

## Social Organisation

The family and kinship form the most important structural blocks of a society. Their significance is great especially in case of a tribal society where these ties are usually stronger. In this chapter we have taken up an analysis of the family and kinship ties which are found in the Molsom society. We shall first discuss the type of families in existence among the Molsoms and then analyse their kinship and clan structure.

### Family

On the basis of the relationship among the members Molsoms families may be categorised broadly into three types: Nuclear, extended and other types. Each of these categories has been discussed separately in the following sections in this chapter.

**Table 5.1: Distribution of the families according to structure**

Serial number	Type of family	Total number	Percentage to the total families.
1.	Nuclear	212	73.10
2.	Extended	60	20.69
3.	Other type	18	06.21
	<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>100.00</b>

## Nuclear family

A nuclear family consists of husband, wife and their children. There are mainly three reasons found among the Molsoms behind the formation or continuation of a nuclear family. A nuclear family may form, due to separation of spouses along with their children, if any, from the extended family after the completion of *smackachangte* of the husband; or secondly, due to death of parents in an extended family resulting in separation of brothers from each other; or thirdly, due to separation of spouses from their natal houses after love marriage.

In our sample villages out of a total number of 212 nuclear families 25.47 percent have been formed due to the first reason mentioned above, 12.74 percent for the second and 61.79 percent due to the third cause. The genealogical structure of a nuclear family may be diagrammatically presented as follows :

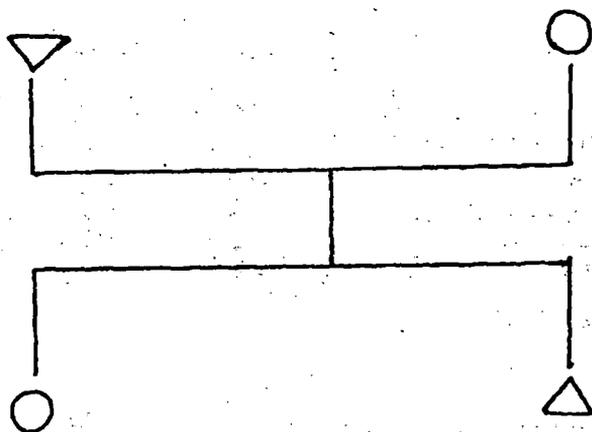


Diagram 5.1: Genealogy of nuclear family

**Table 5.2: Distribution of nuclear family based on cause of formation**

Cause of formation	Number of families	Percentage to total nuclear families	Percentage to total families
By separation of spouses from netal houses after love marriage	131	61.79	45.17
By separation of spouses from netal houses after Samakachangte	54	25.47	18.62
Due to death of the parents of spouses	27	12.74	9.31
Total	212	100.00	73.10

### **Extended family**

Among the Molsoms an extended family may be described as the combination of more than one nuclear families and is formed through marriage of its member or members. Thus a nuclear family may become an extended family through marriage of a son or daughter or both son and daughter. It may be pointed out that the extended family through marriage of a daughter is formed due to the existing system of *smackachangte* where a husband stays, for a prefixed period, with his father-in-law's family after marriage; and a family becomes extended through a son when, the son with his wife and children, if any, reside with his parents after *smackachangte* or love marriage. And when these two

cases occur simultaneously it takes the shape of an extended family through both son and daughter. In our sample villages a total of 60 families are found to be of the extended type, of which 66.67 percent are formed due to the marriage of the son, 25.00 percent through marriage of the daughter and 08.33 percent through the marriage of both son and daughter.

**Table : 5.3: Distribution of the extended families based on causes of formation**

<b>Cause of formation</b>	<b>Number of families</b>	<b>Percentage to the total extended families</b>	<b>Percentage to the total families</b>
Due to marriage of son	40	66.67	13.79
Due to marriage of daughter	15	25.00	05.17
Due to marriage of both son and daughter	5	08.33	01.72
Total	60	100.00	20.68

The genealogical structure of these type of extended families may be diagrammatically presented as follows :

