A NOTE ON *ŹAṅ*: MATERNAL RELATIVES OF THE TIBETAN ROYAL LINE AND MARRIAGE INTO THE ROYAL FAMILY*

BY

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This article examines the meaning of the Tibetan kinship term *źaṅ* as it applied to the maternal relatives of the Tibetan royal line during the period of the Tibetan empire (c.600—c.850). The term *źaṅ*, which generally means "maternal uncle", "father-in-law" or "wife-giver", has been considered by both historians and social anthropologists, and this paper reviews some of their more notable findings before attempting to circumscribe the remit and scope of the term *źaṅ* in Old Tibetan sources. Chief among these sources are the royal genealogy of Ptib 1286, the Old Tibetan Annals and three royal edicts[1]. Based on a close examination of these sources, the following paper demonstrates that the appellative *źaṅ* was lent to an aristocratic clan when one of its ladies gave birth to a Tibetan sovereign (or upon his subsequent accession to the throne), and that the title was retained for at least four generations thereafter. The investigation also reveals a proscription governing the marriage practices of the Tibetan royal line: no heir-producing marriage with a single maternal clan was permitted until a certain number of generations had passed since an earlier such union. The ramifications of this practice are

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[1] Ptib 1286 and the Old Tibetan Annals were translated into French in BACOT *et al*. (1940). For an analysis of their structure and content, see MACDONALD-SPANIEN (1971: 199-202) and URAY (1975). For ease of reference, Bacot is cited here for his treatment of the Old Tibetan Annals and the royal genealogy in Ptib 1286. However, in every case, the photographic plates in SPANIEN *et al*. (1979) have been consulted, as have the transcriptions in IMAEDA and TAKEUCHI (1990).

then considered alongside a modern parallel, and the paper closes with a few extrapolations concerning the social structure of the Tibetan empire.

Among the ministers and officials of the Tibetan government listed in various Old Tibetan sources there are an overwhelming number of them whose names are prefixed by the kinship term *źaṅ*. Many scholars have noted the importance of maternal relatives to the Tibetan royal line, and the term *źaṅ* has been scrutinized by Tucci, Richardson, Uray and Yamaguchi, among others. Tucci, who took *źaṅ* to mean 'uncle' stated that "when *źaṅ* is used alone, it seems certain that it applies to families from which the kings chose their wives." (TUCCI 1950: 58). He later noted that according to the edict of Khri lDe-sroṅ-btsan (reigned 800-815) preserved in dPa'-bo gTsug-lag phreṅ-ba's *mKhas pa'i dga' ston* (hereafter, *KhG*), there were four *źaṅ* clans: the mChims, sNa-nam, Tshes-poṅ and 'Bro (TUCCI 1950: 60-61).

Richardson was in general agreement with Tucci's views, and elaborated on the particulars:

> "The title *zhang*, in certain clearly definable circumstances, signifies that the person so described or a member of his family was at some time in the relationship of maternal uncle to a king of Tibet. Families with this distinction, which figure prominently in early records, are *Mchims, Sna-nam, 'Bro* and *Tshes-pong*." (RICHARDSON 1998b: 16).

In addition to his observation that the title *źaṅ* was assumed only by those four clans, Richardson also noted that a clan did not earn the appellation *źaṅ* simply by providing the Tibetan emperor (bTsan-po)[2] with a bride: it had to provide an heir (Richardson 1952: 50-51). This view was echoed in a brief comment by Uray, who stated that "The *źaṅ* <<maternal uncle>> was a title in the age of the old kingdom, and was due only to the four clans 'Bro, sNa-nam, mChims and Tshes-poo from which the mothers of the kings after Sroṅ-btsan sgam-po originated."

[2] bTsan-po is a term reserved almost exclusively for the rulers of the Tibetan empire. Though it literally means something like "mighty one", it is located hierarchically above other terms for rulers, such as king (*rgyal-po*), ruler (*mṅa'-bdag*) and so forth. The other rulers of the time, such as the Chinese emperor, were referred to as kings. For this reason, Beckwith and others have translated bTsan-po as "emperor" (BECKWITH 1987: 14-15, n. 10).

(URAY 1967: 384). Duṅ-dkar Blo-bzaṅ ‘phrin-las reached similar conclusions about *źaṅ*, stating that they were relatives of the emperor on his mother’s side. Duṅ-dkar further posited that the predominance of these maternal relatives as ministers and officials in the Tibetan imperial government was as a result of familial affection (DUNG DKAR 2002: 1765).

Zuiho YAMAGUCHI devoted a long and detailed work to the problem of *źaṅ*. Taking as his point of departure the Sino-Tibetan treaty inscription of 822/23, Yamaguchi analysed the meaning and function of the Chinese equivalents of *dbon* and *źaṅ— shēng* (“son-in-law”/ “nephew”) and *jìu* (“father-in-law”/ “maternal uncle”). He argued that the relation of *dbon* and *źaṅ* was “that of grandson and maternal grandfather.” (YAMAGUCHI 1969: 45). While *dbon/ sbon* most certainly means “grandson” in Old Tibetan (in addition to “nephew” and perhaps “son-in-law”[3]), *źaṅ* rather unequivocally designates “maternal uncle” and “father-in-law”, but not “maternal grandfather”. Faced with this difficulty, Yamaguchi resorted to the following argument in order to force the Tibetan terms into accord with his interpretation:

> “As a grandson regarded himself as *dbon (po)* in relation to his father’s father, so he must have regarded himself as a grandson in relation to his mother’s father. In addressing to the latter, however, he did not call him *mes (po)*, for the maternal grandfather did not belong to his *rus pa* or family. Instead, he borrowed the term *źaṅ (po)* for him that was originally used by his father to refer to his mother’s father. In short, *źaṅ (po)* thus came to be adopted as the appellative term for the maternal grandfather in relation to the grandson.” (YAMAGUCHI 1969: 146)[4].

