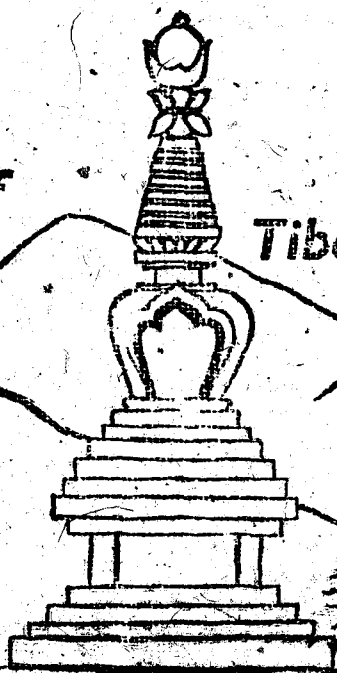


# Bulletin of Tibetology



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GANGTOK, SIKKIM

—The Bulletin of Tibetology seeks to serve the specialist as well as the general reader with an interest in this field of study. The motif portraying the Stupa on the mountains suggests the dimensions of the field—

### *EDITORS*

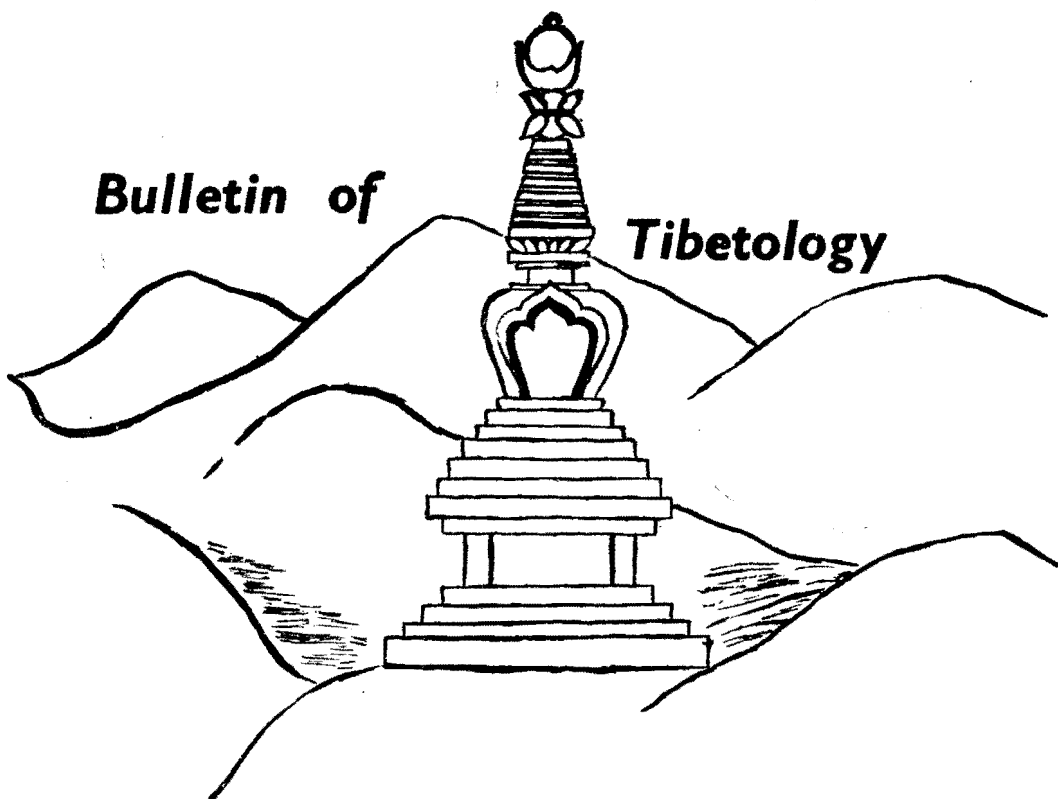
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NIRMAE C. SINHA

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## CONTENTS

	Page
<b>MING-SI-LIE AND THE FISH-BAG</b>	
HUGH E. RICHARDSON	5
<b>BRAHMANISM AND BUDDHISM</b>	
NALINAKSHA DUTT	7
<b>BRAHMANA AND KSHATRIYA</b>	
NIRMAL C. SINHA	13
<b>THE TIBETO-BURMAN GROUP OF LANGUAGES AND ITS POINEERS</b>	17
R.K. SPRIGG	
<b>ON THE MARRIAGE CUSTOMS OF THE BANGNI</b>	21
DAVID W.M. DUNCAN	

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## MING-SI-LIE AND THE FISH-BAG

—HUGH E. RICHARDSON

Many characteristics of the Tibetans in the VIIIth to IXth centuries, as seen through the eyes of Chinese historians, are recognizable in their descendants of the present day. For example, the T'ang Annals describe how in A.D. 702 a Tibetan envoy to Chang'an explained his open delight at hearing Chinese music as due to his rustic origin in a remote border country. In recent times I found such professions of simplicity or ignorance by Tibetan officials used sometimes as a disarming gambit when they wanted to turn aside troublesome or contentious business. Neither party took such statements seriously. Nor perhaps did the Chinese in the T'ang dynasty for in 730 when the Tibetans asked for some of the Chinese classics a minister of the Imperial court warned against granting the request because it might increase the warlike abilities of the Tibetans who were not only aggressive but were endowed with energy and perseverance and were intelligent, sharp, and untiring in their love of study.

So much by way of introduction to the story of the fish-bag. In A.D. 730 there were discussions about a treaty between the Tibetans and the Chinese who had been at war almost continuously since 670. The leader of the Tibetan delegation to Chang'an was Ming-si-lie who is stated in the T'ang Annals to have known some Chinese and to have been on a mission to China before, in order to escort the princess of Kin-tcheng to Tibet. A banquet was given in his honour after which the Emperor conversed with him and gave him various presents including what Bushell translates as a "fish-bag" and Pelliot as a "bourse au poisson". Ming-si-lie accepted the other presents but politely declined the fish-bag saying that such ornaments were not used in his country and he did not dare to accept so rare a gift. In the New T'ang Annals the present which Si-lie declined is described as a golden fish.

Neither Bushell nor Pelliot throws any light on this incident but the key is to be found in that fascinating assemblage of miscellaneous exotic learning—*The Golden Peaches of Samarkand* by Professor Edward Schafer. He writes ( p 26 ) that a fish in bronze, or rather, half such a fish was carried as a token by the envoy of each country that maintained diplomatic relations with China. On arrival, the envoy produced his half which was compared with the other half, kept at the Imperial court; and he would then be given appropriate facilities according to the pro-

tocol. The fish token was carried in a handsome purse attached to the girdle of a ceremonial robe which would also be presented by the Emperor. Accepting such a gift, even if it were got up in a specially valuable guise, would smack of the acknowledgement of "tributary" status. That was something the Tibetans would not endure. In *Le Concile de Lhasa* Professor Demieville states (p 180) that the Tibetans had precedence at the Chinese court over all other "barbarians". And it is recorded in the T'ang Annals that in 780 the Tibetan king rejected a letter from the Emperor because it was not phrased in terms of equality. The wording had to be altered to omit the offending expressions. Ming-si-lie's refusal of the "fish-bag" was, therefore, the act of an adroit diplomatist.