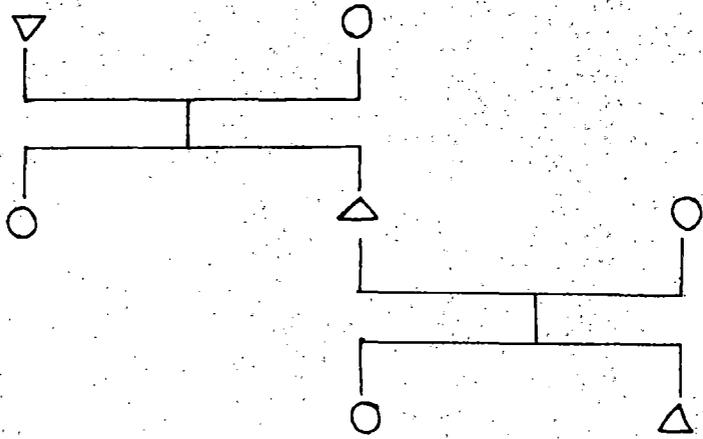


Diagram: 5.2: Extended through son type of extended family

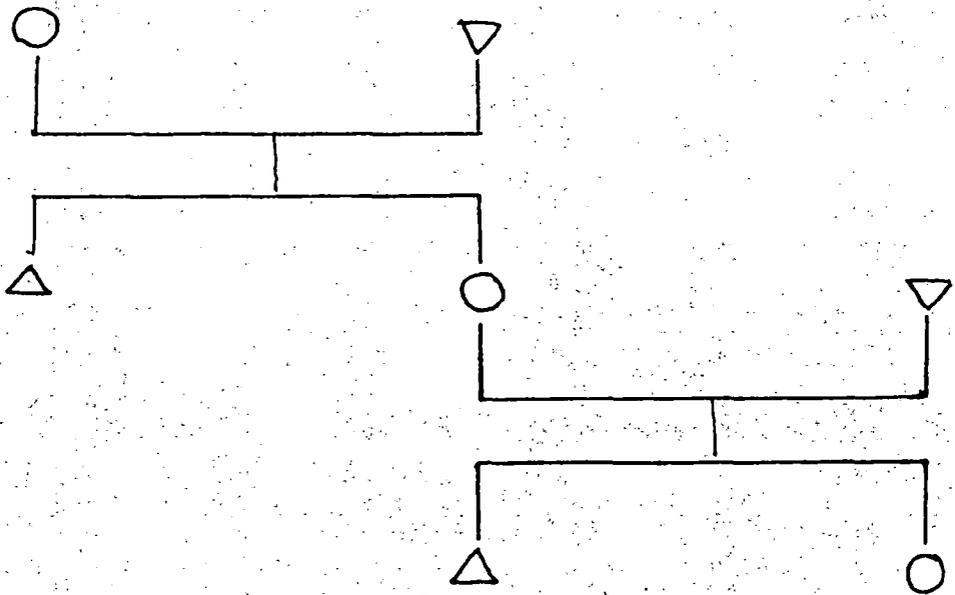
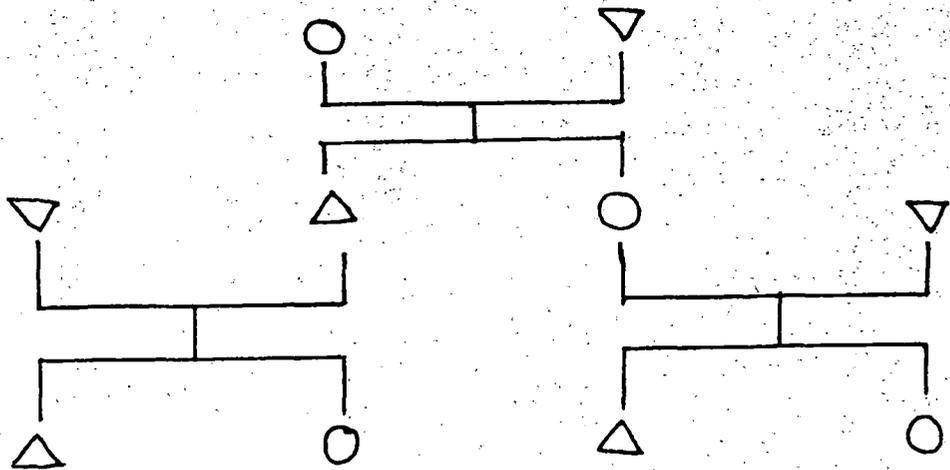


Diagram 5.3 : Extended through daughter type of extended family



**Diagram 5.4: Extended through both son & daughter type of extended family**

### **Other types of family**

Besides nuclear and extended families described above, there are some families found in our sample villages which have been formed under some special circumstances and are discussed under the heading "other type". Three such types have been found so far. In the first type an unmarried daughter is found living with the nuclear family of her brother (27.78 % to total other type family) ; in the second type an widower is found living with his married daughter (22.22 % to total other type family) ; and in the third type an widow is seen living with her married daughter(50.00 % to total other type family).

