

# The Organizing Principles of Brahmin-Chettri Kinship

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This article is a field analysis of data from anthropological research which I have been carrying out in the town of Pokhara, in west central Nepal. A main focus of this research has been on Brahmin-Chettri <sup>1</sup> kinship systems. I have examined what I have found to be a close relation of these systems with Brahmin-Chettri economic choice in a situation of change and development. In the pages that follow I will concentrate on presentation and analysis of Brahmin-Chettri kinship itself and its main organizing principles. These principles are firmly held, willingly articulated, and firmly put into practice in Pokhara and the surrounding hill areas. They suggest the nature of cultural continuity which can be expected for the people of this ethnic group as Nepal continues to undergo economic development and change.

## The setting

Brahmins and Chettris along with a smaller number of occupational caste people form the majority population or are present in significant numbers in perhaps three-fourths of the wards of the wide-ranging Pokhara City Panchayat area. They are also in the majority in most villages on the Valley floor and in the nearest of the surrounding hills. They have moved from the west in a migration which has been going on for a great many centuries, but which was given impetus by the Mughal invasions in India when numbers of plains Hindus were pushed up from the south into the middle Himalayan ranges. During this period of movement the immigrants from the plains came into close and regular social, economic and political contact with the Khas <sup>2</sup>, an Indo-Aryan group of related language and culture which had always been a hill people and engaged in this slow eastward migration for as long as their history can be traced. The two groups mingled, and it is now often difficult to differentiate hills heritage from plains heritage except in some of the far western regions of Nepal. In the Pokhara Brahmin-Chettris' own phrase they are the "real inhabitants" of the Valley: that is, they are among the first to have developed the large bazaar areas, and their number as residents is still rather small in the bazaars. Newari settlement followed closely on the establishment of the present, Shah dynasty in Nepal. Thakali, Gurung and Tibetan settlement has been recent but large and has been concentrated in the nucleated settlement areas of the town. At present Gurungs from the surrounding hills seem the most common new settlers in the City area.

The main outline of the Brahmin-Chettri migration route to the Valley is easily traceable and well-remembered. One thar <sup>3</sup> in the Pokhara City area is said to have come from Dailekh in the

west, north to Jumla, and from Jumla to Kaski on the long ridge just west of the city. At least two other thars arrived in the same way. From the time of the Thakuri kings in the Kaski Fort area (a period beginning perhaps three hundred years ago) Brahmin-Chetris have been moving slowly from the western and southwestern ridges down to the Valley floor, seeking riceland and room in which to expand. There have been sizeable Magar and Gurung settlements to the north and northwest for a long time, and the ruling occupants of Kaski Fort have been Magars, Ghāle Gurungs, and Thakuris in that order. But the Valley itself is said to have been practically uninhabited when the Brahmin-Chetris began to establish themselves there. Different subdivisions of the City Panchayat area can still be connected, by memory and by the concentration there of members of one or another Brahmin-Chetri thar, to these movements.

The Brahmin-Chetri people of the area are deeply attached to land not only as an economic necessity but as a social and cultural principle. Those who live in the City Panchayat area are the main ones to voice a particular worry: as Pokhara grows, land values rise, and large outside commercial interests enter the picture: "the real inhabitants of this town won't be able to afford to live here and will have to move" to villages in the area or perhaps to resettlement areas in the Terai. They have been slow and selective in their response to economic diversification in Pokhara, and simply tenacious in their response to lowering per capita farm yields. Members of other ethnic groups, the Gurungs among them for example, seem to have responded differently to economic opportunity and pressure. Besides heavy enlistment in the army, Gurungs will move into the center of the town area where they can enter business. They will move even to a place where they can obtain little or no farmland, and depend on their home village for the agricultural backup most people in Nepal must have. But the Brahmin-Chetris seem to be willing to move only to places where they can farm, and their business endeavors are limited with some exceptions to investments or to one-man operations.

#### General principles of Brahmin-Chetri ranking and status inheritance

An approach to the explanation of these settlement and occupational patterns can be made through examination of the Brahmin-Chetri kinship and marriage systems. The most striking thing about the kinship system in itself is its extreme patrilineal bias. The most effective way to introduce this is to begin with diagrams produced by Brahmin-Chetri people themselves. The diagram below is an abstraction of the form of a vamsāvalī or descendants' record for the members of a locally resident subdivision of a thar. These documents are used to keep a record of caste status of the different branches. Full or pādhyā Brahmins

who alone may officiate as priests, jāisī Brahmins who are traditionally the astrologers of their area, and Chetris all claim membership in most Brahmin-Chetri thars. The vamsāvalis are consulted to determine whether a proposed marriage is within the rules, and in inheritance disputes.

