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1.1: Location and Geographical Features of Doya Habitat

The Doyas live in two physically separate hills in the southwestern district of Bhutan, called Samchi, bordering Sikkim in the west and *Jalpaiguri* district of West Bengal in India to the south. Road communication to Samchi district is only from the Indian side. The Indian National Highway No. 31 and the North-Eastern Frontier Rail way lines run parallel to the borderline between India and Bhutan providing basic communication to all the southern districts of Bhutan. The nearest approach to Samchi on this national highway is at Banarhat, which is at

12 km from the District headquarters. There are local taxis and bus services to go to Samchi via a market called the *Chamurchi* on the Indian side. There is a regular road communication between Samchi and Phuntsholing – a commercial town and the main Gateway to Bhutan from India. There are also regular bus services between Phuntsholing and *Siliguri* – a commercial center also known as the Gateway to the India's northeast. Phuntsholing is under another southern district of Bhutan called *Chuka* neighboring Samchi district on the eastern side.

Samchi is also a hill district gradually rising to a height of 3000 to 3500 ft. approximately, from the Tea gardens in the Duar plains bordering India. The district has basically no road communication except for a stretch of 42 km of black top road running parallel to Indian borderline. This road connects the district H.Q Samchi with another sub-division called Sipsoo located along the Bhutan foothills in the extreme southwestern corner of the district. All communication inside the district is done on foot and ponies.

The biggest river that passes through the interior hills of Samchi district is called AmMochhu originating from the Tibet region in the north. It cuts across Samchi southeasterly and flows down to India as Toorsa from Phuntsholing town (Map – 0.2). The river flows very swiftly and is shallow in Bhutan. There are several other small river and streams like *Jaldhaka* – originating from Sikkim hills, *Jiti* and *Damti* (Chamurchi Khola in India) originating from a large watershed in Samchi hills that drains out into the Indian side in the south (Map - 1.1). The two Doya settlements under Dorokha *Dungkhag* (subdivision) in Samchi district are located on either side of AmMochhu (also called *Moti* by the Doyas) on the hill slopes. One settlement on the southern side of the river is called Lotukuchu located in the interior hills and the other called is Taba – Ramteykha¹⁰ located near Phuntsholing town. Lotukuchu is approximately at a distance of 30-35 km from Samchi headquarters and 15 km from the Dorokha *Dungkhag*. To go to Lotukuchu one has to start on foot right from the district headquarters, walk along

¹⁰ Taba-Ramteykha was previously under the Chukha district administration but later in the year 1990 it was put together with Lotukuchu group under the jurisdiction of Samchi district administration.

Map-1.1 Samchi District showing Doya Settlement Areas.



the Damti river cutting across it several times for about a distance of 15 km and finally climb on the hills to a height of 3000 m walking along a further stretch of 15 –20 km. Another path breaks away from this route at a place called *Sang-guri*, 6 km short of reaching Lotukuchu, leading to the Dorokha sub divisional headquarters towards the north direction. The other path continues along shoulder and ridges of hill ranges in the southern direction to finally reach Lotukuchu. It usually takes 7-8 hours of walk to reach Lotukuchu and 8-9 hours of walk to reach Dorokha headquarters from 0 km Samchi.

Taba-Ramteykha is easily approached from Phuntsholing town on foot. Taba and Ramteykha are two separate settlements. Taba is located at the AmMochhu riverbank on the foothills at a distance of 10-12 km from Phuntsholing. Ramteykha is located on the hills along the river at an altitude of about 1500 ft approximately. It is at a distance of about 20 km from Phuntsholing. One can also go to Taba-Ramteykha from Lotukuchu on foot but the path is rather difficult and dangerous. The distance between the two settlements is 35-40 km approximately, taking minimum nine hours of trekking along the river AmMochhu, crossing over number of ridges of *Panbari* hills before finally entering Taba after crossing the turbulent river on a raft. Ramteykha is another 6 km walk on the hills. *Totopara*, the village where the Totos reside in West Bengal, India, is located along the Indian border at a distance of 12-15 km from Taba.

The interior parts of the Dorokha subdivision can be physically divided into four main hills Dorokha proper, Denchukha, Sengten and Panbari hills. River and streams separate them. Dorokha , Sengten and Panbari hills are on the southwestern side of AmMochhu river and Denchukha is on the northeastern side. Dorokha being the sub divisional headquarters has the characters of a small township with School, Health infrastructures and facilities, Forest, Agriculture and Animal Husbandry out posts, Post office, Monastery, Government Quarters and market. Large areas of hilltop on the Dorokha hills still have good forest cover.

The Dogapas who are originally from the Ha district in the northern part of Bhutan are permanently settled in a large community near the Dorokha headquarters. Besides, there are Bahuns, Chhetris, Gurungs and Rais – all subgroups of the great Nepali society - spread over the hill slopes all over the sub division.

The Denchukha hills are along the northern side of AmMochhu. It is a large single hill range running southeasterly. Top part of the hill still has thick forest cover with wild life. Denchukha is connected to Dorokha and Samchi by only a hanging suspension bridge¹¹ down below the Dorokha headquarters. The hill slopes of Denchukha facing south is inhabited by several communities of the Nepalis and Lepchas. The historical relics¹² of the Doyas are still present under thick cover of bushes in the midst of the Lepcha settlement area. Denchukha has a Primary school and a Basic Health Unit.

The Sengten hills consist of several contiguous hillocks separated by a number of small streams. AmMochhu separates it from Denchukha in the north, from Dorokha by *Kamti* stream in the west and from Panbari hills by *Yeti* stream in the east. All these streams and several other small ones flow down the Sengten hills and join the AmMochhu. Sengten is becoming an important place next to Dorokha. It has a permanent double-store school building with large playground, Basic Health Unit services and facilities and few shops on the hilltop. The school also represents the administration at times for the development concerns of the Doyas.

Across the Yeti stream in the eastern side is another range of hills south of AmMochhu bordering India, which may be called as the Panbari hills. Large villages of the Nepalese called Panbari and *Lapchakha* inhabit it. On the foothill

¹¹ This bridge provides a very important communication link for the migratory people of the district and it used to be an important trade route also for Paro Penlop in earlier times.

¹² Doyas generally refrain from going to Denchukha to visit their historical relics as though it is a forbidden place for them. One reason they said whenever I asked for their company to visit the place was that in 1980s one Doya man from Satakha died mysteriously right back home after he ventured to visit the place.

side bordering India, the *Penden* Cement Factory of Bhutan is located at a place called *Gomtu*. It has all the social services infrastructures, communication facilities and a market.

1.1.1 Settlement Pattern

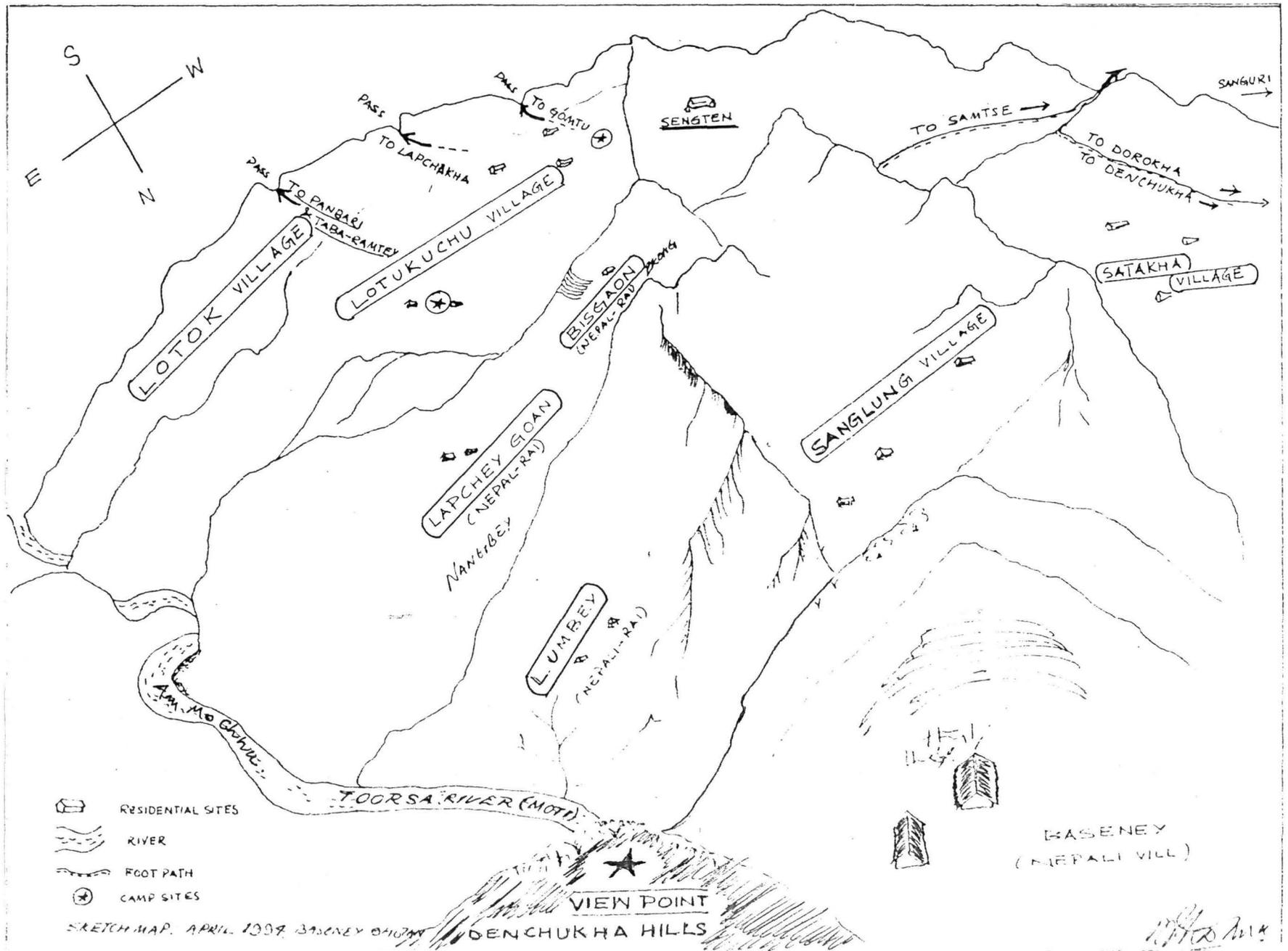
The whole of existing Doya settlement area is confined within the inner side of Sengten hills facing the AmMochhu (Moti) river in the north, *Kamti* and *Yeti* streams in the west and east respectively. Lotukuchu is a group of 5 distinct residential territories spread over the hill slopes below Sengten down to the Moti riverbank. There are also three Rai villages called Bisgaon, Lapcheygaon and Lumbey situated in a column from top down to the bank to AmMochhu intervening between the two Doya residential territories (Map – 1.2). The present locations of Doya community would comprise a very little space of what their folklore has to say about the expanse of their territorial area in the past¹³. The geographical region where these two communities can be located is approximately around the intersection point of 27°. 2' north and 87°. 1' east. The region lies at the junction of Sub-Himalayan foothills and Inner Himalayan zone at an elevation of about 3500 feet. Many streams and rivulets draining through the habitation slopes join AmMochhu at the foothills. The climate is moderately cool throughout the year. Average temperature does not exceed 20°C. Cold and dry season is very short. Wet season is longer with high humidity. Maximum average rainfall of 1600 mm has been recorded during my stay in June-July, 1992-93 at the school premises.

The region is covered with evergreen tropical forests. Varieties of broad-leafed trees, sal, bushes, shrubs and Savannah grasses grow. Many species of animals like rhesus monkeys, variety of rodents, squirrels, snakes and pythons, barking deer, wolf, wild cats, boar and jaguar live here. The region is abounding with

¹³ Elders narrates about their territory in the past like this – *Tangpu tangpu la rang k a pon Mih ya-an. Tangpu tangpu la jang Salela nang Lhop Jalpaiguri tuk-tuk, sar Seti chio nang Nup Jiti chio tuk-tuk Lhopu ka ewui ka Mih ya-an* : Long long ago we had our own king. Lhopu villages were located in the vast territory extending between the first snowline in the north and Jalpaiguri in the south, between Jaldhaka River in the west and *Seti* River in the east.

Map-1.2

Sengten Hills showing Doya Residential Territories.



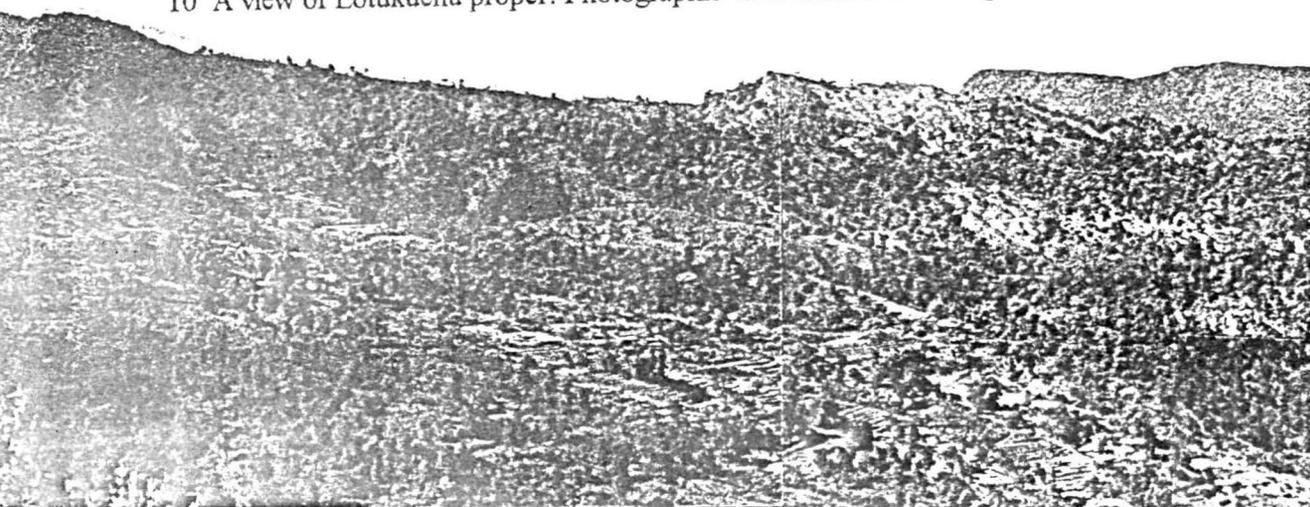
unavoidable variety of leeches. Tiger, leopard and bear do not live here anymore. Folktales reveal that once upon a time giant creatures otherwise of the form of human beings called '*Mihgoe*' lived there.