**Table 5.4: Distribution of other type of families based on cause of formation**

<b>Cause of formation</b>	<b>Number of families</b>	<b>Percentage to total other type family</b>	<b>Percentage to total family</b>
Un-married daughter with her elder brother's nuclear family	5	27.78	01.56
Widower with daughter's			

nuclear family	4	22.22	01.25
Widow with daughter's nuclear family	9	50.00	02.81
Total	18	100.00	05.62

Regarding the Molsom families it may be said that for a certain period every family has a chance to be shaped taken as a nuclear or an extended family. A nuclear family, for instance, consists of husband, wife and their children—son and daughter. Now after the social marriage of a daughter, this family has a chance to become an extended family for the period of *smackachangte* of the son-in-law; it would take the shape of another type of extended family if the son of this family along with his wife resides with the parents after the completion of *smackachangte* or after love marriage; and a third type of extended family may emerge if the two cases mentioned above occur simultaneously. The change of a Molsom nuclear family into various types of extended families may be

diagrammatically presented as below :

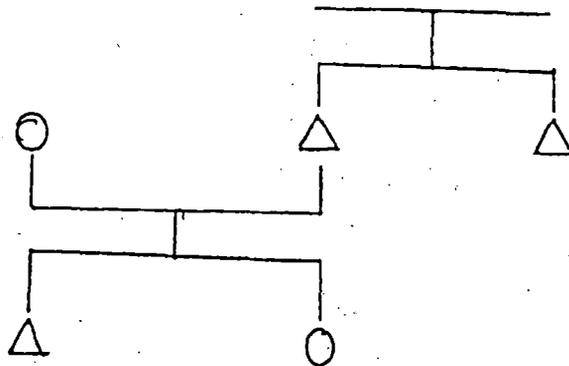
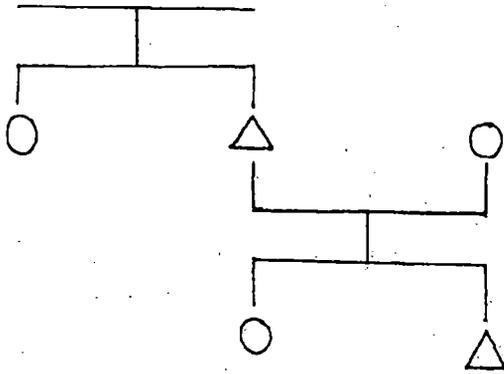
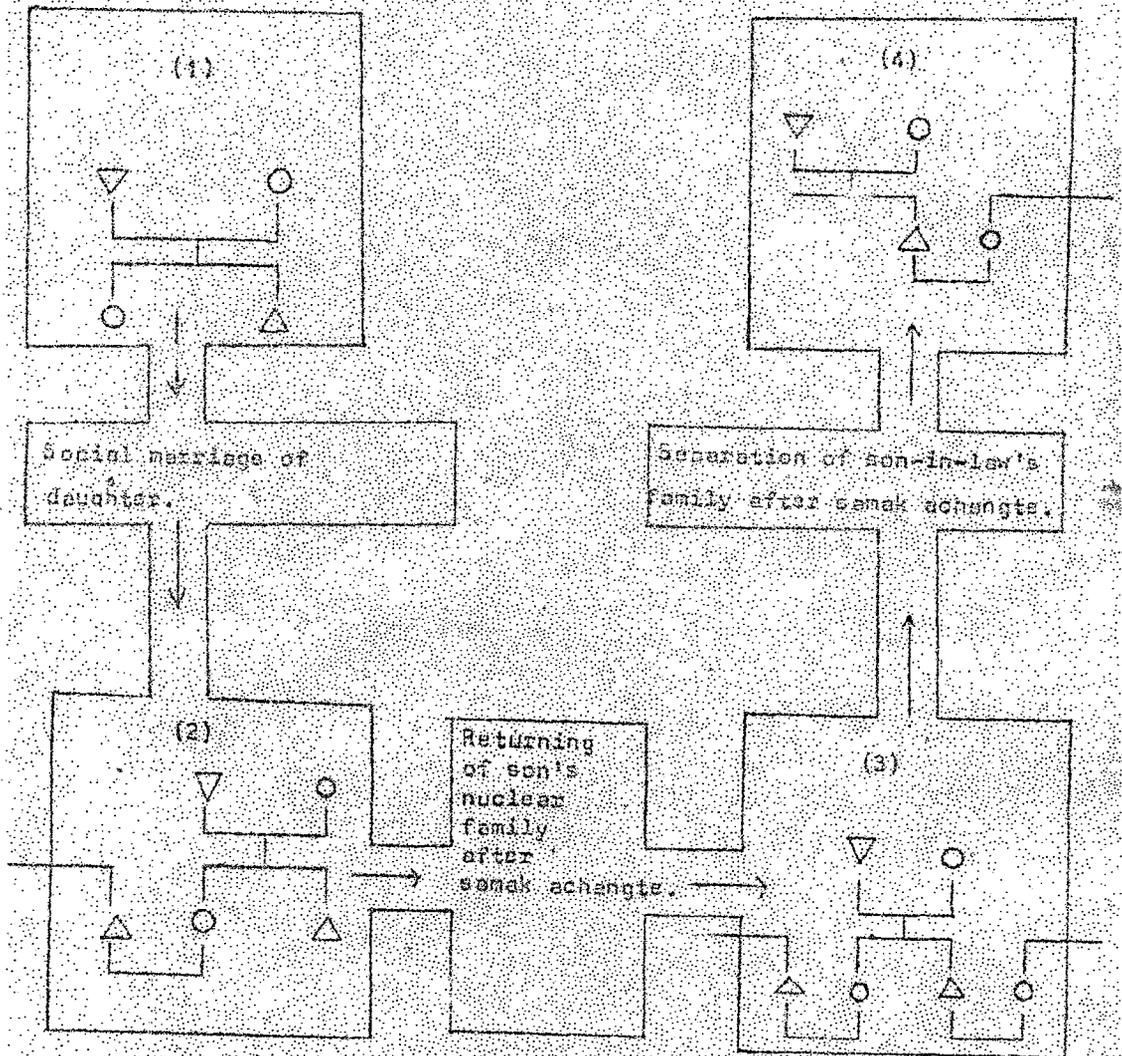


