Aspects of the Social Organisation of Tibetan Pastoral Communities

BY

Graham E. CLARKE

Reprinted from:

TIBETAN STUDIES, Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association of Tibetan Studies, NARITA 1989

NARITA
1992
Aspects of the Social Organisation of Tibetan Pastoral Communities

Graham E. CLARKE
(Oxford)

Introduction

This paper looks at the social significance of the wider territorial group and kinship among Tibetan pastoral communities. It is based on original field work carried out in north-east Tibet in the Hainan 海南 area to the south of Lake Qinghai (Lake Ko-Ko Nor or mtsho-gyon, "the blue lake") in the Spring of 1989; it also utilises earlier field work carried out in the summer of 1986 in the central Himalayan borderlands of Tibet, the Nyenam & Dingri areas, and the south-eastern fringes of the Changthang plateau at Lake Namtsho.\(^1\)

In the earlier work I was concerned with recording micro-level social and economic changes that resulted from China’s "reforms", that is the introduction of "private" (non-state planned) trading from 1978, the formal disbanding of production teams and division up of livestock (1981 to 1983) and the grasslands (1982 to 1984), and the introduction of the "household responsibility system" (see Clarke 1987 or 1988a)\(^2\). The more recent field study was primarily an ethnographic survey concerned with longer-term changes and continuities in political institutions, in particular "vertical linkages" (from state through province, prefecture, county, township to local settlement and household), and the social basis of the tent or household and wider local groups.

The paper begins with a general outline of Tibetan social order and a history of this area, and then moves on to an account of the pastoral groups to the south of Lake Qinghai at the present-day. The first part of this account suggests a continuity of earlier social terms and units with those of the present day; the second is a description of inheritance and residence, how these allow adaptations to pastoral management under varying economic and ecological conditions over the annual cycle and life-cycle of the domestic group. The third part concerns more recent changes from the "reform" period, and their significance for Tibetan social order as a whole.

Social organisation expresses itself variously here according to economic and ecological conditions. The analysis centres on the relative priority of kinship and common residence as features that define social units at different levels up from the tent, to the "tribe" or province. Under economic stress the domestic cycle displays matrifocal features: the suggestion is that these features reduce the number of key households and reduce the lower range of variance in labour/consumption ratios, giving an adaptation to lack of resources.

---

1) The main material is from a preliminary field-survey undertaken at the invitation of the State Nationalities Affairs Commission of the PRC and organised by the Qinghai Province Nationalities and Religious Affairs Commission; the earlier field-study was undertaken at the invitation of the Advisory Group of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China on Economic Affairs of Tibet/Deputy Director of the State Planning Commission, and organised by the Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Research Institute, Lhasa.

2) This other work contains recent demographic and statistical material on Tibet as a whole, with case-studies from 1986 that focus on the Namtsho (gya'-tsa) area on the edge of the Changthang (byang-drang) plateau a few hundred miles to the north-west of Lhasa, and the Nyenam (gya-nang) and Dingri areas to the north of the Himalaya. A more didactic account of the political demography of the region as a whole is given in Clarke 1988b.
Tibetan Social Order

In general, variable ecological factors differentially affect the nature of agricultural and pastoral production, just as variable distributions of resources and communications differentially affect patterns of exchange and create specific regional interdependencies. In the traditional Tibetan social order the spatial separation of livestock and grain production entailed by the high plateau north-western grassland gave rise to long-distance rural-rural trade from the north and west to the south and east. This trade was also linked to the apparatus of the state, which in the lower and sedentary area extended its influence to the degree that not only did it command tribute and taxation, but it also defined the social status of local groups as an aspect of their tenurial rights to land.

The significance of the pastoral encampment as a unit and the general organisation of rights of access to the grassland, are not as well documented for pastoral groups in Tibet as are those of the household and village for sedentary groups. Ekvall's work is a classic if dated source of information on such traditional pastoral communities in Tibet (1968). In his discussion of the ownership and management of livestock, he advances the idea that for Tibetan pastoralists the individual tent is a basic nomadic unit; here family structure is clearly subordinated to the economic viability of the tent as unit. His material supports an interpretation of the tenthold/extended family as the important unit within the encampment, one structurally parallel to the household among Tibetan sedentary groups. However, that Ekvall writes of these tents as nomadic is slightly at fault in that it conjures up images of people, either in clan-based groups or as individual tents, somehow wandering at will. This is not common, and most nomadism tends to take place in repetitive annual cycles that express traditional rights of communities to access to definite areas of grazing. Pastoral communities in Tibet are no exception to this general rule of regulation of the pasture.

For sedentary agricultural groups, the term khral-pa (literally a tax-payer) is used to refer to a house unit registered by the state whom tenancy rights to land were vested3). These khral-pa might farm directly or sub-let part of their land to a local dependent farming population (djid-chung), fixed numbers of such registered households constituting the territory of the village as the taxation unit in relation to the state. This system as a whole regulates the ties of subordinate commoners (mi-ser) to the local demesne, in a manner that loosely may be termed as feudal (see Goldstein, 1971). The rules of such a system may be interpreted as principles that act to maintain the village as a corporate entity or territorial unit. The houses, and the village estate as a whole, are registered units to which others (djid-chung) are dependants. Here it is not so much that people inherit land and houses as that estates and houses, which are the social units with continuity, acquire rights to individuals. The variety of forms of Tibetan domestic units recorded elsewhere includes intergenerational linkages and forms of polyandry and polygamy (see Aziz, 1978). Analytically, these can be connected to the fixed territorial basis of household units from generation to generation, and a corresponding lack of partition of the estate. Here, kinship is subordinated to territory as an organising principle even at the domestic level.

The above is representative of sedentary Tibetan society (bod-pa) but differs from pastoral society (brog-pa). In a formal sense the Tibetan state also may have recorded transhumant pastoralists under the heading of khral-pa (see Liu Zhong, 1986); but this term is not used commonly at a local level by pastoralists to describe their own organisation. In traditional Tibet there also were differences in the manner of taxation of pastoralists, which often was not by the area of grazing land or from the household as a unit. In principle it was often made according to the numbers of head of livestock. Hence while the administrative apparatus specified the

3) Outside the traditional Tibetan state in the northern Himalaya, in the Yolmo or Helambu region of Nepal, the term khral-pa has the sense of citizen-household of a Lama Community, that is a household with the right to share in the ceremonial, deliberative and judicial offices of that village community (Clarke, 1980).
household and village as primary social units for sedentary areas, it did not do so for pastoral groups.