Most part of the habitat land is of uneven, stony and sloping hill surfaces. There are very few areas where terrace fields can be developed. Soil is loamy and black and acidic but once the vegetation is removed the soil fertility loses very fast. The relative difference in the temperature between the upper hill and lower hill slopes, along the AmMochhu River allows cultivation of different crops continuously within a seasonal cycle at different places. Most of shifting fields are also located in the upper and lower slopes. Land in the Upper regions where most of the residential sites are located is not as fertile as the lower foothills. Most of the permanent terrace cultivation fields are developed in the middle and lower parts of the slopes. Orange orchards abound in the lower hill slopes where relatively hot and humid climatic conditions prevail. Most of the cardamom fields are located along sides of streams in the upper part of the hills.

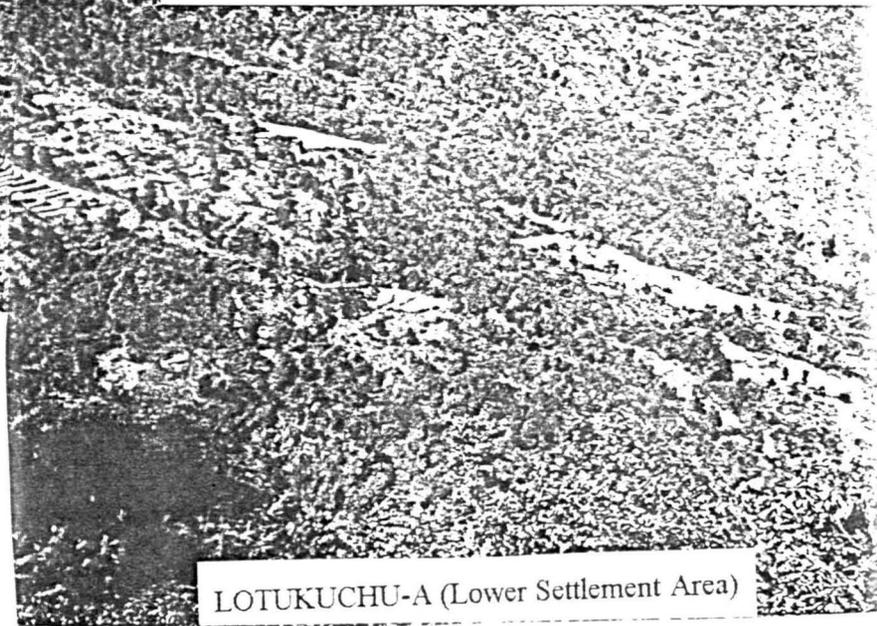
Lotukuchu is a group of three physically separate residential territories namely (starting from the west end side of the hill slope) Satakha, Sanglung and Lotukuchu proper with its extension village Lotok (Map-1.2). Lotukuchu is the biggest village of all. It has upper and lower divisions (Plate-10). There are therefore, 5 administrative units of residential territories each under a Karbari (Head of a village in Nepali). All these villages are taken here as Lotukuchu group of villages for our social analysis in juxtaposition to Taba-Ramteykha group of villages consisting of two separate villages for the purpose of the present study.

Lotukuchu group of villages is organised in five administrative units, which seems to be matching with their social and territorial sub-grouping within their social and territorial boundary. The five administrative units are (starting from the western side) Satakha, Sanglung, Upper and Lower Lotukuchu (A & B) and Lotok the last residential area bordered by the Yeti stream in the eastern side. Satakha people

10 A view of Lotukuchu proper: Photographic view from eastern ridge



LOTUKUCHU-B (Upper Settlement Area)



LOTUKUCHU-A (Lower Settlement Area)

are known as *Satank* or sometimes *Danchat*¹⁴ and they live in the western extreme end of the residential area. People of Sanglung, the second largest residential territory are known as *Guchat* among themselves. A hill ridge sloping down the hill and corresponding a stream called *Kamchal* separates Sanglung from Satakha. On the western side of Sanglung residential territory there is a flattish ridge on the eastern side on which the three Rai villages are located separating Lotukuchu and Lotok from Sanglung and Satakha on the western side. There have been cases of inter-marriages between the Rais and Doyas.

Lotukuchu proper is the largest residential territory among the five. The residential area is spread over 1 km in width in the upper part of the hill slope and the whole area runs roughly 2 km from top to bottom on the hill slopes. Lower part of the settlement area towards the AmMochhu River has gentle slopes.

People of Lotukuchu are known as *Binchat* and further among themselves, people residing in the lower part of the village are known as *Leysant*¹⁵ and those in the upper part of the village are known as *Rosant*¹⁶. Further, people of Lotukuchu group of villages as a whole is known as *Gonkey* to Taba-Ramteykha group of Doyas, who in turn are known to the former as *Sarmi* (eastern dwellers). There is an antagonistic feeling apparent between the *Gonkey* and *Sarmi*¹⁷.

All these named groups seem to connote certain social categories also in relation to one another although they were basically territorial groupings. These groups have established intra and inter-territorial social relations among themselves and

¹⁴ *Danchat* is a social category among the Doyas meaning descendants of inter-marriages between Nepali and Doya. They are socially segregated from the rest of the society.

¹⁵ *Leysant* literally means residents of lower part of hills (*Ley* = lower/down, *sant* = residents/dwellers). This term is also taken as social category.

¹⁶ *Rosant* also means residents of upper part of hills (*Ro* = upper/up, *sant* = residents/dwellers). This is also taken as a social category.

¹⁷ The local elders told me that the *Gonkeys* and *Sarmis* had been serving different Penlops in earlier times as royal porters and labourers. And that whenever, *Gonkey* women happened to travel through the *Sarmis* villages they received maltreatments and in another couple of instances *Sarmi* women had forcibly taken *Gonkey* men for their husbands. An apparent distrust and mutual fear between the two groups of people were observed during my study also. The Doya children of Taba-Ramteykha who were brought to Sengten School never had friendly relation with the Lotukuchu children even when staying together in a common dormitory.

with others in their surroundings. Rai who live in their immediate neighbourhood are known as *Dan* or Danchat, Drukpas who are looked upon as superior as they are the ruling class of people are known to the Doyas as *Lhakey* and the same term is used for *Hapa*¹⁸ (people of Ha district in the north of Doyas) and Tibetans alike across the snow capped mountains in the north. They do not distinguish between the Tibetans, Drukpas and eastern dwellers *Sharcop*. Hawkers in the regular *Hatt* (weekly markets across the national border in the foothill plains) who are mostly Bengalis and *Biharis* are known to them as *Jaadan*, and they know tea garden labourers in the foothill plains as *Madesi* and others inhabiting the foothill plains of north western Duars of India are called *Lehdan* by them.

1.2: Physical Features and Demographic Situation

The Doyas are predominantly of the mongoloid stock by race although among them some Austric features are also noted. They are short and strong people. The average height of the people does not exceed 5 ft. Their skin colour varies from relatively dark to fair and their bodies have less hair, moustache and beard. Hair on their heads varies from straight to slightly curly type. However, many of the my close friends told me that their ancestors used to be tall fair and handsome like the Tibetans¹⁹

Taba-Ramteykha who were brought to Sengten School never had friendly relation with the Lotukuchu children even when staying together in a common dormitory.

¹⁸ *Hapa* are migratory pastoral people of Tibetan stock. They speak a corrupt form of the national language *Dzongkha*. They keep herds of cattle and fleets of horses and make seasonal migration towards the south foothills of Bhutan passing through Doya region during the winter season starting from Sept.-Oct. to April-May every year, from their cold habitats in the north of Bhutan.

¹⁹ My Doya friends often showed me Pa Tshering an old man aged 80+ years, which stands at 5.6ft. and has fair skin, broad shoulders as an example of Doya physical features in earlier times.

Total population of Doyas in 1992 approximately stood at 1720 that included 1100²⁰ heads for the Lotukuchu group of Doya villages residing in about 150 houses.

This figure hardly makes 0.137% of the 1.26 million²¹ people in Bhutan. However, if this figure is seen against what was reported in 1987 in the country's National Weekly,²² ... *total population of Doyas is little under 1000, ... with almost equal number of male and female ... in about 100 households.*

The, the population has shown a growth of about 100 heads per year over a period of 6 years, or else it may also mean that the report underestimated the Doya population. Until the year 1987 no population record of the people was publicly available. However local folktales have this to say that Doya population had a fluctuating trend in the past. It had its climax when their ancestors lived in vast areas of hills of the present Bhutan and adjacent plains of India.

That was perhaps, a time about 400 to 500 years ago. They say that Totos were also their people with whom they lost social contact ever since²³. What marginalised such a large population to a few hundreds now and confined them into small pockets in Bhutan? Investigation in this regard in the absence of any historical documents about these people is difficult proposition. Nevertheless, folktales reveal that a great decline in their population was due to war, flood and evil spells of supernatural powers such as Sun and Water²⁴, and that the present

²⁰ These figures were obtained through an interview with a Doya clerk working at the District Census Department, after 1990 National Census operation. These figures were cross checked and endorsed through my personal door-to-door survey in February and March 1992. However, detail analysis on demographic situation was done on a figure of 1069 heads from the Sengten Basic Health Unit.

²¹ 1988 population estimates. Source: *A Geography of Bhutan*, CTDD Department of Education, Royal Govt. of Bhutan.

²² *Kuensel*, July 25, 1987 vol. 2, No. 29, p5.

²³ Nepali people along the 'Jiti' khola (a stream in the western boundary) at *Pinjuli* and *Sipsoo* also corroborated the same story about the past of Doyas. They said that the Doyas were separated from the Totos after Indo-Bhutan boundary demarcation. This was recorded during my short posting at *Pinjuli Primary School* in 1995.

²⁴ People generally believe that evil spirits causes death and diseases. They say, "..... *at times their people were destroyed by Sun, at other times by evil spirits of Water at another time by a*

population of Doya is regeneration from the last survivors of the population downfall 5 *Mitchis*²⁵ ago.

Table-1.1 Population of Lotukuchu Group of Doyas

Sl.No.	Name of the villages	No. of Households	Total Males	Total Females	Total	Birth	Death
1	Lotukuchu-A	33	117	126	243	11	0
2	Lotukuchu-B	33	123	147	270	15	2
3	Lotok	18	72	67	139	8	1
4	Sanglung	30	126	156	282	15	1
5	Satakha	13	57	78	135	5	0
Total		127	495	574	1069	54	4
Average		25.4	99	114.8	213.8	10.8	.8
Percentage		-	46.3%	53.7%	-	-	-

* Sources: Sengten Basic Health Unit, Sengten.

The elders of the present generation ranging between 70 and 100 remember that in their young days there were just 9 houses of Doyas; 4 in Lotukuchu, 3 in Sanglung, only 2 in Satakha villages and no one settle at Lotok. The population of the whole Lotukuchu group of villages would have been much below 200 heads then, until 1900. If the base population is taken at 200 in 1900, the population has grown 5 times its initial strength over the years. However, the growth may not have been so smooth as we suppose, elders often talk about untold miseries of death and diseases and their general helplessness to counter the misfortunes. Birth rate may have been quite regular but high mortality rate

great epidemic." Basic Health Unit outpost sources at Sengten say that this region is endemic in dysentery and diarrhea.

²⁵ One *Mitchi* (*Pusta in Nepali*) is equivalent to time period of a persons lifetime which is roughly taken as a 100 years according to local standards of life expectancy. The time roughly coincides with second half of 19th century when British were enroute towards the northeastern frontiers of Bengal and Bhutan and in the course of which Bhutan was engaged in continuous war with the former over the occupation of the Duars. The population down fall of the Doyas is conspicuous by the absence of any mention about them in the historical records and travelogues of the British although, mentions are made of the Lepchas, Bhutias, Nepalese and Tibetans, etc.

must have resulted in slow and irregular growth rate in complete absence of medical facilities and faulty remedial practices pertaining to beliefs in supernatural forces. Until the year 1986 there was no medical facility available nearby to these people. A classified population record taken in 1990 for the Lotukuchu group of Doyas gives a total of 1069 head counts in a total of 127 household units which gives an average of 8 to 9 heads per household unit in the Lotukuchu group. Data available (Table – 1.1) shows that now, there are on an average 25 households in each residential territories. These territories have a minimum of 13 households in Satakha and a maximum of 33 households in A & B parts of Lotukuchu. It shows little higher average of female population in all the territorial groups except for Lotok. On the overall average, 8 females for every 7 males and 10 to 11 children born in each village against a total of 4 deaths recorded in the year 1990.

The excess of females seemed to have caused multiple marriages in the society ensuring a steady growth of population in the present generation²⁶. Although, there is no strict prohibition against multiple marriages it is definitely not encouraged in Doya society. There were about 10 cases of multiple marriages involving 2 to 3 females to single male(s) contributing a large number of offspring in the present generation, which also included inter-marriages with Nepali community.

Further, sex-break up analysis of the present population (Table – 1.2) reveals that out of the total 574 females in the population, 284(49.47%) were in reproductive age group (15-49 years), 218 were girls between age group of 0-14 years comprising of 37.97% and the rest 72 females (12.54%) included those who were above the reproductive age group, spinsters and imbeciles.