Diagram 5.5,5.6 : Other type of family (an un-married brother staying with his elder brother's nuclear family and an un-married sister staying with her elder brother's nuclear family).

The process of transformation of a nuclear family into an extended family by both son and daughter can be illustrated with the help of a case-study. Bishnu Bhakta Molsom of Manithang Bari was residing in a new house in his original village, along with his wife and children, after the completion of *samakachangte*. At that time he had one son and a daughter. Thus it was a

nuclear family. After some time his daughter was married to Sukh Lal Molsom of the same village and, as per the pre-condition, Sukh Lal had been residing in his father-in-law's house for nine years. During that period the family of Bishnu Bhakta was an extended through daughter type of extended family. His son also married one Rupaiti Molsom of the same village and was residing with his father-in-law's family for the completion of *samakachanhte* for three years. Kaidin Bhakta returned to his father's house after three years, after completion of *samakachangte*. During that period the family of Bishnu Bhakta took the shape of an extended through both son and daughter. During the fieldwork, I observed that Bishnu Bhakta's family was an extended family through both son and daughter as Shuklal had been, with his wife and two children, residing in his father-in-law's house since for him the period of the *samakachangte* was yet to be complete.

Diagram - 6



Diagrammatic representation of changes of conversion of a Molsom family in four major types.

( 1 : Nuclear family; 2: Extended through daughter type of extended family; 3: Extended through both son and daughter type of extended family and 4: Extended through son type of extended family ).

Symbols used :  $\square$  = Marriage-bond;  $\square$  = Sibling-bond;  
 $\nabla$  = Male;  $\circ$  = Female.

Diagram 5.7 : conversion of Molsom family in various type

Nowadays, the preference of the Molsoms is shifting towards the nuclear and extended-through-son type of families. This is because of the higher incidence of love marriage, preference of spouses to reside in neolocal house and reduction in the period of *smackachangte* due to which a son or son-in-law returns to his parents house or from a neolocal house. Earlier when the period of *smackachangte* was of longer duration, there was every possibility that the son-in-law had to continue to reside with the family of his father-in-law. In our sample villages as many as 73.75 percent of the families are nuclear and 13.12 percent are of extended-through-son type.

