
SOCIAL ORGANISATION

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The Doyas have lived with their own ethnic identity over time immemorial. They have retained a distinctive culture and social organisation of their own amidst the politically dominant Drukpa and culturally dominant Rai migrants of great Nepali cultural extracts in their immediate neighbourhood. Doyas form a distinct social unit in the socio-cultural environment within which they find themselves. Their relation with the *Drukpa* due to geographical barrier has been partial and master-servant like in nature through private and personalised contacts or as groups of porters/labourers for the rulers. The Doya occupies a receptive position at lower level of social strata in Bhutanese society. They don't mind if Drukpa take away their women but Drukpas consider them lower caste and do not necessarily treat them as equals and accord legitimacy to any offspring out of a sexual intercourse with Doya women. There have been instances when Drukpa have taken young males and females for their domestic services through their administrative and trading contacts with the people. When the males, who are picked at their young age, come back home. They retire without spouse and children, as males would not readily find female partners in Drukpa society. Some females also come back home with couple of illegitimate children, as females would be sexually exploited. Such children are however, generally accepted in Doya society without any social discrimination.

On the other hand, Doya's relation with the Rai can at best be described as harmoniously symbiotic but socially exclusive. Rai as a part of great Nepali cultural extract present themselves as culturally superior and potentially impressive social group capable of considerable influences on the Doya ways of life. Rai in general feel that their Doya brethren needs to learn a lot from them to improve their living standards and change some of their social customs. Incidentally, the Doyas also seem to have adopted certain cultural traits and techniques through years of close social interactions with the Rai and subsequent changes in their ecological environment. In turn, the Rai found amicable the people and place to settle down and prosper. Yet, both the societies maintain a social boundary between them by virtue of their intrinsic socio-cultural tenets and different perceptions. In this connection it may be remembered here that the offspring of inter-marriages between the Nepalese and Doyas form a distinct category in the Doya society called Danchat who are socially segregated from others.

Doya social organisation is based on Matriliney and Matrilocality and that of Durkpas and Rai are based on the principles of Patriliney and Patrilocality³⁷.

Thus, a social boundary line can be delineated for the Doya with respect to the Rai and the *Drukpa* societies. The Drukpas, on the one hand as the ruling and dominant cultural group, trace their origin from Tibet. On the other hand, Rais as the lower caste in Nepali society trace their origins from Nepal and form a distinct cultural group with local variations and consider the Doyas as an indigenous minority group of people having inferior lifestyle and language. The Doyas therefore, present a distinct ethnic group in the socio-cultural environment of the region for an ethnographic investigation.

2.1: *Riihs, their Origins and Deities*

The Doya society is organised through number of matrilineages. Individuals born in the society is identified with a matrilineal title that is transmitted through female lives. A consanguinal group of people with such a lineage title with a distinct

³⁷ Although, the ethnographic studies on many different communities in Bhutan are not to be found the Drukpa society is also generally known to be much influenced by matriliney and matrilocality.

origin transmitted through only female line of descendants is called a *Riih*. There were at least 13 Riihs known to the people with different titles in the Doya society. They are *Namba*, *Kordang*, *Himajang*, *Laskey*, *Ruischat*, *Humchat*, *Dupsot*, *Metchat*, *Binchat*, *Dingchat*, *Dohtag*, *Asonk* and *Konsiring*.

Table-2.1: Riih(s) and Their Origins.

Riih Groupings	Name of the Riih(s)	Origins
1.	<i>Namba</i> <i>Kordang</i>	Sky. A branch of Namba riih.
2.	<i>Himajang</i> <i>Laskey</i>	<i>Pey-chop</i> : An insect that infests the stems of Acorn tree.
3.	<i>Ruischat</i> * <i>Humchat</i> <i>Dupsot</i>	<i>Bup-sop</i> : A land dwelling snail with whitish shell.
4.	<i>Metchat</i>	The origin is not known. They are also believed to have come from a place called <i>Todey-tankha</i> in the south.
5.	<i>Binchat</i>	From <i>Bindin</i> ,: an ancestress deity, revealed and worshipped by a famous Pama. The descendants of who became associated with this deity and came to be known as Bin-chat.
6.	<i>Dingchat</i>	Their origin is not known. Members of this clan are known as high hill dwellers.
7.	<i>Doh-tag</i>	Origin not known.
9.	<i>Asonk</i>	Origin not known.
10	<i>Konsiring</i>	No descendants left.

* People of this clan are believed to have come from Sikkim.

Members of the most of these *Riihs* trace their origins from different sources while some of them did not have clear idea of their origins. The *Riih Konsiring* had no descendant family left among the Lotukuchu Doyas.

Among the existing Himajang, Laskey, Ruischat, Humchat, Dupsot, Metchat, Binchat seem to have origins of earthly nature amongst which the former five *Riihs* trace their origins from some form of land dwelling animals and the latter two trace their origins to specific geographical regions. We can have at least six *Riih* groupings on the basis of some similarities of their origins among those whose origins were known (Table-2.1). Himajang and Laskey share a common origin from a stem borer insect called *Peychop*. Ruischat, Humchat and Dupsot also share a common origin from a land dwelling snail called *Bupsop*. *Namba*³⁸ is said to have originated from sky along with another *Riih* called the Kordang being a sub branch of the former. It is also said the Doya kings of the past belonged to *Namba Riih*. Origins of Dingchat, Dohtag and Asonk *Riihs* could not be known during the studies. Ruishchat (although sharing common origin with Humchat and Dupsot) and Metchat are said to have migrated originally from Sikkim and *Todey-tamkha* (a place said to be in south of the present Doya habitat). How ever, different may be the origins of each *Riih* the Doyas as an ethnic community all together seem to have at least three mythological stories that accounts for a common origin³⁹.

³⁸ *Setah* aged 70+ years belonging to *Namba Riih* narrated the origin of his clan. According to him origin of his clan took place when once God sent a man to earth to fetch a pig for certain ceremony. The man looked for a pig on the earth and found one. But when he was about to take the pig, it asked if it can get human faeces to eat there. The man said no and then the pig refused to go. Fearing the indignations of God in going back without the pig the man stayed back on the earth with the pig. He later married with a local lady and his descendant children; became *Namba*. Another version says that *Namba Riih* originator fell from sky at *Tahlag* (*Tahlag* is waterlogged place on the upper hill of Sanglung territory still existing. This place considered sacred is under thick forest cover. They believe that a powerful deity resides there). Further, the Doya king who had his palace at Denchukha is said to have belonged to this clan.

³⁹ Talking about their earlier forms of family traditions and ways of life with the local elders in all the villages four different versions emerged;

a - Once three brothers came around the region, the youngest brother could not keep pace with his elder brothers. His elder brothers told him to take a rest for sometime while they and proceeded ahead looking for better place to settle. They did not come back for days. Later, the youngest brother also followed behind in the direction they went. He went on and on without any trace of his elder brothers. On the way he saw vast area of burnt Jungle with new shoots coming up on the land and he thought It was futile to trail behind his brothers any farther. He decided to settle down there. He married a local woman. It is said that the descendants of this couple became the Doya. Incidentally, this story of origin is quite similar with that of R.Fonig's narration in his book, "My Vanishing Tribe" written about the origin of the Lepchas.