Yamaguchi arrived at these conclusions through a circular argument in which his selective interpretations of the Tibetan terms informed his reading of the Chinese terms and vice-versa. In particular, his contention that the term *mes-po* was used only for paternal grandfather and not for maternal grandfather is completely unsubstantiated. While generally accurate in describing Chinese kinship terms, it simply does not hold for Tibetan kinship terminology. Further, Yamaguchi operates on the flawed assumption that the use of the terms *dbon* and *źaṅ* in the context of the *dbon-źaṅ* relationship between Tibet and China should correlate pre-

[3] For a discussion of this term in Old Tibetan sources, see UEBACH (1980).
[4] Yamaguchi reiterates this view in YAMAGUCHI (1992).

cisely with the use of these kinship terms in a more restrictive context, specifically, within the emperor's relationship with the aristocratic clans titled '*źaṅ*'. It is more likely, however, that in the context of Tibet's relations with the royal houses of neighbouring states, terms such as *dbon* and *źaṅ* functioned not only as kinship terms pervading from one generation to the next, but also as hereditary titles. As titles, such terms referred to a relationship whose nature was often more symbolic than actual. In the case of Tibet's alliance with Nanzhao, for example, Nanzhao and the Nanzhao sovereign were referred to as "younger brother" in relation to Tibet and the Tibetan emperor (bTsan-po)[5]. This parallels a similar practice in which the Chinese emperor would bestow on an important, but subordinate vassal ruler the title of younger brother. Kinship terms were thus used to define political relationships between states, and in the case of Nanzhao the kin relationship was obviously fictive. It should be observed, therefore, that there is a qualitative difference between the application of kinship terms to relations between countries as opposed to relations between kin groups or individuals within a single society, and it would be rash to expect these terms to serve the exact same function in each case. At the same time, one can expect a large degree of interpenetration between these two contexts in which *źaṅ* is used; it is only the assumption of a strict one-to-one correlation that is problematic. Thus while it is useful, to a certain extent, to illuminate the meaning of *źaṅ* in relation to the Tibetan aristocracy by drawing parallels with its meaning in the context of dynastic marriages with foreign states and vice-versa, the two must not be conflated entirely.

Źaṅ as a Kinship Term

Purely as a kinship term, *źaṅ* has received the attention of Benedict and of Lévi-Strauss. Lévi-Strauss based his analysis largely on Benedict's

[5] In chapter seven of the Old Tibetan Chronicle, it states that during the reign of Khri lDe-gtsug-brtsan, "the Mya king, who was called Kag-la-boṅ, offered obeisance as a subject and was bestowed with the rank of younger brother" (*mya 'I rgyal po kag la boṅ źes bya ba/ /'baṅs su pyag 'tshal nas/ thabs gcuṅ stsalte/*) (Ptib 1287, l. 345) (IMAEDA and TAKEUCHI 1990: 29). This refers to the pact concluded between Tibet and Nanzhao in 751 and 752, and Kag-la-boṅ apparently transcribes Ko-lo-feng, who ruled from 748-779, and was bestowed with the title "younger brother" (BACKUS 1981: 71). See also YANG (1904: 44).

data, and interpreted *źao* in the context of generalized exchange[6] and matrilateral cross-cousin marriage[7]. In this manner, Lévi-Strauss placed the pair *źaṅ* and *dbon* into the categories of wife-givers and wife-takers, respectively (LÉVI-STRAUSS 1968: 371-73). Benedict argued that the dual meaning of *źaṅ* as both "maternal uncle" and "father-in-law" supported an argument for matrilateral cross-cousin marriage in Tibet, and drew the same conclusions for China based on that fact that the Chinese kinship term *jìu* also meant both "maternal uncle" and "father-in-law", while *shēng* indicated "sister's son" and "son-in-law" (BENEDICT 1942: 337). Allen and Guigo have also considered the reconstruction of archaic kinship patterns in Tibet, but neither have upheld Lévi-Strauss' claims for generalized exchange. Allen claims that Tibetan kinship terminologies were originally of a symmetrical prescriptive type[8], while Guigo concludes that Tibetan exogamy was essentially bilateral (GUIGO 1986: 112).

Źaṅ as an Honorific: *Źaṅ-lon*/ *Źaṅ-blon*

Beyond his treatment of *źaṅ* as a kinship term, Benedict also noted its use in honorific compounds (BENEDICT 1942: 329-30, n. 37). The term *źaṅ* was commonly employed as an honorific in the compound *źaṅ-lon*/ *źaṅ-blon*, which simply means "minister."[9] Only in very few circumstances

[6] Following lèvi-Strauss' definition, systems of generalized exchange "establish reciprocal relationships between any number of partners. These relationships, moreover, are *directional relationships"* (LÉVI-STRAUSS 1968: 178). Further, "in a system of generalized exchange, A is debtor solely to B from whom he receives his wives and, for the same reason, B is debtor solely to C, C to *n*, and *n* to A, when there is a marriage it is as if B had also a direct claim over *n*, B over A, *n* over B, and A over C." (LÉVI-STRAUSS 1968: 306).

[7] In the ideal form of matrilateral cross-cousin marriage, a man ego marries his mother's brother's daughter or a classificatory mother's brother's daughter (from the point of view of a female ego, a woman marries her father' sister's son). In this type of system, parallel cousins (mother's sister's children and father's brother's children) are usually regarded as siblings.

[8] Allen puts forward this thesis in Allen (1975) and applies it again in Allen (1976).

[9] For the use of the term *źaṅ* as an honorific among the Tamang, who practice matrilateral cross-cousin marriage, among other forms of exchange, see STEINMANN (1987: 324, n. 34). The use of *źaṅ* as an honorific would appear to be a by-product of the fact that wife-givers (*źaṅ*) traditionally have a higher status than wife takers. This is reflected

does *źaṅ-blon* indicate "maternal uncles and ministers" or simply "maternal uncle minister", that is to say, a minister who is also a *źaṅ*. The use of *źaṅ-blon chen-po*/ *źaṅ-lon chen-po* to refer to high ranking ministers in general and not "(classificatory) uncle ministers" is evident from the final entry of the Old Tibetan Annals for the dragon year 764, which records promotions and transferrals following the Tibetan sack of the Chinese capital:

> *bod yul du mol cen/ mol cen mdzade// źaṅ lon chen pho/ spo bleg mdzade/ blon che snao bźer ke ke ru'I yI ge stsalde/ blon cher bcug/ źaṅ rgyal zigs chen pho g.yu'I yi ge stsalde/ mgar 'dzi rmun gyi thaṅ du chog śesu bstod// blon khri bzaṅ blon cer bcug// stoṅ rtsan g.yu'I yI ge stsal te/ so mtha bźI dmag pon du bka' stsald/ par lo gcig//* "Making a great consultation (*mol-cen*) in the land of Tibet, the great ministers (*źaṅ-lon chen-pho*) made transferrals (*spo bleg*). They gave Prime minister (*blon-che*) [dBa's] sNaṅ-bźer [zu-brtsan] the *ke-ke-ru* insignia and appointed him as prime minister. They gave *Źaṅ* [mChims-rgyal] rGyal-zigs [śu-theṅ] the great turquoise insignia and praised him for saying he was content with the rank of *mgar 'dzi-rmun*. They appointed Minister [mGos] Khri-bzaṅ [yab-lag] as prime minister (*blon-ce*). They gave *Źaṅ* sToṅ-rtsan the turquoise insignia and proclaimed him general of the four frontiers. So one year."[10]

One notes here the obvious fact that *źaṅ-lon chen-po* refers to all of the upper echelon of ministers who were promoted or transferred following their triumph at the Chinese capital the previous year. Included under the term *źaṅ-lon chen-po* are dBa's sNaṅ-bźer zu-brtsan and mGos Khri-bzaṅ yab-lag, and there is no record of either the dBa's or the mGos clans contracting any marriage, let alone heir-producing marriage, with the Tibetan royal line.