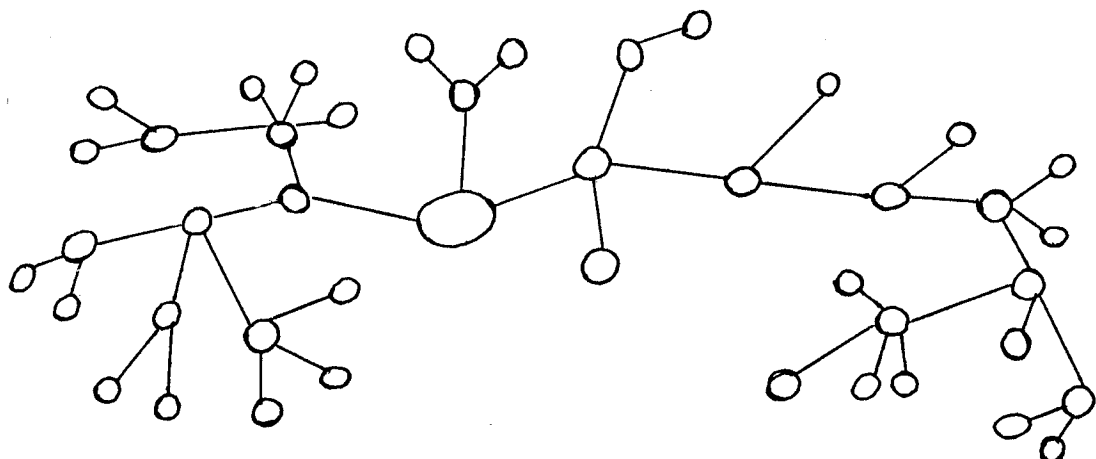


Diagram 1: vamsāvalī form

The large circle in the center contains the name of the sājā bāje, the "common grandfather" or "ancestor". Each of the other circles contains the name of a son, son's son, etc. Women's names are not recorded, despite the fact that they become legally and ritually members of the thar into which they are married; at a married Brahmin-Chetri woman's funeral rites, for example, only her near male relatives by marriage accompany the body to be burned and her relatives by birth may not attend in any way. The only way in which women are taken account of in a vamsāvalī is to note, on the lines joining fathers and sons in the diagram, whether the son was the issue of a fully contracted (biḥāete) marriage; an informal (lyāete) marriage; or a widow (rāndi) remarriage. (The polite term for widow is vidhvā). There is a left-to-right notation of jethā "elder", etc. to distinguish the sequence of birth of the sons. If there was more than one marriage of any of these three types, the sequence is begun again for the sons of one mother <sup>4</sup>.

Fürer-Haimendorf (1966) has remarked on the Chetri custom of spacing homesteads widely rather than grouping houses into a nucleated village with the fields of all the residents surrounding this. The same settlement principle is equally true of Brahmins, and the principle seems to hold true more or less throughout Nepal. Although the connection is of course symbolic it is none the less worth marking the close correspondence in form between the vamsāvalī outline as drawn by Brahmin-Chetris

and the splitting, spreading pattern of their villages whether on hillsides or valleys.

The patriline whose record is preserved in these documents is the main repository and source of status for its sons. This status, for son (or for a daughter), is subject to change depending on the marriage choices of the father. The distinction between bihāete and lyāete has its function not in definition of caste status but in determining inheritance. The sons of a lyāete marriage do not inherit if there are sons from a bihāete union. Widow remarriage or intercaste marriage on the other hand affect the caste status of the offspring. If a pādhyā Brahmin man marries a widow, his children by her are not accorded full pādhyā status but will be classed as jāisī Brahmins. If a pādhyā or jāisī Brahmin marries a Chetri woman his children by her are called Khatrī Chetris, indicating that they are descendants of a mixed marriage and not of a theoretically pure Chetri line. There is not room here to go into the complete labelling rules for all of the possible intercaste, interethnic marriages which can and do take place in Nepal, and full accounts are given in Fürer-Haimendorf (1966) and Khem Bahadur Bista (1972). But it should be noted here that there is a strict cutoff point at which this process of ghaṭibadī "reduction" of caste status becomes drastic. In any of the possible Brahmin-Chetri marriages noted above, children have membership in their father's thar even though father and child are of different caste status. But if a Brahmin or Chetri man and an untouchable Kami-Sarki-Damai woman have children with or without setting up their own household the children will have the mother's caste status and will be referred to only as Kami, Sarki, or Damai.

Kinship terminology

This function of the patriline as a source of status is clearly expressed in the kinship terminology itself, as a person would apply it to members of the generation just above his. The following two diagrams are of relatives through the father and through the mother respectively:

