

CLANS AND THE JOKING-RELATIONSHIP AMONG
THE PLATEAU TONGA OF NORTHERN RHODESIA

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Formalized joking between clans has been reported from many tribes in British Central Africa(1). Tew has attempted to place the joking between clans within the wider context of the funeral friendship which exists in one form or another from the Zambezi River in the south to Lake Tanganyika in the north and from the east coast to the Luangwa river(2). Radcliffe-Brown has also dealt with the subject in his analysis of the general nature of joking relationships(3).

The Tonga are thus not unique in practising such joking. This paper does not report any new phenomenon, nor shall I attempt within it to develop any new theory of the nature of joking relationships. I am limiting myself to a description of the relationship as it exists among the Plateau Tonga. Despite Tew's suggestion that "funeral friendship" should be adopted as a descriptive term to cover the phenomenon as it occurs in this area, I shall use the old form "clan joking relationship" since among the Tonga the funeral is only one, and perhaps not the most important, situation in which the relationship operates. Indeed, one could cavil at either term, since neither joking nor funeral duties effectively define the relationship. In many situations clans perform reciprocal services for each other. One might therefore call the institution, "clan reciprocity," and those entering into it "clan reciprocals."

The Plateau Tonga are a Bantu-speaking people living in what is now the Mazabuka District of the Southern Province of Northern Rhodesia. Today they number between 80,000 and 120,000 people. To the east of them live the We or Valley Tonga of the Gwenbe District in the Zambezi River Valley. They share with the Plateau people the same clan system and among them the institution of clan-joking also appears in the same form(4).

Among both Plateau and Valley Tonga, descent and succession are in the matrilineal line. Today, they are organized into chiefdoms under Native Authorities instituted by the British Administration. Traditionally, they had neither chiefs nor other forms of instituted authorities to bind them into a tribe or some organized political body. Instead, though they recognized their common cultural and linguistic affinities, they were content to give their loyalty to much smaller groupings. These were of two types: small neighbourhoods composed of a few villages organized about a common rain shrine and cult; and a large number of small groups based on kinship. The members of such a group were usually dispersed throughout a number of neighbourhoods. These groups I have called matrilineal groups to distinguish them from the much larger clans, which

are known by the same term, mukowa (5). The matrilineal groups were bodies which shared inheritances, bridewealth, and other privileges and responsibilities. Their members met together for common purposes, both ritual and secular. They acted as vengeance groups, and formed mutual assistance associations. Theoretically, all members of a matrilineal group were descended from a common ancestress, a few generations back, though usually her name had been forgotten, and those within the group were not able to trace their genealogical links with each other. Though I have written in the past tense, the matrilineal groups remain important elements of Tonga social organization, and many of their functions remain intact.

THE CLANS:

The clan is a much less integrated body than the matrilineal group, and its functions are not as clearly defined. True the Tonga, even today, will argue that the clan system is of the greatest importance in their lives, but this is because they are usually thinking of the matrilineal group which is only situationally distinguished from the clan of which it forms a part. Still, though the clan is widely dispersed and owns no property, has no shrines, no common rites, no occasions on which all its members gather for some common purpose, the clan is the single unit in Tonga social life which has more than an ephemeral existence. Villages usually have short histories. Even neighbourhoods may shift their boundaries and composition within a generation. People move from one to another, and need not spend their lives within one village or neighbourhood (6). Matrilineal groups may also be disrupted, and reform themselves into new groupings, as people become geographically separated and no longer maintain the old relations with their kinsmen. The clans alone are thought to be eternal. Most Tonga take them as a part of the natural order of things left to them by their ancestors from long long ago. Over most of Tonga country there is no myth which purports to explain the origin of clans or people. Both have always existed, or were created simultaneously. In the western areas, such as the present chiefdom of Macha, some people have a legend that the first people, already organized into clans, descended from the sky to light on a certain hill where their imprints may still be seen. Even in this myth, clans and people originate together. The only additional information they have about the development of the present clan system is that once two of the present clans were one, and then for some reason separated into the clans known as Baloya and Bantanga. This division again is said to have occurred long before the memory of living men. Since then the clans have continued unchanged. There is no myth which gives one priority over the others or purports to relate its history.