The question then remains as to the basis of the organisation of Tibetan pastoral groups, which is addressed here in the first place through material from northern Qinghai. Other classifications, such as the Mongol military order that grouped tents in an upward hierarchy of "tens", "hundreds" and "thousands", also have had a historical role in defining the status of pastoralists in northern Qinghai; but exactly how this operated at the micro-level if it was more than a system in name is not clear: such a fixed order would pose problems for managing a movable resource such as livestock that, at least at the lower-level unit of the tent, would fluctuate in numbers from year to year.

A priori one would expect the extent of control and regulation from a territorial state to be less in outlying pastoral areas that are in part nomadic, than in central sedentary and agricultural areas. One might also expect the lineage, that is an institution based on descent, to play an important role in pastoral organisation. The question is how territoriality interacted with other principles such as descent, marriage and inheritance at the level of the encampment ("village") and tent ("household") to determine rights to pasture of these units as a whole.

Social Aspects of Regional History

The topographical divisions between different areas of Qinghai correlate with altitude, the land sloping down off the highland plateau from the west to the north-east. The majority of the population, some 70%, lives largely in this lower north-east, which descends gradually to the plain of northern China. The far north and west is in the main part a desert region with a low population density that once was ethnically predominantly Mongol. There are grasslands in the north as well, but the Tibetans are found mainly in an area of grassland that extends around Lake Qinghai and south and outwards, like a pyramid, to the Tibetan Autonomous Regions of Golog (mgo-log) and Yushu (玉树), and the provinces of Gansu and Szechuan.

Ethnically, some 60% of the population of Qinghai are Han (2,503,000), who live mainly in the north-east; the balance is made up by various "minority nationalities" such as Tu (142,000) and Salar (69,000); the Hui Moslem (585,000) and Tibetans (844,000) are the largest of these groups. According to the 1988 registration there are approximately 820,000 Tibetans in Qinghai that is some 18.80% of the population; the precise 1989 figure is 844,210.

Qinghai appeared as a Manchu political entity in the period 1723–1725, and was formally incorporated as a Province of Nationalist China in 1929. This overlayed the loose political entity of Amdo (a-mdo) that allied Mongol to Tibetan, both as pastoralists in common and via the Tibetan Buddhist theocratic order, since the 13th century. Amdo was slightly to the east of present-day Qinghai and extended to include the western parts of what is now Gansu (in particular the monastic centre of La-brang, bla-brang) and the north-west of Szechuan.

Mongols have been ethnically predominant in the area to the north and west of Xining since at least the 15th century. Their political authority operated in a segmentary fashion, and formal control over clans amounted to the division of the region into two "wings" in the 17th century, the
left of which was predominantly Mongolian and the right of which was predominantly Tibetan. These “wings” extended along an axis from the Caidam (tsha'i hdaw) Basin eastwards to the Lake and towards the Huangshui 澜水 River in the east of present-day Qinghai (Chen Guangguo & Wang Haoxun, 1986):

| left-wing | east and north | Haidai 海北, north-west Caidam basin, also north-west Gansu |
| right-wing | west and south | southern bank of Yellow River, Hainan, Yushu, Golog, south-eastern Caidam Basin |

After 1725 the Mongols are then referred to in Chinese sources as being organised into twenty-nine “banners” (qi 旗, today a level equivalent to a “prefecture”); the Tibetans are referred to as comprising some 40 “clans” or “tribes” and there are adjustments over the next few years involving a nominal transfer of administrative classification of 25 [or 35] of the [60] clans of Yushu to central Tibet. A similar system of classification is used later in Chinese sources for the Tibetans, that is, a hierarchical organisation of the lineages into groups of ten, then of a hundred and then of a thousand, this form being associated with the early Mongol military presence in the area.

After a conflict between pastoral Tibetans and Qing forces close to Xining in 1822, the Manchus attempted a household census and registration of Tibetans in this central area. The classification of Tibetans into ‘hundreds’ and ‘thousands’ was then changed into one of tens, fifties, hundreds and three hundreds; there was a nominal residue of the old titles, in that the leader of the highest level was still referred to by the title of a ‘thousand-household head’.

The Chinese policy was to separate Tibetan from Mongol and keep Tibetans “south of the Yellow River”, a topographical specification that takes on sense in this area where the Yellow River flows east-west, and north of Guide. This policy did not fully succeed; in 1859 a boundary was redrawn northwards to recognise the de facto resettlement of the eight Tibetan groups north-west of the Yellow River near Lake Qinghai. These movements have resulted in ethnically mixed “banners” today in parts of Haidai, as well as in the northern part of Hainan, to the south of Lake Qinghai. This last region, where the case-studies are taken from was known, until 1958, as one such group or tribe of “1,000 tents”.

Until 1949, on the ground, the ‘sun and moon’ ridge and the trade market of Hongyuan 洪源 to the west of Xining and east of Lake Qinghai, remained as the generally recognised division between highland and lowland areas, and accordingly between pastoralists and settled agriculturists. Since 1958 agriculture has extended westwards along the southern reaches of Lake Qinghai and now competes with pastoralism for land.

In the wake of the establishment of Qinghai after 1723, there has been an immigration of Han and other people into the north-eastern areas of Qinghai to carry out agriculture; this has overlayed earlier pastoral Mongol migrations from the north. More recently, there have been other such movements into the west of the Province, to central Haixi 海西 in the 1950s and to the far north-west in the 1980s. More generally, agriculture, roads and the railway have pushed pastoralism further back into highland territories, where in the long-term many forms of

7) In Qinghai, even in the twentieth century, borders were “ill-defined and more or less arbitrary” (Rock, 1956). The state did not so much administer the territory as try to assert and extend its own sovereignty by naming, counting, and classifying clans or counties into records and lists, rewarding local leaders who would forward what could be interpreted as tribute, and carrying out occasional military forays. Military expeditions had very mixed results in the highland areas; Rock’s account suggests that the state was not even able to send a postal courier to or through the area, and had no representation in highland areas, in the first half of the twentieth century; according to modern Chinese sources it was not the Red Army but the Tibetan tribes of Golog who displaced and drove out the Nationalists and Moslem Governor of Qinghai, that is Ma Bufang, in the 1930’s.
8) One Gelug monastery was supported by the “1,000 tents” which had an establishment of around two hundred monks and novices, and ten smaller Gelug retreats; there were also other small Nying-ma and Kagyü temples, which were possibly much older. Those of these temples that were not destroyed in 1958 were destroyed in the cultural revolution. This main temple reportedly began to be rebuilt between 1978 and the Spring of 1989.
sedentary agriculture are inefficient, if not altogether technically unfeasible.