### **Kinship**

As kinship is the product of family and a family begins through marriage, the Molsoms kinship may be divided into marriageable and non-marriageable categories. According to the Molsom marriage rules, a male cannot marry his father's youngest sister's daughter and a female cannot marry her mother's elder brother's son. Marriage is permissible among all other kin of the same generation.

Thus a friendly, brotherly and sisterly relation prevail among the same generation kin and accordingly a few kinship terms are in existence to address these kin. Other non-marriageable relatives consist of the members of one's elder and younger generations. The major kinship terms and a list of respective relations covering four generations namely, one's own generation, parent's generation, grand parent's generation and children's generation are cited below :

**Table 5.5: Relationship and kinship terms covering four generations.**

Relationship	Kinship terms
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
A. Elder male members of one's same generations :	
1. Elder sib brothers	
2. Father's brother's sons	
3. Father's sister's sons	
4. Mother's brother's sons	
5. Mother's sister's sons and all such others	<b>Kudod</b>
B. Elder female members of one's same generations :	
1. Elder sib sisters,	
2. Father's brother's daughters,	
3. Father's sister's daughters,	
4. Mother's brother's daughter's,	
5. Mother's sister's daughters and all such other	<b>Yeite</b>
C. Younger male members of one's generation	
1. Younger sib brothers,	
2. Father's brother's sons,	
3. Father's sister's sons,	
4. Mother's brother's sons,	
5. Mother's sister's sons and all such others	<b>Nupa</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
D. Younger female members of one's same generation :	
1. Younger sib sisters,	
2. Father's brother's daughters,	
3. Father's sister's daughters,	

4. Mother's brother's daughters,	
5. Mother's sister's daughters and all such other	<i>Naunu</i>
E. Husband,	<i>Lompa</i>
F. Elder sister's husband,	<i>Upa</i>
G. Younger sister's husband and	
Wife's elder brother :	<i>Waipa</i>
H. Wife	<i>Nupui</i>
I. Elder brother's wife	<i>Unu</i>
J. Younger brother's wife and wife's elder brothers :	<i>Wainu</i>
K Wife's younger sister	<i>Palarangnu</i>
L. Wife's younger brother	<i>Palarangpa</i>
<b>Kinship terms of one's parent's Generation</b>	
M. Father,	
1. Wife's father,	
2. Husband's father	<i>Kupa</i>
N. Mother,	
1. Wife's mother,	
2. Husband's mother	<i>Kunu</i>
Relationship	<i>Kinship terms</i>
O. Mother's elder brothers,	
1. Father's elder brothers	<i>Kapater</i>
P. Mother's younger brothers	<i>Kanasa or Kungpa</i>
Q. Father's younger brothers	<i>Kupungak</i>
R. Father's elder's sisters,	
1. Mother's elder's sisters,	
2. Mother's younger sisters	<i>Kupuitter</i>

S. Father's younger sisters	<i>Kini</i>
T. Father's sister's Husbands (elder & younger)	
1. Mother's sister's husbands (elder & younger)	<i>Kumrang</i>
<b>Kinship terms of one's grand parent's generation.</b>	
U. All male members of one's father's father's generation,	
2. All male members of one's mother's father's generation	<i>Pu</i>
V. All female members of one's father's mother's generation,	
2. All female members of one's mother's mother's generation.	<i>Pi</i>
<b>Kinship terms of one's children's generation</b>	
W. Son	<i>Kosapo</i>
X. Daughter	<i>Kosanu</i>
Y. All male members of one's children's generation	<i>Sapo</i>
Z. All female members of one's children's generation	<i>Sanu</i>

### **Interrelationship among the kin**

The interaction pattern among the Molsom is largely guided by their marriage rules. The behavioural pattern among those who are marriageable and those who are not could be differentiated. The members

of the same generation mix among themselves freely. While mixing with the members of opposite sex, the use of jokes and, at times, sex related talks are common. A joking relation is also permissible with one's brother's wife and sister's husband. Among the people of the same sex the code of expected conduct is friendly and, at the same time, brotherly or sisterly. At times, especially when a number of young males court a common girl in *leang*, some rivalry may develop, but that does not last long and ultimately friendly relation prevails. During customary rites of thread wearing and puberty initiation namely *takbrokmi*, *punmizel* and *risabomb*, the free relation among the opposite sexes of the same generation takes a ceremonial shape. The joking relations with one's sister's husband and brother's wife help socialisation especially regarding sex knowledge and sex-life. The members among whom marriage is tabooed behave with each other as brothers and sisters. They are not permitted to attend *leang*, thread wearing and puberty initiation rites of their brother or sister's kin.