There are several high gods called *Lha* among the Doyas. These Lhas are believed to have control over their lives, properties, fertility and natural environment. There are three different important Lhas namely, *Tengtha*⁴⁰, *Zibdag* and *Nehdag*. All the Doyas generally worship these once in 3 or 5 years period in different residential territories with the cooperation of all the matrilineage descent members. However, Namba and Kordang Riihs were more closely associated with Tenglha, and Laskey Riih to Zibdag deity in ritual observances at the time of worships. These Lhas are believed to be residing in the rocks and top of hills. There were however, no signs of idols but they could point out the abodes of these deities in the territories.

There are also several deities associated with the natural resources in the residential territories. Some of the popularly known are *Orlung*, *Lhungma* and *Uripemo* deities residing in different parts of Lotukuchu territory. *Uripuda*, *Yuhma* and *Chohminh* are other territorial deities in Sanglung. *Kenduma*⁴¹ is

b- Once there was a big snake in a big pool of water. One day, God came and cut it into three equal parts. From the parts, sprang three men. The first man from the head part went north and became 'Lhakey' (Tibetan). The man from the middle part remained in the same place and became 'Doya' and the last man from the tail part went southwest and became the Nepali. Some persons criticise this as a concocted story to justify/prove indignity of the people of Nepali origins in Bhutan.

c- There are some elders who bluntly deny the authenticity of this story of origin saying that this is a concoction theory under the influence of migrant Nepalese. They simply say that Doyas originated from this very land and migrated from nowhere. Under-current of this idea came quite explicit in the recent socio-political development of the region, relevance of which will be touched upon in the last chapter.

d- Another theory, but not the last is very encompassing and has its underpinnings in their belief and knowledge about their natural environment which can be relegated to the realm of myths. In this theory Doya has been related to certain animals. It says that people are related to tiger (*Kong*) as their Maternal Uncle (*Ku*) and Jaguar (*Jig*) as their maternal Uncle's wife (*Ni*) who gave birth to a female. On the other hand Bear (*Naïsa*) as their Paternal Uncle (*Pang*), who gave birth to a male. The union of the two female and male resulted in the origin of the Doyas. They say that it is taboo to kill any of these animals and eat their meat. In an interesting incident that occurred with Yangku's father Late Zaba, who came across a *Jig* (Jaguar) while coming back home through Jungle paths in the evening time. The Jaguar charged and leaped at him and he, in his efforts to save his life caught hold of the animal so firmly that both remained there throughout the night without harming one another. Zaba's friend went out looking for him in the morning and found him lying with the Jaguar in the Jungle. After making it sure that the Jaguar was dead, they approached and found that Zaba was still alive but badly scratched.

⁴⁰ Elders in Lotukuchu territory in the course of an informal interview told me that there are nine such deities associated with important *Riih*(s) and that they are brothers amongst who *Tengtha* is the eldest of all.

⁴¹ *Kenduma*, a particular deity came to be worshipped after a *Hapa Pau* (another term for Shaman in *Dzongkha* language) who is believed to have influenced the *Satank* people after he had revealed it. The abode of this deity is at *Karmapet* which falls at the vicinity of *Satahka* territory and where the *Hapa* set up their makeshift tent (*Nulak*) in the migration to the south during winter season. Relation between *Hapa* and *Doya* is discussed in Chapter-IV.

another deity in satakha territory and Bindin⁴² in Lotok. There are certain sacred spots preserved where these deities are believed to be residing. They are worshiped every season before and after seed sowing for productivity and well being of the people⁴³. It is believed that these deities exercise their control over the land fertility, productivity, rain and wind and also over the health and well being of the people. These deities are to be appeased and worshipped occasionally also by the local people when something seem to be going wrong in their normal live.

The Doyas have yet two other deities closely associated with their residential households (Makim) and matrilineage. One is called *Echan* and the other *Gyenea*. They are associated with residential households and one's matrilineage. Both are to do with the welfare and solidarity of the ancestry and descendant lineage members under a Makim.

All the Doya households in general worship these deities every year between September and October marking the beginning of a new year (*Loh*). All the descendant members of a lineage segment who may be found under different territorial units have to be present on this occasion. They are bound together under a deity specifically associated with each Riih. The unity and solidarity among the segments of a lineage find expressions in the annual worship Riih deities. This worship of Riih deities is performed once in 3 or 5 years with sacrifice of cocks (*Kek*), or a Pig (*Pank*) or local ox (*Pik*) or an ox procured from tea garden labourers from the Indian border⁴⁴. This requires co-operation in cash and kind contributions from all the Riih members of lineage⁴⁵. Some such names

⁴² Please see Table-2.2

⁴³ Rai people residing adjacent to Sanglung village are also invited to participate in the worship of Doya Deity.

⁴⁴ Madesi ox is requisitioned at a time from a family who has committed some social offence in choosing a matrimonial partner.

⁴⁵ *Chapchu* (24 y) belongs to *Humchat Riih*. He was a temporary cook in the school mess. One day, he came to me asking for some money. I asked the reason why he needed the money. He told me that on 16th of November '92 they were worshipping their *Riih* deity for which they needed to buy a big pig and he had been asked to contribute some money as he was married. A pig has to be procured and fed at home for some days in the name of the deity before the sacrifice at the village *Karbari*'s house, where the ancestral deity resides. The *Karbari* of the village, *Senam Dorji* is *Chapchu*'s uncle. They live separately. I gave him the money and he invited me to join the worship.

of Riih deities are; *Gomchen* deity for Namba Riih and *Jimpey* deity for Kordang Riih⁴⁶.

I once had an occasion to witness the local deity worship in Sanglung territory along with Hirang Maila, a popular Rai Bijuwa of Bisgoan neighbouring to Sanglung. It was 2nd May in 1992 when the maize crop had grown 3 to 4 feet tall on the Jhum fields along the ridges and slopes of the hills. Representatives of eighteen households who had their fields (*Yonk*) around the stretch of hill slopes there. Hirang Maila was also invited as he had a patch of maize field on *Adhiya*⁴⁷ (50:50 share) basis with a Doya family in Sanglung.