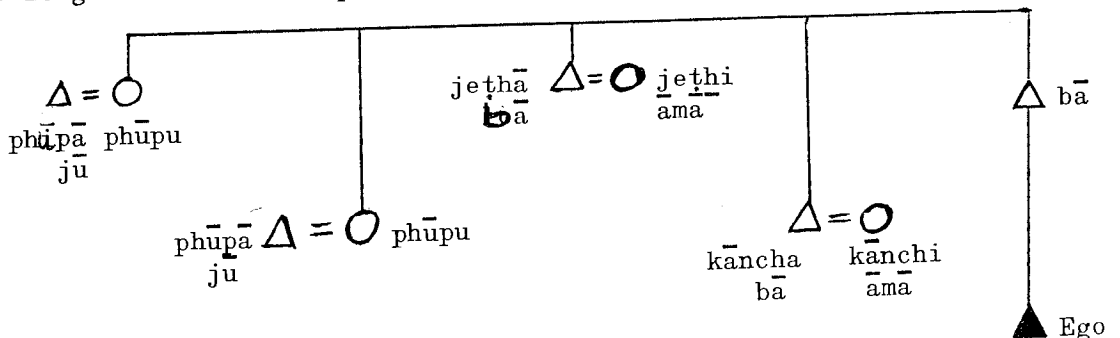


Diagram 2: relatives on the father's side

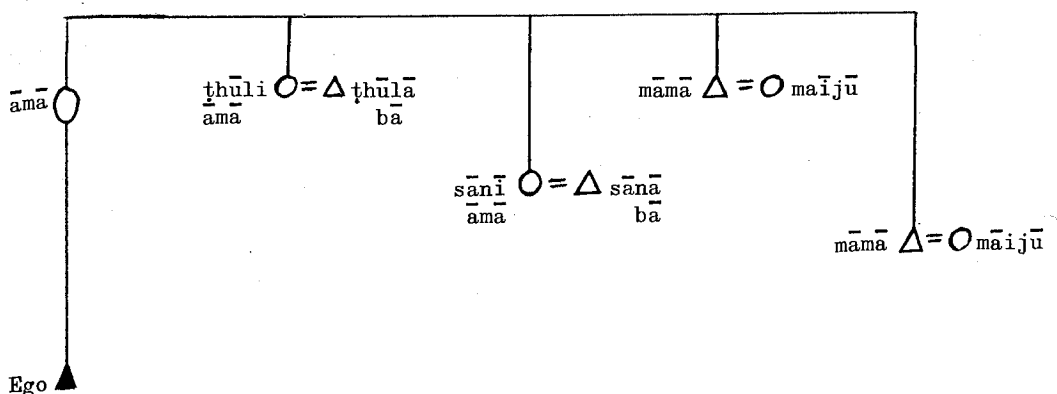


Diagram 3: relatives on the mother's side

The terms in diagrams 2 and 3 fall into four groups: (1) Fa along with FaBro; (2) FaSi; (3) Mo along with MoSi; and (4) Mobro. Spouses of these persons take their designation by derivation from the term for the consanguineal relative of Ego to whom they are married. Each of these groups has its members' status relation to Ego clearly expressed by the terminology itself. The central group here, in terms of identification with Ego, is the patriline. And it is in this line alone that the terminology allows for detailed ranking of individuals by the age-status criterion. The terms jēṭhā, māilā etc. are employed in detail as great as necessary to identify each of the father's brothers in order of birth. But on the mother's side there are only two age terms applied: ṭhūli and sāni in the case of MoSi. In addition to the lesser complexity of terms used for MoSi and MoSiHu, the connotation of the terms themselves is much more relaxed and informal. Formality in terminology used on the father's side extends to one's own father's wives as well as to the father's brothers' wives. My informants say that kanchī āmā is technically preferable as the term for father's younger wife, for example. Sāni āmā is a more colloquially used and heard expression; but this application of sāni āmā has its origin in extrapolation from the common practice of a man's marrying two women who are sisters. In this case the wife younger than Ego's own mother is in fact one's own sāni āmā.

It is not felt necessary to subdivide two classes of relatives: FaSis and their husbands on the one hand, and MoBros with their wives on the other. After a woman is married her main source of affection will not be her husband's house and family. There she will always be in a deeply inferior position vis-a-vis the men, as also in relation to any senior wives of her own or preceding generations, and any sisters of her husband and his brothers. Her outlet is her parental home, her māita (the terminology allows a woman only one literal "home" or ghar, that of her husband). Ego, as the child of his mother, participates in

the affection shown by her parents and brothers. A Brahmin-Chetri will often answer immediately with "mama" when asked what his most "loving" or or pyāro relative is. In real social interaction there is no question of a formal, status relationship between Ego and māmā, and correspondingly no need for subdivision on status lines. One informant explained to me in detail his feelings of love for his sister's children, along with the fact that he finds it impossible emotionally to observe the jūtho or touched food pollution rules with these children. To the scandalization of his grand mother, who thinks he is carrying things too far, he and his sister's children often eat from the same dish.

The second class of relatives which is not subdivided terminologically is on the father's sister's side. FaSi and FaSiHu are identified by only one term each. But the relation is different from that on the MoBro side. Ego, as a member of his father's thar and immediate patriline, stands in an inferior status relationship to his phūpā jū. Those who provide a wife are considered inferior to those who accept her. Among Brahmins, the inferior relative must touch his head to the feet of the superior on meeting. The Brahmin etiquette when a son-in-law or juvāi meets his sasurā or sāsu "father-in-law" or "mother-in-law" is for the son-in-law to give the folded-hands greeting of nāmaste first, but his parent-in-law must follow this by touching the feet of the son-in-law. Via-a-vis his phūpā jū Ego is classified with the sasurāli or father-in-law's side and his phūpā jū with the more prestigious juvāi paṭṭi or son-in-law's side. There is some dispute among my Chetri informants about the applicability of this superior/inferior relation resulting from marriage to them. Some have said that a Chetri must bow to none but father and mother; others say they prefer to see in-laws as "equals". But a Chetri shopkeeper on being asked the most important thing about "Chetri-Brahmin" society said: "Only a pādhyā Brahmin may do a pūjā, and one must always respect his juvāi". Again, the men of the royal family of Nepal may practice mother's brother's daughter's marriage. But this practice can only be reconciled with the paramount status of the King's family if the sasurā's side is to be considered inferior in status.