Molsom women of two generations—grand-mother & grand-daughter

All members of one's parent's generation, both of father's and mother's side, are respected as parents and the behavioral code is like that of parent-child relationship. The members of this generation act as agents of socialisation in all spheres of life for the kin of their children's generation. The behavioural patterns with the members of one's grand parent's generation is of affection and joke from the grand parent's side and respect and joke from the grand children's side.

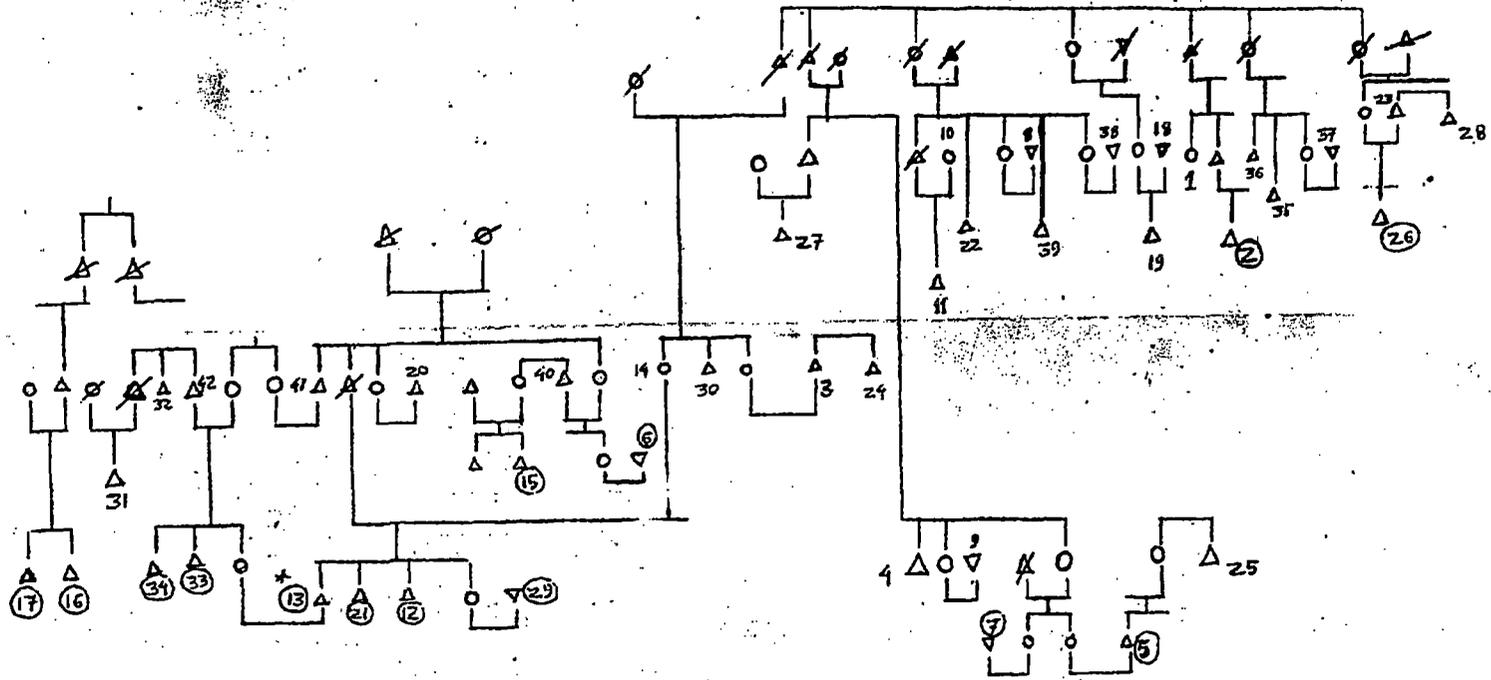
All members of a Molsoms village, in one way or the other, are related to one another and in most of the cases overlapping of many relations occurs. Such overlapping of relations takes place due to occurrence of marriage among a wide range of kin especially of the same village. The relationships among the members of Kalabon Molsom Bari are presented in the latter portion of this chapter. Such an exercise will show how all the families of a village are related by kinship ties.