This same pattern may be seen in the bSam-yas edict (c.779) of Khri Sroṅ-lde-btsan preserved in *KhG* (372), where the nine great ministers

also by the fact that while wife-givers are indicated by a term usually reserved for an elder (*źaṅ*: maternal uncle), wife-takers are referred to using a term for a nephew or grandson (*dbon* or *tsha*).

[10] For Thomas' translation see Bacot *et al*. (1940: 60, 66). There is apparently an error in this passage in that two men are appointed to the post of prime minister. Though there is a remote possibility that two men shared the post, it is far more likely that dBa's sNaṅ-bźer zu-brtsan was "promoted out" of the post with bestowal of the otherwise untested *ke-ke-ru* insignia and replaced by mGos Khri-bzaṅ yab-lag. This agrees with the succession of ministers in chapter two of the Old Tibetan Chronicle where mGos Khri-bzaṅ yab-lag succeeds dBa's sNaṅ-bźer zu-brtsan (Bacot *et al*. 1940: 102, 32).

attached to the council (*źaṅ-blon chen-po bka‘ la gtogs-pa*) include Minister sTag-sgra klu-khoṅ of the Ngan-lam clan, minister rGyal-sgra legs-gzigs of the sBraṅ clan and minister bTsan-bźer mdo-lod of the dBa‘s clan. None of these three clans are named in Old Tibetan Sources as maternal relatives of the Tibetan royal line[11].

The use of the honorific term *źaṅ-blon*/ *źaṅ-lon* to refer to those of ministerial rank is evident also from the legal document Ptib 1071, whose contents have been treated by RICHARDSON (1998a). The first part of Ptib 1071 records the punishments meted out if while hunting, one man shoots an arrow at a wild animal, but hits another man. The legal document decides punishments according to the statuses of both the shooter and the victim, beginning with the four great ministers, and proceeding through turquoise, gold, silver and gold alloy (*phra-men*), silver, brass and copper rank ministers, all the way down to the lowest class of Tibetan society comprising field servants and barbarian prisoners. Investigating the categories of victims, it is apparent that the document divides complainants into nine legal classes, or nine tiers of social strata:

Table one: the nine social strata of Tibetan society according to the Dunhuang legal document Ptib 1071.

I. The four great ministers (*źaṅ-blon chen-po bźi*): prime minister (*blon chen-po*), great minister of the interior (*naṅ-blon chen-po*), the veritable maternal uncle of the emperor endowed with political authority (*btsan-po‘i źaṅ-druṅ chab-srid la dbaṅ-ba*)[12], deputy to the prime minister (*blon chen-po‘i ‘og-pon*).
II. Ministers with turquoise insignia (*źaṅ-lon g.yu‘i yi-ge-pa*).
III. Ministers with gold insignia (*źaṅ-lon gser gyi yi-ge-pa*).
IV. Ministers with silver and gold alloy insignia (*źaṅ-lon phra-men gyi yi-ge-pa*).
V. Ministers with silver insignia (*źaṅ-lon dṅul gyi yi-ge-pa*).
VI. Ministers with brass insignia (*źaṅ-lon ra-gan gyi yi-ge-pa*).

[11] See, however, Yamaguchi’s argument concerning the sBraṅ clan (YAMAGUCHI 1992: 68-73).

[12] The term *druṅ* indicates that *źaṅ* is meant in the sense of the kinship term, and that this post is filled by the actual *źaṅ* of the emperor—most likely his maternal uncle, or a suitable replacement. This distinguishes it from the *źaṅ* in *źaṅ-blon* or *źaṅ-lon*, which simply means “minister”. See YAMAGUCHI (1992: 61-62).

VII. Ministers with copper insignia (*źaṅ-lon zaṅs kyi yi-ge-pa*).
VIII. *gTsaṅ-chen*[13], "royal subjects with military duties" (*rgyal-'baṅs rgod do 'tshal*), field servants of a commoner or a minister (*źaṅ-lon daṅ dmaṅs kyi bran rkya la gtogs*), and governor's attaché (*mṅan gyi mṅan-lag*).
IX. Civilian royal subject (*rgyal-'baṅs g.yuṅ ṅo 'tshald*), field servants of a minister or a commoner, ordinary civilians (*g.yuṅ ṅo 'tshald*) and barbarian prisoners (*lho-bal brtson-pa*).

The most fundamental divide in the legal clauses is between groups I through VII, who are regarded as *źaṅ-lon*, and groups VIII and IX, who are considered commoners (*dmaṅs*). This being the case, the term *źaṅ-lon*/ *źaṅ-blon* is best translated as "landed gentry", "aristocracy" or "ministerial aristocracy", since the term *źaṅ-lon*/ *źaṅ-blon* designates a social stratum, and not necessarily a government post[14]. This is further justified by the fact that ministers' kin, both male and female of ascending and descending generations, are included in these aristocratic social categories simply by virtue of their consanguineous relationship to their ennobled relative (RICHARDSON 1998a: 151)[15].

While the use of the term *źaṅ* in the above examples demonstrates that it was employed as an honorific in the compound *źaṅ-blon*/ *źaṅ-lon*, meaning "minister" or "ministerial aristocracy", this type of usage is not completely divorced from *źaṅ*'s range as a kinship term. It is likely, moreover, that this situation developed out of a more restrictive use of the term *źaṅ-blon*/ *źaṅ-lon*, which probably once referred only to the maternal relatives of the royal line who filled the majority of the ministerial posts. The term would then have been extended to those ennobled with a ministerial post, but without any matrimonial ties to the royal line.

[13] For wont of a suitable translation, *gTsaṅ-chen* is left in the Tibetan.

[14] Richardson noted a distinction made in Ptib 1071 between *źaṅ-lon*, which refers to the whole body of ministers, and *źaṅ-blon*, which refers to those of highest rank (RICHARDSON 1998a: 161, n. 3). While this indeed holds true for Ptib 1071, it is contradicted in other Old Tibetan sources, such as the passage from the Old Tibetan Annals translated above.

[15] A detailed study of the use of kinship terms in this and other Old Tibetan documents is in preparation.

Źaṅ in Old Tibetan Sources

It is clear from the above analysis that the term *źaṅ* could be extended from its more restrictive sense (e.g. "maternal uncle") to encompass a larger range, be it "wife-giver", or "ministerial aristocracy" in the case of the compound *źaṅ-blon*/ *źaṅ-lon*. It is possible to be more precise, however, in circumscribing the range of the kinship term *źaṅ* as it applied to the emperors' maternal relatives through an analysis of the term's employment in Old Tibetan sources such as the Old Tibetan Annals and the edicts of Khri Sroṅ-lde-btsan (r. 756—c.797), Khri lDe-sroṅ-btsan (r. 800-815) and Khri gTsug-lde-brtsan (Ral-pa-can) (r. 815-c.836).