Essentially this aspect of the terminology--that for FaSiHu--is one example among many of the two preoccupations among Brahmin-Chetris, as these preoccupations affect their kin system. The preoccupation in question is with status. At least in the old system of life in the village, women are regarded as sources of wealth. Their theological identification with Lakshmi refers in practical village terms to their giving birth to sons and to the results of their agricultural work. Living in the traditional frame of reference, it is hard for a father to consider giving away his daughter as an act of largesse according to the shāstras. In the first place he is forced to give up a daughter whom he loves. At the same time he knows that she will be the ornament and means to increase of another family, far away.

In Ego's own generation the most striking aspect of the kin terminology is the separation of male and female:

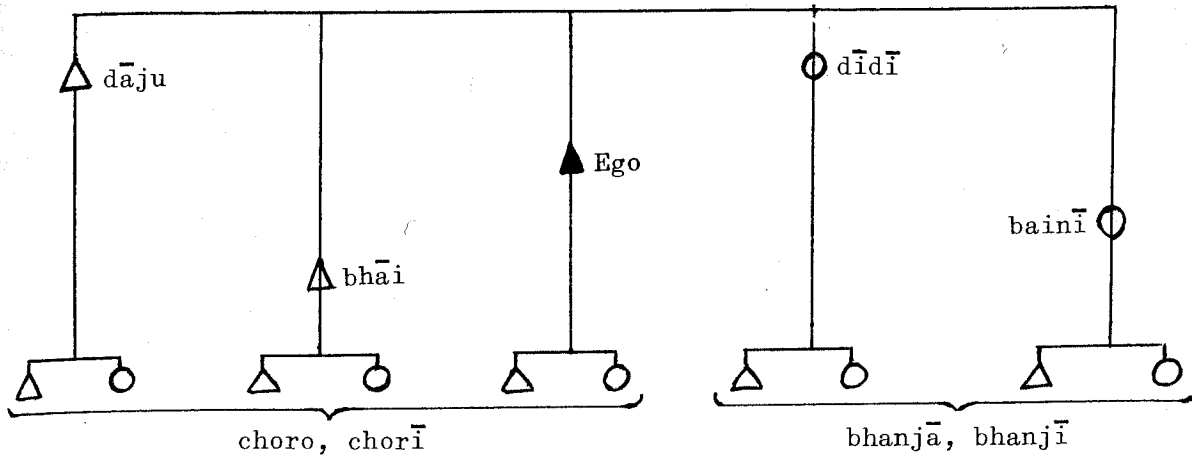


Diagram 4: core relatives of Ego's own generation

The terminology given here is village terminology; outside the city the terms bhatijā, bhatijī for BroSo and BroDa are not common. In the city itself I hear bhāi ko choro more often than bhatijā, for example. Again, we have a fusing of Ego with the patriline. There is a strict separation of children born of this patriline from children born of the sisters to men of some other thar. This separation occurred also, of course, in Ego's father's generation. And Ego inherits the bhānjā-bhānjī relation which his father has to the children of Ego's FaSi:

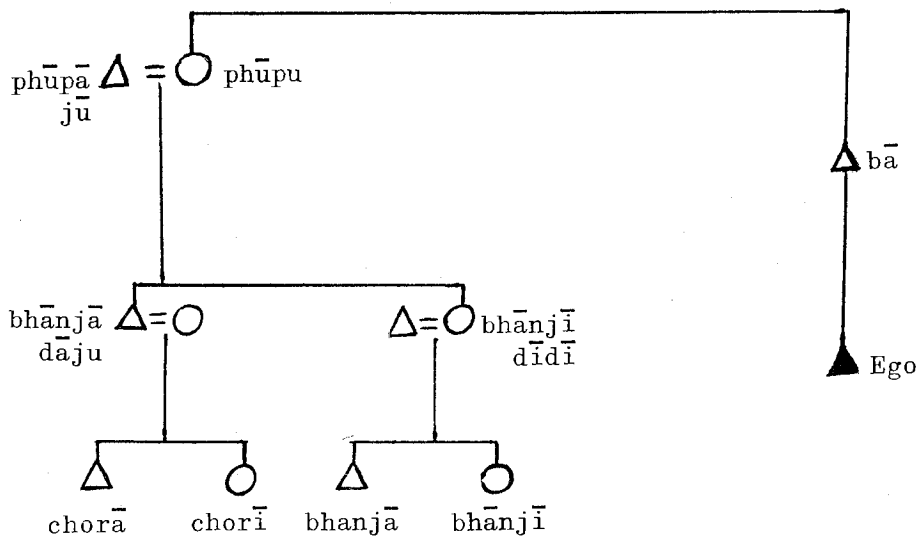


Diagram 5: inherited bhānjā-bhānjī relations

Note in diagram 5 that the bhānjā-bhānjī relation proceeds only through females to the generations below Ego. Bhānjā-bhānjī relations are reckoned as it were matrilineally, in multiple lines beginning from each woman of Ego's patriline who was married off.