They had contributed to arrange two pigs, some hens and cocks and eggs for offering to the deities. The place of worship was on a ridge running west to east direction on which maize was already sown. Nine small platforms raised on four sticks, one to two feet from the ground were erected around the ridge facing different directions. Elders including women were gathered to do the worship. The deities that were worshiped on the day made were as follows; *Zibdag*: supposed to be male deity was offered with pig. He has control over life and death, and general health of the people, their general health. He can cause all sorts of body aches if neglected by the people. *Yuhma*: supposed to be a female deity was also offered with pig. She has controls over wind and rain and also on the health of the people particularly health problems related with digestion and breathing. *Chirrgan* and *Sing*: supposed to be a female deity. She was offered Hens and Cocks. She controls over the crops grown in the shifting fields. *Lungchar* and *Gangchen*: Spirits of death people supposed be residing in the hilltops. They are offered hens and cocks facing the western direction. *Chopdut*: another female deity of the local area. She was offered hens and cocks. My informant friend did not reveal her influence in the local environment. *Chohminh*: another female deity. Her abode is at a pond in the upper part of Sanglung territory. The pond like a spring is a perennial source of water drained by streams down hill through the length of Sanglung territory. The deity has control over this source of water and also responsible for fever and skin diseases if neglected. She was offered eggs. The last two deities that are also worshipped are *Pandigang* and *Yuhma*. They were offered hens and cocks. Their influences were not revealed very clearly to me. The ritual performances of the day were as follows;

The nine platforms at different places were covered with freshly cut banana leaves. Seven trident figures made of dough called *Sebu* were kept on the platform for *Zibdag* along with a small bowl made of the same stuff filled with fermented millet was also placed. On a bark of tree incense smoke with dried pine spruce leaves was kept. Some boiled eggs were placed on the platform for *chohminh*

⁴⁶ It is prohibited to take the name of such deity. In a flow of conversation once I was able to get some names of clan deity but my informant regretted a moment later to have taken the name. Taking such names is bound to arouse indignation of the deity affecting their general health, they believe.

⁴⁷ *Adhiya* is a Nepali term referring to a system of land use between two parties. One who has the land allows the other to grow crop on the condition that the crop yield at the harvest time will be distributed 1:1/1:3 according to the extent of labour and resources contribution from the two parties.

along with chanting of appeasement and sprinklings of local brew. The chanting translated goes like this – “You are our benevolent guardian. You have been worshipped and respected by our ancestors since long. We beseech you to guard us against misfortunes and diseases. We are offering you things that we could manage.” This way all other deities were also appeased with their particular offerings separately one after the another for better productivity, good health, good weather and continuous water supply, etc.

Offering of the pig: A person caught the pig by the two hind legs, while the others/preacher chanted with a cylinder of jar in one hand. At the end of the chanting an elder signalled to spear the pig through its heart and lungs. The blood smeared pointed knife was shown on the offering platform while the pig died soon out of bleeding. The pig was then roasted a little on fire to clear its fur after which the hind nail finger of all the four legs were cut off, a part of tail, lower lip, the eyes, ear, nose, tongue were also cut off and kept separately on a piece of leaf. Two long parallel cuts were made running from the armpits and meeting around the genital. This piece was cut off along with the sternum leaving the stomach and abdomen exposed. The whole of alimentary canal, heart, stomach and liver were cut off and kept separately. From this lump again a piece of liver and lung were cut off and kept on the leaf. The pelvic bone was broken to cut four major portions; 1- Head. 2- Forearm region with the two legs. 3- the middle part including the chest and vertebra. 4- The hind region with two hind legs. These major portions except the head was further cut into four small pieces each. The middle part was cut along vertebral column and a piece of spinal cord was taken out and kept on the leaf. These two pieces were again cut into three pieces each. The hind part was also cut in the same manner in three pieces each. The head was cut vertically into two symmetric parts and the brain was taken off, then another cross sectional cut was made between the jaws and the tongue was taken out. In all, twenty-two pieces were made of the pig. These pieces were boiled and offered along chanting and sprinkling of *Yu* in chorus.

The hens and cocks are also offered in the same manner. After all the offerings were made they partook the meat and drinks. They said that the alimentary canal and lungs couldn't be given to any outsider to eat: they have to eat it themselves.

2.2: *Ewui*⁴⁸: Organisation of Residential Territories

A look at the composition of Riih(s) in a particular residential unit (*Ewui*) would reveal that there are at least two groups of people belonging to different Riih (Table-2.2). However, the fact that some Riih(s) share a common source of origin

Table-2.2: Riih Distribution and Territorial Titles

Residential Territories (<i>Ewui</i>)	Riih(s) found	Titles
Satakha	Ruischat, Humchat, Dohtag	<i>Satank</i>
Sanglung	Laskey, Dupson, Asonk Ruischat.	<i>Guchat</i>
Lotukuchu(A&B) ⁴⁹	Namba, Laskey, Kordang	
Lotok	Metchat, Binchat, Himajang.	<i>Binchat</i>

may also throw some light in understanding the composition of a particular *Ewui* formation (Table-2.1). And the fact that people residing in a particular residential unit are known under different names, viz; *Satank*, *Guchat* and *Binchat*⁵⁰, worshipping respective common deities also shows some kind of territorial solidarity in the social organisation.

Moreover, there is an apparent aggregation, segregation and regroupings of the people based on common territorial residence, lineage, Riih and cultural difference. An interesting aspect of grouping phenomenon can be observed,

⁴⁸ *Ewui* is relative term like local or locality. One single residential territory with a name such as Lower Lotukuchu may be referred to as *lwui* with respect to it adjacent upper residential territory at lowest level of reference and then the whole of Lotukuchu Doya territory or the region as compared to other territory far and near may also be referred to as *Ewui* at the higher level reference. The term *Ewui* is also used in distinguishing things which are locally available or made as compared to other things which are brought from outside. For example, *Ewui to Jarto* = local millet.

⁴⁹ Residents of Lower Lotukuchu(A) are again distinguished by the term *Leysant* from the residents of Upper Lotukuchu(B) who are known as *Rosant*

⁵⁰ These names; *Satank*, *Guchat* and *Binchat* do not refer to any territorial land but to the people who worship different common local deities that control the area where they reside. Further, investigations about these names reveal a particular group i.e. *Binchat* was founded by a *Pama*. My informants said, *The Pama belonged to Metchat Riih. He was known for his extraordinary knowledge about esoteric arts and spirits. He revealed a local deity called Bindin in Lotukuchu. After him his descendants and other people in a Lotukuchu started worshipping the deity and they later came to be known as Binchat. But nothing such could be known about the other two group names in my efforts. They simply say these names refer to people of Satakha and Sanglung.*

reflected in the grouping behaviour and attitudes of school going children of the place⁵¹.

Residential groups of people within a common territory are known with distinct territorial titles such as Satank for the people of Satakha, Guchat for the residents of Sanglung and Binchat for the people of Lotukuchu and Lotok. The territorial solidarity by virtue of sharing a common residential area is expressed by worshipping the local deities from time to time for the general well being of the residents and productivity of land and food grains.