A rather similar Chinese manoeuvre was attempted in 1935 when General Huang Mu-sung visited Lhasa to condole on the death of the XIIIth Dalai Lama. He offered the Tibetan Government a golden seal in honour of the Dalai Lama. It is most unlikely that the Dalai Lama himself would have accepted such a gift from that source but the Chinese may have hoped to find the interim government not yet quite sure of itself. Nevertheless, the offer was at first refused because, "as the Dalai Lama was temporarily absent from the body, there could be no use for a seal". I believe that it was eventually decided to be innocuous and was accepted as a contribution to the expenses of the late Dalai Lama's tomb.

It is sad that such diplomatic skirmishes in Sino-Tibetan affairs were replaced in 1950 by the naked use of force.

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References to the T'ang Annals are to the translations by S.W. Bushell in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1880, and by Paul Pelliot in *Histoire Ancienne du Tibet*, Paris 1961.



## BRAHMANISM AND BUDDHISM

—NALINAKSHA DUTT

In this paper my object is to make a critical study of the valuable paper of Mr. B. Ghosh on "Upanishadic terms in Buddhism" published in the *Bulletin of Tibetology*, Vol VI, No. 3. The subject is very wide and so the present paper proposes to deal with three such terms. These are :—

1. Brahma and Brahmana
2. Atman and Brahman
3. Pudgalavada

At the outset, I should state that both the Upanishads and the Buddhist literature were products of the same country, using the same vocabulary, Pali being a modified form of Sanskrit, and Pali literature also was replaced later by Sanskrit by the Sarvastivadins and the Mahayanists.

Re. Brahma and Brahmana.

The word "Brahma" means "pure, sacred" as in e.g. the word Brahmachariya or Brahmacharya. The word "Brahma" is frequently used in the Buddhist texts, e.g., Brahmajala-sutta, Brahmachariyavasa, Brahmanavihara (maitri, karuna, mudita and upeksha) and so forth. Brahmachakka has also been used as a synonym of Dhammachakka, as the wheel of law leads to purity. From the word Brahma is derived Brahmana, which word is found in the Taittiriya Samhita (vi.6.1.4.), Kathaka Samhita (xxx.1) and in many other texts, meaning "descendant of a Rshi (arsheya), requiring purity and learning like the Vedic Rshis. A Brahmana must have preeminence in knowledge and not mere descent. Satyakama Jabala was the son of a slave-girl and so his parentage was not known. He frankly told this fact to Rshi Gautama Haridrumata (Cha. Upa., iv. 4 and so he was accepted as a Brahmin pupil by the sage.

In the 6th/5th centuries B.C. when Prince Siddhartha Gautama was born, Brahmanism had deteriorated into Varnasrama-dharma attaching importance to birth only and not to purity or learning. The society was divided into four hidebound castes as Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaisya and Sudra, which included even Namasudras and other backward classes as also the untouchables. Worship of gods lost its sanctity and ended in animal sacrifices in the name of gods and goddesses.

The term “Brahmana” of the Upanishads was accepted by the Buddhists. In the undermentioned stanzas of the Dhammapada, the use of the word Brahman is illustrated:

न जटाहि न गोत्तेन न जच्चा होति ब्राह्मणो ।  
यम्हि सच्चं च धम्मो च सो सुखी सो च ब्राह्मणो ॥

(Not by matted hair not by lineage not by caste, does one become a Brahmin. He is a Brahmin in whom there are truth and righteousness. He is blessed).

बाहितो पापो ति ब्राह्मणो समचरिया समणो ति वुच्चति ।

(Because he has put aside (bahishkrta) evil, he is called a Brahmin; because he lives in serenity is called a Samana).

झायि विरजम् आसीनं कतकिञ्चम् अनासवं ।  
उत्तमत्थम् अनुप्पत्तं तम् अहं ब्रूमि ब्राह्मणं ॥

(Him I call a Brahmin who is meditative, free from passions, settled, whose work is accomplished, who is free from taints and who has attained the highest end).

पुब्बेनिवासं यो वेदि सग्गापायं च पस्सति ।  
अथो जातिक्खयं पत्तो अभिज्जावोसितो मुनि ।  
सब्बवासितवसानं तमहं ब्रूमि ब्राह्मणं ॥

(Him I call a Brahmin, who knows his former existences, who perceives heaven and hell, has reached the end of existences, is a sage whose knowledge is perfect and has accomplished all that is to be accomplished).

Brahmana both in the Upanishadic thought and Buddhism is accepted as a term for a saint, one who has attained final sanctification. The Brahmin is one who casts off belief in happy worldly existences, the basis of desire (trshna). Not by ritual and sacrifices, not by isolation and trance but by self concentration and exercise of Maitri and Karuna does one transcend I-ness and become a Brahmin, who knows the highest truth (paramartha satya). Buddha says “cut off the stream of existence with energy (virya).

Re. Atman and Brahman.

The background of Buddhism is the same as that of Brahmanism, viz., Brahman the Impersonal but not, of course, the Vedantic Para-

matman, the existence of which is denied in Buddhism. A few extracts are being quoted from the Upanishads in support of this contention of ours.

Brhadaranyaka Upa (iv.4.7):—

यदा सर्वे प्रमुच्यन्ते कामा येऽस्य हृदि स्थिताः ।  
अथ मर्त्योऽमृतो भवति अत्र ब्रह्म समस्नुते ॥

(When all desires, which entered into one's heart, are eschewed, there does the mortal become immortal and he attains Brahman).  
Mundaka Upanishad (iii.2.8.);—

यथा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रेऽस्तं गच्छन्ति नामरूपे विहाय ।  
तथा विद्वान् नामरूपाद विमुक्तः परात्परं पुरुषमुपैति दिव्यम् ॥

(Like rivers flowing into the ocean disappear abandoning name and form, so the wise attains the divine person beyond the beyond (i.e. infinity).

Re. Atman (Soul).