The first mention of *źaṅ* in the Old Tibetan Annals occurs in the ox year 701, notably during the reign of the 'regent queen' 'Bro Khri-ma-lod (BACOT *et al*. 1940: 20, 42). It is unclear, however, whether the person mentioned, *Źaṅ* bTsan-to-re lhas-byin, was a member of the 'Bro clan[16]. It is unfortunately also the case that with most of the other functionaries in the Annals whose names are prefaced by *źaṅ* there is no mention of their clan affiliation. The Annals of the 'A-źa Principality, however, mention a certain 'Bro *źaṅ* Khri-bzaṅ kha-ce-stoṅ in the entry for the rat year 712 (YAMAGUCHI 1970: 66).

Returning to the Old Tibetan Annals, *Źaṅ* rGyal-zigs, who is first mentioned in the sheep year 755, was a famous general who is also mentioned in the Old Tibetan Chronicle (BACOT *et al*. 1940: 114, 53) and on the Źol Pillar inscription (c.764), which is the oldest known sample of Tibetan writing (RICHARDSON 1985: 12-13). From these sources it is known that *Źaṅ* rGyal-zigs was a member of the mChims clan, or more precisely, a member of the mChims-rgyal clan who were probably descended from the royal house of mChims. Given that he is known as *źaṅ* during the reign of Khri Sroṅ-lde-btsan and that the last mChims

[16] He is also mentioned in the dog year 710 as the leader of the groomsmen in charge of Princess (bTsan-mo) Koṅ-co's travelling arrangements (BACOT *et al*. 1940: 20, 42). *Źaṅ* bTsan-to-re is mentioned in an entry in the Annals of the 'A-źa principality, one year later, also in connection with the marriage to Koṅ-co, so it can be reasonably concluded that this refers to the same person. The immediately preceding text, which would have included his clan affiliation, is missing (YAMAGUCHI 1970: 66).

queen to bear an emperor (bTsan-po), according to the royal genealogy in the Dunhuang document Ptib 1286[17], was Lady bTsan-ma-thog thog-steo, whose son was Khri lDe-gtsug-brtsan (704—c.754), *Źaṅ* rGyal-zigs may be considered a 'second generation' *źaṅ*. To be more precise, this is reckoned based on the fact that the mChims clan became the *źaṅ* of Khri lDe-gtsug-brtsan either upon this emperor's birth or his accession to the throne. Then, counting descending generations not from the perspective of the mChims clan, but *from the perspective of the Tibetan royal line*[18], mChims clansmen would be reckoned second generation *źaṅ* during the reign of Khri lDe-gtsug-brtsan's successor, Khri Sroṅ-lde-btsan. Calculating in the same manner, 'Bro *źaṅ* Khri-bzaṅ kha-ce-stoṅ, mentioned above in the context of the entry for 712 in the annals of the 'A-źa principality, would be considered a second generation *źaṅ*, since the 'Bro initially became *źaṅ* during the time of Khri lDe-gtsug-brtsan's father, Khri 'Dus-sroṅ, who was born to 'Bro Khri-ma-lod.

An edict of Khri Sroṅ-lde-btsan, preserved in *KhG*, accompanied the bSam-yas inscription, and records the names of several of his ministers who swore to uphold the edict proclaiming Buddhism as the religion of Tibet. Richardson dates this edict to between 779 and 782, based on 779 as the date of the completion of bSam-yas Monastery (RICHARDSON 1985: 27). The edict does not contain any clan names, but by cross referencing with other Old Tibetan documents some clan affiliations can be found for ministers in the edict. The first three ministers listed in the edict under the heading of "great ministers attached to the council" (*źaṅ-blon chen-po bka' la gtogs-pa*) are Prime minister *Źaṅ* rGyal-zigs śu-theṅ, Minister sTag-sgra Klu-khoṅ and *Źaṅ* rGyal-mtshan lha-snaṅ (*KhG*: 372). According to the succession of ministers (*blon-rabs*) in chapter two of the Old Tibetan Chronicle the same three ministers, mChims *Źaṅ* rGyal-zIgs śu-teṅ, Ngan-lam sTag-sgra klu-goṅ and sNa-nam *Źaṅ* rGyal-tshan lha-snaṅ, succeeded one after another to the post

[17] This, the earliest royal genealogy, is employed here and in the examples that follow. For more on this genealogy, see the section immediately following.

[18] Such a perspective is necessitated by the dearth of information concerning the detailed genealogies of any group besides the royal line. It is possible that the number of generations were counted from the perspective of the *źaṅ* clan, but even if this were the case, the result would be roughly the same.

of prime minister (BACOT *et al*. 1940: 102, 32). mChims rGyal-zigs śuteṅ was already mentioned above as a second generation *źaṅ*, and *Źaṅ* sNa-nam rGyal-mtshan lha-snaṅ can be counted as a first generation *źaṅ*, considering that a sNa-nam lady mothered Khri Sroṅ-lde-btsan. Further on in the edict, one of the ministers of the interior (*naṅ-blon*) is named as *Źaṅ* Rams-śags. This most likely refers to ‘Bro Khri-gzu ram-śags, who would go on to become prime minister under Khri lDe-sroṅ-btsan, and is listed as such in that emperor’s edict. During the reign of Khri Sroṅ-lde-btsan, the last ‘Bro lady to have borne an emperor (bTsan-po) was Khri-ma-lod, who had been queen to Maṅ-slon Maṅ-rtsan and mother of ‘Dus-sroṅ Maṅ-po-rje. Therefore ‘Bro Khri-gzu ram-śags is reckoned a third generation *źaṅ*. There may be other clans aside from the ‘Bro, mChims and sNa-nam who were counted as *źaṅ* in the edict of Khri Sroṅ-lde-btsan, but as they are less well-known than the above three ministers their clan affiliations cannot be easily ascertained through cross-referencing.

The edict of Khri lDe-sroṅ-btsan (r. 800-815), also preserved in *KhG*, accompanied the sKar-chuṅ pillar edict proclaiming his desire to uphold the Buddhist religion, and records the names of several of his queens and ministers who swore to the declaration reinforcing Buddhism as the religion of Tibet. According to the edict, the first two political ministers attached to the great council were Prime minister *Źaṅ* ‘Bro Khri-gzu ram-śags and *Źaṅ* mChims-rgyal bTsan-bźer legs-gzigs. ‘Bro Khri-gzu ram-śags and the other ministers of the ‘Bro clan mentioned in this edict would now be a fourth generation *źaṅ*, and mChims-rgyal bTsan-bźer legs-gzigs would be a third generation *źaṅ*. Beyond these ministers, the first person listed as a minister of the interior (*naṅ-blon*) is *Źaṅ* sNa-nam Khri-sgra-rgyal. As the sNa-nam mothered Khri Sroṅ-lde-btsan, sNa-nam Khri-sgra-rgyal would be considered a second generation *źaṅ*. The second minister of the interior is *Źaṅ* Tshe-spoṅ mDo-bźer phes-po, and given that Lady rMa-rgyal lDoṅ-skar of the Tshes-poṅ clan bore the present emperor, Khri lDe-sroṅ-brtsan, he can be reckoned as a first generation *źaṅ*. To conclude, the *źaṅ* in this edict are ‘Bro, mChims, sNa-nam and Tshe-spoṅ (*KhG*: 412-12). Calculating according to intervening generations of emperors, and doing so from the point of view of the emperor, the members of these four clans are respectively fourth, third,

second and first generation *źaṅ*[19]. This demonstrates that the term *źaṅ* encompassed at least four descending generations of kinsmen.