Matrimonial relations within and amongst the residential groups present a particular pattern (Table-2.3) despite possible deviations due to demographic situation. An analysis of the pattern of matrimonial relations of 160 cases

⁵¹ The primary school was established in 1987. It had classes up to V standard 1994-95. There were about 216 students on the roll (1993) age ranging 7 to 29. The total strength comprises of 130 Doya (*Lhopu*) boys and girls with a sex distribution of 101 boys to 29 girls and 50 boys to 32 girls between the *Rai* and minor number of *Lepcha* students. These students come from the surrounding villages (Map-1.2) namely; *Sengten*, *Satakha*, *Sanglung*, *Lumbey*, *Lapcheygoan*, *Bisgoan*, and *Majuwa*(not shown in the map). The school had boarding facility. Since the year 1991 the Boarding started to accommodate only Doya boys and girls.

Observation of the clustering behavioural pattern of the children in 3 dormitories in Boys' Hostel and 1 room for girls revealed the following interesting patterns: In the first dormitory some *Leysant-Binchat* (Lower Lotukuchu) along with 1 *Guchat* (Sanglung) and a *Lepcha* boy stayed. In the middle dormitory which is the largest and had *Leysant-Binchat* with three *Satank* staying. Inside each and every room including the girls' shows segregated cluster groups based on the Group identity and *Riih* attachment, occupying separate Portions and corners of the rooms.

During the school hours when the school is in full strength they get half an hour time of Lunch and Games, during which time they are left on their own. Lunch was served in exclusive lines of boys and girls. After getting their food they moved out to the playground to eat. During this time pity looking minority group or individual also got their groups to join in. Girls sat at a little distance from the boys group. Doya and *Rai* girls made their own separate groups in semi-circles. The scattered group comprises of territorial alignments and village groups (for *Rai* girls). Small minority group often joined friendly groups but what were again apparent among the Doya girls were the *Riih* groupings. The same was true for the boy's pattern of groupings. There was also conspicuous segregation of groups into sub-groups during playtime among the boys. Here, it must be noted that in general the relation between Doya and *Rai* at the village level was amicably congenial, which was also reflected in the general behaviour of the school children. But what went on during the playtime is just interesting. Groups of Doya and *Rai* boys made exclusive teams in the football ground with two local made footballs of plastic rags. They made two exclusive groups of Doya and *Rai*, which were further divided into 2 Doya opponent teams and 2 *Rai* opponent teams. One *Rai* team and one Doya team took to one side of the football field and other two exclusive teams to the other side along common goal posts. In this way, one noticed two goal-keepers (one Doya and one *Rai*) at each of the Goal posts. The play began with two balls at the centre; Doya boys play with their ball with their opposing team and in the same manner *Rai* boys with their own ball and opposing team played in the same field without any conflict or chaos. At first sight, it looked like a total chaos but with a careful observation one could see an order in the disorderly playground. The play went on without any mistakes and mischief between from the players of the two groups carefully avoiding obstructions and the ball of the other group. They used to get themselves absorbed in carefully tracking their own football and its movements.

revealed that there is a tendency of intense intra-territorial matrimonial bonds rather than that of inter-territorial bonds.

Table-2.3: Inter & Intra-Territorial Conjugal Patterns

Residential Territories	Satakha	Sanglung	Lotukuchu	Lotok
Satakha	54 (71%)	16 (21%)		
Sanglung		110 (66%)		
Lotukuchu	11	4	276 (88%)	
Lotok			8	8

The table above shows at least 54 ($\approx 71\%$) cases of intra-territorial matrimonial alliances out of 76 adults males and females and another 16 (21%) had relations with neighbouring village Sanglung and no relations with Lotukuchu and Lotok which are physically apart. Sanglung being the oldest and second largest village with vast territorial expanse has 110 (66%) matrimonial alliances within the village out of 176 adults. Lotukuchu as a whole has 88% of intra-matrimonial alliances and a few relations with sanglung and Satakha. Lotok as an extension to Lotukuchu has equal intra and inter-matrimonial relations within the village and with Lotukuchu.

These figures were calculated in terms of males taking residence to wife's households.

The inter-territorial alliance seems to be the result of the imbalance in the sex ratio. The little excess of females in reproductive age seems to have received the excess of males in Satakha as the two residential territories were contiguous to each other. Similarly, the excess of adult males in Lotukuchu seems to have gone to find their partners to Satakha and Sanglung. However, there are also other social reasons to explain this phenomenon. It has also been observed that there is an intense intra-Riih matrimonial bond rather than that inter-Riih ones (Table-2.4). The patterns of inter and intra-Riih conjugal relations that emerged out of the field data show interesting results. The samples included married

couples of eleven different Riihs and out of which at least five Riihs were found to be practicing intra-Riih conjugal relations.

Table – 2.4: Inter & Intra-Riih Conjugal Patterns

Riihs	(askey)	Namba	Metchat	Humchat	Dohtag	Dingchat	Kardong	Binchat	Ruischat	Himajan
Laskey	33	3	2	6	-	-	2	3	-	1
Namba	11	9	3	-	1	-	1	1	-	-
Metchat	1	6	1	1	-	-	-	2	-	-
Humcha	2	1	1	6	-	1	-	-	-	-
Dohtag	2	1	2	2	1	-	-	-	1	-
Dingchat	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kordang	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	53	22	9	15	2	1	3	6	1	1

(Random sample size : 113)

These Riihs were Laskey, Namba, Metchat, Humchat and Dohtag. In the sample of 113 married couples collected during the study 62.2 % belonged to intra-Riih couples of Laskey Riih (as compared to 37.8% of inter-Riih marriages with Namba, Metchat, Humchat, Dohtag and Kordang Riihs), 7.9 % couples belong to intra-Riih marriages of Namba Riih, 5.3 % belong to intra-Riih couples of Humchat Riih and single cases (0.8 %) of intra-Riih marriages with Metchat and Dohtag Riihs. Out of a sample of 22 cases for Namba Riih 40.9% were of intra-Riih marriages and the rest inter-Riih with Laskey, Metchat, Humchat, Dohtag and Dingchat. Metchat and Humchat Riihs had inter-Riih marriage relations with Laskey, Namba, Humchat/Metchat and Dohtag.

2.3: *Makim: An Abode of Matrilineage and Matrilocality*

To disentangle and understand the inter-twined complexity of Doya social organisation within and without let us look at domestic level consanguinal family unit which reproduces its members and perpetuate the relations. This consanguinal unit is called Makim. In a Makim (main household) mother, her husband, married daughter her husband, unmarried daughters and small boys and girls live together. But seen in any household, these consanguinal units can be found with varying compositions such as;

A - Mother, her husband, with one or more married daughters and their husbands along with unmarried daughter(s) and son(s) may be found in a Makim

B - Newly married daughter with her husband may still be a part of a Makim taking shelter in a budded structure on one of the side of the main house.

C - Married daughter with her husband and children may be found in a small house called *Kim* built nearby the Makim or in a *La* at the shifting field.