The fundamental difference between Buddhism and the Upanishadic thought lies in the conception of soul of an individual (jivatman). The watchwords of Buddha consisted of dukha, anicca and anatta. The first word dukkha means that worldly existence is misery because it is impermanent, momentary (anitya, kshanika) and lastly anatman (i.e. unreal) absence of nitya atman (permanent soul) corresponding to Vedantic Jivatman. A person is a composite of namarupa (mind and matter) sub-divided into five constituents (skandhas). These five constituents are ceaselessly changing, hence kshanika. A baby loses its babyhood when it grows up and becomes a youngman. The youngman loses his youth, his blood, flesh and bone when he becomes old. The change is effected every moment as our nails grow and need trimming every week or fortnight and so it is said that there is no continuous personal identity (na ca so na ca anno). (Vide Milindapanha, p. 40). This conception is expressed in these stanzas:—

सब्बे संखारा अनिच्चा ति यदा पञ्जाय पस्सति ।  
अथ निब्बिन्दति दुक्खे, एसो मग्गो विसुद्धिया ॥  
सब्बे संखारा दुक्खा ति यदा पञ्जाय पस्सति ।  
अथ .. .. ॥  
सब्बे धम्मा अनत्ता ति यदा पञ्जाय पस्सति ।  
अथ ... .. ॥

All things are impermanent (anitya), lacking in self (anatta) or reality and therefore sorrowful (dukkha.)

Re. Pudgalavada

Pudgalavada (Pudgalatman) is the fundamental doctrine of Vatsiputriyas or Sammitiyas, who were also known as the Avantakas, because they claimed as their patron-saint Mahakaccayana, the direct disciple of Bhagavan Buddha, and a native of Avanti. Besides this fact, the Sammitiyas had many adherents in Avanti. It is striking that at Hiuen Tsang's time, the largest number of monks belonged to the Sammitiya school. In the inscription of Sarnath of the 4th or 3rd century B.C. it is seen that the name of Sarvastivadins was replaced by their name. From this inscription it is evident that this school had its origin prior to this date. Hiuen Tsang states that 15 treatises of this school were translated into Chinese. One of these texts, the Sammitiya-nikaya-sastra, has been translated into English by Professor Veakataraman of the Visvabharati. This text is the main source of our information, apart from the treatises on sects written by Vasumitra, Bhavya and Vinitadeva. The latter two exist in Tibetan translations.

The Pudgalavadins rely on the following statements of Buddha:—

(i) अस्मि पृगलो अत्तहिताय पटिपन्नो

(there is a person who exerts for his own good).

(ii) एकपृगलो लोके उपज्जति बहुजनहिताय बहुजनसुखाय लोकानुकम्पाय

(there appears a person, who exerts for the good and happiness of many out of compassion for the world of beings). Kathavatthu 1.

Basing on such words of Buddha, the S. (henceforth abbreviated for Sammitiyas) state that the puggala of the above-mentioned passages is something positive. It is not something apart from the five constituents (skandhas) of a being; it is not possible to establish a relation between the pudgala and the skandhas, i.e. like the container and the contained. On the other hand, though it possesses all the characteristics of the skandhas, it is not like them caused and conditioned (sahetu sappaccaya).

In support of their contention the S. rely on the Bharahaa-sutta of the Samyutta Nikaya (III, p. 25), which is as follows:—

कतमो भिक्खवे, भारो ?

पठ्चुपादानक्खन्धातिस्स वचनीय

कतमे पठ्च ? सेय्यधिदं रूपपादानक्खन्धो, वेदनुपादानक्खन्धो,

सज्जुपादानक्खन्धो, सङ्गारूपादानक्खन्धो, विट्ठाणुपादानक्खन्धो; अयं

बुच्चति, भिक्खवे भारो ।

(What, O Bhikkhus, is the burden? Burden refers to the five constituents : matter, feeling, preception, impression and consciousness. These are called bhara.)

कमतो च, भिक्खवे, भारहारो ? पुग्गलो तस्स वचनीयं ।  
य्वायं आयस्मा एवं नामो एवंगोत्रो; अयं वुच्चति,  
भिक्खवे भारहारो ।

(What is, O Bhikkhus, is the carrier (haro) of burden ? The person (puggala), which has a name, a lineage is called the carrier of burden.)

In the Tattvasangraha (p. 130) Kamalasila quotes its Sanskrit version

भारहारः कतमः पुद्गलः  
यो असावायुष्मान्नेवं नामा  
एवं जातिः, एवं गोल, एवम् आहार  
एवं सुखदुःखं पटिसंवेदी  
एवं दीर्घायुरित्यादिना पुद्गलो व्याख्यातः ॥

(Note: The Sanskrit version is slightly better. It is not translated as it is easily intelligible).

Another very important argument put forward by the S. is that a person (puggala) in the first stage of sanctification (sotapanna) is called also sattakkhattuparama (i.e. will have seven more existences at the most) to attain Nibbana. This implies that Puggala continues. The S. make their position clear by stating they accept anattavada of Buddha but they contend that puggala is not soul but something apart from the skandhas but having all the characteristics of the skandhas. It maintains the link between two existences of a being, but there is an end of it in Nibbana.

Samyutta Nikaya III, p. 26:—

भारा हवे पञ्चक्खधा, भारहारो च पुग्गलो ।  
भारादानं दुखं लोके, भारनिक्खेपनं सुखं ॥  
निक्खपित्वा गरं भारं, अठ्ठं भारं अनादिय ।  
समूलं तण्हम् अण्बुह्य, निच्छातोपरि निण्बुतो ति ॥

SOME PUBLICATIONS  
FROM  
NAMGYAL INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY



PRAJNA or the famous Sanskrit-Tibetan Thesaurus-cum-Grammar was compiled by Tenzing Gyaltsen, a Khampa scholar educated in Nyingma and Sakya schools of Derge, in 1771 A.C. Though this book was preserved in xylograph few copies of the block-prints are found outside Tibet. The lexicon portions are now presented in modern format with Tibetan words in Tibetan script and Sanskrit words in Sanskrit script with an elaborate foreword by Professor Nalinaksha Dutt.

*October 1961.*



The entire xylograph (637 pp: 21 inches x 4 inches) containing both lexicon and grammar parts is now presented by offset (photo-mehanic); most clear reproduction of any Tibetan xylograph ever made anywhere. A table of typographical errors etc., found in the original (xylograph), compiled by late lamented Gegan Palden Gyaltsen (Mentsikhang : Lhasa and Enchay : Gangtok) makes the present publication an improvement upon the original.

*November 1962.*

## BRAHMANA AND KSHATRIYA

—NIRMAL C. SINHA

Apropos the indebtedness of Buddhism to Brahmanism, the great Flemish savant Louis de La Vallee Poussin (d. 1939) made this statement. "It cannot be said that the most notable features of the Buddhist speculation – its 'rationalism' (I mean its antipathy to every kind of ritualism and superstition); its atheism (i.e. its negation of a God creator and providence), its high morality, its pessimism, its anti-caste tendency, its mildness and humanity, and so on – are specifically Buddhist." (Garratt & Zetland: *Legacy of India*, Oxford 1937, pp 162-3).