The Lhasa treaty pillar of 821/22 contains the names, ranks and clan names of those who swore to uphold the Sino-Tibetan treaty enacted during the reign of Khri gTsug-lde-btsan (r. 815-c.836). One of the great political ministers mentioned in the edict is mChims *Źaṅ* rGyal bTsan-bźer, and one of the ministers of the exterior (*phyi-blon*) is ‘Bro *Źaṅ* Klu-bzaṅ lha-bo-brtsan. Aside from these two, the clan affiliations of the other *źaṅ* in the edict, which is unfortunately quite damaged, are unknown. Based on the same parameters given above, the mChims were at this point fourth generation *źaṅ*, while the ‘Bro were first generation *źaṅ*, since Lady Lha-rgyal Mao-mo-rje of the ‘Bro clan mothered the current ruler, Khri gTsug-lde-brtsan (Ral-pa-can).

This brief investigation of the genealogical range of the term *źaṅ* in Old Tibetan sources demonstrates that after the lady of a clan gave birth to a Tibetan emperor (bTsan-po), or upon his subsequent accession to the throne, the term *źaṅ* applied to at least four descending generations of the clan.

Źaṅ in the Dunhuang Genealogy Ptib 1286

Having demonstrated that the term *źaṅ* applied to at least four descending generations of a Tibetan emperor’s maternal relatives following his birth or accession to the throne, it is now necessary to consider the patterns of exchange revealed in the royal genealogy in Ptib 1286. Though there are several genealogies of Tibetan rulers in later

[19] Oddly, there are several references in the Old Tibetan Annals to ‘Bro ministers who are not called *źaṅ*. As mentioned above, of all the mentions of *źaṅ* in the Annals, only mChims rGyal-zigs śu-theṅ has been identified. Considering this type of anomaly, Yamaguchi writes, “the lack of the title may be due to the fact that as he was the youngest of all the high officials from this clan, probably one generation younger than the other co-signatories from this clan, he could not be entitled *źaṅ po* in relation to the king.” (YAMAGUCHI 1969: 149). While this statement is entirely plausible, it is perhaps premature to accept it as a final resolution to this problem. In some instances, such as the succession of ministers (*blon-rabs*) in chapter two of the Old Tibetan Chronicle, the term *źao* is not employed even in cases where it should apply. It seems that one should not discount the possibility, then, that the choice of whether or not to prefix a minister’s name with his requisite title *źao* may be sometimes put down to the whim of the author.

sources, Ptib 1286 is the only Dunhuang document that contains a full genealogy of the Tibetan royal line up to the birth of ‘U‘i Dum-brtan (Glaṅ dar-ma), whose assassination in about 842 precipitated the collapse of the Tibetan empire. The Old Tibetan Annals is by far the most reliable source for the history of the Tibetan empire, and Uebach has recently demonstrated the Annals’ value in establishing a royal genealogy (Uebach 1997). Nonetheless, the Annals only cover the period from 650 to 764, with some years missing in between, and cannot be considered a substitute for the royal genealogy contained in Ptib 1286.

As the focus of this inquiry is maternal relatives of the royal line, the first half of the genealogy in Ptib 1286, which does not include queens, is of little use and is therefore excluded. Queens are mentioned for the first three emperors, of course, but these certainly represent mythical figures, as do probably all of the queens mentioned in post-dynastic histories up until one generation before Lha-tho tho-ri gÑan-btsan. In *KhG*, for example, it states that before the time of Lha-tho tho-ri gÑan-btsan, “the queens were all goddesses or serpent spirits (*klu-mo*)” (*KhG*: 165)[20]. Aside from the divine nature of the queens, the transition in the royal genealogy from myth to prehistory is revealed in the spatial location of the tumuli of the various groups of kings along a descending continuum from the highest point down to the lowest point. Thus the tombs of the “Seven Heavenly Thrones” (*gnam la khri bdun*) were built in the sky (*KhG*: 160), those of their successors, the “Two Upper Reaches” (*stod kyi steṅ gñis*) were built on the highland slate, those of the next group of emperors, the “Six Pure Ones” (*legs drug*), were built on the border between the slate and the highland meadows, and the tombs of the “Eight lDe”, the group immediately preceding Lha-tho tho-ri gÑan-btsan, were built in the middle of a river (*KhG*: 165). This passage from on high to down low, in conjunction with the appearance of actual earthly queens indicates a movement into a murky intermediate stage between history and myth. Further, as this transpires at a point six generations back from Khri Sroṅ-btsan (569/605?-649), it may also represent the extent of genealogical memory. Beginning six generations before Khri Sroṅ-btsan, the genealogy in Ptib 1286 is as follows:

[20] This is also stated in the *lDe‘u chos-‘byuṅ* (*lDe‘u*): 248-9.

[26.] Khri Thog-brtsan and Lady sDoṅ-rgyal mTsho-ma of the Ru-yoṅ [clan] bore the son Lha Tho-do sÑa-brtsan.
[27.] Lha Tho-do sÑa-brtsan and Lady Maṅ-mo-rje Ji-dgos of the gNo‘ [clan] bore the son KhrI sÑa-zuṅ-brtsan.
[28.] KhrI sÑa-zuṅ-brtsan and Lady Duṅ-pyaṅ-bźer of the ‘Bro‘ [clan] bore the son ‘Bro mÑen lde-ru.
[29.] ‘Bro‘ mÑen lde-ru and Lady Klu-rgyal Ṅan-mo-mtsho of the mChims [clan] bore the son sTag-bu sÑa-gzigs.
[30.] sTag-bu sÑa-gzigs and Lady sToṅ-btsun ‘Dro-ga of the ‘Ol-god [clan] bore the son Slon-btsan Rluṅ-nam.
[31.] Slon-btsan Rluṅ-nam and Lady ‘Driṅ-ma Thog-dgos of the Tshes-poṅ [clan] bore the son Sroṅ-lde-brtsan[21].
[32.] Sroṅ-lde-brtsan and Lady KhrI-mo-mñen lDoṅ-steṅ of the Moṅ [clan] bore the son Guṅ-sroṅ Guṅ-rtsan.
[33.] Guṅ-sroṅ Guṅ-rtsan and Khon-co Maṅ-mo-rje KhrI-skar bore the son Maṅ-slon Maṅ-rtsan.
[34.] Maṅ-slon Maṅ-rtsan and Lady Khri-ma-lod KhrI-steṅ of the ‘Bro [clan] bore the son ‘Dus-sroṅ Maṅ-po-rje.
[35.] ‘Dus-sroṅ Maṅ-po-rje and Lady bTsan-ma-thog Thog-steṅ of the mChims [clan] bore the son KhrI lDe-gtsug-brtsan.
[36.] Khri lDe-gtsug-brtsan and Lady Maṅ-mo-rje bŚI-steṅ of the sNa-nam [clan] bore the son Khri Sroṅ-lde-brtsan.
[37.] Khri Sroṅ-lde-brtsan and Lady rMa-rgyal lDoṅ-skar of the Tshes-poṅ [clan] bore the sons Mu-ne bTsan-po and lDe-sroṅ-brtsan.
[38.] Mu-ne bTsan-po’s line being cut off,
[39.] lDe-sroṅ-brtsan and Lady lHa-rgyal Maṅ-mo-rje of the ‘Bro [clan] bore the sons [40] Khri gTsug-lde-brtsan and [41] ‘U-‘I Dum-brtan[22].