This division into clans is considered to be an invariable human institution. The Tonga find it practically impossible to conceive of any society in which people are not divided into clans. Since most of the other peoples they have encountered also have a clan system,

this belief is not surprising. Indeed, many of the same clans appear in other tribes, and foreigners who come to settle in Tonga country have little difficulty in fitting themselves into the Tonga clan system. They either belong to a clan which is also represented among the Tonga, or they find some way of equating their own clan with one of the existing Tonga clans. Thus, though Tonga country has always received influxes of people from other tribes, and today contains many foreigners who came first to work in the European areas near the railway and then settled in the Tonga reserves, the Tonga clan system remains unaffected. Strangers do not introduce new clans into the country. They find their place within the existing divisions, only fourteen in number.

The clan system then gives a common basis of understanding with people of other tribes, and makes Tonga society into an open system. For through their membership in the same clans, foreigners can find their place within Tonga society, while the Tonga can also associate themselves with other tribes if they leave their own territory.

Clan membership gives rise to only a few limited obligations and rights, which perhaps is why it is so easily extended to strangers. In the days before British Administration brought peace to the land with its ban upon vengeance and enslavement, the clans may have been more important in offering security to the man who ventured outside his immediate home area, for members of the same clan were expected to offer each other hospitality and assistance. It was considered unethical to enslave, or to hold in slavery, a fellow clansman, though a slave assumed his owner's clan without affecting their relationship. Today this aspect of clan membership is no longer of any importance. But the clan continues to function in other fields. It still governs marriage, to the extent that clan exogamy is rigidly maintained. I have recorded only three cases of marriage within the clan where there was no question of slave descent to complicate the issue. For a slave or a person of slave-descent is a quasi-member of the clan with whom marriage is permitted. The Tonga stress clan exogamy as the most important aspect of the institution. Almost fifty years ago, when missionaries first went among them and queried them about the nature of the clan, the Tonga said that the clan was an institution given to them by God so that people might marry properly (7). And so they still view the matter. The clan system also provides a mechanism for finding acceptable substitutes for certain rites in which matrilineal kinsmen should participate if no one of the proper category is available. Finally, the clan system forms the basis for a system of joking relationship and reciprocal services.

Before describing this, however, it is necessary to discuss clan names, and their association with certain animals. Twelve clans are found very widely throughout Tonga country, from the Zambezi River to the western borders. Two more seem to be found only in the western areas. In the northwest, the system of names seems to be rather different, and probably it is affected by the system of the neighbouring Ila.

Most of the clan names cannot be translated today, though they are

assumed to refer to animals. Many of the clans have a number of names, any one of which may be used. Informants do not know why these multiple names exist, and they certainly do not seem to designate divisions within a clan, or local groupings. The same person may sometimes say, for instance, that he is a Mukuli, again that he is a Mutenda, and again that he is Muunga. When queried, he will comment, "It is the same clan. It just has different names." Each clan is associated with a number of animals or natural phenomena. These are not totemic associations, since no one avoids or honours his clan animals in any way. The association between a particular animal and a particular clan is not invariable throughout Tonga country. In some areas, one clan will be associated with an animal which is attributed to quite a different clan in some other area. Occasionally even within a single area there is some disagreement between people as to the proper clan association for different animals. But in the main this difference of opinion seems to apply chiefly to what one might call secondary associates. Each clan is usually referred to as having one particular associate, and then informants remember to add that it also has others. These secondary associations are remembered chiefly in the praise names and slogans belonging to the clan and in clan joking situations. Why the Tonga should have such a varied array of animal and other associates for their clans, I do not know. Possibly it results from the amalgamation of the various foreigners into the common clan system. Whatever the cause, the associations persist and appear in the joking situations.