As a student of history I confine my observations to "anti-caste tendency" in Buddhism. Eminent Indian scholars like the late P.C. Bagchi (d. 1956) and Professor N.K. Bose have held that the Buddha (Gautama Siddhartha) had no positive anti-caste objective in political sense or that he was above such mundane considerations. While I subscribe to this view, I submit that the Buddha was positively hostile to any inequalities between man and man. Buddhism did not succeed (survive) as a denominational religion in India while Brahmanism did not succeed (survive) as a denominational religion outside India. Buddhism succeeded outside India because it was not based on ethnic or caste considerations. For example, in Inner Asia, Buddhism easily captured the ground from Iranic (Zoroastrian) and Sinic (Confucian) spheres of influence because Buddhism did not have a sense of 'civilized' and 'barbarian'. In India Buddhism failed partly because of its own weakness which prompted and facilitated Brahmanical revival. If however Buddhism had succeeded in India it would have made the history of India altogether different and among other things it would have ended or mended the caste.

Gautama Siddhartha came in a milieu full of doubts and misgivings about the viability of ancient sacrifices and infallibility of high birth. Deussen: *The Philosophy of the Upanisads* (1906), Ranade: *A Constructive Survey of Upanisadic Philosophy* (1927), and Dutt: *Early Monastic Buddhism* (1960) throw ample light on the crisis in Vedic thought.

On merit accruing to birth, we have the famous story of Satyakama (*Chandogya Up.* IV, 4), who was admitted to highest Vedic learning even though he said his mother could not remember the caste affiliations and was thus found to be adherent to truth (satya/dharma). For centuries Sankara's commentary glossed over the fact of the matter. Modern thinkers like Tagore have found that Satyakama was admitted to highest knowledge because he was truthful: he did not conceal that his mother got him when she was a maid servant in the house of her master. Inference is clear that an anti-caste tendency was already strong at the time of the Buddha's advent and that the highest knowledge was open to talent and was by no means a privilege of the high born.

Gautama Siddhartha was a Kshatriya by birth, was admitted to highest Brahmanical knowledge by masters like Alara Kalama and Rudraka Ramaputra, preached to Brahmana disciples as the Buddha and admitted merchants, untouchables and courtesans to his Dharma. Yet, the Buddha was very particular about his own caste Kshatriya as the highest of the four castes, even though he claimed that he himself was a Brahmana. His veneration for the Brahmana as holyman is clearly expressed in *Dhammapada* and *Milindapanha*. I have discussed elsewhere the significance of the Brahmana-Kshatriya equation in the political thought of Buddhism (*Prolegomena to Lamaist Polity*, Cal. 1969). I cull below data from Upanishads to suggest that the Brahmana Kshatriya parity was a live issue of history before or at the advent of the Buddha. I also contend that it was symbolized in a tussle between Knowledge and Power.

The *Katha Upanishad* in a verse (1.2.25) describes the majesty or absolute power of God (let us use this conventional term) thus: "He for whom Brahmana (priesthood) and Kshatriya (nobility) both are as food and death is as a sauce, how shall one know of Him where He abides?" In mystic language it is implied here that the power of God transcends the two highest powers (on earth), namely, Brahmana and Kshatriya. The anxiety to record both priesthood and ruling class on the same spiritual plane is significant in a discussion about the hereafter as in the *Katha Upanishad*.

The *Chandogya Upanishad* (5.3.7) relates how Gautama, a Brahmana sage, had to seek the knowledge of the hereafter etc from a Kshatriya prince who made it clear that "this truth has never reached the Brahmanas uptill now". The same Upanishad brackets in the list of sciences Brahmanavidya and Kshatravidya as not far from each other (7.1.2, 7.1.4. & 7.2.1.)



The *Brihadaranyaka* offers an apology as to why the priest (Brahmana) sits below the ruler (Kshatriya) at the Rajasuya sacrifice (1.4.11 & 1.4.14). "Though the Brahmana sits below he is the source of (power of) the Kshatriya and that finally Law (Dharma) is superior to even the Kshatriya."

The *Brihadaranyaka* affirms (2.4.5) that the dear objects of material world like consort or wealth are prized not for the sake of the objects themselves but for the sake of the Self (Atman). In the schedule of such prized objects the attribute of Kshatriya takes immediate precedence after the attribute of Brahmana. In other words Brahmanahood or priestly rank is no more dear than Kshatriyahood or nobility.

This exaltation of Kshatriya finds spiritual fulfilment in the *Bhagavadgita* (composed 500 B.C. according to Radhakrishnan, and of pre-Buddhist origin according to S.N. Das Gupta). Here God (Krishna) confides the mystic lore of the Upanishads to a Kshatriya through the Upanishadic dialectic dressed in heroic grandeur. The venue of the divine dissertation is the battlefield. The great lesson for Arjuna, namely, "There is no greater merit for a Kshatriya than to fight a righteous war" (2.31), remains a political testament for all castes with Kshatriya in the van. The Buddha's dialogue affirming Kshatriya as the best of mankind (*Digha Nikaya: Aggannasutta*) does not surprise a Brahmana who comprehends the dialogue between Partha (Arjuna) and Sarathi (Krishna).

The Buddha by his life and sermon no doubt sublimated Kshatriya to divinity. In Mahayana, royalty or Kshatriyahood was considered an attribute worthy of Bodhisattva. In Tibet, Kshatriya ancestry of Gautama Siddhartha and Asoka or of Santarakshita, Padmasambhava and Atisa was fully played up along with the concepts of Dharmaraja (Chos-rgyal) and Chakravarti (bKhor-lo-bsgyur). The Mahayana concept of Buddha (or Buddhaputra) as Jina (or Jinaputra) had inevitable temporal aura. The Lamas wielding political power would be, in temporal sense also, RGYALWA, that is, JINA (Victorious or Conqueror). The Dalai Lama is popularly called RGYAI WA RINPOCHE, that is, JINA RATNA (Precious Conqueror). If the popular Tibetan notion of the priest-king as a Buddhist ideal is accepted one has to trace the concept back to the pre-Buddhist Upanishadic milieu in which the Brahmana and the Kshatriya vied with each other for Knowledge as well as Power.

In conclusion Gautama Siddhartha's affirmation that the Kshatriya is the best of men may be quoted along with the *Chandogya* story that the divine knowledge was transmitted to the Brahmana caste through the Kshatriya caste.