B and C groups would always be found linked to an ancestral house through matrilineal descent thus these two family units do not necessarily occupy a Makim. Unit A can often be found occupying a Makim forming a matrilineal corporate group (*a la Maine*) in continuity of its Riih. All individuals born in this group, identify themselves with the particular Riih title. Descendant females transmit the Riih title through her children. Males retain their Riih identity in their lifetime and end with it when they eventually die. From a consanguinal family of the unit A matured son takes residence in his wife's ancestral house with parents-in-law and other resident husbands.

This situation may be quite alike Robin Fox's Model-1 derived from ethnographic materials of *Nayyar*, *Navaho* and *Yao* tribes, in solution of his 4 Principles⁵² but we cannot afford to overlook the cultural specificity of other society.

⁵² The four Principles are 1 – the women have the children, 2 – the men impregnate the women, 3 – the men usually exercise control and 4 – Primary kin group do not mate(Robin Fox:1976)

The Doya situation presents a specific case in particular the question why must only females stay put on the ancestral land? And why must only females transmit the Riih title and not males? Who exercises control over the ancestral land? These questions require us to look into the history and traditional law of inheritance in the Doya society. Here, we will look into the land owning system first.

What the local folktales account for the way land came to be owned by them in the past corroborates the land revenue system in the 19th century in Ashley Eden's book (1864). Doya folktales reveal that they did not enjoy an ownership right to the land on which their descendants lived. Until 1956 Land Reformation Act of the Royal Government the land belonged to the Penlops and Rajas. Doyas were allowed to use forest and land resource freely in lieu of free labour services in transportation of goods, tending ponies, cattle and construction work through 'Gon-do wula⁵³'.

Illegally in the eyes of the rulers but internally, they had well defined collective/legitimate land ownership and inheritance pattern. In the vast area of richly forested land on the hill slopes they practised mainly slash and burn/shifting cultivation, wherever it was suitable. They moved from place to place within their territory and slashed and burned parts of hill slopes, at many different places. And whosoever, did the work, the land belonged to him or her lineage and got inherited through generations. Thus each and every descendant primary lineal family began to possess land they cultivated and possessed. The more each primary lineal family procreated, the larger and the more of Jhumming fields as they had the freedom to exploit their environment. Although both male and female worked at par, a popular folksong called *Nangsey*⁵⁴ is sung by females for

⁵³ Gon-do-wula is a term in the national Dzongkha language that refers to a system of free labour services for the state. In this system every household has to provide one person's labour a period of 15 days or more depending upon the nature of work and travelling days involved. The work generally used to road and fort construction for the rulers.

⁵⁴ It is believed that when a woman sing *Nangsey* keeping her sickle (*Goish*) with the cutting blade facing upward in the Jhum field to be cleared the song has a magical impact in the work accomplishment. The song goes like this: "Ya Nangsey ya pumo-o-pup cher-a...Nupchu ya pekpa gu sen ru-a.... ga tinley ba...Ga ugen ya pusem busen ru...Ga nangsey pumo popse duna se su o-ya...Ga nangsey nalu tin me ba nangsey-ya.... Ga nabsu ya pepa pupa...Gu sin ru pin me banase su...". The woman who sang this song for refused to give the meaning of the song while it being tape recorded and unfortunately later I did not have time to pursue the matter.

its magical effects on the work progress in clearing the fields. These lands owned at many different places came to be known with particular names, as, after a big tree or a rock or a different type of tree or topography of the land for their reference (Map-2.1: Native's Version).

Given the historical antecedents and given the type of Doya family organisation (*a la Malinowski & Firth, R.*) with respect to land it does not make sense to talk about land ownership as such, it would rather be meaningful to talk in terms of land *authorship* and subsequent maintenance and inheritance pattern of the land through the descendant consanguinal lineage group, who seem to corporate to use and maintain and extend it wherever possible/needed for their future descendants.

In the above situation it goes without saying that who ever group authors a piece of land develops a sense of attachment towards it and consequently a sense of collectively owning it along the matrilineal residential group. For a descendant consanguinal family among many other different such lineal groups, to maintain such a piece of authored land it becomes necessary that the land remains within themselves and does not go to other's hand. Therefore, to this effect the consanguinal family as a corporate body has to see that the lineal reproduction is ensured within close kin groups through generations. This is the main problem of matrilineal corporate body for which there are customary rules relating to conjugal alliances that ensure continuity of the land and female line through generations.

Given the understanding of this kind of situation and to set out to analyse the Doya social organisation would be indigestible if Robin Fox's Principle-3, which says, men usually exercise control, is not heeded to, at all. But for any analytical purpose I would like to see the Male(s) for men because the word is more often value laden and culturally tainted. Let the image of men emerge out through the analysis of their situation.

Map -2.1: Lotukuchu Proper: A Native's Version



2.4: Rules relating to Conjugal Relations

Rule-I:

A - Son must go for brother's daughter and daughter must bring brother's son (females' perspectives) or in other words, Daughter must bring sister's son and son must go for sister's daughter

B - Consanguinal daughter must stay put together in mother's natal house and son must take residence in wife's natal house.

These are the ideal rules of residence and conjugal relations for eligible males and females to reproduce the lineages, which they try to adhere to but the problems of finding conjugal partners due to imbalance sex ratio in the community it is often difficult to adhere to the ideal rules in practice. Therefore, there are also some alternative rules in the spirit of the former. First, we will look into the operations of the first set of rules and resultant problems by taking up two consanguinal families of Unit-C⁵⁵ (comprising wife, resident husband and their children) in which the wife and her husband are grandchildren of a mother in the preceding third generation. In ideal situations, the children in the two-consanguinal families will grow up into matured males and females. They will then begin to look for their conjugal partners according to the first set of rules and they establish conjugal bond with their own mother's brother's son or daughter, and/or father's sister's son or daughter.

In this situation, son of a sister will take residence at brother's wife's natal house or brother's daughter's natal house and sister's daughter will stay put in mother's natal house that is also brother's natal house. This relation affects some sort of sons exchange between the two families of brother and sister. The Case studies of Challamo and Chedojis will illustrate the point at the end of this chapter. Son goes to none other than his own mother's brother's daughter and daughter gets

⁵⁵ Folktales often mention of regeneration of the present population from descendant of *Cheli-maiti* (a Nepali term meaning for cross-cousins) conjugation after disastrous population depletion due to war and diseases generations ago. But this term has to be delivered off the Nepali social connotation and articulated into Doyas social milieu to do away with unnecessary confusion, which will be referred in later part of this Chapter. *Cheli* in Nepali society refers to a female who takes residence in the groom's house after marriage and *Maiti* refers to males who bring their wives and stay put in the patrilocal household. Now, in Doya society it is the males to be taken as *Cheli* and not the females as it is a Matrilineal and Matrilocal society.

back her own mother's brother's son (the bone or the seed) to the matrilineage, to further perpetuate the line of descent. The son provides his labour in both his wife's maternal land and his own maternal land and contributes his share of grains to his conjugal family. He is also entitled to a part of whatsoever property such as livestock or land that his mother's brother (*Ku*) raises for his children during his lifetime. Whereas, mother's brother's children also have an access to a part of the matrilineal land for use that may be allotted through a joint decision taken by parents and married sons and daughters of a matrilineal group. The males of the family help make and extend the matrilineage through generations by his sex right mobility. His role and status is embedded in this social matrix. He plays an important and responsible role in facilitating decisions relating to the matrilineage in different social occasions. However, he does not necessarily dominate over the decisions. He is equally responsible to his sister(s) and her children who enjoy a special relation with him different from their own father's brothers and father. He plays an important role in organising and performing rituals relating to the matrilineal household deities and deities associated with their Riih and territory and at the time of familial crisis. In the time of misfortunes and at the time of rituals of life, he is always the one to look upon⁵⁶.