Unlike parts of Gansu and Mongolia the southern areas of Qinghai are not (as yet) desert or arid lands like much of sub-Saharan Africa; instead they are a highland watershed, well-suited to pastoral production and perhaps to little else. In these areas the highlanders have maintained some of their pre-twentieth century political and domestic order. Attempts to introduce settled agriculture, and the commoditisation of the economy, may lead to more intensive grazing and a change away from a social order in which the organisation and management of production is specified by a transhumant exploitation of grassland. Whether these new forms will be economically successful or ecologically sustainable in the long-term is another issue.

Rural Pastoral Organisation

The examples are taken from Hainan prefecture, which extends south of Lake Qinghai down to the valley of the Yellow River before it rises up to the highlands of Golag. They are within Gonghe County (共和县) where Tibetans now form 37% of the population, and which today has relatively good infrastructure and access by road to the provincial capital. Gonghe County itself is made up of one municipality and twelve rural administrative areas (the Chinese term is zhua, xiang, normally glossed as township, these latter themselves being made up of eighty-seven clusters of hamlets (郟 normal glossed as village). Today there is a mixed agriculture and livestock base to the economy of Gonghe County where sixty-seven per cent of the income comes from livestock products. The townships to the south of Lake Qinghai include Heima Heu (popn. over 3,200) and Dao Tong Heu (popn. over 6,700). In terms of economy and administration they are atypical in that they have relatively good access to the county and provincial headquarters, and that there also has been an increase in agriculture (mainly rape-seed production) at the expense of the area of pasture, and a corresponding reduction in the total numbers of sheep9).

Despite these economic and social changes, there are continuities to the traditional order. Today, at the level of the township the administration consists of a vertical structure of nested territorial units, all of which have roughly the same pattern of institutional officers as during the collective period. Below the level of the township the social organisation reflects traditional practice and efficient needs of livestock management, factors that do not always tie in clearly with a fixed territorial organisation or a bureaucratically regulated system of offices.

From 1959 until 1978 the present townships were the ‘commune’ units (mi-ning chi-kang) and because of the low population density this livestock region, like those of central Tibet, had only two rather than the full three administrative levels of inner China during the collective period (see Clarke 1987 or 1988a). Below this level today each rural township ideologically is constituted by four clusters of hamlets. In the period of de facto collective management (that is up until 1983/4) these were known as “production teams” (ru-khag), local work groups which nominally were of 100 households, giving a total of four hundred households within the commune or present rural “township”. These groups were regarded as subordinate to the traditional encampments for which the Tibetan term ru-skhor is used; ru itself is used to translate the Chinese or Mongolian term for “banner” and can carry the wider connotation of a military wing or division of an army; skhor means circle or ring and here has the sense of a circle of tents.

In Heima Heu township there were three such traditional pastoral groups, plus one extra group formed of people originally from a different county and immigrants who ran shops or restaurants

9) Since 1982 the area under grain in Gonghe County has more than doubled, with over a five-fold increase in rape-seed area, and a corresponding ten percent drop in numbers of sheep in two townships along the Lake. In one township the area of high quality pasture was estimated to have been halved. Much of the grain production was neither private nor through local rural ‘encampments’ but carried out by state-farms and the PLA. There were over ten such farms along the southern edge of the Lake, which clearly has reduced the amount of available grazing.
near the road. In 1989 these three had 180 (1049), 207 (1034) and 109 (704) households and members respectively; the fourth group had a total of 41 households and 234 people (overall household size was around 5.6 members). These 496 households, together with similar numbers from Dao Tong Heu and Jiang Xi Gou formed the traditional Hainan group of “1,000 tents”.

All together, these three communes would have had nine or ten such groups of “production teams”. It can be seen how these groups from the collective period fit in with the earlier forms of political organisation. First, this medial level division into three groups referred to as “communes” and now “townships” accord with the earlier (and possibly nominal) 1823 Qing division into de facto groups of “three hundred”, the “production teams” being regarded each ideally of “one hundred” tents. Second, the overall number of nine or ideally ten such production teams allows the “1,000 tents” to be made up directly from ten groups of a hundred; in name this was the system before that reclassification. Third, as outlined below these “production teams” can be divided into local kinship and residential groups, of which there are roughly ten constituent encampments per “team”. Hence overall, at least in ideal terms, this gives the three-levelled hierarchical layering into the tens and hundreds up to the “1,000 tents” of the “right wing” of the earlier Mongol terminology.

Clearly these aspects of the earlier organisation exist at the present-day, and are maintained by current institutions. There was also a short-lived attempt to bring back the larger unit of the “1,000 tents” at the beginning of the collectivisation programme in this area, that is in 1958. The plan was for a single large commune (of full commune rather than the subsequent Tibetan “brigade-sized” communes) to the south-east of the Lake, centring on Dao Tong Heu. The entire community was assembled with their herds at that site by a cadre (apocryphally referred in the story as a Han cadre from the east), who intended to found “Tibet City”. Not only were there 1,000 or more tents, but there was also their entailment of around 50,000 yak and 250,000 sheep. For the group this was a welcome extension to the annual calendar of collective festivals. A festival is one thing; however, as any livestock specialist would know, it is quite impossible to graze such numbers based in one central location. This is the reason why pastoral organisation on the plateau involves a dispersal and seasonal transhumance over extensive grasslands. In this instance as the grazing rapidly dwindled, so the settlement of the “1,000 tents” had to disperse back to their traditional seasonal pastures. The idea of “Tibet City” was put to one side.

The Local Encampment

In practice even during the commune period local territorial encampments continued with their traditional grazing lands, and the head, secretary and accountant of the production team were the senior local lineage heads\(^{10}\). As such they had the same formal responsibility for deciding how much land each family should have for grazing, as they did before the formation of communes.

Rights to grazing were traditional within nested territorial segments that in the first place were specified by kinship: a tent was organised around a family, and this was part of the local circle of tents or encampment (tru-skar) that focused on the dominant local lineage. Disputes over grazing could be taken higher than the local-lineage encampment, traditionally to kinship heads and then latterly to the same person as head of the “production team”, or on to the “commune” level; but disputes in the first place were and are still solved at the level of the local encampment. The only difference today is that now one can in principle appeal to a higher state level, the county, if a problem is not resolved locally.

