in-law" (Das 1902; 1970) and "wife's brother" (藏漢詞彙 1957), and Yamaguchi also notes that *skud po* is "bride's brother" and "bride's father" (1983:571). As was mentioned in Section 1 above, Tibet has been a patrilineal exogamous society since before the establishment of the *Tufan* Kingdom. If *khu* is taken as meaning "paternal uncle", then the children of *khu* belong to the same lineage (or clan) as ego (male), so that ego cannot take a daughter of *khu* as a wife.<sup>9</sup> Females who can become ego's wife must marry in from another lineage (or clan). Accordingly, for the sons of *khu* to be "wife's brothers", *khu* must be of the wife's original lineage (or clan), i. e., *khu* must be a male on the maternal side.

Here we see a contradiction between the meaning of the root element of *skud* (*ku* < *khu*) and the meaning of *khu* with the sense of "paternal uncle" in Written Tibetan. In Tibetan society under a patrilineal exogamous marriage system, the head of the affinal group, maternal uncle, was an important entity.

<sup>9</sup> See Desideri's description (note 2).



Moreover, even in modern times in Tibet, it is the bride's father, i.e., the maternal uncle, who plays an important role in his daughter's wedding.<sup>10</sup> Accordingly, the root element (*ku < khu*) of *skud* must have been "maternal uncle" (i.e. "bride's father" or "father-in-law").

In that case, what then was the word for "paternal uncle"? In various Tibeto-Burman languages, a word stem of the same origin as "father" is commonly used for parallel uncles. In Tibetan as well, the word used for the patrilineal uncle was probably the same as that for "father".<sup>11</sup>

Next, how did *khu* undergo a semantic shift from "maternal uncle" to "paternal uncle", and how did the form *zhang* come to be a term denoting "maternal uncle"? As was mentioned in Section 1, the evidence for polyandry (claimed by Benedict to be the cause) is weak. Furthermore, although the shift from a matrilineal system to a patrilineal system proposed by Lévi-Strauss is easiest to accept from the standpoint of theoretical adjustability, all of the materials currently available to us indicate a patrilineal Tibetan society, so that immediate acceptance of this proposal is not possible.

I believe it to be the case that *zhang* was not introduced in order to fill the gap left by the shift in the meaning of *khu*, but rather that

- (a) *zhang* was introduced as a term for "maternal uncle" with a different meaning from *khu*, i. e., as a marked term;
- (b) this term became influential, and therefore became unmarked so that it was used in general to indicate "maternal uncle"; and
- (c) *khu* acquired the function of distinguishing between father and parallel uncles, which were previously undifferentiated in the lexical system.

*Khri sde yag pa*, who was five generations later than *Nyag khri btsan po* (the remote ancestor of *Yarlung*), concluded an intermarrying relationship with the *sBrang* clan. The members of this *sBrang* clan, newly related by marriage,

<sup>10</sup> According to Stein (1962, 1972:108), an early inscription (ca. 800) speaks of the wise maternal uncle taking an active interest in the king's birth or childhood, and uniting in joy 'father/son, elder brother/younger brother, mother/son, superior/inferior'. Furthermore, even in the modern marriage arrangement, it is the bride's maternal uncle (*zhang-po*) who plays a dominant role. His agreement to the marriage is essential (see Bell 1928:183, Stein 1962, 1972:107, Prince Peter 1965:196, etc.).

<sup>11</sup> Benedict reconstructs the same root as *pha* "father" for parallel uncle as well, alongside *khu* (Benedict 1942:316). Moreover, anthropologists have presented many ethnographical examples demonstrating that a social father does not belong to the individual real father, but rather to a corporate unit including brothers or fathers (cf. Radcliffe-Brown 1952, Leach 1955).

Stein says that within the clan each generation is treated as a compact, homogeneous undivided group. The set comprising the father and his brother (paternal uncle) is called *pha-khu* "fathers-uncles", or else the senior of them is called "elder father" and the others "younger fathers". (Stein 1962, 1972:94-5).

The term *a-jo* or *jo-jo* denoting the eldest brother means "father" as well, therefore it would not be impossible for parallel uncle to be denoted by the term *a-jo* or *jo-jo*, but *jo* was originally used as the honorific for a superior man in general, so that this does not seem very likely.

called themselves *zhang-po*. WT *zhang-po* may be interpreted as "matrilineal relative"; however, it is worth noting that the *sBrang* clan considered their origins to be "the *sBrang* clan of *Zhangzhung*".<sup>12</sup>

Since the area of origin of this new *sBrang* clan was considered to be in *Zhangzhung*, might it not be that *zhang-po* had the meaning of "people originating in *Zhangzhung*, from *Zhangzhung*" prior to acquiring the meaning of 外戚 "maternal relative"? The *zhang* in *Zhangzhung* is exclusively used as a proper noun indicating place names, and does not occur as a common noun. It is known that *Zhangzhung* was an important area of *gnyen* "relatives by marriage" for the *Yarlung* family<sup>13</sup>; although it is not true that all maternal relatives from the time of *Khri sde yag pa* to the time of *Srong btsan sgam po* originated in *Zhangzhung*, there is no doubt that affines from *Zhangzhung* accounted for a major portion of these maternal relatives. For this reason, members of the *sBrang* clan later (around the end of the 8th century) began to style themselves as *zhang rgyal* "kings of the affinal tribes originating in *Zhangzhung*".<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The *sBrang* became a maternal relative of the *Yarlung* royal family owing to the birth of *Dri gum btsan po* and was denoted as 'the king of *zhangzhung sBra*' in "Amdo chos 'byung" (III f 259 a.1.4), and is also called 'Zhangzhung *sBran rje*' in "Dar rgyas gsol ba'i sgron ma". These historical documents specify that this tribe originated in the region of *Zhangzhung* (Yamaguchi, 1983:226-7). According to Yamaguchi's historical examination, the *sBrang* founded 東女國 "eastern 女國" in *Gyim shod* district of the *mDo smad* region, cooperating with the tribe *rLang* (or *gLan*) around the fifth or sixth century. They are considered, however, to have originally been the identical tribe which had founded the western 女國 (which was inferred to have been located on *sTod* "upper" *Zhangzhung*), and which moved eastward later. Regarding the *sBrang*, this king's family name of eastern 女國 is the corrupted form of *suvarna* 金, the king's family name of western 女國. See Moriyasu's summary (1992) of Yamaguchi's study.