From the following observations and analysis a deviation from the principle-3: *men usually control* is irresistible. And equally irresistible is an idea of commonality of interests amongst the consanguineous lineal members in its perpetuation and maintenance of the authored land within a Riih vis-à-vis other Riih(s), which may be seen, reproduced through generations in the Doya social organisation on the whole.

For the time being we will continue to concern with our consanguinal family. Daughters of sisters establishing connubial relations with brother's sons serve the same purpose. In that the husband who is mother's brother's son comes to no alien household other than his own close aunt. Working and procreating in that household also serves the common interest for the future generations. If he is

⁵⁶ I often ask the question, *who is the most important person in your family among the people*. To the answer they often say, *Mother and then father*. Some important persons in family: *small children say Father and mother*. But elder say: *Father, mother and Maternal Uncle (Ku)*.

able to author some more land, he does not become a rich man but he becomes a resourceful male to have had more of which some part can be shared to his own children and some part to his sister's sons. One of them gets more who gets a chance to carry his (*Ku's*) dead body in his funeral rites.

However, in reality it isn't possible to get one to one relation for every FZC and MBC to reproduce and maintain the matrilineage and the land according to the Rule-I. More often than not many of the prospective matured males and females fail to have their prescribed opposite sex partners due to various practical reasons which are out of their control such as;

1. Unequal sex distribution, 2 age differences between the prescribed partners, 3 individual adventures, etc. To counter such practical problems pertaining to the basic tenets of the society alternatives are provided in Rule-II.

Rule-II: One can seek connubial partners with mother's sister's children (MZC) also in the third generation by direct descent.

This rule provides an alternative to the Rule-I within the same scope and parameter. But in this case both the conjugal partners will belong to the same Riih. Moreover, they may also be residing in the same territory but living in separate households belonging to a lineage segment. Nevertheless, this relationship brings the groups even more closely and consolidates on their corporate land and property ownership. But for the small size and limited pool of members belonging to a particular Riih or for that matter a lineage and also for the general morbidity of children and presence of some imbeciles many a conjugal relations were found affected even among the first and second generation of parallel cousins in the direct descent. Such relations are considered as deviance from the norms of the society however; the party concerned and their children are legitimised and accepted only after paying *Nama*⁵⁷ to a congregation of elders in the residential community.

⁵⁷ *Nama* in some kind of ceremonial payment, most often in terms of the local drinks (*Yu*) done where a person(s) has to seek social approval or legitimacy.

Nevertheless, neither the rule-I nor Rule-II is able to contain and satisfy the problem-3 as listed above and the strict adherence conjugal prohibition among the parallel cousins on the father's side up to 7th generation. This is apparently adhered to by the absence of such matrimonial cases notwithstanding very rare exceptional cases that resulted to social ostracism.

Non-adherence to the prohibited rules and non-payment of Nama in case of pardonable social offences, they say are ostracised from the society and lineage land. Such cases have not occurred among the Doya but application of such a sanction on prohibited relations involving individuals from among the people is apparently considerate⁵⁸ although they are labelled with different identity.

However, the problem of finding one's conjugal partner given the sort of rules and the demographic difficulties seem to have allowed situation where individuals to personal adventures courted marital relations with the Nepali women in their neighbourhoods from earlier times. Almost the whole of people in the Satakha territory is often said to be descendants of such deviant inter-marriages. It was found that these people suffered from social ostracism for long time. They were differentiated from the rest of the society by labelling a derogatory title.

Observing and talking to all these people who face social sanctions relating to conjugal relations it was confirmed that they lead a secluded and left out life. They authored new land on their own or bought land from others and started a life anew on their own. Descendants of these parents are not all together forgotten and pardoned. They are collectively separated from the rest of society and labelled as Danchat (children of Nepalese)

Now, let us look into the consequences of the execution of the Rule-II (Females must stay put at matrilineal house). Obviously, the execution of this Rule will best serve the purpose of the corporate body wherein the lineal individuals and land will be intact. For this matter why should not the children of sisters be allowed to

⁵⁸ Some of them to name few Late Pincho Ganpa of Satakha married a Rai Nepali lady and settled in his own village, Ujeydema mothered a son to a Gurung Bijuwa Nepali of Bisgoan, Sakonang mothered a son to another Gurung Bijuwa Nepali and Sakab married a Tamang Nepali lady and settled in his ancestral land along with his brothers and sisters

form matrimonial bonds in the second or for that matter in the first generation itself without having to pay Nama? Why should there be prohibitory rules against it? I put this question to many of the people. The answer I get is a frank affirmation, "*Pahela-pahela to hundeiy thiyo, cheli-maiti ko bich-ma puni. Abota hundeina.*" (Speaking in Nepali they say,"Long ago, there used to be, even between sons and daughters of sisters also. Now, it is not done.") There was an apparent uneasiness on the part of respondents in further talking about the matter. We look into the prohibitive rules on the father's brother's side. Under the prescriptions of Rule - II, & I brothers of a consanguinal family will seek matrimonial ties with;

1. MBDs, or
2. MZDs in the third generation, or
3. Other females within the society.

The first two (1 & 2) will best serve the purpose of their common interest but in case such options are ruled out, he will go for the third option (3). Even this will serve the common interest provided his wife's house or the land is in the same territory (Table-2.4). Now, let us assume another situation where two brothers get into matrimonial bonds to see how the common interest in the corporate body is maintained. This can happen in two different ways; One- brothers getting married with same lineage females and Two- the two brothers getting married with females belonging to different lineages (Riihs). The fact that males do not transmit lineage title through their progeny and that they take residence in other's corporate consanguinal families only help us to say that males are to help in procreation and perpetuation wife's matrilineages. Therefore, the prohibition on matrimonial ties between parallel cousins on paternal side until 7th generation is justified. What is implicitly conspicuous in this analysis of consanguinal family is that the absence of any negative or positive (must or must not) rules against inter-Riih (lineage) and for that matter inter-territorial matrimonial ties. The implication of this fact seems to cause the very development, existence,

sustenance and perpetuation of each and every lineage (Riihs) and also Doya society as a whole.

