The Kinship Terms and the Family Structure in Post-Proto Zhuang-Dong Community -- Compared with Chinese

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In this paper, I compared the kinship terms of modern Zhuang-Dong languages with those of Chinese, finding that the distinctive features between the two are different. There are more distinctive features in Chinese kinship terms, such as direct versus indirect, paternal versus maternal, face-to-face versus un-face-to-face, consanguineal versus unconsguineal, elder versus younger. In Zhuang-Dong languages, although some distinctive features like those in Chinese kinship term system exist, only the contrast between elder and younger has strict phonetic correspondence in Zhuang-Dai and Dong-Suui. I conclude, there was a Post-Proto-Zhuang-Dong community, in which families had appeared, both elder man and elder women had the same position, relatives were respected equally no matter they had blood relation or not, no matter they were close relatives or distant relatives.

I think there is a Zhuang-Dong Family independent of Sino-Tibetan Family.

Zhuang-Dong Family can be divided into three groups: Zhuang-Dai Group, Dong-Shui Group and Li Group. Zhuang-Dai Group consists of Zhuang language, Buyi language, Dai language, Tai language, etc. Dong-Shui Group includes Dong language, Shui language, Mulam language, Maonan language, etc. Li Group includes mainly Li language.

Except Li Group, there are a lot of cognate kinship terms between Zhuang-Dai Group and Dong-Shui Group (seeing appendix). In Li Group, the kinship terms have no strict phonetic correspondence with those of Zhuang-Dai Group and Dong-Shui Group. We can conclude that in Proto-Zhuang-Dong society, there perhaps had not appeared families. After Proto-Li People split up from Proto-Zhuang-Dong people, families appeared in Proto-Zhuang-Dong people. It means before Proto-Zhuang-Dai people divided from Proto-Dong-Shui people, families had existed.

We name the Group of Proto-Zhuang-Dai and Proto-Dong-Shui "Post-Proto-Zhuang-Dong Group", there was also
a "Post-Proto-Zhuang-Dong people", a "Post-Proto-Zhuang-Dong community. 

The family relation structure of Post-Proto-Zhuang-Dong community is different from that of Chinese community. 

In Chinese family there are two kinds of kinship terms at parent and grandparent level. One is used in both face-to-face and un-face-to-face situation, such as /pa(51).pa/(father), you can call your father /pa(51).pa/, it is used in face-to-face situation; you also tell your friend something about your father, saying "my /pa(51).pa/ is forty years old", here it is used in un-face-to-face situation. Another is used only in un-face-to-face situation, such as /fu(51).tɕhin/, you can not call your father /fu(51).tɕhin/ in face-to-face situation. There is only one kind of kinship terms in modern Zhuang-Dong languages, whenever it is used in face-to-face situation or un-face-to-face situation. 

There is a direct relation versus indirect relation in Chinese kinship terms, such as /ti(51).ti/ (younger brother) versus /piau(214)ti(51)/ (younger brother, who is aunt's son) or /thang(35)ti(51)/ (younger brother, who is uncle's son). The /piau(214) or /thang(35) is the mark of indirect relation appearing before kinship terms. In modern Zhuang-Dong languages, we have not found direct relation versus indirect relation, younger brothers and their younger cousins share the same terms such as /tak-(33)nu:ng(42)/ in Zhuang, /nuang(31)/ in Buyi, /nong(11)-tɕai(51)/ in Xishuangbanna Dai, /long(41) tɕai(51)/ in De Dai, /nong(31)pa:n(55)/ in Dong, /nun(24)/ in Mulam, /nu(41)/ in Shui, /nun(24)/ in Maonan. These words mean both younger brother and younger male cousin. We can conclude that there is no lineal relation versus collateral relation in the family kinship structure of Post-Proto-Zhuang-Dong community. 

In Chinese family, the paternal line is opposite to maternal line. In the same generation, /piau(214)kʰ(55) / (the elder brother, who is the son of mother's sister or brother, or the son of father's sister) is opposite to /thang(35)kʰ(55) / (the elder brother, who is the son of father's brother), /piau(214)/ is the mark of maternal line, /thang(35)/ is the mark of paternal line. In the parent level, /ʂu(55).ʂu/ (father's younger brother) or /po(35)fu(51)/ (father's elder brother) is opposite to /tɕiou(51).tɕiou/ (mother's brother), /ku(55).mu/ (father's sister) is opposite to /i(35).mu/ (mother's sister). In the grandparent level, /tsu(214).fu/ (father's father) is opposite to /uai(51) tsu(214) fu/ (mother's father), /tsu-(214).mu/ (father's mother) is opposite to /uai(51) tsu-(214).mu/ (mother's mother), the mark is /uai(51)/ (maternal line) versus zero
(paternal line). In the child level /thang(35)tʂl (35)/ (brother's son) is opposite to /piau-(214)tʂl (35)/ (sister's son), /thang(35)/ and /piau(214)/ are also the paternal and maternal marks respectively. In grand-child level, /sun(55)/(son's son) is opposite to /uai(51)sun (55)/(daughter's son), /uai(51)/ and zero are also maternal and paternal marks respectively. In modern Zhuang-Dong languages, this kind of contrast is only in grandparent level, for example, father's father is opposite to mother's father: /kong(35)/ versus /ta(34)/ in Zhuang, /pau(33)/ versus /pau(33)ta(35)/ or /ta(35)/ in Buyi, /pu(35)/ or /i2(55)pu(35)/ versus /pɔ(33)thau (31)/ in Xi Dai, /l ng(35)/ versus /lɔŋ(35)lai:i(51)/ or /lɔŋ-(35)tsai(31)/ in De Dai, /ong(323)/ versus /ta(55)/ in Dong, /kɔng(44)/ versus /ta(42)/ in Maonan. In the light of the phonetic correspondence, /kɔng/ may be the approximation to proto-form of father's father, /ta/ may be the approximation of mother's father. We can conclude, the contrast between paternal line and maternal line existed in Post-Proto-Zhuang-Dong kinship terms, but not an important contrast, because in the same generation, parent generation, child generation, grand-child generation, there is no this kind of contrast in kinship terms with phonetic correspondence.