In Kalabon Molsom Bari, it has found that out of a total of 42 households only six family-heads were married outside the village and the remaining 36 family-heads got married to the members of the same village. In the table given below a marriage chart stating the nearest matrimonial relations of the family-heads who married within the village, is worked out. For the convenience of preparing this chart, we made numbering of all the households serially. The last household on the right side ( from the entrance of the village ) has been marked as number one and then other households have been numbered serially up to the last household on the left side ( from the entrance of the village ). After that the relationship, especially the nearest marital relation of a family head with the other family heads are traced and represented in the table placed below. Besides, we have also worked out diagrammatically a relation-structure based on the relationships which are in existence among the members of the Kalabon Molsom Bari. The head of the household number 13 is taken as our ego.

			brother's son's son's wife	<i>Kini</i>
11.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's son's son	<i>Kudod</i>
12.	M	Jr.	Sib brother	<i>Naupa</i>
13.	M	Self	ego	---
14.	F	Sr.	Mother	<i>Tarpi</i>
15.	F	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's daughter	<i>Naunu</i>
16.	M	Jr.	Wife's father's father's brother's son's son	<i>Naupa</i>
17.	M	Sr.	Wife's father's father's brother's son's son	<i>Kudod</i>
18.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's daughter's husband	<i>Kumrang</i>
19.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's daughter's son	<i>Kudod</i>
20.	M	Sr.	Father's sister's husband	<i>Kumrang</i>
21.	M	Jr.	Younger sib brother	<i>Naupu</i>
22.	M	Se	Mother's father's brother's son	<i>Kamasa</i>
23.	M	Sr.	Mother's sister's husband	<i>Kumrang</i>
24.	M	Sr.	Mother's sister's husband's brother	<i>Kumrang</i>
25.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's daughter's daughter's husband's mother's brother	<i>Kamasa</i>
26.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's daughter's	<i>Kamasa</i>

			son	
27.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's daughter's husband	<b>Kumrang</b>
28.	M.	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's daughter's husband's brother	<b>Kamasa</b>
29.	M	Jr.	Sib sister's husband	<b>Waipa</b>
30.	M	Sr.	Mother's younger brother	<b>Kamasa</b>
31.	M	Jr.	Wife's father's brother's son	<b>Naupa</b>
32.	M	Sr.	Wife's father's brother	<b>Tarpa</b>
33.	M	Sr.	Wife's elder brother	<b>Kudod</b>
34.	M	Sr.	Wife's elder brother	<b>Kudod</b>
35.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's son	<b>Kamasa</b>
36.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's elder son	<b>Kapater</b>
37.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's sister's husband	<b>Kumrang</b>
38	M	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's daughter's husband	<b>Kumrang</b>
39.	M	Sr.	Mother's father's brother's son	<b>Kapater</b>
40.	M	Sr.	Father's sister's husband	<b>Kumrang</b>
41.	M	Sr.	Father's brother	<b>Kapater</b>
42.	F	Sr.	Father's brother's wife's sister	<b>Kuiputer</b>

Diagram - 7



Genealogy of the inmates of the Kalabon Molsombari:

Symbol used :  $\square$  = Marriage-bond;  $\text{---}$  = Sibling-bond;  $\nabla$  = Male;  $\circ$  = Female;  $\nabla/$  or  $/$  = Dead;  
 Encircled household number = member of ego's same generation; Open household number = member of ego's parent's generation; \* = Ego (household number 13).

Thus a Molsom village is self-sufficient so far as the supply of brides and bride-grooms is concerned. A Molsom child, as a consequence, is diversely related to the kin of his or her father's and mother's side. Such self-sufficiency in marriage place and diversity in relations occur, as stated earlier, due to wide range of marriageable relatives especially within one's own generation. In Kalabon Molsom Bari, for instance, the family head of the household number 41 is ego's father's brother who is also ego's wife's mother's sister's husband (see the diagram showing village genealogy). So far as the kinship terminology is concerned, the head of the household number 41 is ego's *kapater* if the relation is considered through ego's father's side. But that person is ego's *kumrang* also if the relation is considered through his wife's side.