²⁶ Almost all the forefathers of the present generation had two to three wives when the population was just below 200 towards the end of 19th century. One such example is of a man called Pincho who lived in one of the two houses in Satakha. He married 3 wives including one Rai (Nepali migrant) woman. Descendants of these parents now make 66.6% of the total population (135) of Satakha (Table – 1.1) they often say people of *Satakha* or *Satank* are sons and daughters of Pincho-*ganpa* causing far reaching social consequences in the small society.

Table – 1.2. Population Sex Break up

Villages	Females			Males		
	Total	15& above	Girls	Total	15& above	Boys
Lotukuchu-A	126	76	50	117	80	37
Lotukuchu-B	147	97	50	123	94	29
Lotok	67	36	31	72	36	36
Sanglung	156	102	54	126	96	30
Satakha	78	42	36	57	47	10
Total	574	353□	221□	495	353	142
Average	114.8	70.6	44.2	99	70.6	28.4
Percentage	100%	61.5%	38.5%	100%	71.3%	28.7%

□ Females in reproductive age(15-49 yrs) is 284(353 – 284 = 69 are above 49 years and imbeciles).

□ Total girls (0-14 yrs) include 9 imbeciles. Therefore, the total number of normal girls is 218 and total number of females over reproductive age and imbeciles are (69 + 9) 72 females.

On the other hand, out of the total 495 males 353(71.31%) were adults (15-above years) and 142 (28.68%) were boys (0-14 years) including a minor group of imbeciles. It means that for every 4 females in the reproductive age group there were approximately 5 adult males that is contrary to the overall high ratio of 8 females to 7 males. This ratio in reproductive age group is again counter balanced in the first generation of 0-14 age group. There were 3 girls for every 2 boys for the following generation.

What possibility we can infer from this statistical analysis is males competing for females in the adult age group and, on the contrary, females competing for males in the subsequent younger generation of boys and girls.

But what actually occurred in the adult group did not quite follow the statistical prophecy. My own genealogical studies in 1992 among the Lotukuchu population recorded 280 women married against 260 men. It indicated that for every 14 married couples there was a man with two wives. This was quite in contrary to

the male-female ratio in the adult generation. The pattern of marriage alliances and the subsequent demographic situation out of the male-female ratio in the younger generation will also be subject to the marriage rules. However, it is still difficult to predict the pattern of marriage alliances in the next generation. It will suffice here to say that the demographic situation did not actually decide the reproductive pattern of a society but on the contrary, it was the social rules of marriageability that mattered.

Further, the village-wise demographic records (Table – 1.2) show different situation in different villages. It must be borne in mind before analysing that Lotukuchu-A (Lower) and B (Upper) are physically contiguous villages along the slope of a single hill although, there was an apparent social segregation between the two. Lotok is a horizontal extension of Upper Lotukuchu-(B).

The demographic situation in Lotukuchu-A (Lower) shows a total of 243 heads in 33 households. There was an excess of 9 females on the whole, but males outnumbered the females by 4 in the reproductive age group, while females outnumbered the males by 13 in the children group. The major difference was in the younger generation. Lotukuchu-B (Upper) shows a total of 270 heads in 33 households. It has an excess of 24 females to the total males with a marginal difference of just 3 females in the adult section of the population. The major difference was an excess of 21 girls against the total boys.

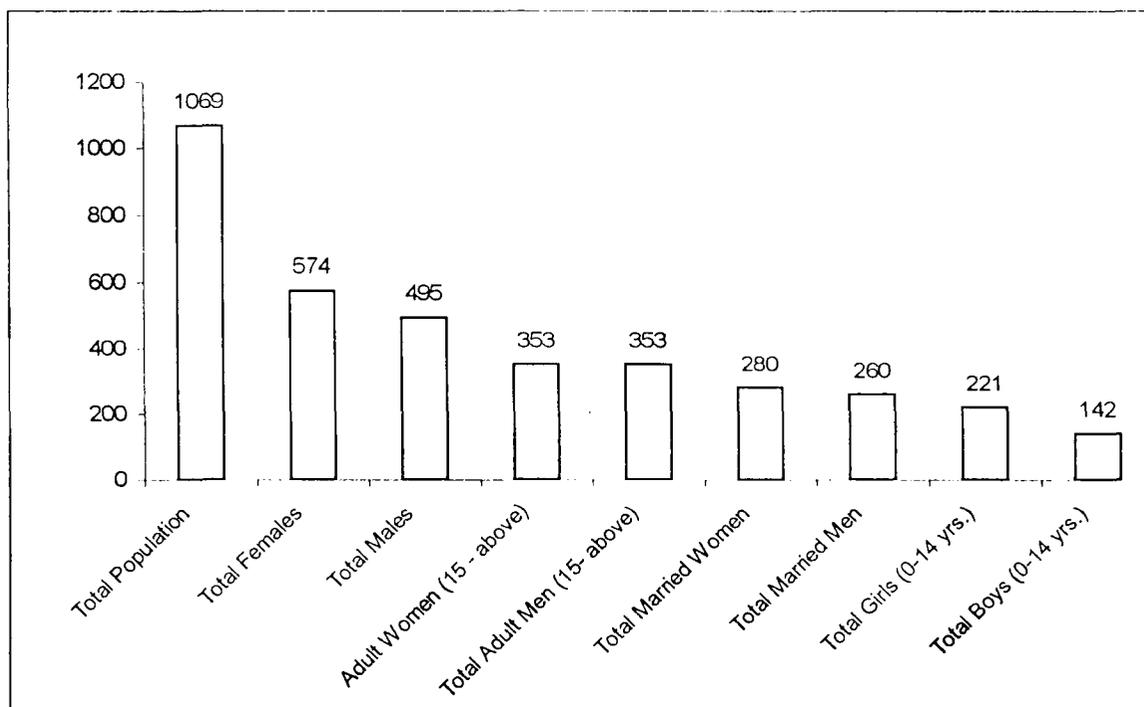
Lotok had a total of 139 heads in 18 households with minor difference of 5 females from the total males in the population. It had equal number of adults but had 4 excess boys to the girls in the younger generation.

Sanglung with a total of 282 heads in 30 households had an excess of 30 females on the whole. It had a minor difference of 6 excess females to the total males in the adult section and a major difference of 24 girls in excess among the younger section.

Lastly, Satakha village had a total population of 135 heads in 13 households. It had an excess of 21 females on the whole. There was an excess of 5 males in the adult section but an excess of 26 girls over the boys in the younger generation.

It may be mentioned here that the total excess of 4 males in lower Lotukuchu of the adult section may account for spinsters and old aged people, etc. The total excess of 9 males in Lotukuchu-A and Satakha and the total excess of 9 females in Lotukuchu-B and Sanglung in adult section of population may account for the minor portion of spinsters, bachelors and imbeciles. The present adult section of the population reproduced a very disproportionate sex ratio among the younger generation.

DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION OF THE DOYA



The excess of 79 girls to the total number of boys who were gradually entering into the active reproductive phase would decide the future demographic and social situation of the Doyas. Of course, if there was a significant difference in the age-specific death rates for males and females so that more females run the risk

of death as they approach the reproductive age group. The balance in the sex ratio would automatically be taken care of.

1.3: Doya Language

The Doya speak a language, which is different from that spoken by the Drukpas, Lepchas, Nepalese and the Sharcopas. Doya language is recognized as *Lhokpu* in a survey of languages in Bhutan carried out in 1993²⁷ *Lhokpu* belongs to the Eastern Himalayis of Bodic branch in the Tibeto-Burman group of languages. In this system of classification *Lhokpu* language is grouped together with that of Monpa, Lepcha, Rai and Newari languages (Appedix - III). The language spoken by the Drukpas that is Dzongkha or Zhungkha is put together with that of Tibetan, the Sharcokpa and the *Kheng* belonging to another sub-branch called the Tibeto-Kinauri under Bodic family in the Tibeto-Burman group of languages.

1.4: Houses

Houses are small and simple and built with *Ba-sing* (Bamboo), *Sing* (Wood logs), *Li-sing* (Cane and other creeper strings) and different varieties of leaves and grasses for roofing. Mud or clay is not used in house construction. Houses are single storey structures, mostly facing eastward depending upon the sloping directions of the hill slopes. Their houses have their own indigenous design, building techniques and aesthetic features. They are in tune and friendly with their natural environment as all the house-building materials are derived from their surrounding environment.

²⁷ George Van Driem, an Assistant Professor in the Linguistics Department of the University of Amsterdam who was appointed for linguistic studies by Royal Government of Bhutan. He visited Lotukuchu in April 1993 to do linguistic study of the place and identified the Doyas language as *Lhokpu* in a personal interview with him at the Sengten School.

Houses are rectangular in shape. The floor is half or fully rose from the sloping ground on a bamboo/wooden platform leaving a rough square area for the *Jikpu* (Fire place) on one side in the middle part of the house. The *Jikpu* is either placed on the sloping ground of the earth or is totally raised from the ground to the level of the floor with the help of earth and stone piles. The walls are made with broad bamboo strips. These traditional houses have no window as the rows of bamboo strips leave slit open spaces in between to facilitate adequate ventilation in the house in all seasons. The walls without plaster also allow a good watch outside from inside the house in daytime and moonlit nights. Anybody sitting inside the bamboo strip-walled houses can see what is happening outside the house but an outsider approaching the house would not see anything inside the house unless, one peeps through the slits on the walls or looks through the entrance door. To a question once I asked why they don't plaster their walls like the Nepalese in the neighbouring villages, they simply told me that people would die if all the walls of their house were plastered!

Front entrance is opened along the side the hill slope. The entrance normally has no door wings. A piece of cloth or a thin bamboo matting is put up to close the house. The *Jikpu* has three stones standing in a triangular formation for mounting cooking pots. Above the *Jikpu* a squarish bamboo frame with bamboo matting (*Tab*) is hung from the ceiling as a rack for smoking meat and other food items. Besides, the hanging rack, there are also many bamboo baskets of different sizes and cloth pouches storing seeds and food grains, etc. Left over food, pots and pans also go into these baskets.

Inside the house there is a semi-partition of bamboo strips in the middle part, which divides one half of the room into two equal quarter rooms. The inner quarter room is a sort of private or sacred room where they say resides the household deity. If there are more people in the house this room is also used for sleeping. Visitors are received and entertained in the front quarter of the room at the entrance. Any ritual performance is also done in this front quarter of the

room. Outside the house is a hut raised on four tall bamboos covered with thatch grass or leaves. This hut, though small, is normally raised taller than the main dwelling house. This is called *To-kim*. Food grains and seeds such as millet, maize, and sorghum are preserved here protected from wet ground, rainwater and rodents. The size of such grain stores may be 1mx1m x 2m by volume and 4 to 5 m tall. These granaries were not often seen full with food grains. The sizes of the present-day granaries attached to a house seem to be indicating the decreasing production level of food grains. In olden days, the *To-kim* used to be as large as main living houses.

1.4.1 Type of Houses

In larger families this *To-kim* is often used for sleeping when it is empty. In Lotukuchu area there are largely four to five types of houses.

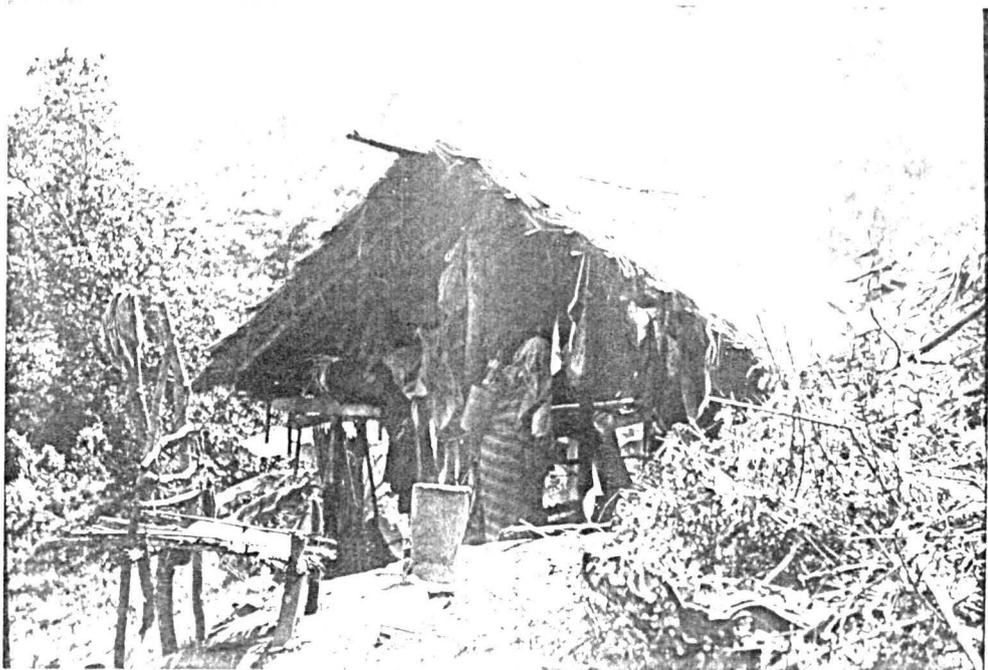
Kim: A relatively small house in which only one half of the room is raised on a platform with a semi-partition inside. The *Jikpu* is on the ground. This type of house is called *Kim* where an extended family of a married couple resides with their kids. A *Kim* measures 10 x 15 ft approximately (Plate-14, 15&19).

La: A temporary (make-shift) hut made in the same fashion as a *Kim* with certain simplifications. This type of hut is called *La*. It has no walls, the half platform on the sloping side of the hill is raised higher to shelter young calves underneath and sleeping bunker above. A *La* measures 5 x 10 ft. approximately on ground and maximum 6 ft. tall. *La* is built far away from homesteads in grazing grounds and pasturelands. A small family often stays in this hut looking after cattle and crops. They would abandon the hut when they have to move to another pastureland or to attend to some other works (Plate-11, 12 & 13).