The consanguineal versus unsanguineal is a very important contrast in Chinese kinship terms, such as /kезд(55).kɛ/ (elder brother) versus /tɕie(214).fu/(elder sister's husband), /ku(55)ma(55)/ (father's sister) versus /po(35).mu/ (wife of father's elder brother). Here /kезд(55).kɛ/ and /ku(55)ma(55)/ have consanguineal relation with ego, but /tɕie(214).fu/ and /po(35).mu/ have no. The contrast exists everywhere in Chinese kinship terms, a kinship term can not refer to both consanguineal and unsanguineal relatives. This contrast does not exist in all modern Zhuang-Dong languages. In De Dai, /pi(33)tsai:i(51)/ (elder brother) is opposite to /pi(33)xoi(35)/ (elder sister's husband). /u(31)xoi(35)/ (husband of father's elder sister) is opposite to /lung(51)(father's elder brother), /a(33)xoi (35)/ (husband of father's younger sister) is opposite to /u(31)a:u(33)/ (father's younger brother). It seems that /xoi(35)/ refers to unsanguineal, but /xoi(35)/ in De Dai and Xi Dai has no phonetically correspondent kinship terms in other Zhuang Dong languages. /xoi(35)/ may be borrowed from Chinese /fu(55)/ (husband). The kinship term /pa(31)/ in De Dai can refer to the wife of father's elder brother, to father's elder sister, to the wife of mother's elder brother, to mother's elder sister, here is no consanguineal versus unsanguineal. What is interested to us is /pa(31)/ in De Dai has phonetic correspondence in other modern Zhuang-Dong languages.
This character is universal in all kinship terms of all modern Zhuang-Dong languages, we can say, the contrast between consanguineal and unconsanguineal did not exist in Post-proto-Zhuang-Dong Family, it has developed independently in different modern Zhuang-Dong languages.

There is a same distinctive feature both in Chinese kinship terms and in those of Zhuang-Dong languages, it is elder versus younger. In Chinese, this contrast exists in all kinship terms of the same generation, such as /kɔ(55).kɔ/ (elder brother) versus /ti(51) ti/ (younger brother), /tɕie(214).tɕie/ (elder sister) versus /mei(51).mei/ (younger sister). In parent level, this contrast is not so strict: father's elder brother is opposite to father's younger brother, that is /po(35) fu(51)/ versus /ʂu(55) ʂu/, but father's elder sister and father's younger sister have a same kinship term /ku(55).mu/, mother's elder brother and mother's younger brother have a same kinship term /tɕiou(51).tɕiou/, mother's elder sister and younger sister have a same kinship term /i(35)ma(55)/. In child generation, there is no contrast between elder and younger. In modern Post-Zhuang-Dong languages, elder-younger contract is stricter than that in Chinese. In the same generation, this contrast is evident. Taking the example of De Dai, /pi(33)tsa:i(51)/ (elder brother) versus /lɔn(41)tsa:i(51)/ (younger brother), /pi(33)sa:u(35)/ (elder sister) versus /lɔn(41)sa:u(35)/ (younger sister). In the parent generation, relatives elder than father and mother are opposite to relatives younger than father and mother. In Maonan, even elder brother's child is opposite to younger brother's child, that is /ka:k(24)va:i(24)/ versus /lak(24)nung(24), this, of course, developed independently in Maonan. But in modern Post-Zhuang-Dong languages, terms which have the elder-younger contrast in the same generation and parent generation usually have phonetic correspondence, it means elder-younger contrast had existed in Post-Proto-Zhuang-Dong families.

And more, there is a same distinctive feature both in Chinese kinship terms and in modern Post-Zhuang-Dong kinship terms. One usually use kinship terms to call relatives elder than him. If your elder brother's name or your uncle's name is /wang(35)ping(35)/, you usually call his kinship term, but not his name. In modern Indo-European languages, the situation is not always like that. You often call your brother's name, sometimes even your uncle's name. It means the contrast between elder and younger is stricter both in Chinese families and in modern Zhuang-Dong families.