The main active principles in Brahmin-Chettri kinship

The discussion of inheritance and of terminology has pointed up two main principles of Brahmin-Chettri kinship: (1) identification with the patriline and the preoccupation with status within this line; and (2) the relationship of love, pyāro, directed to the MoBro side. These principles can be given concrete demonstration by the statements of Brahmin-Chettris themselves.

Status itself has been discussed; identification with the patriline is exemplified in a common expression. In Pokhara the phrase mero bā haru "my fathers" can refer not only to own Fa and to FaBro, but also to one's brothers. When a man says that mero bā haru are in a certain place and is asked to explain exactly who is there, he may say that actually no one other than his brothers are there at the moment--or even that his father has died and his brothers are working the land. The phrase is used in referring to residents of the general family homestead area, the place of the fathers and their brothers for many generations.

As for the relationship of pyāro feelings for one's MoBro: one Brahmin-Chettri shopkeeper in fact singled out this relationship to be a critically important one, and explained it in relation to his own family's particular case. The descendants of a patriline from another thar, who live about a mile away from his own home, continue to share with his family this special relationship. The requisite number of generations have passed, and theoretically the two lines could marry again. But the other group is still regarded by the shopkeeper's people as standing in a mamā relation, and he says that "we can't marry those people we love". Love relations and status relations are indeed considered incompatible, and marriage is a matter of status relations. A man's main relations with his juvāī are said to be indirect, and oriented to making sure that his daughter is being treated well. The YoSiSu (also juvāi) and the ESiHu bhīnajū are in my own observation rather uneasy relations. One man said, "Well, we just don't meet them very often or have much to do with them".

As a final point in this section, it should be noted that women only are the generators and handers-down of the pyāro relation. Men are the participants and inheritors in the status sphere. In this instance it should be noted again that a bhānjā-bhānjī relation can be handed from generation to generation only by women. For it to go through men would conflict with the male's positions of landowner and competitor for land, husband and competitor for wives.



The marriage system

If marriage is so traumatic socially, one would not expect stable alliance patterns to emerge; exchange marriage would be out of the question. In fact, beyond cases of a man marrying two sisters I have discovered no patterns where kinship seems to direct marriage in a positive sense. There are patterns of avoidance, and there are geographical patterns. A family will continue to take wives from the same general area or to give its daughters there. People say "it's easier that way; you've already gone to the trouble to check up on the people there". All that emerges overall is a general agreement to marry within the Brahmin-Chetri sphere, and this agreement must be reactivated in negotiations each time a marriage is proposed.

The criteria of "status" and "love" operate not only in the kin but also in the marriage sphere. We may gloss these terms in Nepali as mānnu pānu and pyāro hunu ("deference required" and "presence of love"). Fürer-Haimendorf (1966) also discussed the deference relation of mānnu pānu, but he did not discuss pyāro hunu. He went to some lengths to isolate and discuss a relation he calls pūjyā "worshipable" which is said to be applied to women of one's own patriline. This relation seems to be only a special ritual case (a daughter is worshiped by her parents at her marriage) resulting from the unequal status of a sasurā and juvāī. If one were to take it further one could say that pūjyā relations are those depending on a woman's position as one given in marriage. But it seems of little use to do so: none of my many informants was acquainted with this term except a particularly Indian-influenced man, who even so merged mānnu pānu and pūjyā hunu in his explanations. Rather, all of my informants were preoccupied only by "status" and "love" relations. In the end, mānnu pānu and pyāro hunu seem intellectually sufficient and idiomatically satisfying.

In considering actual forms of marriage rules, it seems best to begin with a short discussion on MoBroDa marriage. This sort of marriage flies directly against the pyāro relationship (The MoBroDa, māmā's, line is pyāro). It is forbidden to Brahmins and absolutely rejected as a possibility by Chetris who trace close descent in a pādhyā or jāisī Brahmin line. It is considered acceptable, by all the peoples of the Pokhara area, for Thakuris and Ranas; these two groups are reckoned more or less within the Brahmin-Chetri sphere, but are acknowledged to have different rules. But especially for Chetris in a village situation MoBroDa marriage seems to be a possibility if not at all a preference. In my field notes I have rules which on hearing I specifically asked the informant to write down, so that I could be quite sure of the matter: these rules state that for "Chetries" one may marry MoBroDa (māmā ko chori) but not FaSiDa (phūpu ko chori). It suggests that the pyāro relationship can be waived in consideration on some occasions; but never the deference/status relation, which must be

considered primary. It may also be due to the fact that pyāro relations seem to be primarily directed to women (note the manner of their inheritance, diagram 3), and only extended to associated males. A jāisi explained the permission of MoBro Da marriage by saying: "because one respects phūpu ko chorā but not māmā ko chorā". It means essentially, that a line to whom one has given women remains higher than one's own, and may sometimes depend on this status for provision of another wife.

In full, the rule states that phūpu ko chora māmā ko chorilāi huncha "FaSiSo is acceptable for MoBroDa".