The clans, and their most common associates are given below. Where an animal has been attributed by different informants to different clans, I have shown this by placing it within brackets.

<u>CLAN</u>	<u>ASSOCIATES</u>
1. Bahyambø	hyena, rhinoceros, pig, ant, fish
2. Batenda	elephant, sheep, lechwe, (hippopotamus)
3. Baleya	goat, tortoise, black vulture
4. Pansaka	leopard, bee
5. Bakonka	(eland), jackal, rain, zebra
6. Bafumu	pigeon, frog, (hippopotamus), cattle
7. Bansanje	hare, honey guide
8. Bayuni	bird
9. Bacindu	lion, grain
10. Peetwa	crocodile, monitor lizard
11. Bantanga	white vulture
12. Balongo	baboon, (buffalo), scavenger bird
13. Pancanga	bush-baby
14. Bankombwe	(buffalo), (eland)

Clan names are used constantly in daily life throughout Tonga country. People are commonly addressed by their clan names, or they may be honoured by being addressed by the clan names of their fathers. Everyone, including young children, knows his clan affiliation.

Clan Joking:

Each clan has a formal joking relationship with a certain number of other clans. This is known as bujwanyina. A clan-joking relative is called mujwama (my fellow joker), mujwanyoko (your fellow joker), mujwanyina (his or her fellow joker). The term seems to be derived from the term for sister's child, mujwa, to which is added the possessive suffix (8). Despite this derivation, the relationship is one which exists between clans, and it has no implication of kinship. Most people, indeed, say that where actual kinship exists, the joking-relationship goes into abeyance. Others claim that clan-joking relationships are of two types: one the formal unchanging relationship between paired clans, the other a particular relationship between a person and the clans of his mother's father and father's father. The latter type, they then go on to say, is not a true bujwanyina relationship but is only like it. Thus a woman who is Munsaka said that she had a clan-joking relationship with the Baleya, and then qualified this statement with: "But they are not real bajwanyina. We have it because I am a grandchild of the Baleya. My father was born to them (i.e., her father's father was Muleya), and so at a Baleya funeral I can demand that meat be given to me. But my children won't have bujwanyina with the Baleya. They will follow only the real bajwanyina who are the Bansanje, Bahyamba, and Balongo."

The confusion may occur because there is also a formal joking relationship between kinsmen of certain categories. This differs in kind from that of the clan-joking. Such joking exists between cross-cousins, between affines of the same generation, and between grandparents and grandchildren. In the last category, the joking is extended to include all members of the grandfathers' clans. This type of joking is known by the term ku-sobasyana ("to cause to play"). It involves a good deal of teasing. Between grandparents and grandchildren it is confined largely to the exchange of pleasantries and sexual innuendos. Those indulging in it call out: "You are my wife," "My wife get water for me," "You are my grandparents and so you must give me a wife (or husband)." Cross-cousins and affines of the same generation have the same type of verbal exchange, but they may also indulge in rough horse play, practical jokes, and fondling (9).

Clan-joking is quite different, and the bystander easily recognizes it and differentiates it from the joking appropriate between kinsmen. Clan-joking involves the play upon the presumed antagonism between the clan animals. It permits obscenities and rough words. It permits those in the relationship to call to each other: "Your mother is dead," "Your mother's brother is dead." Small children when they hear these statements may rush home weeping, thinking that a relative has actually died. Older people laugh and retort: "Your mother is also dead." Clan-joking also involves accusations of sorcery: "You are a sorcerer! You are killing the people!" Such joking is called ku-tukila ("to use abusive language"). This is permitted only between those in a clan-joking relationship. If anyone else used these words to a person, it would be an insult. He would be called to account and made to pay damages before the matter was permitted to drop.