Examining the genealogy of Ptib 1286, one notices a striking feature: in three cases there are five intervening generations between queen moters of the same clan, and in one case there are three intervening generations.

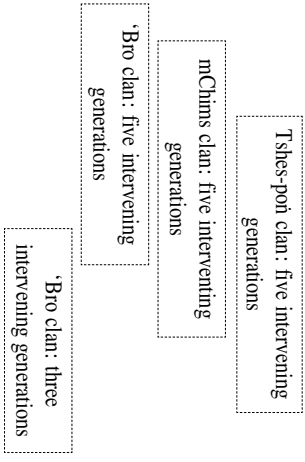
[21] Unless this is a scribal error, Sroṅ-lde-brtsan is another name for Khri Sroṅ-btsan, alias Sroṅ-btsan sgam-po. This is confusing, since Sroṅ-lde-brtsan was also the name of Khri Sroṅ-lde-brtsan before he took the throne in 756. This adds to the confusion in the Old Tibetan Chronicle surrounding the events during the reigns of these two famous emperors, particularly the conquest of Źaṅ-źuṅ. This problem is summarized and resolved in Uray (1968).

[22] Ptib 1286, lines 57-69. For the text, see (Spanien *et al*. 1979: pl. 556, ll. 56-69). For Imaeda and Takeuchi’s transliteration, see Imaeda and Takeuchi (1990: 16). For Bacot and Toussaint’s transliteration and French translation, see Bacot *et al*. (1940: 82, 88-89).

Thus Khri sÑa-zuṅ-brtsan [28] had a son by a lady of the ‘Bro clan, and after five generations had passed, Maṅ-slon Maṅ-rtsan [34] (r. 650-676) did the same, bearing an heir with Lady Khri-ma-lod Khri-steṅ. Likewise ‘Dus-sroṅ Maṅ-po-rje’s [35] (676-704)[23] heir-producing marriage with Lady bTsan-ma-thog Thog-steṅ of the mChims clan came five intervening generations after ‘Bro‘ mÑen-lde-ru [29] married Lady Klu-rgyal Ṅan-mo-mtsho of the mChims clan. Furthermore, Khri Sroṅ-lde-brtsan’s [37] union with Lady rMa-rgyal lDoṅ-skar of the Tshes-poṅ clan replicated the heir-producing marriage of Slon-btsan rLuṅ-nam [31] to a Tshes-poṅ lady five intervening generations earlier. Further, Khri lDe-sroṅ-brtsan [39] sired heirs by Lady lHa-rgyal Maṅ-mo-rje of the ‘Bro clan three intervening generations after his great-great-grandmother, ‘Bro Khri-ma-lod, mothered ‘Dus-sroṅ Maṅ-po-rje [35]. This pattern may be clearly demonstrated in the following table, which presents only the clan names of the heir-producing queens.

Figure one: the clans of the emperors’ heir-producing wives (Ptib 1286).

[26.] Ru-yoṅ clan.
[27.] gNo‘ clan.
[28.] ‘Bro‘ clan.
[29.] **mChims clan.**
[30.] ‘Ol-god clan.
[31.] *Tshes-poṅ clan.*
[32.] Moṅ clan.
[33.] Khon-co (Chinese).
[34.] ‘Bro clan.
[35.] **mChims clan.**
[36.] sNa-nam clan.
[37.] *Tshes-poṅ clan.*
[38.] Mu-ne bTsan-po had no descendants.
[39.] ‘Bro clan.



[23] ‘Dus-sroṅ took the throne in 685. These dates, as with all of the others between 650 and 764, are based on the Old Tibetan Annals.

These repeated instances of a lapse of several intervening generations between heir-producing union with a given clan are quite a striking, as this reveals quite a lot about the patterns of exchange practiced by the Tibetan royal line. From this evidence one can discern that the *źaṅ* were a group of privileged maternal relatives with whom heir-producing marriages were contracted, but that parallel to this, there existed a proscription against reproducing the unions of one's immediate forbears. Whether this proscription amounted to a hard and fast rule prohibiting heir-producing union for a specified number of intervening generations—five, perhaps—is not entirely clear based on the above evidence. Needless to say, these are all marriages from which an emperor (bTsan-po) was born, and the same proscriptions were probably not extended to minor queens and consorts.

The revelation that the term *źaṅ* applied to at least four descending generations of a Tibetan emperor's maternal relatives following his birth or accession to the throne, together with the evident proscription against heir-producing union with a *źaṅ* clan too shortly after a previous such union, yields a fuller picture of the Tibetan royal line's exchange patterns. The proscription against heir-producing marriage with the same clan until the passage of several intervening generations prohibits the replication of one's forebears' marriages, and there fore rules out the practice of any "classical" form of generalized exchange[24]. Such a pattern of exchange serves a number of purposes. Unlike generalized exchange, which is a structurally egalitarian system involving an essentially circular pattern of exchange, the form of marriage practiced by the Tibetan royal line created a distinct centre. The proscription against repeating sequential heir-producing marriages with a *źaṅ* clan multiplied the number of alliances available to the Tibetan emperors, and placed the royal lineage at the centre, thus enabling the royal line to extend its influence beyond an immediate circle of exchange.

[24] The proscription against procreation with members of the clans of one's maternal relatives until the passage of a suitable number of generations can certainly be seen as a modified form of generalized exchange. Alternatively, the imbalance in exchange may reveal the underlying imbalance of power, with the Tibetan rulers taking wives from the aristocratic clans, but marrying off their own sisters and daughters in dynastic marriages with foreign royal houses. This may be due to hypergamy, that is, to the practice by which women do not "marry down", but marry into a family of equal or higher status. Hypergamy, according to Lévi-Strauss, is often a consequence of generalized exchange (LÉVI-STRAUSS 1968: 375).