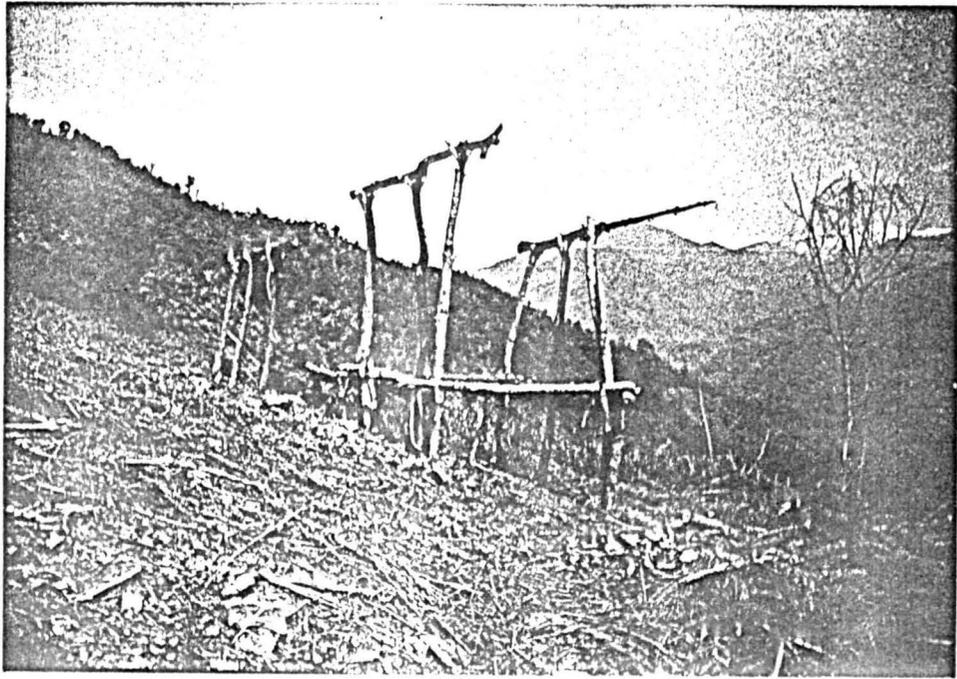
Makim: This is the third type of house. It is little larger than a *Kim* to accommodate joint families of young daughters. In this type of house the whole room is raised on a bamboo/wooden platform except for the fireplace. This type



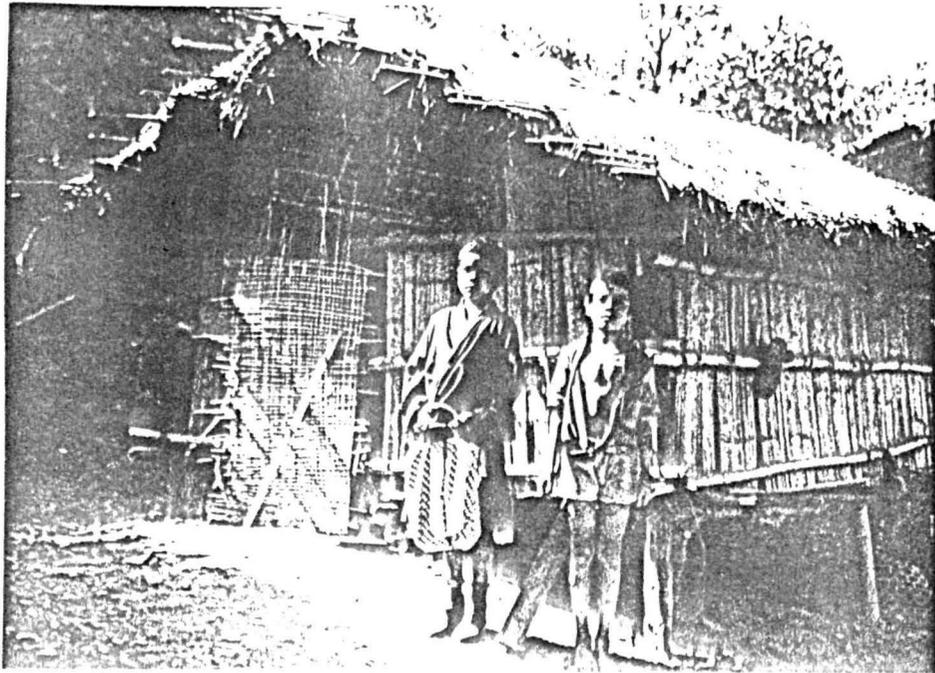
11 A *La* at Sanglung with father and daughter



12 Another *La* at Satakha with Mother and children



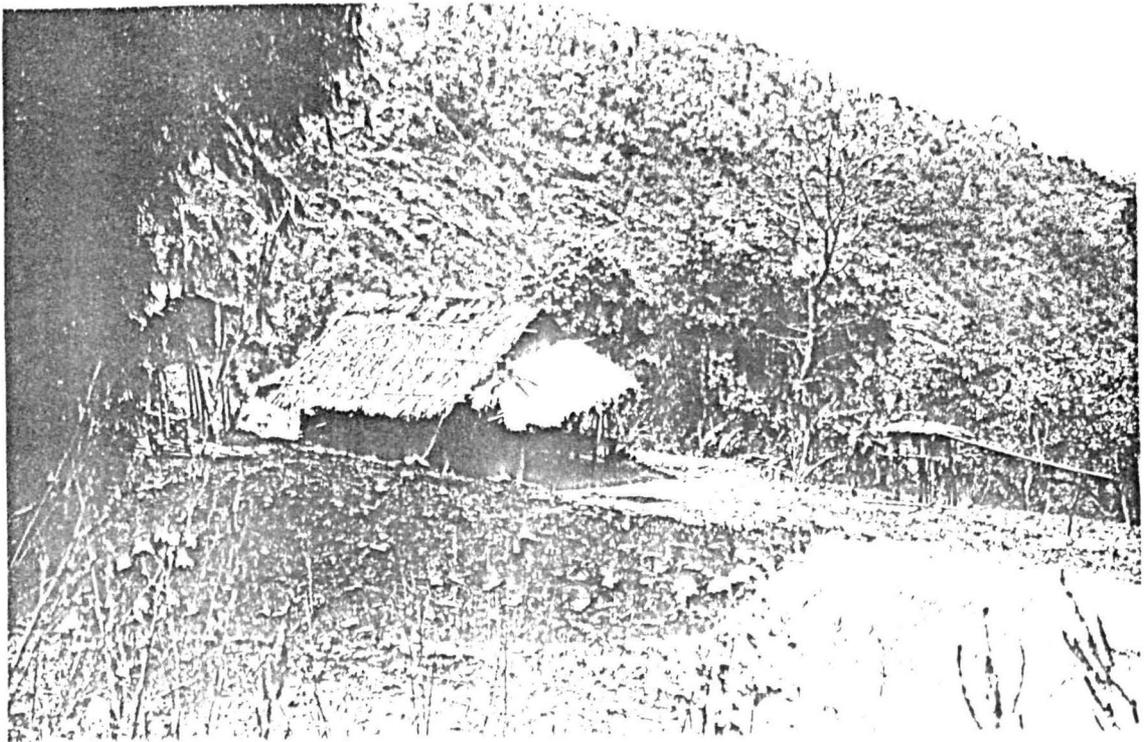
13 A *La* taking shape in Lotukuchu



14 A *Kim*. The entrance is closed as they are going out



15 A *Kim* and a *Makim* at the background



16 Another *Makim* at Lotukuchu

of houses is old type. The floor and walls are of wooden planks in some of the very old houses. The entrance has replaceable door wings of wooden planks. Most of the ancestral main houses are of this type. They are called Makim (Main house) in which all the descendant members of the matrilineal household worship the ancestral and lineal deities at times together. This house normally measures 15 x 30 ft approximately on the ground and as tall as 7 to 8 ft from the ground (Plate-16, 17 & 18).

Tokim: There is another type of house, which is basically a large granary rather than a dwelling house. It is also known as Tokim. These types of houses are seen only in Lotok village at present. Since early times Lotok village has been known for its productivity. They say the name itself is derived from the nature of land and its productivity. In this type the whole main room of the house is used for storing food grains in big bamboo baskets on a raised wooden platform. A small family with or without kids who guard this granary live in little extensions in front and back of the house. On the front side a little portion of the extension is raised on a low bamboo platform leaving some space in the middle for the fireplace. The sleeping platform is called *Tonk*. This granary measures 30 x 12 ft. approximately.

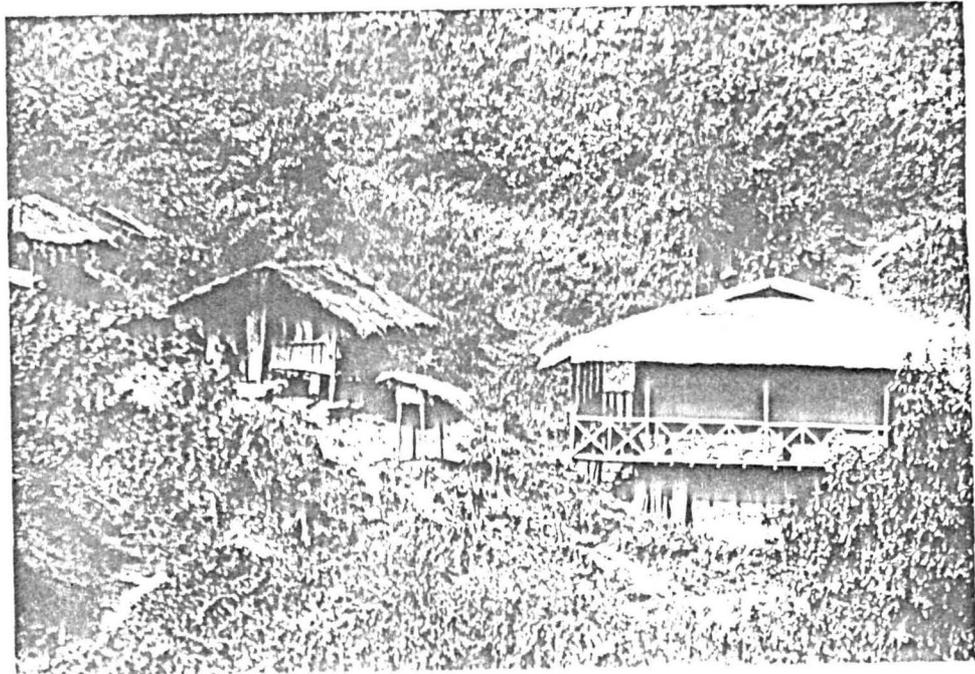
Modern Houses: The fifth type of house, which has become a status symbol among the richer people, is a permanent structure of stone, mud, wood and tin structure. They are most often double-storey structures. This type of house is at present coming up in the whole region. Building of these houses require time, specialised skills and considerable amount of money as compared with the traditional types which are wholly built from local materials. During my stay in Lotukuchu, Doyas had built six such houses which belonged to those among them who could make best earnings out of the orange and cardamom sale off in recent times. These modern houses have also become a status symbol among the Doyas (Plate-19).



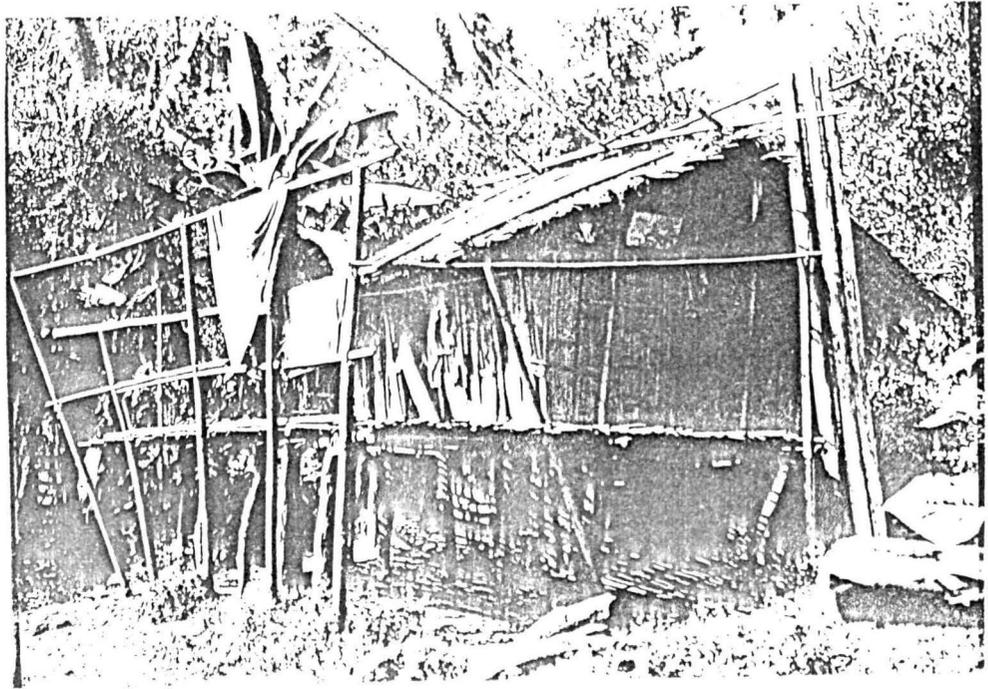
17 Another *Makim* at Satakha with father and daughter