Some people may therefore assimilate the joking appropriate to the grandfathers' clans to that of the clan-joking proper, but it is the relationship between paired clans which is the backbone of the system, and the one which most Tonga stress. Each clan is paired with a number of others for this purpose, and these in turn are paired with a number of others. This results in a web of ties between clans, rather than a division of the clans into a number of segments, each of which has a joking-relationship only with others within its segment. The pairing of clans for this purpose, however, is not invariable throughout Tonga country. Even within the same small area, informants may differ whether certain clans are paired together. Nevertheless, there is sufficient consistency for people to be able to move from one section of the country to another without involving themselves in cases for joking with clans which do not recognize their right to enter into this relationship. The Tonga think that the pairing ought to be universal throughout the country, and they also maintain that it applies to all members of the appropriate clans and not to matrilineal groups or to local sections of a clan. They say that as soon as you learn that a man is a member of a paired clan you may begin to joke with him in the prescribed manner whether or not you have previously known each other.

I have found the clans paired for joking in the following fashion. (10):

CLAN	JOKING RELATIVES													
	Bahyamba	Batenda	Baleya	Bansaka	Bakonke	Bafumu	Bansanje	Bayuni	Bacindu	Beetwa	Bantanga	Balongo	Bancanga	Bankombwe
Bahyamba		X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		
Batenda	X			X					X					
Baleya	X								X					
Bansaka	X	X					X					X		X
Bakonka	X					X	X	X	X	X				X
Bafumu	X				X		X		X					
Bansanje	X			X	X	X		X	X	X				X
Bayuni					X		X		X	X				
Bacindu	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X	X	X		
Beetwa					X		X	X	X					X
Bantanga	X								X					
Balongo	X			X					X					
Bancanga (11)														
Bankombwe				X	X		X			X				

If the Tonga are asked why certain clans joke together, they either refer to some antagonism between the associated animals of the two clans, or they relate a folk-tale which is said to describe the origin of the relationship. For unlike the clans themselves, the reciprocal relationship between them is thought to have come into existence after the origin of people. A Muhyamba, for instance, will say, "We have bujwanyina with the Bansaka because they are bees who make honey, and we are ants who steal their honey. That is what we always tease each other with. And we have bujwanyina with the Baleya because they are goats, and we hyenas come and steal them from the house. And we have bujwanyina with the Bacindu because they are lions who kill meat, and we hyenas come carefully and eat alongside the lion when it is satisfied. And we have bujwanyina with the Bansanje because they are hares, and both hare and hyena are tricksters." When joking partners meet they tease each other with such references, but among the Tonga the jesting does not turn on the counter-claims of the two clans to superiority over each other because of the relationship between their animal associates. The two are assumed to be of equal status. In this the Tonga differ from other tribes of the area who have the clan-joking.

The jest may be elaborated into a folk-tale as follows: "We Bahyamba have bujwanyina with the Bansanje because we are hyena and they are hare. One day Hyena fell in love with a girl and asked her to marry him. She agreed. Then along came Hare who also wanted to marry her. She refused to marry him because she had already accepted Hyena. Hare said, 'How can you marry him? He is my mount. I ride upon him.' The girl then thought that perhaps Hare might make a better husband. Hyena came to see her. She refused to marry him, repeating that Hare had said he used Hyena as his mount. Hyena went off in a rage. He found Hare lying in bed claiming to be very ill. Hyena announced that they had a case and Hare must come with him to the elders to have it settled. Hare denied that he had ever claimed to ride upon Hyena, and said it was impossible for him to come now as he was ill. Hyena insisted. Hare finally agreed, and said he would come if Hyena would carry him on his back. Hyena set off with Hare on his back. Hare suggested that Hyena should run so that they might get there faster. Thus Hare galloped up to the gathering, mounted on Hyena to whom he applied a switch from time to time. As they arrived, he shouted, 'Well, see! Do I ride him?' And he jumped off. Since then Hyena (Bahyamba) and Hare (Bansanje) have had bujwanyina, and that is what they joke about,"