\(^{10}\) At Namtso in central Tibet the same individual had been the monastic steward, the collective secretary, and then after 1981 became the “neighbourhood” secretary; the other two officials were at all times from the traditional lineage headman’s family.
Overall we can see that in practice the organisation of groups was defined by three partly correlated factors: a formal accounting into tens and hundreds, traditional territorial areas, and the kinship base around a local lineage. Of these the territorial and kinship principles remain as more than nominal features in modern times: under current reforms and the construction of houses, "territory" appears as the dominant principle. Empirically kinship (including marriage) and territory produce related orders, as kinship relations express themselves in territorial segments and territorial contiguity tends to lead to marriages. This makes for an ambiguity between the two principles locally.

In the Hainan area there are twenty-seven main local lineages that come from six exogamous clans. People from these clans intermarry both within the locality, and with those from the two Tibetan clans from Haibei to the north of the Lake. Though each such hamlet would have a "core" local lineage, in each such local settlement there are representatives from two or three such local lineages by birth. It is these local hamlets which are known as the ru-skor (locally the transcription khor also is used), that is the local encampment.

The Wider Group

Five or six of these groups of ru-skor with contiguous territory would be linked together again as a "wider group" (ts hog-s ba or ts ho-ba), which still even after the end of collectivisation is known as a "production team" (ru-kha g). In an ideal rather than empirical sense these are grouped in tens, ten of which make up the "group" or "team" of 100, leading back to the "100s" and the "1,000 tents". Empirically the situation is more fluid. For example, one hamlet of fifteen houses in Heima Heu is known as chos-skor after the name of the local lineal lineage, and is a part of a lineage with 60 households in the territorial area of this "production team" which is made up of 180 households.

The term for "group" (tshogs-ba or ts ho-ba) suffers from lexical slippage as it is used for two levels, that is for the "team" and for the "commune". It is at these levels termed tsho-ba and below that the local organisation diverges from that of a clear territorial group to include lineal features of organisation. It would appear to include intermarried local lineages with their own contiguous territory, plus other locally-resident affines. The fact that it may be variously specified as a kinship, territorial and seasonal unit of pastoral management, and that it has been superceded by current political terminology, makes complete clarification difficult. Its commonness, and the fact of slippage of change of level in use, may indicate the presence of a "core-term" in the culture that deserves close attention (Clarke 1985, following Dumont).

This term is common elsewhere in the Tibetan cultural area. Literally tshogs-ba had the sense of an accumulation of many individuals, a meeting or assembly as in the pre-1958 central Tibetan National Assembly or any village committee. In the Namtsho region, on the Changthang to the north-west of Lhasa, tsho-ba is recalled as a system of larger units above that of the local encampment (groups gshos, literally hamlet or village) of tents, one that dates from before 1949. Again in Namtsho, as in the Hainan area of Amdo, there was and is an organized and nested system of grazing rights; there was also another higher unit, a rte of 100 main tents (the number suggesting the Mongol system) under the direction of the three headmen who were appointed by state and monastic officials.

From the south-west of the Tibetan cultural area, in the Langtang Valley of the northern central Himalaya of Nepal the same term tsho-ba is used by pastoralists to refer to an extended local kinship group for summer alpine livestock management (Sadakane, personal communication). This group is named after the dominant or central lineage of this temporary unit of association that forms within the village, often a kinship or neighbourhood group that takes the livestock high up onto smaller summer pastures. The same system of seasonal management is used in the next region to the south of the Himalaya in Nepal, that is Yolmo (Helambu) and the
upper headwaters of the Balephi, where groups of pastoral households ascend high summer pasture above their villages at the height of the summer monsoon for alpine grazing. Here, while some recognise the term, tsho-ba is not much used – there is little need for an extra name for this intra-village group, beyond relevant kinship specifications.

The term tsho-ba does not appear to have an important application for the mixed agricultural pastoral groups of peoples of Tibetan origin in Nepal, who have a pre-existing group identity as villagers, a unit within which there are elaborate kinship rules that define relative status. For these people who have a pre-existing village identity, the seasonal movements of pastoral units is an annual fission off from others of the village. This suggests that the tsho-ba is more important for Tibetan pastoral peoples who live for much of the year in smaller encampments of extended kin, without such a superordinate territorial label of this level, and for whom a coming together into a tsha-ba represents an act of temporary association rather than fission.

In the Hainan area of Amdo the term may formerly have been used for the wider temporary groups, above the level of local encampments, that came together to utilise higher Alpine grazing in the summer. Ekvall introduces the term tsho-ba for the pastoral peoples of Amdo, and translates it as a “group” that is linked to the “wing” (shog-pa), and also in some way subordinate to the kinship unit of the “tribe” or “clan” (1968). His account focuses on the tent as the principal unit of ownership and management for pastoralism; encampment organisation and grassland rights are put to one side and an individualism of the ‘nomad tent’, wandering at will, is highlighted instead. This emphasis on tents as individual units, with collectivity represented only by an idealised history of the “tribe” as a pure kinship type, may come from a focus on the rights of ownership of livestock and the absence of attention to rights of access to pasture via the encampment.

At the same time Ekvall recognises that nomadic pastoralists become identified with the fixed administrative districts of the state, that is with territorial units, as indicated by the taxation of such a pastoral group collectively from the Changthang. However, he does not record the higher levels of order with the same assiduousness as he follows life in the tents, and instead refers to them as a historical or military relic, now part abandoned and part overlayed by the state. For Ekvall the seasonal dispersal and coming together of tents is depicted more as an act of individual will than as a recognisable annual social pattern of transhumance. The leader of the group was seen as the ‘most able’ individual, and it was he who ‘takes charge of decision-making by the men of the encampment and represents the encampment in dealing with higher authority’. Furthermore, in this account it is not clear how an elaborate system of tent-to-tent trade, which in practice is managed by encampment units as a whole with annual caravans between north-western and south-eastern Tibet, could function on the basis of individualistic tents.

The exact form of organisation varies according to the topography, the seasonal labour needs of pastoral production, the size and wealth of the group, and local ecological differences. Within this matrix of possibilities there are various possible cultural solutions for the organisation and maintenance of such groups. Ekvall’s simplification in part comes because he is trying to write about a substantive Tibetan pastoral ‘type’, rather than the complex of relations between people, livestock and topography in just one area: indeed the only common-factor of organisation from one area to another may well be the tent. However, contra Ekvall, tents are not just individual units but usually are part of a wider social order, which regulates grassland.