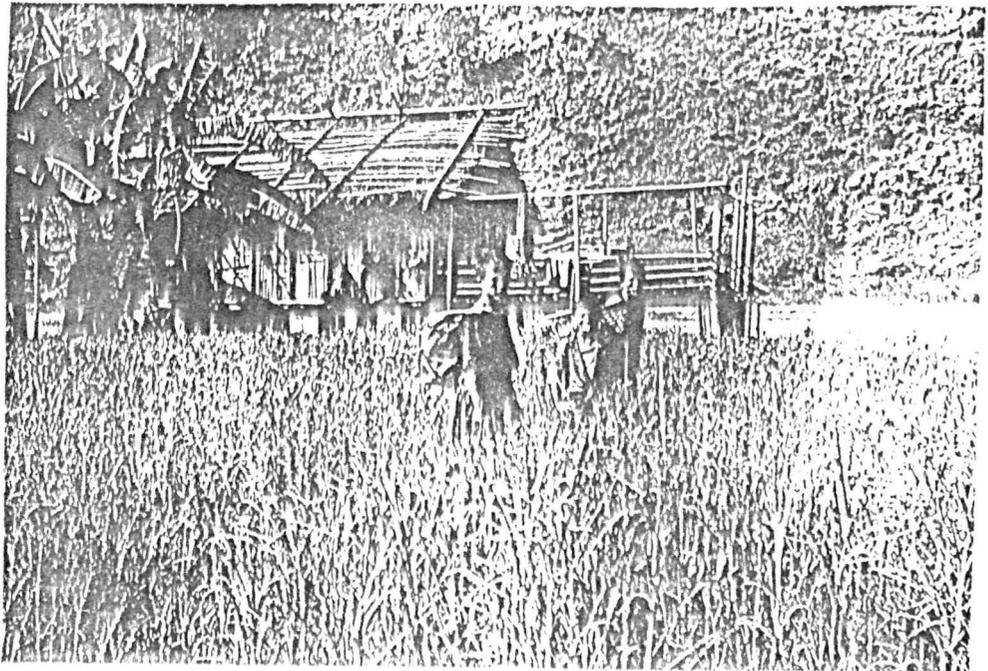
18 Another old *Makim* at Sanglung with family members



19 A *Kim* and a Modern house in Lotukuchu



20 A House in Ramteykha



21 A House in Taba

The houses in Taba-Ramteykha are different from the ones in Lotukuchu. The Taba-Ramteykha houses are larger in size and they are fully raised on bamboo platform higher than those in Lotukuchu. This Jikpu is also arranged on the platform by laying layers of earth and stone. The front side of the house has a large open area on the platform. Pigs and cows take shelter below the platform. A fairly big size stump of a tree with steps dug out on one side of it is leant on a side of the platform. One can step on this dug out stairs to board on the platform and approach the house. This platform provides a safe and comfortable space for all the household chores and social activities (Plate-20 & 21).

1.4.2 Household Articles

They possess very little household articles. Most of them are indigenously manufactured from materials derived from their natural environment. Bamboo and wood are chiefly used in making most of the household articles. Some of the commonly used household articles can be classified under different categories according to their usages such as carriage articles, implements, storage and vessels.

Some of the carriage articles are; *Tol*, *Wang* and *Tibuk*, etc. *Tol* (Fig-1) is basically a cradle made of cane and bamboo strips. It measures 60 x 22 x 20 cm, approximately. It is used for carrying baby while going to a work place and markets. The cradle with the baby is carried on the back harnessed by a cane string around the chest and forehead. *Wang* is also cane and bamboo woven basket carrier (Fig-2). *Tibuk* is a long hollow cylinder closed at one end. It is cut out of big bamboo by knocking out one of the nodes. It measures approximately, 120 cm in length and is used as water carrier (Fig-3).

Some of the implements are *Tra*, *Roung*, *Chachang*, *Halum-tok*, *Chiptok-tombu*, *Simteng-dahol*, *Goish* (Fig-16: Sickle), *Chatub*, *Chabu* (Fig-16), *Jaru* and *Kulik* (Ladles), etc. *Tra* is U-shape winnowing basket made of cane and bamboo. It measures 68 cm in length and 58 cm in breadth, approximately. The people for domestic uses are still locally making these only (Fig-4). *Roung* (Fig-5) is a

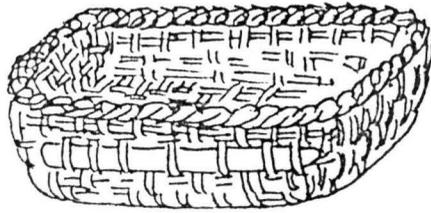


Fig-1: *Tol*
Length: 51 cm
Breadth: 23 cm
Depth: 15 cm
Material: Cane and Bamboo
Uses: A baby carrier

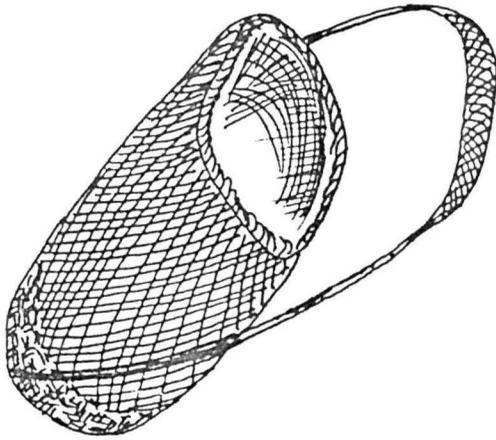


Fig-2: *Wang*
Material: Bamboo
Uses: carrying basket

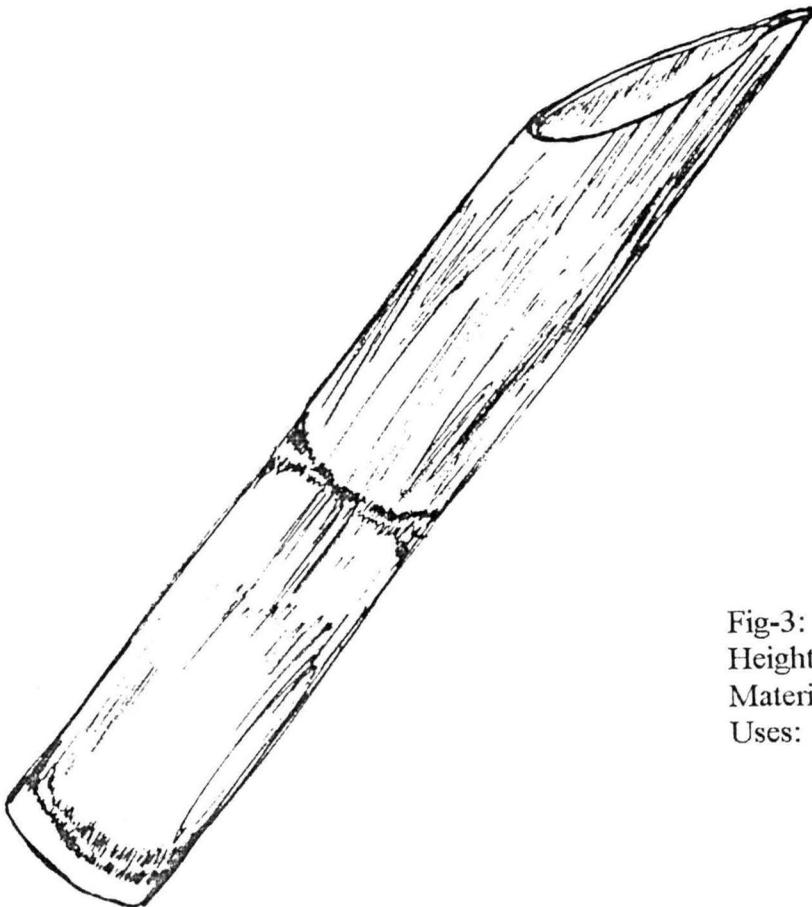


Fig-3: *Tibuk*
Height: 114 cm
Material: Bamboo
Uses: carrying water

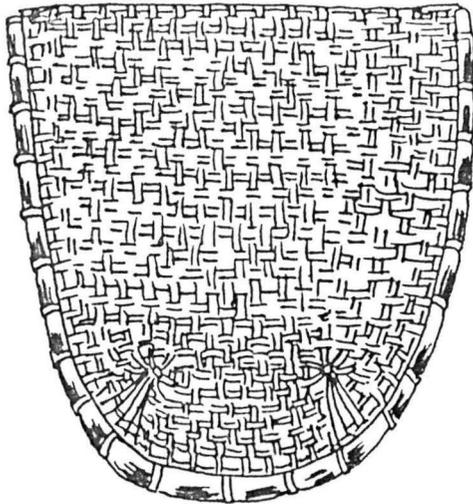


Fig-4: *Tra*
Length: 76 cm
Breadth: 58 cm
Material: Cane and Bamboo
Uses: Winnowing

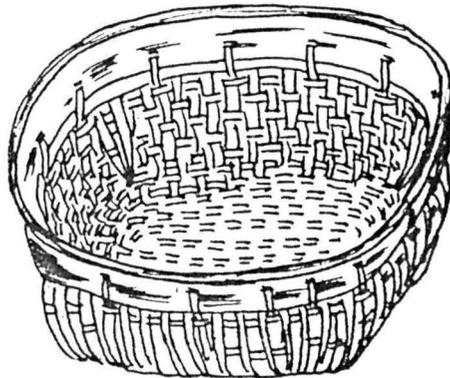


Fig-5: *Roung*
Diameter: 36 cm
Depth: 15 cm
Uses: Measuring



Fig-6: *Chachang*
Length: 45 cm
Diameter: 28 cm
Material: Cane
Uses: Sieving

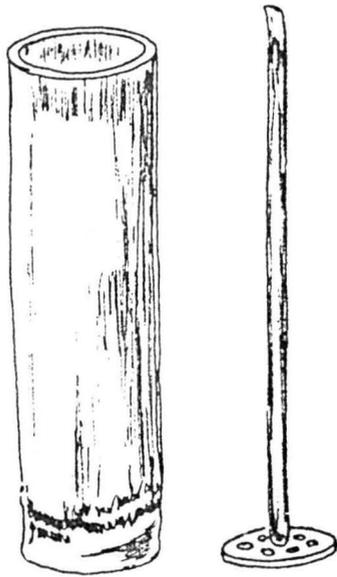


Fig-7: *Halum-tok*
Height: 120 cm
Material: Bamboo & wood
Uses: Milk Churner



Fig-8: *Chiptok-tombu*
Height: 20 cm
Material: Wood & stone
Uses: Pounding tools

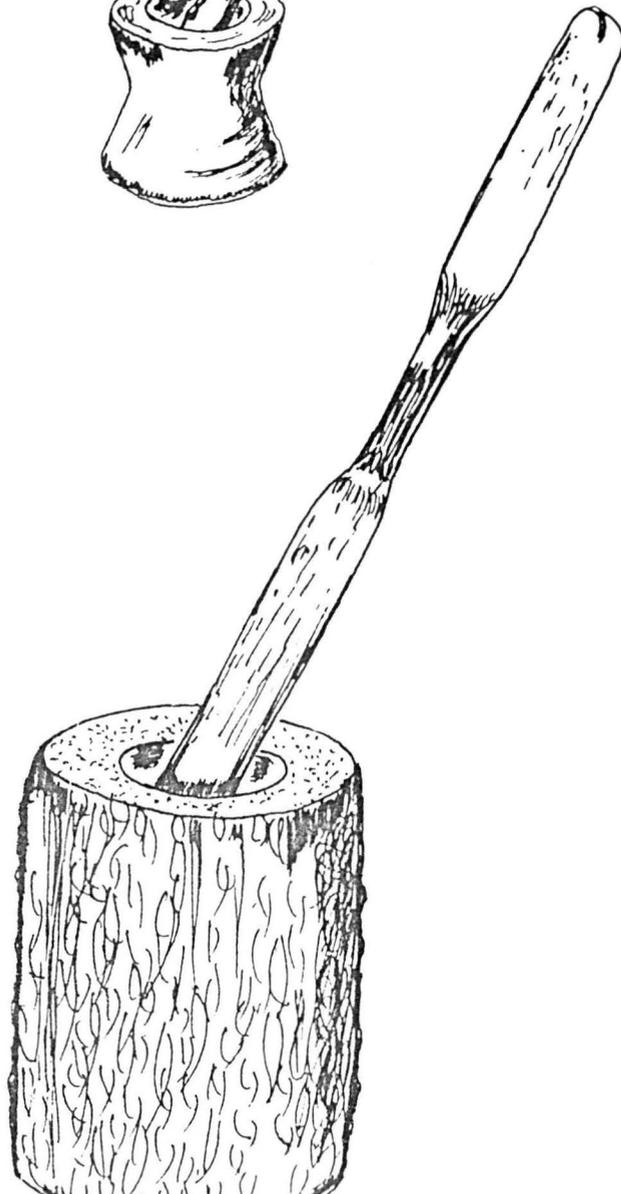


Fig-9: *Simteng-dahol*
Height: 57 cm & 171 cm
Material: Wood
Uses: Pounding grains

standard measuring basket (38 cm in diameter and 14 cm in depth, approximately). Highly skilled craftsmen make these. Very fine and complicated weaving is done on it. Almost all the *Roung* I have seen in village are pretty old but they are in good conditions. Nobody in the village makes this article but they say their ancestors used to make it. *Chachang* (Fig-6) is a sieve made of very fine bamboo strips. It is conical in shape and measures 25cm in diameter and 40 cm in length approximately. It is used for filtering tea and local brew. *Halum-tok* is a pair of long hollow cylindrical bamboo made of a large size bamboo and a pestle with valve like structure at the end. The cylinder is 70 to 80 cm long, approximately. This is used for churning and processing sour milk to produce local cheese and butter (Fig-7). *Chiptok-tombu* (Fig-8) is also a pair of mortar and pestle. The mortar is made out of hard wooden stem and the pestle is often a longish piece of stone measuring around 20 cm, approximately. It is used for grinding chilli and salt at every meal. *Simteng-dahol* (Fig-9) is a pair of pounding implement made of cylindrical log measuring around 60 cm in height. It is used for pounding food grains. It is a pestle made of a hardwood log measuring around 170 cm length and weighs around 3 kg. *Goish* (Fig-16) is a sickle. It is procured from outside. Sickle is also all-purpose weapon for them. Outside the house it is a handy tool for cutting and protection. Inside the house, it is used as kitchen knife. Once outside the house women are always seen with a sickle. *Chatup* (Fig-10) is a mixing instrument made of a hard branch of a tree or shrub with 5 to 6 forking branches. It is used for dispersing butter in tea by rolling between palms. *Chabu* (Fig-16) is a chopping knife. It is one and half to two feet long and it is bought from markets. It is used for cutting trees and slaughter of animals. Men folk would always be seen with a knife at their back. *Jaru* is a service spoon made out of bamboo. *Kulik* is a ladle made out of bamboo. This is used as stirring implement in cooking food.