A similar tale relates the origin of the bujwanyina relationship between the Bahyamba, the Bafumu, and the Bansanje. "One day there was Rhinoceros (Bahyamba), Hippopotamus (Bafumu), and Hare (Bansanje). Hippopotamus always stayed in the water and never came out in the day time. Rhinoceros never went in the water. Hare went to Rhinoceros and said, 'Why don't you go into the water and bathe? You would feel fine. I'll tell you what I'll do. Tomorrow morning I will bring a rope, and you will take one end and I will take the other. I will get in the water and we will both pull. If I pull you into the water that will mean that you will come into the water all the time.' Rhinoceros agreed. Then Hare went to Hippopotamus and told him that he ought to come out of the water in the

day time, and that next morning he, Hare, would bring a rope and see if he could pull him out. So the pulling contest was arranged. Hare, out of sight of the contestants, so arranged the rope that Hippopotamus and Rhinoceros were pulling against each other. Then he ran away. Hippopotamus and Rhinoceros pulled most of the day. Then each began to wonder what could be wrong and if Hare could really pull this hard. They went to investigate and found each other. They said, 'Ah, Hare has tricked us!' Since that day, these three clans—Bahyamba, Bafumu, and Bansanje—have had the joking relationship."

Another describes the origin of the joking relationship between Bakonka, Bansanje, and Bacindu. "One day Lion (Bacindu) fell into a pit trap. Jackal (Bakonka) came along and agreed to push a stick into the trap so that Lion could climb out. Lion was very hungry after his imprisonment. He announced that he was going to eat Jackal, who protested that this was no just repayment for his assistance. Lion refused to listen. Before he could eat Jackal, Hare (Bansanje) came along and asked what was happening. When he had heard the story, he asked Lion to show him just what had happened. Lion jumped into the pit. Hare grabbed out the stick and told Jackal not to help Lion out of the trap again. So they went off leaving Lion in the trap. Since then Jackal (Bakonka), Hare (Bansanje), and Lion (Bacindu) have had bujwanyina."

It would be pointless to give any more of these tales, which are all of the same type. They are said to explain the origin of the joking relationship, but they are certainly not essential to it. Many people deny any knowledge of the tales and say that they carry on the relationship with their paired clans because this is a matter of tradition: "Perhaps the old people knew how it started. We just know that it is the custom which they left for us to follow. So we follow it." Even the very old may not remember the tales attached to their own particular joking-relationships. One old man of about eighty told me that he as a Muhyamba has a joking relationship with the Bansanje. When I asked him why, he cheerfully replied. "You must ask the old people. They never told me and I don't know."

Certainly the tales give no clue to the importance that the pairing of clans has in Tonga life, for it enters into many situations, besides that of the formal exchange of insults and jests. Paired clans have reciprocal duties which they perform for each other. Whenever a man or woman has so misbehaved that he has brought upon himself the general condemnation of his community, it is through the clan-joking partners that his shame is brought home to him. This can not be done through his own kinsmen—through the people of his own matrilineal group and the people of his father's matrilineal group—upon whom he relies for support and assistance. Nor may it be done through his affinal relatives. For them to shame him would injure their permanent relationship which is built upon mutual respect and support. Perhaps their exclusion is also based upon the assumption that if the offender were amenable to the advice of his kinsmen, he would have so patterned his life upon their advice that he could not have committed his offence in the first place. In any event,

his kinsmen are merely bystanders, and witnesses to his formal punishment, which is in the hands of his clan-joking partners. If a man repeatedly takes and wastes the property of his kinsmen, his joking-partners chide him with his folly and mock him for his stupidity. They make general play with his shortcomings and give them full publicity. If a man and woman commit incest, either by having sexual relations with a clansman, or with some other prohibited relative, the matter is not allowed to rest. Their own kinsmen cannot proceed against them and force them to pay damages. But the man is forced to produce a goat which is killed. Then the woman must cook porridge, while the man cooks the meat of the goat. While they are thus at work, clan-joking partners stand about jeering at them for their misdeeds. They also take the blood of the goat and smear it on the bodies of the offenders, saying, "Here is your incest!" "Then everyone who is there will be afraid and think, 'If I should ever do anything like this, they will give me the same punishment. I must never agree if someone who is my brother tells me that he wants me. I must remind him of what would happen to us if we did this wrong.' So this is for punishment. It is the clan-joking partners who must make them ashamed of what they have done."