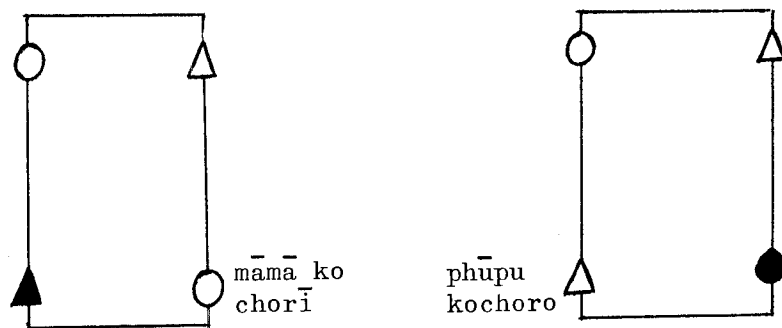


Diagram 6: MoBroDa marriage

Persons shown are the same; Ego is changed from male to female to illustrate the rule.

Despite permission of MoBroDa marriage for Chetris, Thakuris and Ranas, it is not well regarded generally and is strictly forbidden to Brahmins. The Brahmin-Chetri official strictures against MoBroDa marriage seek to avoid a compounding, in two successive generations, of the unequal juvāi-sasurā relation. To again give up a sister to any of the families where the father's sisters were given (dieko) would not be generally acceptable for status reason.

Similarly, FaSiDa marriage is regarded as impossible for Brahmin-Chetris. In this case, the relation of love for lhānjā and bhānji kin is invoked. But the element of status is also present. If a FaSiDa marriage were to occur this would mean that the unequal status relation established in the father's generation would be reversed. Just as it is not comfortable to be too firmly in an inferior position, so it seems to be felt that a status relation once established may not be upset. An informant who had spent some years in Silgarhi Doti in West Nepal said that FaSiDa marriage was sometimes practiced there. He did not specify the cases but said he had personally observed a few. He said that FaSiDa marriage was usually claimed by a poor man, unable to get a wife otherwise, who approached the men of his father's juvāi patṭi or "son-in-law's side" saying "we have given you a woman and you

must give in return". He added however that such requests (as would be expected on the basis of the discussion here so far) were invariably cause for a long and bitter argument even when successful.

The rules for permissible marriage ( I have these rules from jāisis in the Pokhara area) neatly avoid any of these pitfalls. The primary rules are two, and avoid one's marriage to a woman who may in any way be too closely related--or, in the terms I have explained here, within too close a "love" or "respect" degree. The first of these rules is as follows:

Chorī ko chorī,	Daughter's daughter,
chorī ko chorī	daughter's daughter
gotra <sup>6</sup> pharak	<u>gotras different.</u>
Tin gotra phirepachi	After going through three <u>gotras</u>
bibahā ādi phukcha	marriage is open

Diagrammatically, the arrangement is as follows:

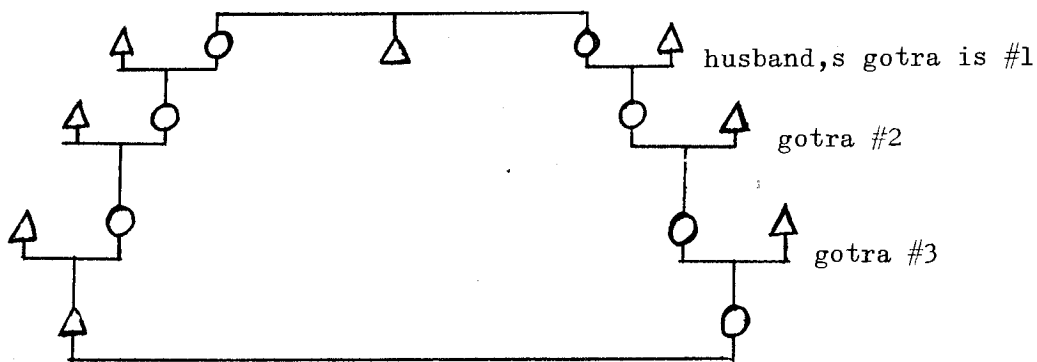


Diagram 7: the three-gotra rule

My informant was explicit that this rule does not apply to Ego's own descendants. It is formulated in order to determine whether the descendants of two sisters have established sufficient genealogical distance for a marriage to take place. The female descendants of these two women on both sides must go through three gotras before a marriage may occur. To illustrate the rule's inapplicability to the descendants of a brother and sister, the following diagram <sup>7</sup> is useful:

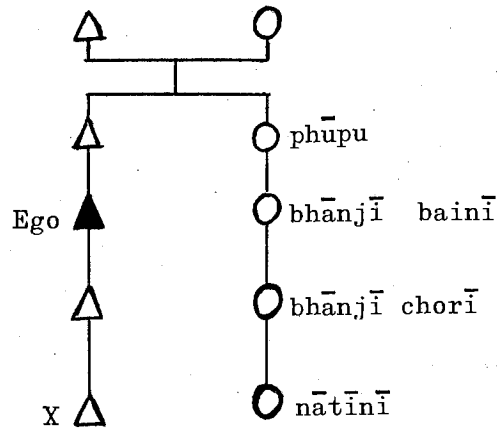


Diagram 8: marriage prohibited, at close degrees, with the descendants of brother and sister

In this diagram, X and Y still cannot marry although the women have been transferred by marriage through three gotras. Ego, who is X's grandfather in this diagram, still has a relationship of love with Y, the daughter of his bhānjī chori, and calls her nātīnī or "granddaughter".