खत्तियो सेटो जनेतस्मिं, ये गोत्तपटिसारिना ।  
विज्जाचरणसम्पन्नो, सो सेटो देवमानुसे ति ।

अगगञ्जमुत्त

यथा मा त्वम्, गौतम, अवदः यथैयं न प्राक् त्वत्तः  
पुरा विद्या ब्राह्मणान् गच्छति तस्माद् उ सर्वेषु  
लोकेषु क्षत्रस्यैव प्रशासनम् अभूद् इति ।

छान्दोग्य उपनिषद्

## THE TIBETO-BURMAN GROUP OF LANGUAGES, AND ITS PIONEERS

—R. K. SPRIGG

In an age in which centenaries are increasingly celebrated, it must be a source of sorrow to the student of Tibetan and allied languages that the centenary of the first use of the term *Tibeto-Burman* (and *Burma-Tibetan*), for the sizable and important group of related languages now known by this name, went entirely uncommemorated. The two terms *Tibeto-Burman* and *Burma-Tibetan* seem to have had their origin a hundred and seventeen years ago, in a series of articles by J.R. Logan in *Journal of the Indian Archipelago* for the year 1853, one of which is entitled 'General characteristics of the Burma-Tibetan, Gangetic, and Dravidian languages' (chapter IV, p. 186).

In an earlier chapter of the same volume Logan considered the Tibeto-Burman group of languages in relation to the Dravidian, and at first came to the conclusion that 'the non-Arian languages of India, from their Tibetan and Tibeto-Burman members on the North East to the Tamil in the extreme south, have many features in common', but qualified this statement, a little further down the page, with the remark (with which not all of us will agree): 'the phonology of the south is advanced, plastic and energetic, while that of the Tibeto-Burman languages has hardly wakened into life and motion'.

Whatever the relative merits of the Dravidian and the Tibeto-Burman groups of languages may be as regards plasticity and energy, there is no denying that, in associating Tibetan with Burmese, or even, for that matter, in distinguishing them as a group from Tamil and other Dravidian languages, Logan's observations show remarkable insight, especially when one remembers how restricted, in 1853, his opportunities were for studying Tibeto-Burman languages, whether through published material or from observation at first hand.<sup>1</sup> He was writing at the time of the Second Burma War (1852-3); his source material for Burmese was limited to 'the grammars of Judson and Latter' (p. 53);<sup>2</sup> there was still less contact with Tibet and Tibetan-speakers: Darjeeling had, it is true, been 'ceded' to the East India Company eighteen years earlier,<sup>3</sup> but foreigners did not lightly travel in Sikkim, as Sir Joseph Hooker, the botanist, had discovered four years earlier;<sup>4</sup> and another twelve years were to pass before Sir Ashley Eden's escape from Bhutan was to precipitate the Bhutan War. Only through Kashmir, occupied,

with British support, by the Dogra, Rajah Gulab Singh, in 1846, was there access, of a sort, to the Tibetan-speaking populations of Baltistan and Ladakh. Logan tells us (p. 106) that he had to rely, for published material on Tibetan, on Csoma de Koros's Tibetan grammar, of 1834, and Abel Remusat's *Recherches sur les langues tartares*.<sup>5</sup>

It is another twenty-five years before I again find the term *Tibeto-Burman* in a publication. This next occurrence is in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* for the year 1878: and here it is important to remember, in establishing the climate of opinion of the time, that another seven years were to elapse before the Third Burma War resulted in the overthrow of the kingdom of Ava, and completed the British conquest of the territory now known as the Union of Burma, another twenty-six years before Younghusband's troops entered Lhasa, and, last but not least, three years and twenty-four years, respectively, before the publication of Jaschke's and Das's Tibetan dictionaries.<sup>6</sup> E.L. Brandreth writes (p. 8): 'the chief group we then come to is what has been called the Tibeto-Burman from the two principal languages included in it - an immense group - the boundaries of which in the present state of our knowledge are very doubtful'.<sup>7</sup> Later in the same issue of the *Journal* Captain C.J.F.S. Forbes, of the Burmese Civil Commission, writes, somewhat disparagingly: 'the term "Tibeto-Burman" has latterly crept into use as a convenient designation of a very large family of languages which appear more or less to approximate to each other'.<sup>8</sup>

As a student of linguistics I too am obliged to recognize that there are linguistic grounds for dissatisfaction with the term *Tibeto-Burman*. This is because the reasons for adopting it were not so linguistic as politico-cultural: Burmese and Tibetan were the two national languages of the group, with great literary prestige. From a linguistic point of view it would have been better to name the group from the languages at its extremes, from its two most diverse members, if, of course, it had been possible to establish which those languages were. This was not, however, even attempted; for Logan himself writes: 'Tibetan, in many respects, takes a place between the Burman and the more advanced postpositional languages'.<sup>9</sup>

Despite Forbes's strictures the term *Tibeto-Burman* was sufficiently well established by 1909 to give its name to Part III of the *Linguistic Survey of India*; and it is a matter of pride to me that I should, even though indirectly, be associated with that volume, through the scholarship of David Macdonald, my wife's grandfather, who contributed to the chapter on Lepcha as well as himself contributing to the chapter on Sikkimese Tibetan, and helping Colonel Waddell with a contribution to the chapter on central Tibetan.<sup>10</sup>

1. Even in the jet age, however, students of Tibeto-Burman languages are in some respects no better off than Logan: Burma is all but closed to scholars from America and the non-Communist countries of Europe; the present writer was refused permission by the Government of Pakistan to study the Balti dialect of Tibetan (of great interest, as being in many respects the nearest in pronunciation to Tibetan spelling) in their province of Baltistan; and who would waste time and energy in applying to the Chinese Government for permission to study Tibetan in Tibet?

2. A Judson, *A dictionary, Burmese and English*, Maulmain, 1852, in which the *Gram mar* is contained as an appendix; Thomas Latter, *A grammar of the language of Burmah*, Calcutta, London, 1845.

3. *Bergai District Gazetteers, Darjeeling* (Alipore, 1947), pp. 37-8; but for a different view, see Hope Namgyal, Gyalmo of Sikkim, 'The Sikkimese theory of land-holding and the Darjeeling grant', *Bulletin of Tibetology*, III, 2 (Gangtok, July, 1966) pp. 47-59.

4. Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, *Himalayan Journals*, 1854, chapters XXV-XXVI.

5. A. Csoma-de Koros, *Grammar of the Tibetan language*, Calcutta, 1834; Abel Remusat. *Rec. erches sur les langues tartares*, Paris, 1820.

6. H.A. Jaschke, *A Tibetan-English dictionary*, London, 1881; Sarat Chandra Das, Rai Bahadur, C.I.E., *Tibetan-English Dictionary*, Calcutta, 1902.

7. *JRAS*, X (1878), p. 8.

8. 'On Tibeto-Burman languages', *JRAS*, X (1878), p. 210.

9. *Op. cit.*, p. 106.

10. *Linguistic Survey of India*, part III, Calcutta, 1909.