### The clan

The Molsoms are divided into twelve clans. In Molsom dialect clan is known as *punchi*. The names of these clans are *singer*, *mapu*, *lengman*, *uisha*, *achep*, *nompor*, *lungthung' nokham*, *tuisung* and *ronte*. Every clan has one head-man called *pungifang*. These clans are not totemic. The villagers are not able to trace the progenitor of their clans. However, they believe that the names of these clans originated due to some special work-activities of the head of these clans. These clans are neither exogamous nor endogamous—selection of mate, for marriage, is open among the members of all clans. The children inherit the clan of their father and the clan of a women remains unchanged after marriage. There is a belief prevailing among the Molsoms regarding the origin of the names of

these clans which is stated below:

In Arshiemkhosak of Bolpuitang, as per their hearsay, the Molsoms had been residing on twelve adjacent villages. The dwellers of each settlement area were under the supervision of a headman who maintained solidarity among the dwellers and made liaison with the *kamchikao*, *suprai* and other leaders of the community for maintaining the affairs and problems of the people of respective settlement.

In course of time, those twelve villages had merged into one due to extension of homestead areas of every village as a result of increase of population. This sort of merger had created some problems in identifying the people in terms of their village and their separate headman. To solve this problem the *kamchikao* and *suprai* decided to give a name to each of the settlement heads on the basis of the type of works he had done during the day time on a particular day.

One evening, they called all the heads of the twelve settlements to a meeting at the house of *suprai* and asked about the type of work they had performed during the day time. Accordingly, the twelve heads reported their deeds one by one and *kamchikao* and *suprai* gave a name to each of the respective heads by which the other people of their settlement were identified. The head of one village reported that he had repaired a supporting pillar of his house locally known as *deo*. And thus that headman and the people of his village were named *deorai*. Another head told that he had done nothing but eaten chicken and drunk *zukola*. That head and his village people, thus, were named *singer* owing to the fact that a wild cat which is in Molsoms known as *singer* does nothing but eat flesh. The third head said that he and other adult members of his family had cleared the jungles surrounding their house. That head and all people of his village were named *mapu*. In Molsom *ma* means courtyard and *pu* means large. The head of the fourth village reported that he had

attended some of the *leangs*, the evening gossips. Therefore he and his village people were named *leangman*. In Molsom *leang* means the evening gossip of the young males and females. The fifth village head informed that he, along with other people of his village, had eaten the flesh of a dog mistaking it a deer, which had incidentally been burnt in *jhum*-fire. The head and other people of the village therefore were named *uisha*. In Molsom *ui* means a dog and *ashak* means to eat. The head of the sixth village reported that during the day he had punished a person of his village who had done some unfair deeds. In Molsom, punishment is known as *ron*. Therefore the village head and his people were named *ronte*, that is, the person who impose punishment. The head of the seventh village reported that he, along with some youths had constructed round their village a boundary-wall of bamboo with pointed end. That head and his village people were named *sungfun*. In Molsom *sung* means pointed end and *phun* means sharp. The head of the eighth village reported that he had made a hearth on the floor of his dwelling house. That head and his village people were named *lungthung* as in Molsom, a hearth is called *lungthung*. The leader of the ninth village said that he, along with youths of his village, had been detained by the people of a neighbouring village who doubted that they had burnt down some of their houses, although they were not the actual culprits. The people of that village had pinched them as a form of punishment and after that they were released. The people of that village and their head were named *achep*. In Molsom *achep* means pinching. The head of the tenth village reported that he had taken his launch on an unclean leaf. He with his village people were named *nompör*. In Molsom *nom* means leaf and *por* means unclean. The head of the eleventh village said that he, along with some youths of his village, had burnt the house of a person to teach him a lesson, for the man had done some unfair deeds. The people of that village and their head were named as *nokham* in Molsom *nokham* refers to a person who burns house. The head of the twelfth village reported that he had supplied water to the

house of the *kamchikao*. He and other people of his village were named *tuisung*. In Molsom *tui* means water and *sung* means to supply.

Thus we find that names of the clans among the Molsoms are in clear departure from the practices followed by other tribes, based on activities and not after some gods and goddesses who might have been worshipped in ancient days or based on some other totemic things.

Besides the stories narrated above, we do not have any other sources from which the origin of the names of the Molsom clans could be ascertained.