The worst situation is when a lineage is reduced to a mother (over her reproductive age) is left with one son only or the situation where execution of Rule - II&I of matrimonial alliances is out of question. The implication can best be illustrated through another rare social practice involving a woman to change her matrilineage for good among the Doyas. This rare phenomenon can be termed as *Matrilineage transmutation* of a woman to others matrilineage, which is facing extinction in the absence of female descendant.

2.4.1 *Matrilineage Transmutation*⁵⁹

Having no *Metchan* (a daughter) born/left in a matrilineage is a great crisis and extremely crucial situation that may lead to extinction of a lineage, which is also linked to certain deities. This cannot be allowed to happen in all consciousness of the collective conscience when there are possible ways of finding a woman in the situation to work out a solution within the society. All the possibilities are to be explored collectively and it is often not so easy for the woman is central to every lineage. Each woman is sacred in her own lineage with transcending relations the supernatural realms. As such they are firmly rooted and immovable like a piece of land in their matrilineage being responsible for the continuity of the lineage in normal circumstances. Corollary, how can anybody in a close society like the Doyas lay claim over a piece of land that has already been authored and owned by a lineal group? Even if it happens a serious conflict will ensue and the consequences will have far-reaching and irreparable impacts (see Setah and Chapey's case *inf.*). Although, the situation here does provide a room for such

⁵⁹ *Matrilineage Transmutation* (according to Oxford Dictionary *Transmute* v.means 1 change the form, nature, or substance of. 2 *hist* Change (base metal) into gold.) refers to a specific case of Doya society wherein a woman from a matrilineage is permanently taken away for procreation of another matrilineage resulting in totally severing any kin or affinal relation between the two lineages. It involves a long process of negotiation and transactions between the two lineages and with the associated deities on both sides during the life time of the woman. Once, this transaction is affected the past of the woman concerned is forgotten her matrilineage identity gets submerged in that of her husband's matrilineage. This is a rare event in Doya society. However, My respondents used the phrase *Wife Buying* for the phenomena. It was understandably for the convenience of communicating to me in Nepali language. In fact the detail description of the whole process as we shall see does not in any way mean commodification of woman in Doya society.

conflict the social collectivity sees to it that the problem is resolved amicably involving negotiation at societal and supernatural levels. It is time taking and painful emotional processes for the woman but the society shares it together. The details are as follow.

First, a lineage group will have to be found out who can spare a daughter to help procreate others lineage and a process of negotiation begins with elders of the two parties. The interest in the continuity of one's matrilineage and the land is so intense and encompassing that they can even convince the deities who rule upon them. It involves a whole transaction of economic, social and spiritual nature between two lineal groups through a series of negotiation. This being unlike the normal ways of establishing conjugal relations between prescribed partners does not require premarital sex with the women to be transmuted however, there are rooms to test the fertility of the women during the process of transmutation. What is most important is to find a family whose parents can bear and afford to part away with a daughter. In four such cases recorded, two males (*Setah* and *Yishey*) had no sister to perpetuate the lineage and in other two (*Kasadao* and *Aedusiri*) had sister but for plenty of land unmanageable by them they had to arrange transmutation of women for their wives. Woman for transmutation will be undoubtedly found in a relatively disproportionate family size to the corporate land holdings. Once a family is found, consultation and persuasion through close kin and relatives (especially Ku's role is important), to mediate and bring an agreement. After an agreement is reached with the parents and guardian uncle (Ku), a day is decided to take away the girl from her maternal house through rituals. My respondents narrated the whole procedures as follows;

On an auspicious day, lineal elders of the girl will get together at her natal house when the boy's party along with lineal elders guardian will also come prepared. The determination of wife buyer's party is so strong that it is expressed through a folksong sung on this occasion⁶⁰.

⁶⁰ The song goes like this: *Ga choiya-a-bemba lero-a... Ga chuley-a-mata... Ga damba-a-sikti... Ga doley ya mata doji om siki so-oi...Ga chaley ya mat ha chakto siki so-o-wai...Ga lai ya lada pusho chi lada...ga jemo nga ya jigobey lada - o...Ga lari ya lada ya ika ga...sosy nga jemo nga yajigebey - lada-o..* Which briefly means we are taking away the girl after paying the Nama. Nothing can stop us from taking you. If the biggest stream obstructs us on the way we will make a bridge over it. If the path is obstructed by biggest rock we will break it with stone. If iron bars block the path we will cut it through with iron. We will find our path. We will take her home.

After singing the song, the boy along with his elders will sit together inside the girl's house and pay Nama to the mother of the girl. This Nama used to consist of; 12 silver Coins, one *Gemba* full of fermented millet and grains to be offered to the matrilineal deity. And some such things are also to be carried while taking the girl to offer to the local deities of the residential territory on the way. After paying the Nama they will sit together and drink. Then they will set out towards the boy's home taking the girl along.

The Nama paid on this day is the first instalment. After three years from the day giving enough time to test the fertility of the girl-another Gemba of Yu along with a big pig is given to the girl's parents to be offered to the household deity, lineage deity, the ancestral deity and beg for separation of the girl from her mother's lineage, her ancestral land and spiritual relations whatsoever within which she lived and grew up. This is the second instalment of the Nama. The girl thus separated forfeits all the relations whatsoever and would never go back to her natal house even when any members of natal family die.

On the other hand the girl has to be accommodated to the husband's matrilineage and to make the local deities accept her so and bestow on her and her offspring the same protection given to all others of her husband lineage. The same kind of offerings is to be made to propitiate the local spirits and deities for acceptance and accommodation. After these rituals the girl becomes an inseparable member of the lineage by foregoing her Riih title and taking up that of husband's Riih title for her offspring, and thus she will perpetuate the lineage of her husband's mother's matrilineage.

The third continuing instalment of the Nama is given annually at the harvest of local millet (*ewui ka Jarto*) until the lapse of the third year after the death of the woman⁶¹. In absence of parents the descendant children of the matriliney will continue to pay it without allowing any lapse. For the payment goes directly to the deities any lapse in reaching the annual payment will earn royal indignation of the deities. Misfortunes will befall on the family of the defaulters.

Furthermore, the implications of the matrimonial rules can be manifested in the dynamics of territorial group solidarity and social solidarity of the Doya society. There are certain factors, which allow and limit intra-territorial and inter-territorial matrimonial relations. The aforementioned problem-3 in the maintenance of matrilineage continuity gives leverage to effect intra-and inter-territorial relations and social solidarity.

The little room of freedom of choice in the absence of prescribed matrimonial mates allows a matured male or a female to look for his or her mates of choice. Here, also there are certain factors which limit their choices because of the nature of work they do being quite attached to the ancestral land, confines his or

⁶¹ There were occasions when I observed small girls carrying this form of Nama to her mother's natal house in upper Lotukuchu in during 1993.

her movements within their own territory to allow and also limit his or her choices. Therefore, the maximum occurrence of intra-Riih (Table-2.4) and intra-territorial conjugal bonds support greater the solidarity of lineal corporate and territorial grouping patterns (Table-2.3).