## ༄༅ ། རྒྱལ་ཏུག་མཚོག་གཉིས། །

RGYAN-DRUG MCHOG-GNYIS (Six Ornaments and Two Excellents) reproduces ancient scrolls (1670 A.C.) depicting Buddha, Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dinnaga, Dharmakirti, Gunaprabha and Sakvaprabha; reproductions are as per originals today after 300 years of display and worship with no attempt at restoration or retouching. The exposition in English presents the iconographical niceties and the theme of the paintings, namely, the Mahayana philosophy; the treatment is designed to meet also the needs of the general reader with an interest in Trans-Himalayan art or Mahayana. A glossary in Sanskrit-Tibetan, a key to place names and a note on source material are appended. Illustrated with five colour plates and thirteen monochromes. Price: Rupees Twenty Five (India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim) or Fifty Shillings (other countries).

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## ON THE MARRIAGE CUSTOMS OF THE BANGNI

—DAVID W. M. DUNCAN

The Bangni, whose dialect belongs to the Tibeto-Burman group of languages, inhabit the eastern half of Kameng Frontier Division and the western areas of Subansiri Frontier Division in the North East Frontier Agency. Their land is bounded by Tibet to the north and by the plains of Assam to the south. The Bangni are the sons of Abo Tani in his form of Kolo Tani and their Mother was Sachingne, The Earth. They worship Doini-Pollo, the Sun-Moon God of their ancestors, and they propitiate the spirits of their ancestors and the spirit of Good and Evil, the spirits of the mountains and their rocks and the spirits of their valleys and their many streams. It was my privilege to serve them as their Assistant Political Officer from 1955 to 1959 in Sepla Sub-Division which is predominantly inhabited by the 2 Sub-Tribes the Yanu Bangni and the Tagin Bangni; and the marriage customs which are briefly described in the succeeding paragraphs pertain more specifically to the marriage customs of the Yanu Bangni, although there is good reason to believe that the Tagin and Krodang Bangni also observe the same customs. The tribal words where they occur in this article are in the Yanu Bangni dialect.

A Bangni takes a woman as his spouse for the purpose of procreation and for economic reasons. The Bangnis are a practical people. They are nevertheless capable of expressing the purest and deepest affection for their marriage partners; but a dubious virgin sighing and weeping by the side of a lake with water lillies in the background would be as incomprehensible to them as Einstein to a new born baby. They do, however, believe that a couple who have been joined in marriage will be re-united in the after life; and with a few exceptions a Bangni husband does show more affection towards his wife than towards his parents and other relatives.

The Bangni are exogamous and polygamous (polygyny), and marriages are arranged either by the parents or next of kin, or by the man himself if he is in a position to acquire a wife for himself. Marriages are also effected between a couple who are in love with each other provided that the man is capable of paying the bride price. When a marriage is arranged by the parents or next of kin not much attention is paid to the age of the girl or the boy; and marriages have been arranged between a matured girl and a boy who has not yet reached the age of

puberty, and there have been marriages between an old man and a mere child. Marriages have also been arranged between a young boy and a young girl who have not yet attained the age of puberty. In such cases, where the physical consummation of marriage is impracticable, the girl will continue to remain in her own home until she is considered fit to become a wife in the physical sense. This is the general rule, but there are exceptions, especially if the girl's parents are poor and desire to secure the bride price as early as possible. On the other hand, if the bride price has been paid in full, it is not unusual for a matured girl who is married to a young boy to go and live in her husband's house, and it is not considered an offence for the husband's male relatives to cohabit with her at this stage and even after the husband is in a position to perform his marital duties.

**BRIDE PRICE** When the interested parties to a proposed marriage get together for the purpose of discussing the bride price, the meeting is known as the NIDA GAHNA. In this meeting a decision will be taken in respect of the bride price and the time when the girl will leave her parents' house to join her husband in his house or village. The bride price is called DAMRE. Two witnesses are to be present at the NIDA GAHNA. The one from the boy's side is known as the BUNGTE and the one from the girl's side is known as the CHENE. The BUNGTE and the CHENE each receive a fee called the BUJO and CHENE DUNGDOM respectively. Such a fee rarely exceeds one mithun (*bos frontalis*) in value. The DAMRE is paid only by the man, his father or next of kin, and it is very rarely less than one mithun in value, and I did come across a case where the DAMRE was valued at 70 mithuns. In those days the price of a full grown mithun was Rs 600/- Salt, erichadars, meat (mithun, beef, mutton or pork) are also included in the DAMRE, and if the man is fairly rich the costly necklaces known as TASANG and Tibetan prayer bells known as LAKTE are also given and count towards the value of the DAMRE. In this connection it may be mentioned that the TASANG, of which there are many varieties, are distinctly Tibetan in origin and the people believe that God had given them the TASANG, and as far as I could gather the number of TASANG in the Bangni area had never been augmented by direct purchase from other areas. The Tibetan prayer bells are all without handles and have been given names and are endowed with the quality of being either male or female. Their origin, as far as the BANGNI are concerned, is the same as that of the TASANG.

The DAMRE can be paid all at one time or in instalments and it is expected that the girl will join her husband when the full DAMRE has been paid.



After the NIDA GAHNA has come to an end, a mithun will be slaughtered in front of the girl's house by the man's family. This signifies that the betrothal has taken place. A mithun so slaughtered is called the PAGAH and counts towards the DAMRE. If a man is unable to afford a mithun he will offer erichadars (Assamese silk) instead and such an offer is known as the PAH-GAH. If the presentation is a sword (CHEGE) it is known as the SEGAH.

The DAMRE is received by the girl's father or by her brother or brothers or by the guardian of the girl if she has no close relative. Whoever receives the DAMRE takes upon himself the responsibility of giving the girl in marriage to the man who paid the DAMRE, or to the man on whose behalf the DAMRE was paid. It is customary for the wife to live in her husband's house but on certain rare occasions if a man is unable to pay the full DAMRE he will go and live in his wife's house and work for her parents until the full DAMRE is paid, or until such time as his wife's parents are dead when he will take his wife to his own home.

**THE DOWRY** A dowry is paid by the girl's parents to the man's family only when the DAMRE is more than seven mithuns in value. There is no collective name for the dowry; however if the dowry presented is in the form of mithuns (SEBE) it is called BECHE, if TASANG are given the dowry is known as SANGCHE, and if a male slave (NIERRA) or a female slave (PAHNE) is presented the dowry is called RACHE or PAHCHE respectively. In addition the girl's parents can also give necklaces (TASANG) if the DAMRE is more than four but less than eight mithuns in value. If the DAMRE is five mithuns in value then the girl's parents will give one TASANG which will then be known as the DALLAM TASANG. If the DAMRE is six and seven mithuns in value then the additional TASANG given by the girl's parents will be known as the GALLAM TASANG and ALI TASANG respectively.