Some of the Storage articles are *Jopsey*, *Jitem*, *Sele*, and *Belheng*, etc. *Jopsey* (Fig-11) is a bitter guard shell of different sizes. Big ones are used for storing seeds and for fermentation of millet for local drink (*Yu*). *Jiten* (Fig-12) is a

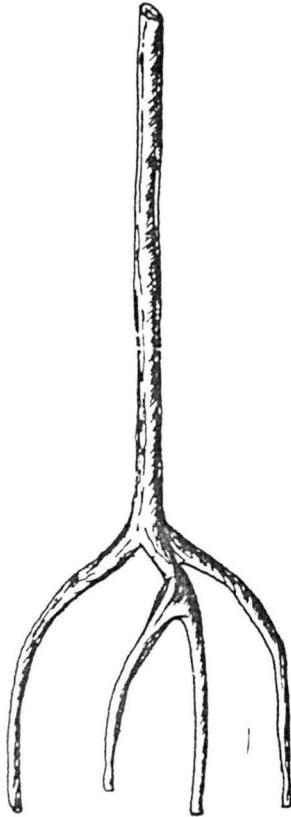


Fig-10: *Chatub*
Height: 20-30 cm
Material: A forked branch
Uses: Mixer tool

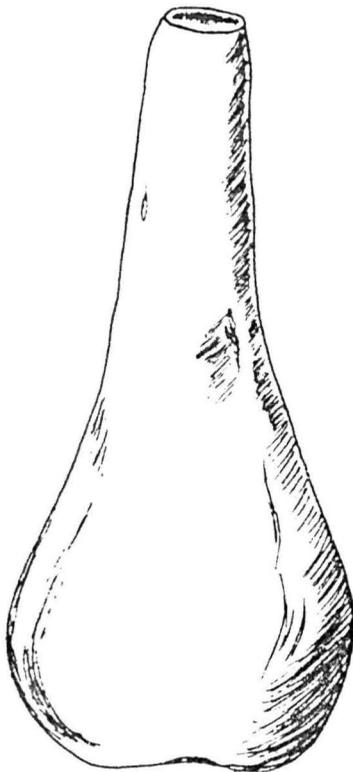


Fig-11: *Jopsey*
Height: 83 cm
Material: Bitter guard shell
Uses: Storing seed

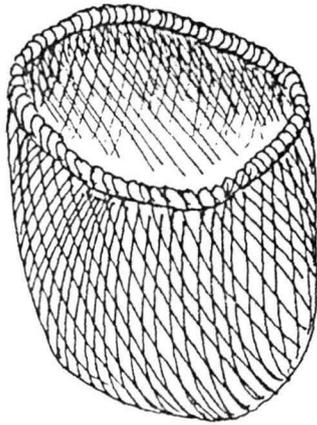


Fig-12: *Jitem*
Material: Bamboo
Uses: Storing grains

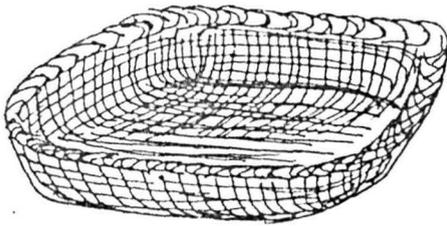


Fig-13: *Sele*
Material: Bamboo
Uses: used as tray

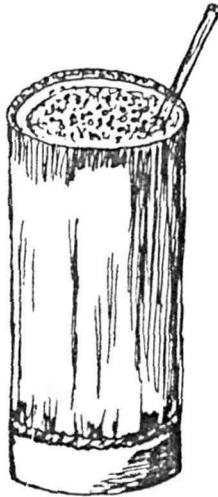


Fig-14: *Belheng*
Height: 30 cm
Material: Bamboo
Uses: used as tumbler
for local drinks

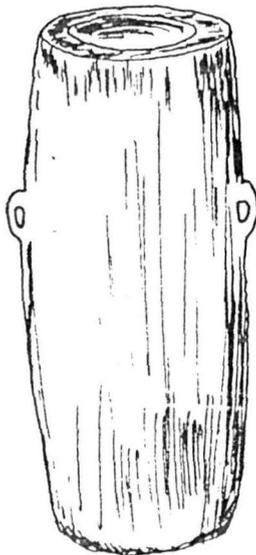


Fig-15: *Belheng (Large)*
Height: 80 - 100 cm
Diameter: 20 - 30 cm
Material: wood
Uses: Storing/fermentation

carrying basket made of thin bamboo stripes. *Sele* (Fig-13) is a flat open tray made of thin bamboo strips. It has a conical shape and measures 25 cm in diameter and 40 cm long. It is used for keeping meat, chilli and vegetable over the fireplace. *Belheng* (Fig-14 & 15) is a very important tumbler made of a big bamboo with fairly wide curvature. It measures 25 cm in height. It is used for drinking local beer with a bamboo straw. There is another *Belheng*, which is larger in size. It is carved out of wood trunk and it is used for fermentation of local brew.

Some of the commonly used vessels are *Belheng* (Fig-15: Large), *Gemba* and *Rog*, etc. *Gemba* is a pot made of clay. These are procured from distant places. They look very old and considered a very precious possession of household. It is also used for millet fermentation and as ritual gifts. *Rog* is a cooking pot. These are of different sizes. It is made of different metals. These are all imported items but they have become essential commodities. *Rog* is used for cooking. *Porr* is a dish made of aluminium. It is procured from markets. *Loha* is round bottom frying pan of cast iron and it is also procured from outside. This has become an essential item in a household. *Tal* is an aluminium plate procured from outside. It is used for eating food.

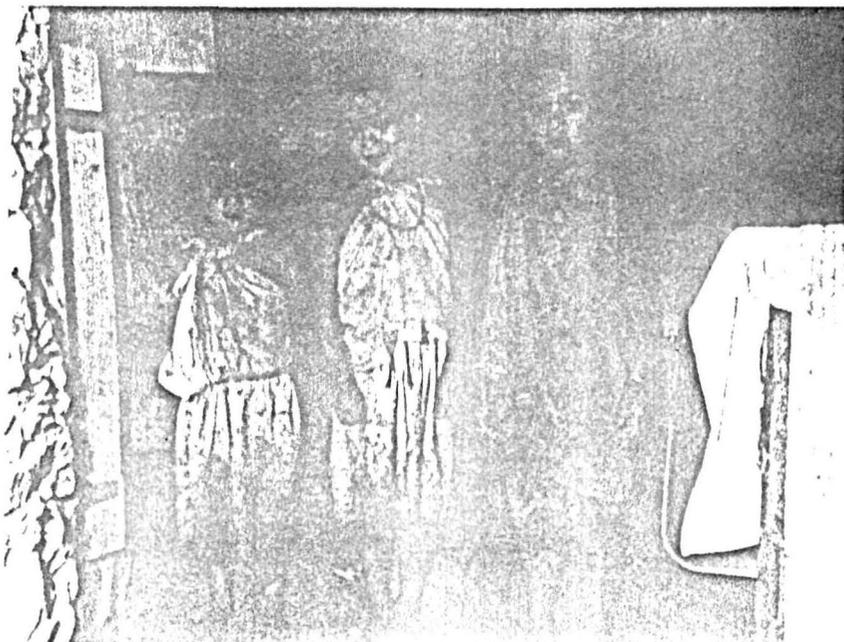
1.5: Clothing

Doyas have their own traditional dress called *Ga-da* (Plate-22, 23&24). It is a white piece of coarse cloth of about 3x2 meters in size. Putting on the cloth is very simple although it looks complicated.

The cloth is folded in the middle length. The two edges of the free ends are held in left hand and the middle fold end in the right hand around the back of body. The three edges are brought together over the right shoulder by running the cloth



22 Doya in their traditional dress at the foreground



23 Doya children in their traditional dress



24 An old Doya woman in her traditional dress - a rare sight!
(Top shirt although is a part of the national costume)



25 A middle aged Doya woman fully adapted to Nepali costume

from below the left armpit and across the chest and back. From this position one free end of outer side of the cloth is released to fall under the left armpit behind the body. While the other three edges are held together by the left hand over the shoulder, the right hand reaches out for the fallen cloth edge and it is picked up from below the right armpit, taken across the chest and over the left shoulder. From this position all the three edges i.e. the two edges of the free ends and middle fold part are held together and adjusted at the center behind the neck. The two edges are fastened at the middle fold point together with the help of a bamboo spindle called *Rim*. In this position the upper cloth border makes an X-cross around the neck in the front side and the body is well covered all around. The cloth runs in two layers from side to side around the body leaving the arms bare and free from the armpit region. Next, the cloth is adjusted properly on both sides. Then the cloth is pulled up above the knee length and fastened tightly with the help of string around the waist. Once it is fastened properly the loose cloth makes a sizeable pouch in the front part of the body to carry many things inside it.

Women also put on their clothes in the same manner but it covers their body from shoulder to the middle part of the calf, leaving a smaller pouch on the front side along the upper part of their body. They do not need any carrying bags in their traditional dress. Now a day, the traditional dress of the Doyas is being fast replaced by the national dress *Gho* and *Kiyra*²⁸, under an active campaign for promotion and preservation of national cultural identity by the Royal Government of Bhutan. They use very few clothing at home. *Gho* and *Kiyra* are all-purpose clothing worn all the time for them. Most of the men and women do not have another set of clothe for a change. A piece of clothing is worn as long as it can cover their body for warmth and carry some weight. They do not at present

²⁸ National dress *Gho* and *Kiyra* is part of the National customs and code of conduct (*Driglam Namsha*) being promoted among the people through schools and colleges currently to preserve the National identity of Bhutan against the influence of western culture. Laws are being enforced to use National dress in all public places and Government offices.



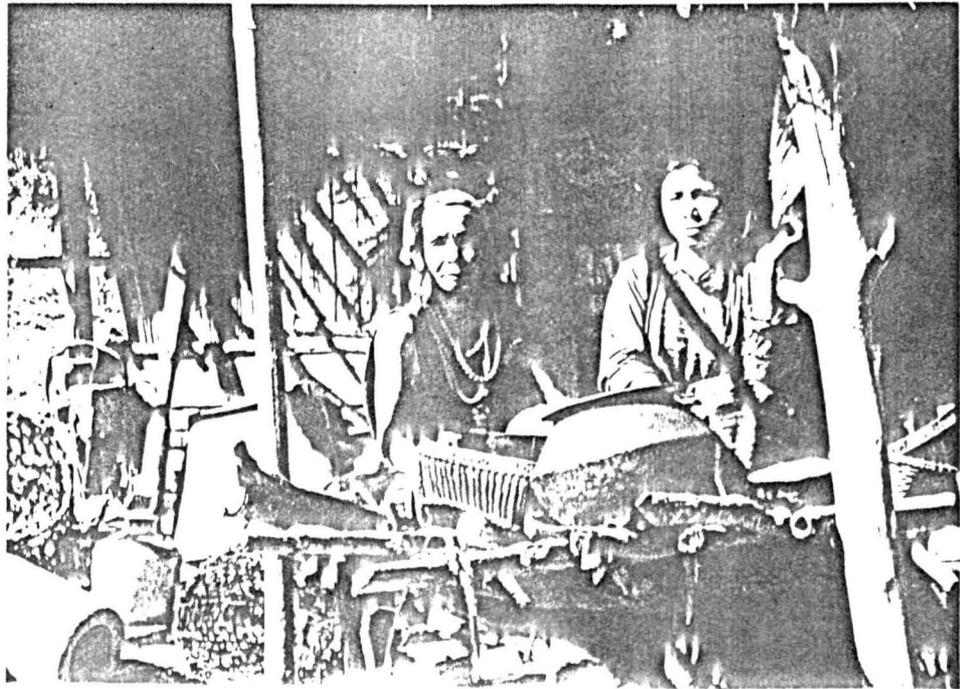
26 Some Doya Women in Lotukuchu, at *Tokim* at the background



27 Doya women in Lower Lotukuchu



28 Doyas presenting folksongs



29 Mother and Daughter preparing morning meal



30 A women preparing for evening meal



31 A woman at Taba roasting flat bread



32 A Doya man taking rest on the path after getting fully drunk

weave or knit their own clothes. Any wear and tear in their cloths is repaired/stitched very roughly with the help of indigenously made bamboo needle

Rim and thread *Jin* made out of plant fibre. Steel needle and mill threads from the markets are fast replacing the *Rim* and *Jin*.

1.6: Occupation and Daily Activities

Doyas are semi-sedentary agriculturist people. They start their day by preparing the *Rihto* (morning meal). The preparation works include collecting water from nearby stream, pounding cereals or preparing boiled roots, making strong tea and processing fermented millet for a morning drink. They take the *Rihto* by around 7 O'clock in the morning right after which they start moving to their respective work places. Ask anyone walking by in the morning with knife or sickle in the hand and something in their front pouch.