<sup>13</sup> It is inferred that the tribe *dMu*, which was one of the principal affinal tribes with the *Yarlung* royal family after the second or third century, had its base in the *Zhangzhung* area, and the *sBrang* as a new affine was also one of the branches of the tribes which had founded western 女國 and moved eastward. Their former land would have been regarded as *Zhangzhung*. At the beginning of *Chronicles* (Bacot et al. 1940-46), there is the following description:

*zhang zhung lte bu, gnyen gyi yang do.*

"A good partner such as *zhangzhung* is an important one as an affinal relative."

Furthermore, Prince *Sad mar kar* got married into the *Zhangzhung* royal family which had been an affinal relative of the *Yarlung* royal family. King *Srong btsan sgam po* also took *Lig tig sman*, a *Zhangzhung* woman, as his wife (Yamaguchi 1983:339-40).

These historical accounts being considered, it can be reasoned that the early kings, including King *Srong btsan sgam po*, had had wives from *Zhangzhung* and that *Zhangzhung* were important partners as affinal relatives. *dPa'o gtsug lag 'phreng ba*, a historian of the 16th century, says that it would be King *Khri gnyan zung btsan*, a son of King *Tho tho ri gnyan btsan*, that first used the term *zhang* to denote his mother's clan in mystical ancient times (Stein 1971:104). However, this is now generally regarded as the result of later recomposition by the Bon side.

<sup>14</sup> 『寺院總置補』, a local history compiled in the Qing dynasty, says, "Kings of *Zhang zhung sBra* are named the line of *Zhang rgyal*". Yamaguchi (1971:6) interprets that *zhang rgyal* is a contracted form for 'king of *zhang po*', and was employed as a proper noun by *sBra* because *sBra*, belonging to the line of *Zhangzhung*, was a matrilineal tribe of the *Tufan* royal family.

As is also seen from the fact that *Dri gum btsan po* commanded the army of his maternal *sBrang* clan, the representative *zhang* of the maternal relatives (*zhang-po*) was an extremely important person.<sup>15</sup> In a patrilineal exogamous system, this *zhang* is a maternal uncle. Thus, it appears that the core meaning of *zhang/zhang-po* underwent the following semantic shift: "people originating in *Zhangzhung*" → "affine from *Zhangzhung*" → "representative of affine" → "maternal uncle". Thus, a semantically marked lexical item with a special content ultimately became a common kinship term for "maternal uncle".

As this shift occurred, *khu* became a form indicating paternal parallel uncles, thus eliminating a state in which "father" and "paternal uncle" were not formally distinguished.

Incidentally, there is a theory that attempts to connect WT *khu* with "semen".<sup>16</sup> Certainly at the stage of WT, *khu* has such a sense along with "uncle". However, this seems to be entirely fortuitous.

I have succeeded in tracing the history of WT *khu* and *zhang*. However, a big problem is still left unsolved. Both Lévi-Strauss and Benedict presuppose that the Tibetans used to practice "matrilineal cross-cousin marriage." Such an idea may be correct, but their arguments are based on very fragmentary evidence. It seems to me that nobody has yet substantiated the whole system of Tibetan marriage historically. I shall attempt to undertake that task in the near future.

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However, his interpretation of the note (ibid. 42) differs from the present writer's. It is not known with certainty exactly when the line of *zhang rgyal* existed, but Yamaguchi (1983:715) reasons that its heyday was later than the reign of *Khri srong lde btsan* (742-803 or 804 A.D.), but not too much later than that reign.

<sup>15</sup> A minister who comes from a queen's family is designated as *zhang*, and is known by the fact that he exercised his power on the politics of the *Tufan* dynasty. This shows how important a maternal uncle (= *zhang*) was in relation to an alliance by marriage, or how much power he controlled. After Dunhuang manuscripts, *zhang-po* is exclusively used for "the tribes who have already provided a king's mother."

<sup>16</sup> Yamaguchi (1983:562) considers that *khu* derives from *khu/khu-ba* "semen" (*gSar bsgrigs rgya bod ming gi rgya mtsho* = 『藏漢辭典』 vol.1:28a, 1932) and is combined with *khu ba byed po* "thing to produce semen". He also relates this to *rkang mar* "marrow of a bone" (格西曲札: 藏文辭典 p.79; 『藏漢辭典』 vol.1:13b) so that the term *khu* has a relation with *rus* "bone" or *rus-pa* "patrilineal kin" from his point of view. This seems to be an interpretation of reproductive theory on a folk etymological level, which differs from the type of reconstruction done in historical linguistics.

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