The rule which is used to determine whether the descendants of a brother and sister are sufficiently removed is as follows:

~  
pācaū kanyā cāitau var;  
jaso man lāgyo usai gar.

Five daughters, six sons:  
(after that) you may do as  
you wish.

The diagram illustrating this rule is as follows:

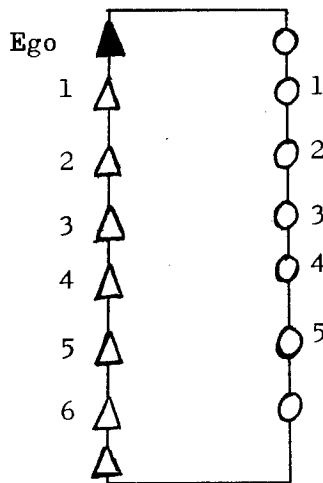


Diagram 9: the five daughter, six son rule

In the interpretation of this rule it is not necessary to draw the line of prohibition through an unbroken sequence of sons on the one hand and daughters on the other. It is only necessary that the persons in question be the descendants of a brother and sister.

Summary: kinship, cultural continuity, and economic choice

Throughout my interviews--with Chetris and Brahmins of all ages, occupations, and levels of education--it was evident and often expressed that whatever else may change in their culture the kin and marriage system will change little and very slowly. And even if the strictures against intercaste marriage become generally relaxed, I would be surprised considering the explanations and opinions given me if the basic ethos of the kinship and marriage system were to change in any radical fashion. As far as caste-based interaction goes even my oldest and most conservative informants expect the Brahmin-Chetri, Kami-Sarki-Damai public observance of ritual status and pollution rules to go fairly quickly from the scene. But my youngest and most progressive Brahmin-Chetri informants expect the practice and philosophy of marriage to continue among them, in its basics, for a long time to come.

The effect of these rules valuing "respect" and "love" is the organization of a society which conforms in an exact and particular way to criteria which we may identify as specifically Brahmin-Chetri. The settlement pattern scatters the members of the society; so do the marriage and kinship rules. The tendency for the immediate patriline to splinter, with the sons taking up separate residences on the death of their parents, has been discussed. In the same place the tension among brothers has been described (Füer-Haimendorf 1966). There is a phrase in Pokhara for this splintering: one says that a brother has u pallo gayo "moved a little away" to a separate house removed at least by a field or two from the house his father built and which another brother has inherited. The tension and competition for status among brothers is strong. It is noticeable in ordinary life from childhood on and becomes quite strong on their having been married. The kin terms express this in their elaboration of formal status terminology within the core patrilineal kin. All Brahmin-Chetri men I have talked to consider it inevitable that houses and fields be split on the death of their father or even before (under growing pressures which affect agricultural life in rural Nepal the division of fields may even be occurring earlier than it did some years before). They regret the loss of efficiency and the necessity to build walls which separate fields but also waste scarce land; nevertheless they feel the process is inevitable and necessary.

Much has been written about kin systems as systems to promote alliance. The Brahmin-Chetri kin and marriage arrangements seem to have their main effects not in promoting regularized, continuous

alliance but rather fairly orderly and complete status identification among individual families and patriline. Women become one means to the calculation of this, with families who accept a woman ranking higher than those who must give one up. The marriage rules and settlement customs soften the blow in a way. It is made sure that status tensions will not be compounded by the circulation of women at close generational distances. Custom arranges also that each male member of a patriline, though living close to his fellow patriline members, need not live too close. And brides are brought from a distance, rather than being sought in one's own or an immediately neighboring village.

These principles, and their acting out, seem to have very important significance beyond the limits of "traditional" or "village" Brahmin-Chettri life. As I stated at the beginning of this paper, Pokhara is a quite complex multi-ethnic area. Among the ethnic groups in question Brahmin-Chettris were perhaps the earliest to arrive in what is now the City area. They still possess, both individually and in total, tremendous resources in land in the area. As conditions change and the economy begins to allow for expansion and variation beyond agriculture the Brahmin-Chettris would seem to be in a position to take part in almost any way.

In fact, their reactions have been very selective. I have been able to make a representative census of Brahmin-Chettri businessmen in the Pokhara City area. Almost without exception their businesses are of the one-man variety. Two exceptions to this are cases where own brothers continue a joint family as their mothers are still alive. But even in these exceptions the pattern of division is seen: each brother operates a separate branch store or otherwise has a specifically marked domain in the family enterprises. Beyond these exceptions: there are many small-to-large sundries stores; a few teashops; one "rice-hotel" with a contract clientele for daily meals; and several small tourist lodges. Of the ten pāuroṭi or tea-loaf bakeries seven are Brahmin-Chettri. Few of the merchants among these men engage in contracting for supplies outside the Pokhara Valley. The rest purchase from salesmen and on the local wholesale market. Most of the businesses are one-man, or run by one man and his sons. Almost all of these businessmen list their major occupation not as business but as farming.