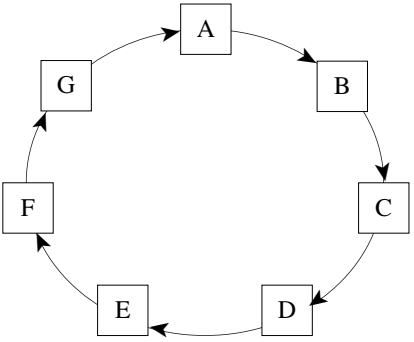


Figure 2. The "classic" model of generalized exchange. Arrows represent the movement of women from one group to the next through marriage.

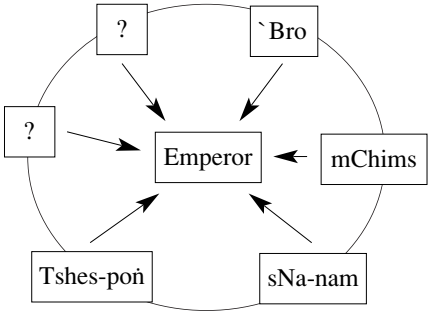


Figure 3. The model of exchange practiced by the Tibetan royal line. Arrows represent queens given to the emperors from whom an heir was born. Question marks indicate that a queen could be taken from another group, such as the Chinese. The clockwise order is not necessarily sequential.

This marriage proscription enabled the Tibetan royal line to contract marriages with numerous clans, and thus extend their influence without being locked into a closed pattern of exchange. At the same time, it created, or at least coexisted with, a privileged class of *źaṅ* clans with whom heir-producing marriage was contracted at almost regular intervals. In practice, only the 'Bro, mChims and Tshes-poṅ clans contracted more than one heir-producing marriage, while the sNa-nam clan, who contracted only one such marriage, was also entitled to the appellative, thus making four *źaṅ* clans. A system of exchange that required "*źaṅ* rotation" thus created a clearly defined class of privileged *źaṅ* while at the same time preventing the Tibetan royal lineage from falling under the undue influence of one or two powerful clans that constantly supplied an heir. This was particularly important, since *źaṅ* traditionally held an advantage over their nephews / sons-in-law, which could be expressed

politically or socially[25]. Beyond its obvious advantages for the Tibetan royal line, this pattern of exchange may have soothed to some extent the rivalry between the *źaṅ* clans by setting out some sort of guidelines for when they were permitted to provide an heir — a crucially important part of their political success.

These revelations about the Tibetan royal line's pattern of exchange may prove helpful in clarifying some of the thorny issues of succession to the Tibetan throne. Further, the model can also be related to Tibet's dynastic marriages with China, 'A-źa, Dags-po, Źaṅ-źuṅ and so forth. As underlined above, however, it is dangerous to assume that the term *źao* was employed in precisely the same way in these dynastic marriages between states as it was in marriages between the emperor (bTsan-po) and the Tibetan *źaṅ* clans.

Exchange in Early Tibet: Some Extrapolations

The pattern of exchange detailed above, and the proscription against reproducing the heir-bearing unions of one's immediate forbears can only be demonstrated to apply to the royal line. There is very little evidence, either direct or indirect, concerning marriage beyond the royal line. It is worthwhile, nonetheless, to consider the possibility that such a pattern of exchange extended to Tibetan society in general. If the proscription detailed above extended beyond the royal line to the aristocracy or even further, then it can be stated with some certainty that the Tibetan empire was not held together by a basic form of generalized exchange such as matrilateral cross-cousin marriage. The system by which procreation with a member of one of one's *źaṅ* clans was proscribed prior to the passage of some intervening generations permitted a more inclusive social structure that could adapt well to taking in additional

[25] Aside from the obvious fact that the mother's clan has control over the child in his infancy and youth, wife-givers in Tibetan societies nearly always hold a higher status than wife-takers. On the political disadvantages of becoming beholden to one's *źaṅ*, see for example Uray's treatment of the songs of Sad-mar-kar, where he suggests that the king of Źaṅ-źuṅ did not consummate his marriage with his Tibetan bride for fear that his heir would fall under the influence the Tibetan emperor, who would then be his *źao* (Uray 1972: 36).

groups and clans. While it was stated above that this method of exchange creates a distinct centre as opposed to the structurally egalitarian model of generalized exchange, this is mainly due to the exalted position of the Tibetan royal line. As a model of exchange for those of the same social stratum, this proscription de-emphasises such categories as wife-giver and wife-takers and creates a more fluid and malleable model for exchange.

A similar type of exchange is practised today in the Tibetan cultural region among the Sherpa of Khumbo, where the proscription against procreation with members of a *źaṅ* clan lasts for at least three generations (DIEMBERGER 1993: 92). Concerning the role of the *źaṅ* in Khumbo society, Diemberger writes:

> Marriage alliances entail prescribing clan exogamous marriage and prohibiting marriage to matrilateral cross-cousins and to women of the maternal clan and their daughters. Thus Khumbo cannot reproduce the marriage of their fathers and have to look for new alliances in each generation. In its own way, this system is extremely flexible, allowing the easy and quick integration of different groups but without the constitution of fixed bride-givers and bride-takers as in the case of generalized exchange… This kind of marriage alliance favours the dissolution of larger kin groups within an overall integrating unity. Here, institutions other than kinship (such as those based on religion and politics), with their own potentiality for stratification, take over the integrative function of society. (DIEMBERGER 1993: 92-95)[26].

In the case of the Khumbo, this kinship system may be seen as part of an adaptive strategy whereby Khumbo society opened itself to accommodate new waves of migration. This was accompanied by a shift in emphasis from patrilineal gods (*pho-lha*) to local gods (*yul-lha*), and a corresponding weakening of the importance of descent in favor of an emphasis on residence (DIEMBERGER 1993: 96-98).

This was accompanied by a shift in emphasis from patrilineal gods (*pho-lha*) to local gods (*yul-lha*), and a corresponding weakening of the

[26] Regarding the type of exchange practiced by the Khumbo, Schicklgruber states that the marriage proscription lasts for four generations. He also appears to have found patrilateral cross-cousin marriage to be more prevalent than matrilateral cross-cousin marriage, with neither being preferred forms of exchange (SCHICKLGRUBER 1993: 345-46).

importance of descent in favor of an emphasis on residence (DIEMBERGER 1993: 96-98). Similar trends characterized imperial Tibet, since it was at this time that decentralized polities and minor kingdoms (*rgyal-phran*) were brought together by conquest to form the massive Tibetan Empire. These previously autonomous areas, often made up of culturally dissimilar peoples, were assimilated to the project of empire through acculturation and militarization, and Tibetan imperial policies militated against their solidarity as corporate and political entities[27]. The country was unified by law, bureaucracy, warfare, the movement of soldiers, and trans-Tibetan structures such as the "border taming tempels". In concert with these radical changes, it is highly likely that the patterns of exchange within the various bounded societies under Tibet's expanding remit transformed themselves to some extent as they became integrated into the empire[28].