The Tent or Household

Above the level of the “encampment-circle” there are the “production teams” or “wider groups” and higher units that come together at points of the annual cycle. Below the level of the “encampment-circle” there is the tent or household; for some purposes it is useful to single out a residential unit, often a main tent, as an economic unit.
In Ekvall's analysis kinship and marriage, and the family structure are clearly subordinated to the viability of the tent as an economic unit. However, this emphasis on single tents ignores the developmental cycle of the tent or domestic group, that is the fact that tents in some ways have to divide or maintain themselves as economic units from generation to generation. A priori nearly all pastoralists require some rule that allocates grazing rights to tents. Here they come from residence, and combinations of patterns of birth, marriage and inheritance, specify the types of domestic order that result. Moreover, place of residence after marriage is a matter of choice, and these choices reflect economic opportunities. Hence the social order may be a function of the economic situation at a particular time and place, a point that we will return to below.

Traditionally, the seasonal activity of the annual cycle, a sequence of communal events of production and consumption, specifies the level of group involved. In this Hainan area there are four sets of pasture locations: the summer pasture on the mountains set well-back from the Lake, the winter pasture to the lower south of these mountains, the Lakeside pasture itself which is just for spring, and the area between the mountains and the Lake that is the autumn pasture. Labour requirements and size of the settlement vary according to season. The full households, including women, come together on the alpine pasture in the summer, when there is a high labour requirement as sheep are born and there is daily milk production. In autumn the wider group of '1000' comes together at the edge of the Lake for a two-week long festival, with archery and horse-racing contests; autumn is also the time, nowadays, when fodder that has been planted for the winter has to be harvested from lower down on the autumn pasture. In winter there is little milk production and only a limited amount of fodder is available: a subsidiary tent of two men, or possibly one family, goes to the lower southern flank of the mountains ridge to supervise the livestock on the pasture there. There used to be a collective festival at the end of spring, usually in May (the fifth day of fifth lunar month), after which the main tents used to move high up on the summer pasture.

The autumn pasture now has houses, and some of the autumn pasture is also used nowadays in spring, especially at the time of lambing, and for caring for young and elderly, and sick, animals. Hence the houses on the autumn pasture set back from the road and Lake are now taking on a focal value in the annual cycle. The creation of these houses (some of which date back to 1959) and the territorial base of a fixed hamlet that they may produce, along with commoditisation and individual inheritance, serve to decrease the importance of kinship as an organising principle above the level of tent.

The jural head of a house or tent would be the father, followed by his sons, and incoming daughters' husbands. Though there may be a partition into smaller domestic units for consumption or sale, traditionally there is no clear partition of livestock within the household unit for purposes of production, that is for livestock management. Even after partition, members of the same household would still help each other with the loan of animals that nominally were divided up. They would also loan their labour not only in the form of direct labour exchange for pastoral management but indirectly; if a member of the same natal household went away they would look after his animals on his behalf.

The critical factor for joint management was not ownership in any simple sense, but the size of the herd, which should be about thirty yak per unit. In terms of numbers, a main tent or household may have as many 60 to 80 yak and 500 sheep; the smallest independent tent would be a scarcely viable unit of 20 yak and 40 sheep; in 1989 most had between 200 to 300 sheep and 30 to 40 yak.

An extended family system has the following economic advantages here. There could be an efficient division of labour between looking after yak, and sheep and goats, and also for gender-specific tasks such as milking; there is also enough labour to attend to the other special seasonal labour requirements, such as supervising lambing, and providing winter feed, which require work in two disparate locations simultaneously and give rise to the problems of two residences to look after one herd. Here the extended family can split up into the required
subordinate units for seasonal management of livestock, and focus labour on seasonal tasks, in a way that a nuclear family is not capable of. Hence the joint rights of the household to pasture, together with the economic and management advantages of a division of labour that can be made because of the larger numbers in an extended family, militate against fission into nuclear families.

The Domestic Cycle of Reproduction of the Tent

The extended family is economically rational as a buffer to fluctuations in labour and consumption over the reproductive cycle of the domestic group. Beyond the obvious smoothing over of fluctuations of manpower by the presence of large numbers of people, to understand the process of replication of this domestic unit we have to look at the maintenance and fission of the tent from generation to generation. In this, the changes and continuity in residence as a factor controlling the use and disposal of livestock and land is of critical importance. We follow the traditional system, leaving changes from the "reforms" until later.

The cultural rule is for the main tent to be inherited as one unit by the youngest son, who stays with the parents, and for there to be an equipartition of livestock between male offspring if they move away from their tent of birth. A woman, if she leaves her natal tent, receives only clothes, jewellery, and possibly a horse. The practice of inheritance by the youngest rather than the eldest son also increases the period of authority of a head over the main tent or household.

Some of the constraints on marriage and the partition of households are economic. Complete partition of property, if it occurs at all, follows the marriage of a son that results in the introduction of his wife as a resident into his natal household, if it already has a female head of household; this illustrates the conventional problem of co-operation between two women from different natal households.

Another reason that elder brothers may wish to leave their natal household is that on the death of their father they will fall under the jural authority of their youngest brother, who will inherit the main tent. One possibility for them is to set up a new tent on the grassland of the man; yet only those with large numbers of livestock and whose encampment has excess grassland can set up new households in this manner. The livestock will come solely from his brother's household, and for a woman to move to join her husband on his grassland is to forego any chance of an endowment in livestock from her natal household. It follows that for any but the wealthiest households (or where there is no daughter in the man's house of birth), that a move to the husband's house or grassland on marriage is not a likely choice.

Matrilocal Residence

A man may take some livestock with him on marriage; if the number is not sufficient for a herd and he still wants to leave his natal household the mongpa marriage is an option. One of the more interesting features of Tibetan kinship is the common frequency of this mongpa or matrilocal ("uxorilocal") marriage, that is the change of residence of the man to his wife's tent. Matrilocal residence is likely if there is no son in the house of marriage for direct inheritance, or if there is a lack of labour in that tent. Usually only one such outside husband is introduced into the family, but the union can be polyandrous. In all these cases the incoming husband will adopt the clan or household name, and may inherit the position of household jural head; he also may come under the jural authority of his wife's mother's brother or wife's brother as leader of the encampment, if the latter is not the head of the tent of marriage itself; he will acquire rights to grassland at his place of residence rather than his tent of birth.
There is also the slightly different case where there are only daughters in a tent but they have moved away, or there are no offspring. Here a man from a collateral line within the encampment may come to take over the household, the ties of the previous generation of "brothers" in a tent being utilised in the present generation, the local lineage or encampment in this sense being considered as "one tent".