The different names given for the dowry are used only if the marriage was arranged at a NIDA GAHNA, after which the girl went to live in her husband's home. If, however, a girl elopes with a man and stays in his house as his wife, and if the girl's parents do not object to the marriage and a NIDA GAHNA is then held after the elopement, then the dowry (if there is to be a dowry) is known by other names. A dowry of mithuns would then be known as SORE, a dowry of TASANG would be called FARGE DOHPUM and a dowry of a male or female slave would be called SENGLE PATAH. Such dowries are generally given if the DAMRE is far in excess of ten mithuns in value.

**POLYGYNY**        A BANGNI can marry any number of wives, but the number of wives he does marry is usually determined by his ability to pay the extra DAMRE, or by the number of wives left to him as his inheritance. I rarely came across a BANGNI having more than four wives at any one time.

The first wife is the important wife and she exercises considerable power over her husband and his household. The husband must get his first wife's permission and consent before he can marry a second or third wife otherwise there are endless quarrels and the second or third wife is apt to be mistreated by the first wife. The first wife also tells the husband which wife he is to sleep with on any one night. A man's wives will continue to sleep around the same hearth until one of them gets a child. The first wife will then tell the husband to make a separate hearth for the wife who had the child. A BANGNI does not have sexual intercourse with a woman who is menstruating, and a menstruating woman cannot sleep around the hearth but has to sleep in the back verandah of the house.

If a man has paid the DAMRE for a girl who is unable to leave her parents because of her young age and if in the meantime he marries another girl (matured) and brings her to his house, then the second girl becomes the first wife. Such cases are rare, and a matured man generally starts off by marrying a matured girl first.

If a girl whose DAMRE has been paid dies, then her DAMRE has to be returned or her sister or some other girl is to be given in marriage. This is particularly true if the young girl dies before going to her husband's house. The DAMRE is not returned if a dowry has been paid and the wife dies in the husband's house. If no dowry was given then the DAMRE is to be returned.

**THE WIDOW**        A widow does not return to her parent's house but continues to live with her husband's family. The widow becomes the wife of either her late husband's son (by another wife) or the wife of her husband's younger brother. Herein lies the reason why many an old man will marry a very young girl. It is to provide a 'paid for' wife either for his son or younger brother in the event of the old man's death.

If a man dies before his wife has come to his house, and if the DAMRE has been paid, then the wife will be given in marriage either to his son or younger brother, or another girl sent in her place. In such cases a new DAMRE is not given, although one or two extra mithuns may be given especially if another girl is sent.

INCEST        The BANGNI are exogamous and I did not come across a case of incest during my stay in Sepla, but when there are prohibitory laws in existence one can assume that incestuous relationships do sometimes occur. A man who is found committing incest is immediately sold as a slave (sometimes killed) and a woman is either reduced to slavery or married off to some one else. It has also been said that a woman who has indulged in an incestuous relationship incurs divine displeasure and her urinary bladder falls out of her body.

A. A BANGNI male can marry the following females:-

1. Father's brother's wife (MEI)
2. Wife's brother's daughter (MEI, RUKME)
3. Mother's brother's daughter (MEI, RUKME)
4. Mother's sister (MEI, RUKME)
5. Wife's sister's daughter (NIANGME)
6. Mother's sister's daughter (NIANGME)
7. Wife's sister (RUKME)
8. Elder brother's wife (MEI)
9. Father's other wives (MEI)

B. A BANGNI male cannot marry the following females :-

1. Daughter (PAPPI)
2. Mother (ANE)
3. Sister (AME, AI, ATE, BORME)
4. Sister same father different mother (AME, AI, ATE, BORME)
5. Sister same mother different father (AME, AI, ATE, BORME)
6. Brother's daughter (BORME)
7. Father's brother's daughter (AME, BORME)
8. Father's sister (AI, ATE)
9. Father's sister's daughter (MEW)
10. Mother's brother's wife (AYO)
11. Sister's daughter (DUNGNE KAU)
12. Son's daughter (KAU, MEFA)
13. Father's mother (AYO, ANE LAKI)
14. Mother's mother (AYO, ANE LAKI)
15. Daughter's daughter (KAU, MEW)
16. Wife's mother (AYO)
17. Son's wife (NYAFUNG)
18. Wife's brother's wife (AYO)
19. Son's wife's mother (AYO)

C. A BANGNI female can marry the following males :-

1. Husband's brother's son (REGO)
2. Father's sister's husband (MAHTE)
3. Father's sister's son (TETE, PAI)
4. Sister's son (HME KAU)
5. Sister's husband (MAHTE)
6. Mother's sister's husband (YAO)
7. Mother's sister's son (RUKME KAU)
8. Husband's younger brother (DOBO)
9. Husband's other son (REGO)

D. A BANGNI female cannot marry the following males :-

1. Father (ABO)
2. Son (FEFA, NAHFA)
3. Brother (ABUNG, BORO)
4. Brother same father different mother (ABUNG, BORO)
5. Brother-same mother different father (ABUNG, BORO)
6. Father's brother (TETE, PAI)
7. Brother's son (BORO)
8. Father's brother's son (ABUNG, BORO)
9. Mother's brother (ATO)
10. Mother's brother's son (KEI)
11. Husband's sister's son (KAU)
12. Son's son (KAU)
13. Daughter's son (KAU)
14. Mother's father (ATO, ABO LAKI)
15. Daughter's husband (MAHTE)
16. Husband's father (ATO)
17. Husband's sister's husband (BARBORA)
18. Father's father (ATO)
19. Daughter's husband's father (ATO)

AGE AT FIRST COHABITATION                      It would be difficult to say at what age a Bangni boy or girl begins to indulge in sexual intercourse. A Bangni girl is considered nubile when her hair, which was shaved in infancy, has grown to a point below her shoulders. I would put this age roughly at 13 years, and it is possible that a girl will have had her first sexual experience before she has started menstruating. Rape is unknown and the Bangni appear to be happily free from many of the sexual aberrations that plague a more sophisticated society.

**ADULTERY**            The Bangni do not draw any fine distinction between adultery and illicit intercourse, and both offences are punishable by custom. The word YOSHI covers any sexual union punishable by custom and the fine in such cases is known as YOGO.

In cases of adultery the man has to pay YOGO to the aggrieved husband, and the fine is never less than on emithun but not more than two mithuns in value. An adulterous wife can also be scolded and abused by the husband, and a more jealous husband will go to the extent of cutting off his wife's plaited hair. A wife who commits adultery more than once during her stay in her husband's house is generally sent back to her parents who have to return her DAMRE.