The joking-partners also come to bring shame to any one who has attempted to commit suicide. But in this, as well as in cases of incest, and in certain other situations, the ritual serves not only as a punishment. It is also a means of averting the evil which would otherwise follow the kinsmen of those involved, or even the offenders themselves. So the clan-joking partners act even in situations where there is no thought of shaming since no offence has been committed. If a granary collapses under the weight of the stored grain, the joking-partners come and curse the owner while they remove all the grain in their baskets. This is said to prevent the death of the owner foretold by the collapse of the granary, for on a death mourners assemble and the granaries are emptied to feed them. Such occurrences—incest, suicide or attempted suicide, the collapse of a granary, and various others—are said to be malweza. This term is also used to refer to some subsequent misfortune which is attributed to the original occurrence. For those, the clan joking-partners assist to ward off the threatened misfortune.

At all funerals, joking-partners have a role to play, but they have a particular duty of burying the bodies of those who die as suicides or from leprosy, for these are considered to be malweza (12). After most deaths, kinsmen and others living in the village of the deceased join together to bury the body, but they may not handle the bodies of lepers and suicides. Instead the joking-partners come to drag these out into the bush where they are thrust into an ant-hill and abandoned. For such people there is no formal mourning, nor do the people assemble. Relatives of the dead will probably kill a goat or a beast to feed the joking-partners who have officiated, and thus the matter ends. At other funerals, joking-partners perform certain rites at the grave, such as pouring a calabash of water over the grave, and again after the burial they have the duty of crying out to begin the renewed wailing. They also act the

part of clowns, to release the tension of the mourners. "If a Muleya dies, then we Bacindu go to laugh and joke. We say, 'Well, he has died. Don't care about this! Perhaps you yourselves have killed him! You are sorcerers.' Then a Muleya will say to us, 'You too are going to die sometime. You also are sorcerers!'" When cattle are killed to feed the mourners, joking-partners go out and play about with the bodies of the beasts. If a rich man dies and many cattle are killed, the first one is for the joking-partners, who may rush in and take the meat. They also speak out to tell the people that it is time to end this mourning and to disperse to their homes. If anyone else behaved in this fashion it would be a serious matter, which long ago might have led to his being enslaved by the offended relatives of the dead.

Joking-partners may also be considered to stand in a quasi-kinship relationship, but one which fits into none of the known categories of kinsmen. For this reason they can be substituted whenever a kinsman of a particular category is not available to carry out his appropriate task. At funerals and on other occasions when a large number of people are gathered, it is the duty of the affines who have married women of the matrilineal group involved to cook the food and perform much of the other work necessary to the occasion. At one funeral when I questioned why different men were working, I was told of one, "He is our joking-partner, but there are not enough of our affines here to do the work, so we told him that he must help us out and work like an affine. That is all right. He must help us because he is our joking-partner." Again, when a man first obtains a new plough, he must take it to the field of his father, or that of some member of his father's matrilineal group, and work with it there before using it in his own field. A young Mweotwa said that when he got his plough he took it to the field of a Mucindu. I asked why he had so departed from custom, and he replied, "But he is my joking-partner. I know I should take it to my father's field, but none of my father's matrilineal group and no member of his clan is living here. So I took it to the field of our joking-partner. That makes it all right for me to use it now in my own field."