In comparison with other businessmen in town (Gurungs, Thakalis, etc.) it is interesting that only a few have moved from as far away as two districts' distance, while perhaps 80% are from the City Panchayat area itself or villages which border on it. Their places of business are most often not their places of residence; they come into the bazaar during the day and return at night to their houses in the "suburban", less densely-settled areas where their fields are. The owners of lodges have without exception opened them on their own family lands, near the lake which is a main tourist attraction.

Their attitude towards size of business on the one hand and towards business itself on the other were summed up in conversations I had with several of these men. In closely questioning the owner of a fairly large-sized sundries store I asked him why he did not, for example, contract for supplies outside but depended on the local wholesale market. The answer was the difficulty of logistics—it would require a full-time partner as none of his sons was old enough. He felt that there would be nothing wrong in having a partner but he obviously preferred to work alone. As for expanding his business, it was again obvious that he expected his sons to go their own ways on growing up and that there was no sense to him in growing beyond a certain size. A Chetri lodge-owner explained to me at great length his satisfaction in having attained a situation in which he had a business he could attend to by himself, on which he could put his own mark, and which he was determined to keep to the maximum size (eight to ten rooms) he could personally oversee with ease. Another man, dealing in sundries and hardware and one of the first Chetri businessmen in the area, is quite emphatic in stating that it is a good thing to go into business and is quite proud of having persuaded others from his home village to come to the city and open businesses also. But in fact, beyond his having opened a store, he also presents a perfect example of the slow, one-step-at-a-time migration pattern I discussed at the beginning of this paper. He has bought land in a farming area on the edge of town and built houses there, where his brothers stay.

The picture which emerges is of a people aware of the modern world, not only willing to change but changing (business, hotel-keeping, bakeries are all new enterprises for them). It is also, however, a picture of a people which has its preferences and is aware of them. They wish to adapt in such a way as to serve these preferences. It is difficult to sustain a conversation with them on the various ways in which new industries might be started and exports expanded. It is easy to discuss the benefits the new government emphasis on fruit-growing in the hill regions could bring, if the worsening problem of food supply could only be solved. These men know their own limitations and also their own ideals. They seem to wish to sustain for themselves a social life which is confined to a relatively small area; in which people and their positions are already well known; and in which one is certain of a chance to be as self-sufficient as possible whether on the basis of farming, a small but not a large hotel, or some similar enterprise. In the complex pattern of Nepali civilization the Brahmin-Chetris represent only one cultural element. But it is important to recognize their attachment to this culture, and their use of it as an adaptive mechanism applicable to both old and modern situations.

NOTES

1. Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf and Dor Bahadur Bista have suggested that the caste peoples of Nepal should be considered simply one among many ethnic groups or distinct peoples in this country. Current idiom in the Pokhara area and in the rest of the country supports this view. Bahun-Chetri or Chetri-Bahun are common phrases indicating that Brahmins and Kshatriyas are linked as one definable group in the minds of the local people of all castes and ethnic identification. In a similar pattern of colloquial reference, Kāmi-Sarki-Damāi for "smiths-farriers-tailors" expresses a perceived separation of these people from Brahmin-Chetris, who are culturally almost the same but who claim direct descent from the two highest Indo-Aryan varna grades.
2. See P.R. Sharma, Preliminary Study of the Art and Architecture of the Karnali Basin. Paris: 1972.
3. "Branching lineage" is perhaps the best English gloss for this word. The later discussions fully illustrate the nature of the thar as a ramifying group. Brahmin-Chetris conceive of the thar in terms of "branches" hāngā. Self-identification with other members of a thar is minimal beyond locally resident members but does exist. It is established on the basis of a common surname such as Bāstolā or Pārajulī. Fürer-Haimendorf and Khem Bahadur Bista have noted that the thar is not a "corporate kin group" whose members cooperate in the ways this technical anthropological term suggests. Cooperation is severely limited even among members in the same local area. For a complete discussion of thar and lineage see Khem Bahadur Bista 1972.
4. The Nepali words for age order (any sex) from elder to younger are as follows (masculine endings given): jethā, māilā, sāilā, kāilā, rhāilā, ṭhāilā, ṭhūlo kanchā, kanchā, antara, jantara. If there are only two sons they are jetha and kanchā. From that point the terms between are added as needed, beginning with māilā. If a new son is born, the others' designations are changed. Girls are reckoned in a separate series. I have never heard antara and jantara used; they would be added after kanchā without changing the other sons' designations. The terms kāilā, rhāilā, ṭhāilā seem to be interpolations of some kind; after sāilā if there are only two more sons they are called ṭhūlo kanchā and kanchā.
5. Lynn and Gabriel Campbell, who have done field work with Brahmin-Chetris in both Jumla and the Kathmandu area, say that their informants also are quite unaware of such a word.



6. See Khem Bahadur Bista (1972) for a discussion of gotra in Nepal. Most Brahmin-Chetris are not aware of the gotra system other than to know that it exists, and that jāisīs refer to it in examining a proposed marriage. It is very complex, dividing one thar into several divisions among which marriage is theoretically possible. Some gotras are shared and produce partial overlapping between thars. Village Chetris simply state that one may marry from any thar other than one's own so long as it is not possible to apply a close kin term to the prospective spouse.
7. Compare the diagrams on page 45, Fürer-Haimendorf 1966.

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