If a woman is permitted to bring a magpa in she will have a right to share in the livestock of her natal household. In this way she and her husband may acquire a viable herd or build the herd of her natal tent back up to a viable level. Given that an incoming man acquires rights in his house of marriage, it follows that there is a link between wealth and location of residence after marriage. If he wishes to separate from his house of birth, a man from a poor tent will tend to look for a house of marriage where he will be allowed to move in with his wife, or form a subsidiary tent that eventually may become self-sufficient. The livestock inheritance that a magpa husband brings in will be supplemented by that of his house of marriage as an endowment (though this does not involve a partition of the herd), giving a herd that may be of viable economic size.

Though to take such a step may be a major change, it would be incorrect to emphasize the significance of the act of "marriage" on its own here. For Tibetans, a ceremony of marriage is not in itself a major ceremonial life-cycle event; the production of offspring is not as crucial to the management of the tent, in the short-term, as the change of residence. The immediate issue is the maintenance of economic production, not long-term reproduction which can be solved in a number of ways. The change of residence, allied to the matrilocal resident husband's bringing in of livestock, raises the rights of the husband in grassland and tent on a par with those of any brother of his wife, excepting if the latter is the head of household.

It is not so much paternity alone but status as jural head of the house of residence that gives authority over children. The wife's youngest brother will be the eventual head of household but is unlikely to be adult enough to exert any authority over the magpa, and in the short term a wife's father is more likely to be the nominal jural head of the tent. The wife's mother's brother may exert authority over a wider set of tents in the encampment, of which his may be the head or pivotal tent like the centre of a wheel from which the others may be considered to radiate (one possible sense of ru-skor from skor, "wheel"). This authority, since it is linked to the land rather than to any one site of tent or house, will continue as long as they stay on this grassland. The wife's brother may become the head of the local encampment in the successive generation, that is with respect to his sister's and the incoming magpa's sons. Since rights to property and use of grassland come from residence in the household, rather than from paternity or patrilineal descent, a child is reared as a full legitimate 'son' of his mother's household with the name of his tent of residence.

The relative unimportance of the marital bond in its own right is shown further by the existence of 'unmarried mothers', or women residing separately from their husbands, along with their brothers (who may be or may not be married) in their natal household. It is a commonplace for a woman to conceive without there being any change of residence either of herself or the father. An example may make this clearer. In one main tent eight people were resident. These were the older household head and his wife, their two daughters each of whom had a child, and their three sons who were married but whose wives were not present. There had been no partition of the tent on the sons' marriages as the "wives" had not moved their place of main residence; the children of the daughters would inherit from the tent on an equal basis to any other of their generation in the tent, though in this case there were no such others.

It should not be surprising to find such matrilineal features here. On a comparative basis, matrilineal kinship is documented to the south of this region for the Nakhi up until enforced changes under the Qing Dynasty, and for Tibetans in Yunnan, in the eastern Tibetan cultural area (Jackson, 1979; Corlin, 1978). On a logical point, since the notion of the magpa is widespread

11) Traditionally, a change of residence in all probability would have been accompanied by a ceremony, as the gods of the lineage or locality are different.
in Tibetan cultural areas, and matrilineal units are merely the result of magpa marriages in successive generations in the same household, the institution should not be that uncommon.

Economic Aspects of the Domestic Cycle

Matriline here is associated with delays in, or the absence of, division of livestock or main tent on inheritance (that is the absence of formation of new nuclear “tents”), and continuation of residence in household of birth, especially for women. Though more data is needed, the suggestion is that the expression of patrilineal features is associated with a division of households, and is more likely when there is an increase in the numbers of livestock and grassland. The wealthy who have adequate livestock and grassland may split into new tents and stay on grassland to which they have patrilineal rights; by contrast the overt expression of matrilineal features is more likely under conditions of poverty rather than wealth.

There are two other features of this pattern. First, the rule that a younger brother inherits the main household and jural authority, and second that men may inherit livestock on change of residence but that females may not. Given a scarcity of grassland and livestock, these rules tend to lead to a change of residence that places men under the authority of their wife's father and wife's mother's brother, or to no change in residence at all; but in these conditions they will not lead to women moving residence on marriage to come under the authority of their husband's father or younger brothers.

Second, there is the role of residence and kinship in defining household membership and hence in specifying what has been referred to here as a “local lineage”. The local encampment is known by the name of the dominant lineage, and the people there are in some sense of “the same” lineage. Those who move there on marriage come from a different lineage, that is have their lineage of birth; but their offspring will acquire the new name by birth – that is the lineage is not necessarily inherited in the patriline. Hence in this system, given matrilocality residence, it will appear as if a dominant local matrilineage remains as proprietors of the same grassland from generation to generation.

One can also look at the effect of this particular family system from the viewpoint of pastoral management. Clearly, if tents were independent economic units that gained income from livestock, the number of such tents would depend on the number of livestock. In practice, they are not independent. Where grassland and environmental conditions do not allow the number to increase, or some climatic disaster leads to a decrease, then extended residence in the house of birth and matrilocality residence on marriage will result in a reduction of the number of independent tents on the pasture in the next generation; here formerly independent tents would fuse and disappear into matriline of marriage, or may revert to economic and managerial dependence on the senior matriline of the encampment.

However if, with the above system, grassland and environmental conditions allow the numbers of livestock to increase consistently, there is the possibility of patrilocal ('virlocal') residence and a fission in the next generation with a greater number of tents. It is here, in this variation of the kinship recruitment to tent membership as a function of residence (itself a function of economic factors), that the relation between kinship and territory as organising principles below the level of the encampment becomes clearer. Logically, a descent principle which is not unilinear but that under certain conditions allows the direction of recruitment to change between the male and the female line, is not a lineal system of recruitment. But territorial unit may masquerade as matriline or patriline, but this depends on consistent economic conditions of either stress or growth. Hence

12) It is not clear whether or not this will regulate marriage, or whether for purposes of marriage a daughter of a magpa is from different male group that is 'bone' or ru. There is also a possible connection between ru and ru-skor which would make patrilineal and matrilineal features ambiguous here.
at the local level of the tent, territory in this sense encompasses kinship as the wider organizing principle, but is accounted for in a kinship idiom of descent.

In terms of environmental stress on the pasture, the rules of inheritance and marriage provide a self-regulating feedback on the pastoral system of production and make it sensitive to the pressure of livestock on the pasture. Over its life-cycle the domestic group is responsive in terms of number of members, and numbers of such domestic units, to the long-term availability of grassland and number of herds that can be supported. These rules do not create economically non-viable isolated and independent tents, but allow for expansion and contraction under appropriate ecological and economic conditions. Overall, for all the elaborate forms of domestic kinship organisation that may result in, the traditional system of kinship carried out by the Tibetan pastoralists of northern Qinghai appears as sound economic and ecological practice.