While the Tonga would argue that any joking-partner from any clan paired with your own might perform these services, in actual practice, of course, the people in one neighbourhood have worked out an informal arrangement by which only a few of the many possible joking-partners participate. All joking-partners in the area need not undertake the obligations. It is enough if only one appears, and no joking-partner may be sued for damages because he has failed to put in an appearance or perform his obligations.

Other aspects of the joking-partnership brings a much wider range of participation, since the joking-partnership also governs the relationships between people of different clans on other occasions. Various informants have told me that long ago it was forbidden to take offence at anything a joking-partner did. "Long ago if my joking-partner was wearing a coat, I could go and spit on it, and he would have to give me the coat because I am his joking-partner. He would give it to me even if it was a new coat.

He could do this any time and not just at funerals." Again, I have been told that theft was not recognized between joking-partners. Some said that if you impregnated a girl from a paired clan that you were not charged to pay damages. Her relatives simply cursed you up and down, and you paid nothing. Others said that this was not true, that you had to pay full damages. Today, certainly, no one pleads a joking-partnership as lessening his responsibility in such a matter. Informants also said that previously if you killed a joking-partner, you paid less than if you killed a member of some other clan. In times of famine, you could go to a village where you had joking-partners and beg for food and for seeds for planting. Indeed, you might go to the granary of a joking-partner and take the grain without permission. "If I saw him, I couldn't give him a case because I would know that we joked together." Old men say that they still observe this custom, but that the younger people do not. It was of considerable importance in the old uncertain days when famines were of frequent occurrence and there was no Administrative Authority to prevent starvation by the importation of grain. For if you begged food or seed in a village where you had no kinsmen or joking-partners, you were liable to enslavement. Joking-partners, like clansmen, were not expected to enslave each other.

In ordinary life, one would not urge a case against a joking-partner. The sign and seal of the relationship was the refusal to take offence, symbolized by the right to use crude and abusive language to each other. In kinship relationships, either consanguineal or affinal, one also should be slow to take offence, but this was because there were practical advantages from the continuation of the relationship which acted as a check upon anger and intemperate dispute. Even if anger boiled up, it could be curbed so that the relationship with its practical advantages could continue. In the joking-partnership, offence was outlawed from the beginning. If one of the partners did take offence and started to fight, then damages had to be paid. But this implied the end of the relationship. "It is forbidden to fight with them. If you fight, it means that the joking-partnership is ended. You will be afraid to joke with them again because you will think 'These people only want to fight.'" Nevertheless, informants maintained that if a man found that his joking-partner was having an adulterous affair with his wife he would demand full damages without regard to the affect that this might have upon their relationship (13).

Marriage between people belonging to paired clans was not only accepted. It was an approved form of marriage. "That is our special place to marry." Full bride wealth was paid, but marriage into a paired clan was considered to be a safeguard for the spouse who went to live amongst his or her affines, for though actual kinship ties, whether consanguineal or affinal, placed the joking-partnership in abeyance, such people had an added reason to protect his or her interests.

The existence of the joking-partnership, or clan reciprocity, therefore gave the Tonga added security in a world made up of small opposed groups, a world in which he found himself easily at odds with others and exposed to their vengeance. Against this he had only the security which could be offered to him by the willingness of his kinsmen to take up his

quarrels as their own. But the joking-partnership meant that offence could neither be given nor recognized in dealings with a large number of people with whom he came into contact. From the table showing clan pairs, the wide range of joking-partnerships is apparent. If I had collected information more systematically I suspect that all the clans would have emerged as paired with at least half the available number of other clans. Thus the Tonga could move through a wide circle of relationships with security. He had to be certain of the clans with which he joked, or he embroiled himself in difficulties, but if he followed the simple rule that he joked where his mother jokod, and not where his father jokod, he was safe (14).