Conclusions

During the period of the Tibetan empire, the appellative *źaṅ* pertained to members of four Tibetan clans: the 'Bro, mChims, Tshes-poṅ and sNa-nam, who together comprised a large portion of the Tibetan administration. The term *źaṅ* was also used as an honorific in the compound *źaṅ-lon*/ *źaṅ-blon*, which simply indicated "minister" or "ministerial aristocracy", and did not necessarily imply any kin relationship with the Tibetan royal line.

Based on an examination of several Old Tibetan sources, particularly the Old Tibetan Annals and various royal edicts, it appears that an aristocratic clan became entitled to the appellative *źaṅ* either with the birth

[27] On the unifying force of the Tibetan military, see URAY and UEBACH (1994) and TAKEUCHI (2003). For a brief outline of the relationship between clan territory and state space such as "thousand-districts" (*stoṅ-sde*) and districts (*yul-sde*), see DOTSON (forthcoming).

[28] The parallel with Khumbo may hold in terms of a religious shift away descent-based structures as well: as regional clan-based political groupings gave way under the irresistible force of the empire, the local religions that reinforced regional autonomy and legitimated local rule—often based on descent—became assimilated to a more inclusive, pan-Tibetan religion, a trend that eventually led to the adoption of Buddhism as the official religion of Tibet.

of a future Tibetan sovereign to a lady of their clan or with the boy's subsequent accession to the throne. The appellative was retained by members of the maternal clan for at least four generations, and perhaps longer. An analysis of the royal genealogy contained in the Dunhuang document Ptib 1286 reveals the existence of a proscription governing the marriage patterns of the Tibetan emperors that restricted them from reproducing the heir-bearing marriages of their forebears. From the perspective of the aristocratic maternal relatives of the Tibetan emperor, the *źaṅ*, this meant that after giving birth to a Tibetan ruler, women of the *źaṅ* clan could not bear another emperor until the passage of a number of generations, (in three cases there were five intervening generations, while in one case there were only three). During this period when heir-producing marriage was proscribed, it appears that women of the clan were still permitted to marry into the royal line, but were not allowed to produce a legitimate heir. After the intervening generations had passed, however, such a union may have been expected, or even required in order to renew the clan's status as *źaṅ*. By multiplying the number of available alliances, this form of exchange enabled Tibetan royal line to extend its political influence beyond the immediate circle of Tibetan *źaṅ* clans. It also served to protect the Tibetan royal lineage from falling under the influence of any single aristocratic *źaṅ* clan. Unlike traditional forms of generalized exchange, which are structurally egalitarian, this model placed the Tibetan royal line at the centre, with the *źaṅ* clans as orbiting satellites rather than equal partners.

The discovery of this model, which applied perhaps only to the highest levels of Tibetan society (and indeed perhaps only to the highest level of the royal family itself), may help to resolve some of the debates concerning the presence or absence in early Tibet of generalized exchange and matrilateral cross-cousin marriage. Though the system of "*źaṅ* rotation" and the proscription against reproducing the heir-bearing unions of one's immediate forbears may be classified as a modified form of generalised exchange, it does not necessarily follow that this model developed from an earlier, more traditional form of generalised exchange. While it may have been the case that asymmetrical prescriptive exchange preceded the pattern of exchange practiced by the Tibetan royal line, this is but one among many possibilities. It can be stated with

certainty, however, that the proscription governing heir-producing unions with the Tibetan emperor was structurally incompatible with the practice of the more traditional forms of asymmetrical prescriptive exchange and symmetrical prescriptive exchange.

This system of exchange may or may not have extended beyond the Tibetan royal line, but provides a solid theoretical model for an expanding society such as the Tibetan empire, as it "favours the dissolution of larger kin groups within an overall integrating unity." (DIEMBERGER 1993: 95). Such a form of exchange would naturally complement the trend by which previously autonomous areas were brougt together to form a massive, centralized empire that constituted one of the major powers of Central Eurasia.

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[29] The page setting, punctuation, and page numbering is identical with the Richardson copy of chapter *Ja* used in the Śatapitaka series (*mKhas pahi dgah ston by Dpah-bo-gtsug-lag 'phreng-ba, Śatapitaka Series*, no. 9 [4], New Delhi 1965, LOKESH CHANDRA, ed.), and may go back to the source for the latter. The Beijing edition is also employed here for ease of reference.

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SUMMARY

This article examines the meaning of the Tibetan kinship term *źaṅ* ("maternal uncle", "father-in-law" or "wife-giver") as it applied to the maternal relatives of the Tibetan royal line during the period of the Tibetan empire (c.600 – c.850). Based on a close examination of several Old Tibetan sources, the article demonstrates that the appellative *źaṅ* was lent to members of an aristocratic clan when one of its ladies gave birth to a Tibetan emperor (or upon his subsequent accession to the throne), and that the title was retained for at least four generations thereafter. The investigation also reveals a proscription governing the marriage practices of the Tibetan royal line: no heir-producing marriage with a single maternal clan was permitted until a certain number of generations had passed since an earlier such union. The ramifications of this practice are then considered alongside a modern parallel, and the paper closes with a few extrapolations concerning the social structure of the Tibetan empire.

Keywords: Tibet, social history, kinship, marriage, royalty, clans.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article analyse le sens du terme de parenté *źaṅ* employé en tant qu'appellation des parents maternels de la lignée des rois tibétains (c.600-c.850). L'analyse de textes tibétains de Dunhuang et des édits royaux, dans lesquels *źaṅ* désigne généralement l'oncle maternel ou le beau-père, révèle certaines principes régissant les alliances avec la lignée royale. Ainsi l'un clan aristocratique peut être autorisé à réclamer le titre de *źaṅ* lorsque l'une de ses filles a donné naissance à un empereur tibétain (ou en vertu de son accession au trône). Dans les cas analyzés ici, les clans donneurs ont conservé le titre pour au moins quatre générations consecutives. Mais on y note également l'interdiction pour ces mêmes clans de renouveler cette alliance pendant un certain nombre de générations. Aussi l'empereur tibétain ne pouvait pas reproduire les alliances matrimoniales de ses ancêtres immédiats. En multipliant le nombre d'alliances possibles, cette forme d'échange a permis à la lignée royale d'étendre son influence politique au delà du cercle restreint des clans tibétains *źaṅ*. Cette coutume a également servi à protéger la lignée royale tibétaine contre le danger d'être soumise à l'influence prépondérante de l'un des clans aristocratiques de *źaṅ*. Les consequences d'une telle coutume sont ensuite interpretées dans la perspective d'un parallèle moderne, et l'article conclut avec quelques considérations générales au sujet de la structure sociale de l'empire tibétain.

Mots clefs: Tibet, histoire sociale, parenté, mariage, royaulté, clans.