An unmarried girl is generally not punished in cases of illicit intercourse, but the man who is caught indulging in illicit intercourse with an unmarried girl will have to pay YOGO either to the girl's father or to her brothers if the father is dead. It is not considered an offence for man to cohabit with his elder brother's wife or with his clan brother's wife, and a man can also sleep with his father's wives, other than his mother, during the father's lifetime and no punishment is inflicted. Such affairs are, however, not disclosed out of respect for the father. It is also not an offence for a betrothed couple to sleep with each other, but if the girl becomes pregnant then she goes to her husband's house and if the full DAMRE has not been paid then efforts are made to pay the balance as early as possible. A man who cohabits with a married girl, who has not yet gone to live with her husband, will have to pay YOGO if he does not belong to the same clan as the husband.

**MARRIAGE BY CAPTURE**            A Bangni will sometimes capture a girl and take her away to his village from where he will make arrangements to pay her DAMRE later on. This form of marriage is known as NIEME SENA but is seldom resorted to. The girl might have been or might not have been married at the time of her capture, and in most cases the girl herself may have permitted the capture. The capture of a married girl leads to a bitter dispute between the husband and the captor in which their respective families, villages and clans are often involved. I seldom came across a case in which a girl was actually bound and taken away by force.

**DESERTION**            Amongst the Bangni it is the woman who generally deserts the husband. There was only one case on record in which the man, probably seized by wanderlust, deserted his wife and children and kept moving from village to village. He returned to his village only when his wife had left his house and gone to stay

with another man, and he returned to claim back his wife. A wife deserts her husband if she is repulsed by her husband's physical appearance or if she is maltreated by the first wife or the husband himself. Sometimes a woman falls in love with another man and her lover will entice her to leave her husband, and there are times when the parents themselves will entice the girl to leave her husband so that they can marry her off to some other man. If a free born woman discovers that her husband's mother was a slave she will leave her husband and go back to her parents. Custom requires that a wife who deserts her husband should be sent back to him, but when it can be established that the cause of her desertion was maltreatment either by the husband or first wife then the village councils invariably take the side of the girl and she is allowed to stay with her parents who have to return her DAMRE.

Some Bangni husbands take positive steps to prevent or deter their wives from running away. The husband either makes his wife take a solemn oath that she will not desert him, or else he keeps a lock of her hair and her pared finger nails so that the wife shall know that he will resort to sorcery and cause her harm if she leaves him. When a deserting wife is subsequently returned to her husband he will quite often put her feet in wooden stocks for a few days to ensure that she does not run away again.

**DIVORCE** The offer of the PAGAH and the giving of the DAMRE indicate that a woman has become the legal wife of a man. She ceases to be his wife the moment her DAMRE is returned to the man or to the persons who paid the DAMRE. A wife may for various reasons not live with her husband but she is considered to be his wife as long as her DAMRE has not been returned.

The Bangni follow the patrilineal line of descent and the children always take the father's clan name. In the case of a divorce the children will remain with the father, but if at the time of divorce there is a child who is still being breast fed then the child will remain with the mother until it is in a position to return to the father's house. If a woman is pregnant at the time of divorce then the child will continue to live with the mother and become adopted into the mother's clan or take the clan name of the man who eventually marries his mother.

**SLAVES AND MARRIAGE** The marriage customs for slaves are the same as those for the NITE (free born), but in the majority of cases it is the ATO (master) who arranges a wife for his male slave (NIERRA). Such a wife would also have to be a slave, a female slave being termed a PAHNE. In such cases it is the ATO of the NIERRA

who gives the DAMRE and it is the ATO of the PAHNE who receives it. Sometimes a NIERRA will arrange his own marriage if he has sufficient wealth of his own. Although it is considered shameful, disgraceful and unthinkable for a free born to cohabit with a slave, it is not considered to be a crime or an offence to religion, and there have been cases of a NITE man marrying a PAHNE and of a NIERRA marrying a NITE woman. In two such cases which came to my notice I found out that in one case the man had remained a bachelor for many years and was quite poor. His elder brother, however, had some property including one PAHNE. On the death of his elder brother the man received all the property and as he was unmarried he took the PAHNE as his wife. In the second case it was a question of pure physical attraction. The man was quite rich and he had two wives, but he was so enamoured of a PAHNE that he brought her home with the intention of marrying her. He actually enticed the girl away from her NIERRA husband. There was an uproar from all sides and the girl was eventually returned to her NIERRA husband.

When a NITE man marries a PAHNE the offspring become NITE, although the mother may still be regarded as being a PAHNE depending upon the circumstances under which the man married her. In most cases, however, a PAHNE becomes a NITE when she marries a free born man. A NITE man who marries the PAHNE of another man is entitled to receive one mithun as compensation from her ATO. This compensation is called PAHTIK and the reason behind it is that a NITE should be compensated for taking a PAHNE out of a state of servitude. If a NIERRA marries a NITE woman, then, in addition to the DAMRE, he has to pay one mithun as compensation to the girl's parents. This compensation is called RAA-RIK. Marriages between a NITE girl and a NIERRA are extremely rare and they only occur when a NITE is so poor that he is unable to give his daughter in marriage to a NITE man, and is prepared therefore to give his daughter in marriage to a rich NIERRA. The offspring of such marriages are considered to be slaves.

It is also rare for a NIERRA to have illicit intercourse with a NITE woman, and if a NIERRA does cohabit with the wife of his ATO he is likely to be severely beaten or else sold to another man. The wife may also be sent back to her parents and her DAMRE demanded back.

A man who falsely accuses another man of having illicit intercourse with a woman is required to pay a fine called RU-MUM-TYP valued at one mithun, and it is immaterial if the woman in question was a NITE or a PAHNE.

## CHILDREN BORN OUT OF WEDLOCK

I seldom met a bastard in Sepla, and one reason for this is that a girl is invariably 'married' at an early age, so if she does become pregnant one can always say that the child is the offspring of his father (sexual intercourse between betrothed couples is permitted). It does not mean that in every case the child is the offspring of its rightful father, but it does mean that the child does ultimately have a legitimate father. Even when a man knows that his wife is bearing another man's child he will claim the child as his own. The guilty man will of course have to pay YOGO unless he is a clan brother.

Abortion is sometimes resorted to if the girl does not wish to have a child and I was told that a pregnant girl will ask her friend to step upon her abdomen and thereby cause her to abort.

There were a few individuals who were definitely half-breeds, and the Bangni admit that such individuals were fathered by tea garden labourers from the plains. The oldest was then about 50 years and the youngest around 12 years of age. They were all treated as slaves but were allowed to reside with their mothers who were invariably slaves themselves.

The Bangni are a fine virile tribe whose manner and way of life will undoubtedly undergo certain changes with the passage of time and through frequent contacts with other people. When such changes do occur I sincerely hope that it will be the tribe itself that wrought the change in its desire to bridge the gap between a primitive and a technologically advanced world; and that the BANGNI did not give up their way of life through extraneous coercion or through a sense of shame.





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