This I think is the true significance of the paired clan arrangement among the Tonga, and perhaps elsewhere in Northern Rhodesia. It also has the effect of mobilizing and expressing public opinion through the mouths of joking-partners who by definition are not kinsmen and who are protected in the exercise of this function by the outlawing of retaliation against anything they may say. The joking-partnership is brought into the context of the funeral, because in the funeral all those who have responsibilities to a person during his lifetime are given particular roles in the ritual which surrounds his death. The funeral friendship is therefore only one aspect of the wider problem of how people may be organized into groups which may then be effectively related to each other, to ensure the well-being of a community.

ENDNOTES

- (1) Richards, 1937, (Bemba; Stefaniszyn, 1950 (Ambo); Melland, 1923, pp. 251-252 (Kaonde); Doke, 1931, pp. 197-198 (Lamba). Dr. I. G. Cunnison informs me that it is also found among the peoples living in the Luapula Valley. Among the Southern Lunda, joking occurs not between clans, but between two sections of the tribe, according to information quoted in McCulloch, 1951, pp. 21-22. Clan joking has not been reported for the Ila, close neighbours of the Tanga with whom they share many customs. Instead joking is characteristic of the age grades. See, Smith and Dale, 1920, Vol. I, pp. 308-310.
- (2) Tew, 1951. She gives references to the literature describing funeral friendships among the different tribes of the area.
- (3) Radcliffe-Brown, 1940; Radcliffe-Brown, 1949. Both articles are reprinted in Radcliffe-Brown, 1952.
- (4) Material for this paper was gathered during the years September 1946-September 1947, July 1948-July 1950, when I worked among the Tonga as a research officer of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. Most of my time was spent in villages to the east of the Northern Rhodesian railway line which today cuts Tonga country into eastern and western sections, and my information is most reliable for this area. However, during my first tour, I also worked in villages to the west of the railway. In 1949, I spent a month in the Gwembe District among the We.

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- (5) For further information on Tonga social organization, see Colson, 1951a.
- (6) Colson, 1951b.
- (7) Personal Communication from Father Moreau, S. J., who helped to found the Roman Catholic Mission in Tonga country in 1905.
- (8) The bu- prefix in Tonga seems to carry any abstract sense. See Hopgood, 1940, p. 30. Torrend, 1931, p. 461, gives the meaning of mujwama, etc., as "my relative of a different tribe." By tribe, he means clan. But I have found the term restricted to those with whom the speaker has a clan-joking relationship. It is not used for those who are considered to be kin.
- (9) Age-mates may also joke together.

- (10) These pairs were collected from informants in Monze chiefdom west of the railway, and in Mwansa, Chona and Ufwenuka chiefdoms to the east. In the northwest, in Mwanacingwala chiefdom, informants denied that bujwanyina was connected with clans, and I was never able to work out the system which governed it. These people are probably affected by their proximity to the Ila who do not seem to have clan-joking. In the Zambezi Valley, the We or Valley Tonga have the clan-joking pairs. During the month I spent in the Valley, I was working on other problems, but I did collect the following clan pairs: Batenda are paired with Bafumu, Bahyamba, Balongo; Bantanga are paired with Bayuni, Baleya, Bahyamba, Bacindu; Bayuni are paired with Bansenje, Bahyamba, Bakonka, Batanga, Bacindu, Batenda, Beetwa; Beetwa are paired with Bacindu, Bafumu, Bayuni; Bacindu are paired with Bayuni, Bahyamba, Balongo, Bantanga, Beetwa. Most of these pairings, but not all, were also found on the Plateau.
- (11) Banchanga are found only in the west, and I had no opportunity to work out their joking-partners.
- (12) Valley Tonga informants denied that joking-partners had the task of burying suicides or lepers. This custom is therefore probably confined to the Plateau.
- (13) The Valley Tonga said that they ignored cases of adultery if a joking-partner was involved.
- (14) Dr. I. G. Cunnison informs me that on the Luapula River, people may assume the joking associations of both parents, though they belong only to their mothers' clans. Elsewhere in Northern Rhodesia, people seem to be limited to the joking-partners of their own clan.

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