Hey, Nang katt-a no? (*Hey* = where, *Nang* = you, *katt-a-no* = are going). The answer invariably is: *Ka-nga La hut-la Katt-an:* (*Ka-nga* = I, *La* = work, *hut-la* = to look after, *Katt-an* = going)

The type of works they normally attend to are looking after their *Yonk* (shifting fields), collecting firewood, and other things for food from Jungle, etc. There is hardly any body at home during the daytime except for some children, nursing mothers and sick ones. Most of the time, the whole family can be seen together in a field along with newborn babies.

Towards the evening before sunset they are all back to their houses. Once at home they begin to make fire, collect water in the bamboo cylinders and pots, and prepare *Hin-to* (evening meal) which generally consists of roasted and

flattened maize, sometimes or *Lohbol* (Tapioca) or *Burr* (Kochu or *Colocasia*) or some food left over from the morning meal. And some tea or Yu after which it is leisure time and the time for drinking and talking. Most of the inter-personal talks, meetings and visiting each other, conveying messages, sharing news and events occurring around them take place. It is often said that most of the quarrels also take place at this time.

While elders drink leisurely with their friends and neighbours around the fire other family members prepare *Lip-to* (night meal) starting right from pounding, grinding, winnowing and collecting water and so on. Nothing at home is ever kept ready for the next meal.

While this type of pattern activities generally remains as day-to-day routine works during the short winter season they are relatively free from agricultural works. It is the time after they harvest most of the crops and they are relatively free from agricultural works. This free time of theirs has always been exploited for free labour services in various development works of the Royal Government involving construction of roads and buildings and trading activities of the state.

Now, in the contemporary times they actively engage themselves in earning hard cash through portorage of oranges from interior orchards to foothill markets. Almost everybody from very young boys and girls to very old and aged people carry baskets of orange down the hills. The money thus earned by direct selling and carrying oranges is immediately utilised in procuring basic commodities such as food grains which include essentially millets for making local drinks, some new clothes, oil, salt and luxury items, etc. Rest of the money is used in loan redemption from others and a what-so-ever remains is immediately consumed in drinks at the market. Most of them including women have a habit of making their first expenditure in terms of buying liquor and millet for home brew.



33 An early morning prize catch of a wild cat at Lower Lotukuchu



34 Sharing freshly slaughter cow meat at upper Lotukuchu

At the end of the orange season there is hardly any savings left with them except for some new clothes, few bags of food grains, and cheap varieties of watches, radio tapes and some ornaments. For further requirements of food grains, other commodities and essential expenditure for the remaining months of the year they begin to borrow money from better-off among themselves and neighbouring Nepali brethren or sell their next season's crops in advance. This is also a time for marriages among young boys and girls. Neighbouring Nepali brethren often say orange season is also Doya marriage season. They say so because young boys and girls often are seen going together and mixing freely while on travel during the orange season. This may however, be a contemporary change among people. People are being increasingly influenced by market showing indications that their traditional subsistence economy has been greatly influenced by cash economy.

1.7: Food and Drinking Habits

Food consists of varieties of cereals, roots and different kinds of meats. Cereals such as *Kersey* (Buckwheat), *Ra-am* (Maize), *Jar-to* (Millet) and *Chak-to* (Sorghum) are popular food grains. *Chak-to* and *Jar-to* are two essential and indispensable food items in their life and rituals. *Chak-to* is boiled the way rice is cooked and taken as main food. *Jar-to* is used mainly for making Yu, and women mainly do the preparation. Buckwheat is ground in a *Ra-tag* (a stone mill) for *Bee* (flour) and taken as *Roti* (flat bread). They eat all sorts of meat and fish except snakes. Pork, beef and meat of wild animals are their favourites. They talk of *Madesis* (Tea garden labourer in the Indian plains) with disgust because they say that *Madesis* take snakes.

Once, I talked to an old woman aged around 50 years about different types of meat. Talking about snake meat she said, *how can one take snake meat? It kills*

people. If you eat snake, will you not die? We eat monkey meat, fox and wolf meat only, etc.

Even though they are not particularly fond of vegetable, they sometimes consume *Pa-em* (Bamboo shoot), *Sa-em* (edible variety of fern), *Chusey* (squash), *Jungka* (Pumpkin), *Sengsey* (Beans) and *Sa(n)-ag* (spinach, leafy vegetable), etc. They do not like pulses. Taking pulse with their food was very rare occasion during my stay with the people in the village but their liking for meat is striking. They do not mind taking stale meat infested with worms. Once, I expressed my anguish over their liberal appetite for stale meat. They told me coolly: *Sir, these worms come out of the meat itself, so what is the harm in taking meat infested with worms*²⁹.

Cooking is very simple process of boiling. They do not use much oil. Most often any food item is boiled simply in water and consumed with salt and chilli. Sometimes, if they have some oil or butter they put it while it is boiling in water. Frying vegetable or meat is not their habit. Food is not mixed with curry while eating. Both are taken separately in turns. They can consume substantial amount of food with only some *Dii* (salt) and *Muris* (chilli).

1.8: Health and Sanitation

Doyas have very poor sense of sanitation. They live in a very poor condition of health and hygiene. They live at the pleasure and mercy of their spirits who have control over their health and general well being. Talking to Jamio (80+years) of Satakha and Sakab (70 years) of Lotukuchu about their past and present health and hygiene conditions, they say:

There was no medicine, many people used to die due to diseases and sicknesses and also due to food poisoning, sometimes. Once, one of my

²⁹ The Totos are also known for their habit of liking stale meat infested with worms.



35 A performing Doya *Pama* (witch doctor) with his second wife



36 A Nepali *Bijuwa* performing rituals at a Doya home to cure a sick



37 Sub divisional head Lama visiting the School for special prayer

sons ate some roots he found in the Jungle. He collapsed unconsciously. We ran to Panbari Nepali village and got a local medicine from a Nepali Bijuwa (Sorcerer in Nepali language) and with that he was saved.

But don't the people know some locally available herbal remedial practices?

No, none of us know very well about that. But, I know there is one root called Konio. Its milk cures loose motion. There was no one in our village that practised local medicines.

They believe that evil spirits who have been neglected or disregarded by the victims in their ignorance causes sicknesses and diseases. To cure the diseases or the sicknesses a *Pama* or Bijuwa (Sorcerer) has to be consulted to reveal the particular spirit or deity, responsible for the same. They have to be appeased through ritual performances, offerings and sacrifices of animals. A Pama is born and gifted in the art of sorcery. They believe that not anyone can become a Pama unless he is born differently with the requisite talents. The belief in supernatural power is so deep that people give much importance to sorcerers for magical cure of all their health problems. As said earlier, people have very little knowledge about local herbal medicines and practices.

Pama is Lhokpu term for witch doctor or a sorcerer. It is 'Geypa' in the national language. There were few Pamas among the Doyas, who were adept in sorcery and witchcraft. They used their knowledge to secure personal gains, because of which they were exiled out of the village with the help of Drukpa Lama³⁰.

³⁰ Not long ago, a complaint was lodged against one Jiwa Doya a professing local Doctor (Pama), for indulging in malpractices of sorcery and witchcraft, to the head Lama in Thimphu. The matter was referred to the local *Gumba* (monastery) authority at Dorokha Dogap (Sub-divisional religious body). All the professing local doctors, both Nepalese and Doyas of the region were summoned at the Monastery and they were made to take oath of allegiance to the Supreme Lamaic Body of the country's religious institution and to use their knowledge benevolently for the people. Jiwa Doya was asked to wash off his hands from the profession by keeping away from the village. In compliance with the order of the religious body Jiwa Doya now stays put at Thimphu and never comes back home in the village.

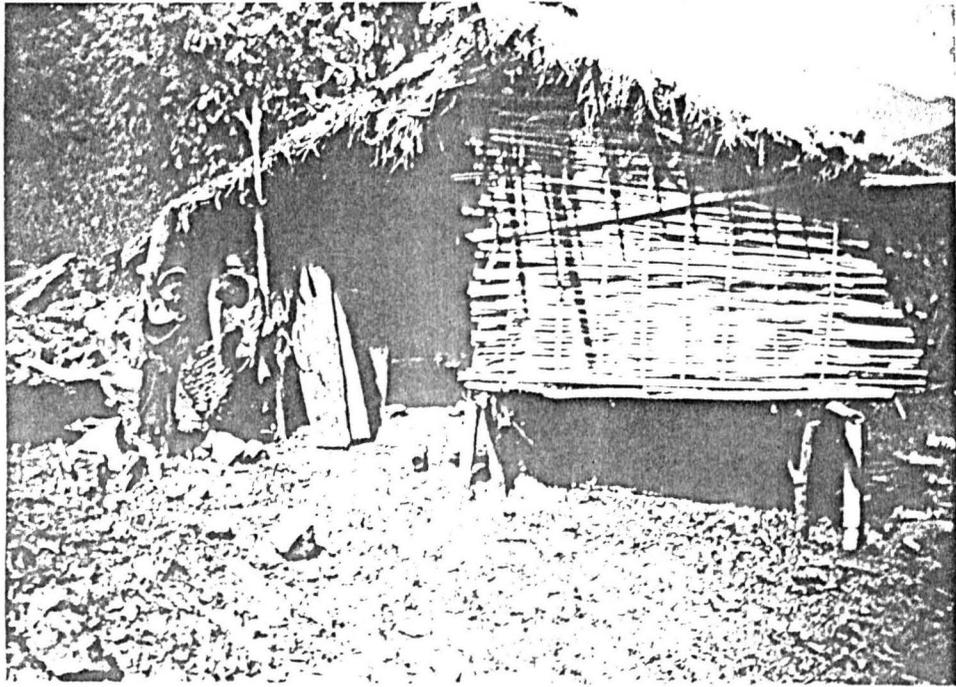
There are many elder persons who have goitre and deficiency disease. Many young children are afflicted with angulostomatitis dysentery, diarrhoea, and upper respiratory tract infection. Skin diseases, fungal infection and internal and external viral infection are very common health problems among the people. Often they suffer from epidemics like Chicken pox and Measles. There are several folktales where reference is made to such epidemics.

Neatness and cleanliness are generally neglected in every walk of life. Women often suffer from venereal diseases³¹. They do not wash their hands and feet before and after food unless things get very dirty according to their standards. Very little water is used at home for general cleansing as they fetch water in small containers enough for cooking and drinking only. They do not wash their pots and pans properly after meals as the neighbouring Nepalese do at their homes. They freely share in of each other's food and utensils while eating without any inhibitions. Since, basic hygienic care is not taken in day today life there were often high chances of contacting communicable diseases among the people.

Now, the situation is improving with regular exposure to modern education in the school and health education from the Basic Health Units from time to time³². Old habits die hard. They seldom clean the surroundings of their houses. They do not possess a broom at home. Cock, hens, dogs and pigs have easy access inside their houses these lick and pick on their plates and pots. Sometimes, hens and

³¹ Official visitor as a part of local hospitality often sexually exploits most of the young women both Doya and Nepali. Some of the women often attended the Basic Health Unit near the school for venereal diseases.

³² During my stay in upper Lotukuchu in one of the house, I saw a conscious attempt of my host to keep the surrounding clean in my presence. I decided to join their kitchen but most often I cooked separately as their food habits did not suit my stomach for every day. They gave me all the possible help and tried to keep clean. I often shared their food. My pots and pans were always washed well than I could manage myself and kept dried in safe place. When I asked for the pot and pan they would wash it again and then only give me. If I ask them to cut vegetable or clean rice they would consciously make it a point to wash their hands before they touched any of my things. When I never told them to do that way. I knew that they never take all these care of cleanliness for themselves during the long consociation them.



38 Children fetching water in bamboo tumblers



39 Back home after days work

cocks snatch food from their food plates and pots but they don't mind. They had no safe latrines until the Basic Health Unit was opened in the area in 1987. Under a strict supervision of the Health Unit and School staff they were made to make safe latrines.

When someone falls sick s/he is left alone at home unattended while others go out for work. If young ones fall sick elders would just think of what is to be taken and what is not to be taken according to the type of sickness. They would not bother to come to the Health centre unless the person becomes very serious, and sometimes, they rather prefer to invite the health workers at home.

They would look for health workers' help only when all other local methods and practices of appeasing responsible spirits and worship of local deities failed to cure the sickness. Every disease is associated with certain beliefs and practices relating to their food restrictions, a few of which are given below.

Chuteck (Measles) - One must not eat fried things from market places, salt, meat, milk and its by-products. One must not drink Yu. One must take only loosely prepared simple food.

Semah (Chicken pox) - One must take boiled roots of *Lahara* (local medicinal plant). One must not move in the open air. One must sit in the sun. One must not take roasted things, meat, drinks, milk and its by-products.

1.9: Recreational Activities

Doyas do not play any game, as there is no free time for games and sports as such in an organised manner. Of course, when some people gather for night stay on someone's death, few persons play a game with maize seeds called *Kauri*,

which is also not their traditional game. Leisure time is the time when they retire to their homes after a days' work in the fields and jungles when they like to sit, drink and talk about something amusing and about day to day affairs, events, incidents, and general gossips about other people and things. Posters of popular film stars, photographs, radio and tape recorders have become popular means of entertainment for the present generation. They like to listen to popular Dzongkha and Nepali songs. More and more young people are being attracted to film shows at Samchi market.