Effects of Economic and Institutional Reforms

The units which formerly made contracts with the state were the production teams, within which the traditional allocation of rights and obligations by local encampments or kinship by any such group of “one hundred” were made. The reforms known as the “household contract system” have emphasised the individual and the household as the owners and contracting parties; these changes in a sense extend the state system of registration of production units down from the team to a household level. To the extent that these operate by a fixed number of units, rather than by a hierarchical reallocation, they do not allow for the wider systemic aspects of local organisation and fluctuations in labour and per capita resources over the domestic cycle, nor allow for the efficient management needs of livestock.

At the same time there have been local group accommodations to these changes. In Qinghai the livestock, in a formal sense, were divided up among individuals in 1983, resulting in the reformation of herds centring on a main tent. Here two or three sheep were counted as the equivalent of one yak. In some cases the principle of allocation was on a per capita basis; in others it was according to the numbers put into the collective in 1958 and here there seems little difference between this region and other parts of the Chinese polity in these practices.

Other institutional reforms affect the continuity of this system. Grassland was in principle divided-up one year after livestock division, in 1984, and has fencing as its public expression. Allocation was to houses rather than individuals. The extent to which different teams still manage their land collectively today varies; the general point is made locally that the division of the grassland is good for effective pasture care, but that it is poor for co-operation, unity or solidarity within the encampment.

Most of the fencing that has been put in place has not been used to demarcate household grazing, but for two other purposes. First, to fence off the land of the local encampment as a whole from the side adjacent to the main highway – that is to protect the autumn pasture from new incursions. Second, it has been used to keep grazing back for later in the season, secure from wandering livestock within the encampment area; houses supply individuals to look after such preserved pasture for the local encampment as a whole, and the cost of this fencing being born by the group as a whole. There are some individual fenced-in plots where some households grow green oats for use as fodder, but overall fencing has not been used to signify ownership per se so much as for more efficient management of grassland by the encampment.

13) Whether the same balance could be achieved by a reverse set of rules, that is a combination of patrilineal, fraternal polygny and inheritance by the eldest brother, is an open question. However, it is the women who bear the children. 14) One difference to the traditional system is that women now should inherit livestock when the natal tent is divided. Clearly any such changes in property rights and inheritance will alter the overall balance and operation of the system of reproduction of social units.

15) The availability of fodder in the winter is recognised as a major constraint on herd size.
Unlike individual or household rights to land in agricultural areas in place of residence in eastern China, rights to grassland alone are unlikely to be sufficient to ensure a subsistence income for a nuclear household. It remains to be seen whether plots of grassland will be divided up on inheritance and acquire some commodity value for resale, or be seen as belonging to the encampment as a whole and allocated as such in the traditional manner. The extended household management of livestock and allocation of grassland by the encampment has economically and technically rational features: it is likely to persist, albeit in slightly modified form, with increased numbers of livestock.

At present, ownership rights, which in a legal sense amount to a lease from the collective by the individual, are in practice still vested in the main tent or “household” much as before collectivisation. Where there is adequate water, labour and knowledge, it is often thought advantageous for such a tent to have such a division of grassland; where these are lacking and especially with small tents and for those without adequate access to water, division into “households” is a disadvantage.

The traditional system allowed for demographic variations and changes in economic fortune over the developmental cycle of families, that is they had a traditional ‘welfare’ aspect, and allowed for changes in the pasture productivity. Without an extensive state-administered welfare system, a system of household ownership linked to markets may result in socio-economic differentiation between rich and poor, dependent in part on their ‘baseline’ size, capital assets and labour, the renting in and out of labour and grassland, and if permitted a sale of rights in grassland.

Commoditisation has increased, aided by the supply of grain and loans through agricultural banks in the townships, general taxation, contracts with the state for agricultural produce, and access for traders via the road. Such commoditisation is associated with individual economic independence. However here there are the management pressures from pastoralism for maintaining some form of group organisation. On first investigation one solution appears to be the growth in importance of the extended family as a common property owning and management unit, centring on the newly-built autumn houses.

In part, an increase in livestock follows on from market-lead demands for increased meat production. There is a risk here, especially in areas where pasture has been reallocated for crop production, of potential overgrazing. Without the collective and traditional management of grassland by local encampments there is a risk of poor management and overgrazing\(^{16}\). Increased commoditisation and a focus on the one hand may in the short term lead to a growth in the size of extended families; it may also lead to an externalisation of social costs onto welfare services that not only are non-existent, but that would be prohibitively expensive to maintain without local communal organisation and responsibility.

Provisional quantitative data indicates that local economic changes are similar to those in the Namtsho region of central Tibet, which elsewhere have been linked these to three main factors (Clarke 1987):

First, market reforms centred around the extended household or tent, which was a traditional Tibetan institution that had been held back during the collectivised period.

Second, the reforms allowed the take up of an economic slack in the area, in particular by access to pre-existing system of roads that generate a larger pattern of rural-to-urban trade.

Third, nomadic pastoral production involves a transhumant community and livestock grazing extensively over a large area, with a low population density; hence it operates more efficiently when decentralised rather than when centralised.

\(^{16}\) Taken together with use of pasture for grain production for market rather than fodder or grazing this can have a disastrous effect in a year of late snow, when livestock cannot be moved up to alpine pasture. According to the Qinghai Provincial Department of livestock, numbers were stated to have been severely reduced, in some areas depleted by a half in 1989, by the severe weather conditions with snow in late May.
Central Tibetan examples suggest that in the urban hinterland of Lhasa the value of livestock increased some 30% in the period from 1981 to 1986, and that livestock were now marketed privately for meat (Clarke, n. d.). While there is no adequate survey data with properly stratified sampling from Qinghai for comparison, the increases noted for some are along the same order of magnitude.

Official statistics indicate that per capita income in the rural areas was said to have been 550 yuan in 1989 over all the county of Gonghe, and appreciably higher in livestock areas – 669 yuan in Heima Heu, that is well above the County average of 485 yuan. A longitudinal comparison would be useful, but to make a comparison to the period from before the division of livestock, that is between the periods of collective and individual ownership, would involve relatively arbitrary assumptions on ownership and market prices. The numbers of registered yak in Heima Heu township has increased from 18,429 in 1982 to 24,391 in 1988.

Conclusions

Whether we look at the pre-1949, the collective, or the reform period up to 1979, there has been and still is an extensive system of supra-tent organisation in this region of Qinghai. This is revealed clearly in rights to grassland, the management of livestock, and the processes of reproduction of tent as economic and social units over the domestic cycle. In the areas described here, at any rate, Tibetan pastoralism did not and does not consist of isolated tents, wandering at will.

In Hainan as at Namtso and with the more sedentary pastoralists between the plateau and the Himalaya, there is transhumance between areas where groups have wider fixed pasture. There are well-defined, traditional, and mutually understood rights to grazing that are held in common by the people of one encampment against another, regulated by units that may be both defined and expressed by kinship and territory. Within the encampment’s grasslands, rights to grazing areas are by primary residence and kinship, which have a matrilineal or patrilineal expression depending on economic factors.

Overall, in these areas there is a similarity in the way in which rights to pasture are allocated. In law they follow the administrative structure; in practice they follow the traditional pattern of encampment allocation of pasture and boundaries. Within these communities rights to grazing fall to local extended families or herds.

Possibly, in the absence of state control, lineage organisation and a ‘purer’ nomadism may be more likely to exist; but in any case, it is difficult to see at the local level how pastoral tents could have operated as management units without at least a coming together of family groups of a few generations – that is local lineages – which would have had a territorial expression. Perhaps a wider “pure” lineage organisation may have been a feature of parts of Amdo in the past when perhaps there was little competition for grassland; here the Mongol presence since the 15th century may not have added more than a nominally regulated organisation to what already may have been an existing kinship and territorial system.

17) One important difference is that whereas in central Tibet the growth of market trade involved Tibetans as active intermediaries from rural to urban areas, in Qinghai that role is taken largely by the traditional Muslim trading population who live in the lowlands.

18) Taxation here is at the Qinghai provincial levels, which for 1989 are 2.30 yuan per year for a yak crossbreed, 1.73 for yak, 1.15 per ox, 0.85 per sheep, 0.29 per goat and 2.10 per horse. The quota price for a sheep was 60 yuan for the first quality, 30 to 40 yuan for lower quality; open market prices are between 170 to 200 yuan. Quota price for a yak is 120 yuan, but the market price is between 700 for a female and 1000 for a male. Each person in this area has a 25 kg allocation from local government of wheat flour at 0.46 yuan per kilo as opposed to the open market price of 1.40 per yuan. Green barley was provided at 0.46 yuan per kilo. The quota purchase price for old type wool is one yuan per kg, for crossbred wool is 4.29 yuan; the fixed price for purchase by state institutions in the province is 7.50 yuan and the open market price anything between 15 and 20 yuan per kg.
Land and grassland management, and the state-focused emphasis on the territorial unit for sedentary groups, helps to explain aspects of traditional Tibetan social organisation, even down to the household or tent level. The rules of marriage and residence, including the much-noted practices of polygyny and the possibility of residence as a subordinate in one's wife's natal household, centre around the continuity of the main households or tents. For sedentary groups these are registered tax-paying (khral-pa) households; for pastoralists, there were customary rights of tenure held in common to pasture by generationally shallow lineage clusters with broad affinal links; taxation was by numbers of livestock. Current economic reforms may well push pastoral organisation closer to the traditional "household" form of Tibet and further decrease the significance of the lineage over territory as a definer of status.

In the traditional system, it is the household or tent as an economic unit responsible for production on specific fields or grazing, rather than the rights of the individual outside the lineage, that are preserved and reproduced over time. The very variability of the residence patterns that in practice derive from these rules, reflect the possible ways in which demographic and economic vagaries may be absorbed within the general pattern of continuity of the household or main tent as an economic unit.

This is unlike kinship in South Asia among Hindu peoples where rights devolve to male-headed nuclear families rather than to households, and there is partition of household and land quite irrespective of the economic viability of the units that result. A few studies have compared ethnic Tibetan and Hindu groups in similar ecological conditions on the southern slopes of the Himalaya (Levine, 1977). These suggest that the Tibetan practice, where maintained, avoids sub-division of land on inheritance between the male members of the same generation. The Tibetan practice keeps landholdings in economic sizes linked to semi-permanent households, albeit at the expense of some individual rights to disposal of property and land.

One exception to this theme of the main and subsidiary tents, or the corporate house, as a territorial unit for sedentary areas is in south-western Tibet, in the Dingri area, where traditionally sons could leave the household and have land allocated to them (Aziz, 1978). This may be connected to the practices in Nepal of Tibetan and culturally related peoples, close by on the southern slopes of the Himalaya. In many areas where Tibetan peoples have settled or cultural features have extended south of the Himalaya, a fissiparous lineage structure has developed, and in addition in places such as Yolmo a principle of social organisation regulated by "cross-cousin marriage" has formed.

In part, this local development in Nepal may have a direct cultural explanation in terms of borrowings from adjacent Hindu peoples; in part, it may have to do with local topographical differences. The difficult communications of the Himalaya result in the absence of an effective central state order; the local vertical valley-side integration of pasture and agriculture removes the option of transhumant pastoralism, and at the same time opens up the possibility of economic expansion through agriculture and trade. In these circumstances an elaborate kin-based social order may be a more efficient structure for economic production and social reproduction than one based on the regulation of territory. In particular, the relative abundance of virgin land in the Himalaya up until the nineteenth century may have promoted the lineage and family as more important social institutions than strict territorial units.

In this paper I have suggested that any dominance of territorial over kinship units for pastoralism is a result of a particular sequence of historical, economic and ecological factors within this cultural area; the significant features here have been external, Mongolian contact through warfare and the Manchu state, and internal, the efficient management requirements of pastoralism. The result has been that whereas in sedentary areas the territorial expression of the group is pre-dominant, in pastoral areas kinship still specifies much of the underlying local order. In this context the Hainan/Amdo material suggests that patrilineal fission and expansion are associated with pastoralism under favourable economic conditions, and that a matrilineal focus may be associated with unfavourable material circumstances; both these, and the social order of
sedentary groups, may be seen as different expressions or developments of a single underlying Tibetan cultural pattern.

References


Chen Chi Yin, (personal communication).

Chen Guangguo & Wang Haoxun, 1988, "The Relationship between Mongolians and Tibetans during the Periods of the Ming and Qing Dynasties and the Policy of the Central Chinese Government towards Mongolia and Tibet", China Tibetology, Beijing, No. 1.


Herrmann, M., 1949, Die Nomaden von Tibet, Vienna.


Jackson, A., 1979, No-Khi Religions, Hague.

Lattimore, O., 1962, Nomads and Nomadism, Oxford.


Sadakane, A., (personal communication).


Autumn Pasture and Settlement South of Lake Qinghai

Main Family Tent on Summer Pasture North of Lake Namtso
Weaving by Day Tent at Lake Qinghai

Tibetan Youth in Main Tent at Namsho