1.9.1 *Loh* Festival

Doyas celebrate only one festival in a seasonal cycle. The time coincides with harvesting of Chak-to and Jar-to, which are their favourite cereals for food and drinks, respectively. The festival is called *Loh* and often falls between 7th and 8th month according to Bhutanese calendar. The word *Loh* literally means a year and the festival starts from *Gutok* that is 29th of the month and ends on the 3rd of the following month³³. Mainly drinking, eating meat and worshipping their household, local deities and ancestors celebrate the festival. Killing of cows and pigs is a must for this festival. They offer cock's head and blood to household deities *Eechan* and *Tenglha*. The cock's head can be noticed erected on a stick on the ridge of the Makim. During this festival sons visit their parents house with gifts of food and meat. People in the village visit each other eat, drink and sing songs. One very popular song often sung on this occasion clearly mentions the time but they still have very clear local specific reasons for difference among themselves. It goes like this:

³³ However, there is a division among the people in timing this festival since 1980s before which time they used to celebrate together. After 1980 more and more people are celebrating *Loh* a month later i.e. between 8th and 9th month of a year according to local calendar. Some elders say that the difference had come due to their engagement in the free labour service of the state during the New Year time leaving no responsible persons in the village. Meanwhile the dispute remains and people are divided into two groups i.e. one who celebrate early *Loh* and other who celebrate late *Loh*. The matter was taken to sub divisional headquarters in 1980. The officer wisely advised them to sort it out among themselves. Meanwhile, the celebration continue at two different occasions amidst controversy as is reflected in the folk song sung on this occasion.

Oi loko lawa daw chuni wa-I
 Sake tida chobjet le rangni loko lawa daw chuni
 Dawdi gube chibe ya che le –o
 Dawdi geba jube jokople rangni loko lawa daw chuni
 Dawdi guba chibe ye ya chile –o
 rangni tengi wo gowa luse – en
 Rangni nangi lada laying se –eh
 Dawdi gube chibe ye ya chi lu –o
 rangni mase eh guna me em-bey
 Rangni loko daw chuni ein.

(Meaning in 12 months Loh comes once only in 18 twenties³⁴ days Loh comes once only, in the last 8th month and beginning of 9th month is our Loh. We must worship and give offerings to all Gods and deities of our land during Loh. We must offer and worship cock's head to our household deity and ancestors during Loh from the 9th month onwards we must worship all our deities. 'O' – we are innocent beings. This is our 12th month Loh.)

1.9.2 Children's Games

Children are often seen conscientiously playing certain games when they are left to themselves in free times. My friendly relation with the children gave me a rare opportunity of closely observing their games and behaviour undisturbed. Children below 12 play lively games of enacting the roles of their parents. They gather and collect small sticks, stumps, twigs, leaves, branches, strings, stones and chips, and pieces of bamboo. Out of these collected materials they make small houses (Kim) and makeshift hut (La) big enough to crawl in and sit inside. They use different materials to simulate all those things in a household family and emulate all the elders' way of life and works. In make belief they maintain a house as mother and father with some children, they cook food, collect water, look after cows and calves, milk the cows, so on and so forth.

One afternoon, Lhasang (6years girl), Rimpen (5years girl), Nunu (4years boy), Passalham (9years girl), Desing (3years boy) and myself went down to the paddy field just below Dillang (last residential/camp site in Lower Lotukuchu) for a stroll. The moment we were on the field Lhasang jumped around after crickets (*Zigma*) and so they all spread all over the length and breadth of the field to catch *Zigma*. Vimb (9years girl) another girl of the locality spotted us on the paddy field from a distance where she was looking after their cows. We hooted at each other and she soon joined

³⁴ 18 twenties is a period of a year as they follow the Lunar calendar (18x20s = 360 days). Twenty is a unit of counting bigger number.

us at the field leaving behind her cows. Lhasang and Rimpen were most active; they swung all around and caught many Zigma without missing a single. The moment the insects were in their hands the hind legs were removed to prevent them escaping from their hands. These captive powerless creatures were then passed on to me to carry, except for Rimpen who carried the insects for herself. Lhasang did not like it she told Rim to pass the insects to me but was not readily heeded to. After some persuasions from Lhasang, Rim submitted a cream color legless one but very unwillingly. Rim caught some more zigmias but declined to pass on to me. This disturbed Lhasang and she said loudly, *Rim is not giving it because she likes to roast and eat them alone at home.* All this while I was watching their expertise and skills in catching and detaching the hind legs without missing a single one. I was also wondering why after all these poor creatures were being caught so mercilessly. As we were climbing up from the fields Lhasang told me that they were going to play cow (*pik so-ane*) rearing game with the zigma. She further told me that with the strong hind legs it is difficult to get the restless zigmias under control like cows. The zigmias were released on the veranda of Lhasang's house and she began to look after them like cows by steering them here and there. Suddenly all our attention towards the game was distracted by Passalha, who attracted our attention towards rabbits³⁵ copulating nearby. They quickly rushed near the rabbits leaving Nunu to look after all the cows. Nunu was happy with all the cows around until suddenly something clicked in his mind. He picked up two crickets and held them closely along the ventral sides. He was fully absorbed in this experiment for some time closely watching the strange behaviour of the two poor insects held between his hands.

When Lhasang, Passalham, Kinjong (6years boy), Diku (6 years girl) and Vimb came back they began to play a different game. Lhasang, Kinjong, Diku and Nunu became cows and bulls according to their wishes. Nunu and Diku were happy to be ferocious bulls. They began to play bullfight while Lhasang and Rim became mild cows with ropes tethered around their necks. Kinjong became the most ferocious bull. He began to bellow and challenge all other bulls around. Soon the bulls were head on against one another and fight ensued. Vimb who became the one to look after the cows came in between two bulls whenever the fights were getting uncontrollable to prevent hurting one another. When it seemed that the fighting bulls were getting tougher she tethered them all with ropes and separated them physically. With the ropes around the neck the bulls were showing their anger against one another by staring furiously at one another, scratching the ground with forelegs and picking on the ground with their horns. After tethering the bulls it was time for Vimb for milking the cows. When the cows stood ready one behind the other, Vimb fetched a calf by the ear and let it suck the udder for a little while and then tethered them away to proceed milking the cows. By this time temper of all the bulls had calmed down and they sat down licking and scratching their wounds and muscles. It became almost dark and we retired to our homes for the night.

³⁵ Rabbits are not found in the region. Rabbit keeping was also not known. Once my landlord express a strong desire of keeping some rabbits at home. Not much later, I was able to get him a pair of Rabbits and that became a piece of exhibit among the people. Many turns up to see them at Lower Lotukuchu.

More grown up boys do not like to indulge in such childish games. They prefer adventures in the jungles, fields and pastures with a catapult and/or a chopper in their hands. They like climbing trees, hunting birds and monkeys, fishing in the streams and explore the jungles for whatsoever interests them. In fact play, amusement and games go side by side, hand in hand with their daily routine works in the fields and at home. They are good audience; they do not mind spending a whole day watching something new and strange or anything that looks extraordinary to them.

1.10: Modern Education and Occupational Change

The Doyas were basically pre-literate ethnic community in Bhutan till the early decade of twentieth century. Very few elders among them began to learn the Devnagari scripts as a formal means of written communication when the migrant Nepalese began to influence over the socio-economic and local administrative affairs of the region³⁶. The Lamaic traditions of education in the monasteries remained restricted among the elites in Drukpa society. During the middle of twentieth century the kings of Bhutan began to lay special emphasis on modern form of education. Royal Government of Bhutan is making considerable efforts to reach out the light of modern education using tri-lingual formula of English, Dzongkha and Lhotsham. The government established Primary Schools in far and remote corner of Bhutan even before constructing any road communications

³⁶ There is local history surrounding the present Samchi district. Reliable sources among the Nepalese in the district say that there was a very influential Gurung family at Samchi. He was a prosperous contractor on the behalf of the Paro Penlop who gave him responsibilities of labour organization to exploit the forest resources in the region and facilitate trading and economic development of the country. Over a period of time, it is said that the Gurung family became very influential and powerful in the region. He assumed monopoly in the socio-political affairs of the area so much so that he wanted to create a political domain of his own much to the displeasures and uneasiness of the Penlop. He even started constructing a large palace with 52 doors for him on the Samchi foothill. His increasing power was not appreciated by the Penlop. Once, he was summoned to the Paro Dzong for a discussion and it is said that a serious quarrel took place with the Penlop. Ever since he did not live to return to Samchi. It is assumed that he is dead.

and infrastructure in most of the regions. Hundreds of Indian teachers were being employed to teach in these schools.

The first school for the district that came into being was one at Samchi HQ in early 1950 and another at Dorokha sub-division in 1956 with boarding facilities. It was only then the first batch of Doya children was put into the schools in 1962. The first batch of children who went to school at Dorokha consisted of nine boys all from Satakha village. The Sengten (Sengdhyen) Primary School came into being from the year 1987 for the children of Lotukuchu area with lots of local initiatives and supports from all people in the Lotukuchu area.

With the advent of modern education among the Doyas and the changes in Government's attitude towards them some Doya men (mostly those who studied up to middle class) and few women were encouraged to take up different jobs outside their villages. As a consequence a certain extent of social mobility set in otherwise conservative and isolated society. This occupational mobility was confined to few individuals who had to face resistances from the closely knitted traditional society (see Jochung's case in Appendix-II: Persons and Personalities).

Since the inception of the School in 1987 as many as 152 Doyas have attended Sengten Primary School. 130 children were on the current school register in the year 1994. Based on the enrollment figures up to the year 1993, an approximate percentage of fourteen of the total population of Lotukuchu group of Doyas have attended primary schools. Female and male literacy up till the year stood approximately at 7% and 22.4%, respectively. The dropout rate recorded up till the year 1993 was 10-15% per year. The actual literacy rate particularly among the male population would be higher. There were many elders among the present generation who know how read and write in Nepali language which is Devnagari script and few other who knew the national language Zhungkha. These literate people did not attend any formal schools but they learnt by

experience and practice as they had to communicate some how in the past. To find out the actual literacy rate may require a separate survey work.

Out of a total 152 literate persons thirteen persons were engaged in Police and security services in security services, Forest and Agriculture departments of the country at different places. There were another twenty six (Table-1.3) persons who did not attend Primary schools, but they were literate working in private and Government services at lower grades. These people who were working outside were mostly unmarried singles. Those who are married left their families at home.

Table – 1.3: Doyas in Different Occupations

Sl. No.	Occupations	No. of Persons		
		Males	Females	Total
01.	Teaching.	1	-	1
02.	<i>Gelong</i> (Monk).	5	-	5
03.	Forest Guards	2	-	2
04.	Agri. Field man	1	-	1
05.	Royal Body Guards	2	-	2
06.	Royal Bhutan Army	6	-	6
07.	Police Wireless Operator	1	-	1
08.	Businessmen	3	-	3
09.	Contractors.	2	-	2
10.	Drivers.	1	-	1
11.	Peons.	3	-	3
12.	Watchman.	3	-	3
13.	Cooks.	2	-	2
14.	Servants (House).	4	1	5
15.	Wage Labourers.	-	2	2
Total		36	3	39

Source: Field Data, 1993 - 94

They do not easily get married outside their community. Of course, there were exceptional cases like Sakab who worked in Phuntsholing district as a Forest Guard and got married with a local Tamang Nepali woman. Soon after he quit his job, brought home his wife and succeeded in settling at his ancestral land despite lots of social resistances.

The range of services Doyas were taking up were Teaching as the most coveted and latest development, Spiritual services as monks, State Security services, Forest and Agricultural field workers and few in Business. Some of them have already quit their jobs premature to settle with their families at home.

SUMMARY

Doyas live in remote corner in the hills Dorokha subdivision of Samchi district without any modern communication facilities. They are located in two physically separated habitations without any social interactions between the two.

Doyas have indigenous names for all the geographical features in the surrounding which amply proves that they are the indigenous people of the region with their historical past in their oral tradition.

Of the two habitations, Lotukuchu group of Doyas live in the interior region of Dorokha subdivision, hence they remained even more inaccessible to outside world. Today the Doyas live along with many other communities of the Rais of Nepali communities, Dogapas and the Hapas, who migrated into the region. The settlement areas of the Doyas have been reduced to few square kilometers from the vast area of territories their forefather once lived.

Lotukuchu is a group of five territorially and socially distinct groups. Similarly, Taba and Ramteykha are also two physically separate locations and social groups.

The territorial groups in the Lotukuchu side are identified with distinct titles. Certain number of lineages resides in a residential territory although few lineages are commonly found distributed in at least two adjacent territories. The territorial titles are mostly related with geographical features of residential sites and / or directions. They consider themselves as a distinct ethnic group in comparison with other people in their surrounding who they identify with distinct titles known to them.

Shifting cultivation coupled with hunting and gathering have been the mainstay of their livelihood like any other hill tribes in the Himalayan region, although in the recent past they have also adopted more settled way of life by erecting terrace

fields for cultivation and raising cash crops under population pressures and ecological constraints in their surroundings. Their staple food are sorghum, maize, roots and millet consumed with varieties of meat, salt and chilli. They are also inveterate drinkers. They brew their own drinks at home.

Doyas have mixed physical features although they are predominantly mongoloid. Their population is showing signs of improvement from near extinction. Lotukuchu group of Doyas comprises 64% of the total population of Doyas at present. The present sex ratio of the Lotukuchu population is showing an excess of female proportion to the total male population.

Doyas live in environmental friendly houses built with locally available wood, bamboo and leaves. Of late some of the richer families have begun to build permanent houses with stonewalls and tin roofing.

Doyas speak a distinct language identified as the Lhokpu by linguists, recently. Lhokpu is clubbed together with Monpa, Lepcha, Rai and Newari languages in linguistic classification.

The modern education and occupations are exposing the Doya people to new and alien status, role and position in the larger society outside their own community. This is a land marked changes from their general status of having been porters' community en block placed in the lowest rank of the larger society until recent past. Despite, resistances from the rest of traditional community modern education and government jobs are gaining importance among the younger generation people. Few government employees among them are becoming role models and change agents in the community. These educated and salaried and/or richer people put up better houses, maintain better living conditions and understand the value of modern education national culture and as such are treated as respectable persons. They are fast catching up with the new ways of life. Some of them have very negative attitude to their own traditional way of life.

A conflict has emerged in the Doya society between the old and new generation in which the new tradition of market oriented modern society is gaining its ground. The Doya society is passing through in transition towards a change. We shall try to understand the old social values and tradition in the following chapters.