Nevertheless, the track in the hills taking almost two days with loads involving night halts on the path, every weekend do give an opportunity to ambitious males and females for seeking conjugal partners or otherwise. Rai people are often heard saying; *Orange season is a matrimonial season for Doya*. Indeed, during my four years of stay in the place most of conjugal bonds were formed during November to March but in retrospect it is difficult to comment if the Doya have a matrimonial season.

What emerges out of the analysis is the portrayal of a dynamic and harmonious Doya social organisation through two tenets.

- 1- interest in the matrilineage and its consequences in the social relations.
- 2- interest in the matrilineal land and its consequences in the formation of the corporate groups.

To further understand the dynamics of Doya society let us discuss some conflicting situations in the society. We have seen how the interest in the matriliney can be maintained in harmony through the ‘positive rules’ and approved ways and means of matrimonial ties. And also how the solidarity so attained becomes manifest in reality in the execution of ‘negative rules’ of matrimonial relations with other society.

Situation arose when someone laid claim over some other’s authored land and the consequences of it was a cleavage in the territorial solidarity of a village. Payo Setah at Lower Lotukuchu and Jimi, my host at upper Lotukuchu narrated this story.

Once it so happened that Setah and Geygey both belonging to Namba Riih encroached upon a piece of land authored by Chapey’s parents (but remained unused for long time) who belong to Laskey Riih. Setah’s parents lived in the

middle of Lotukuchu and then shifted down hill at Dillang (lower most residential area in Lotukuchu) where Chapey had a sizeable land around the place. Chapey lived in upper Lotukuchu. When Setah had risen up a big family he needed more land for cultivation so, he along with Geygey of the same Riih cleared the land around a hill slope, which belonged to Chapey. They used the land and laid claim over it. When Chapey came to know about it he asserted his prerogatives over the land by inheritant ownership right. Setah and Geygey objected. A bitter quarrel broke, animosity and hatred doubled up without anyone to mediate. Ultimately, both the parties underwent **Nubara**⁶² and thus committed themselves to socially boycott one another. This created a divide between the two groups that was transmitted down to descendants through generations. Incidentally, most of the Namba people reside in the lower part of Lotukuchu and came to be known with the title Leysand (ley=low) and most Laskey people reside in the upper part of Lotukuchu and they came to be known with the title Rosand (Ro=upper).

After the incident over the land and subsequent Nubara commitment resulted in forming yet another two distinct socially exclusive groups in the same village under two different territorial titles.

Apparent avoidance in interactions and inhibition among the present generation including their children from going to each other's residential areas was observed through my own experiences of living together with both the groups in lower and upper Lotukuchu living evidence to what occurred 40 to 50 years ago.

However, a better comprehension of the dynamics of Doya social organisation is possible only after we have a comprehensive picture of the organisation of the consanguinal family in its stages of development.

2.5: *Makim and its Developmental Cycle*

A consanguinal family here, refers to a family with matured sons and daughters where the mother is in descent line of a primordial matrilineage and occupies an ancestral house Makim with its household and lineage deities and subsists on an authored land which she inherited from her ascendant mother. This consanguinal family member except the father belongs to a particular Riih. We will not proceed anywhere unless we assume another such consanguinal family co-existing with

⁶² *NUBARA* is a term given to swearing in and commitment to mutual social boycott between quarrelling parties. *Nubara Ka* means two parties committed to this act of swearing. The swearing

matured sons and daughters nearby belonging to a different Riih. And also having had already discussed the rules of finding matrimonial mates further discussion here will be confined how such families relate to one another within the positive rules of conjugal relations.

Sons and daughters are considered matured for conjugal ties when they are grown up as normal⁶³. The decision to take up conjugal ties mostly depends upon the need of a helping hand in the productive work on the land and also on personal proclivity and curiosity of adolescent adventures on the part of males and females. However, the processes of socialisation in association with Ku's family, own family and among peer groups they get to know the rules and ways of finding their own mates⁶⁴. Deliberate attempts to meet in privacy by the prescribed conjugal mates or they are sometime arranged to meet at home or outside if the parties are not motivated. What goes in such meetings and who goes with whom is an open secret to everyone in the society without any fuss. Once a mutual interaction takes place it is not uncommon for the girl to invite the boy home or anywhere anytime in privacy. Parents of the girl accept the adventures of the boy as a normal behaviour, Generally, when daughters get matured, they are made to sleep separately outside in a small compartment attached to the front side wall of the Makim under the roof falls on a narrow and small bamboo platform raised from the ground. On a particular day when the boy comes at night and joins the girl in her compartment and seen in the morning doing some works at her natal house they announce that the particular boy has *found* his *Me-hin* and the girl has her *Ra-him*. Hereafter, it requires the boy to begin to stay put in the girl's natal house and actively participate in all the household chores and cultivation works in the fields. He becomes an indispensable labour in the household. The boy usually works at his best to show

involves drinking a Cock's blood. Both the parties chop Cock's neck and pass its blood to each other to drink subsequently resulting to severe social ties between the two groups.

⁶³ A normal male or female is the one who is not a deaf, dumb and blind by birth and mentally and physically fit for the productive works. Anybody who has attained the age 14/15 is considered matured for marriage.

⁶⁴ Finding of conjugal partners: there is no equivalent term for what we generally understand by marriage as associated with certain formal rituals and ceremony. When talking about marital status of people they make use of Nepali term in their language *Biha* and say: *Ka-nga 'Biha' pa-yang* (*I have married*). Ask to avoid the Nepali term they would say: *Ka-nga Me-him long yang*. (*Ka-nga=I, Me-hin= wife, long yang= found/ male speaking*). The same spoken by a female would be: *Ka-nga ra-him long yang* (*ra-him=husband/conjugal male partner*)

his worth and goes back to his natal house only seldom when required. Some improvements in the girl's improvised compartment is also apparent as they both try to make their sleeping place one of the best place in the world⁶⁵. It is then the boy is related and recognised as *Mahnkpa* (resident son-in-law) to everyone in the girl's household. They are often made to cook for themselves using the same *Jikpu* of the house and eat together until they have a separate arrangement if there is more than one daughter. However, legitimisation of this conjugal tie comes much later only when the *Mahnkpa* succeeds to impregnate his *Me-hin*.

Over a period of time, the girl one day discloses her pregnancy to her mother and in turn to all concerned. The boy then goes back to his parents to report the same. It requires the couple to prepare lots of *Yu* from local millet (*ewui ka jarto*) and make ritual offering of the same to the parents and guardians within a period of six months from the day pregnancy of his wife was announced. This present for pregnancy is also called a *Nama* payment to the girl's parents, uncles and all other related to their household. This payment legitimises the boy's relation as *Ra-him* to the girl who in turn relates to the former as his *Me-hin* i.e. husband and wife. This relation also entitles him to be father (*Payu*) of the future offspring of his *Me-hin*. Failing to impregnate a woman in such conjugal ties over a period of time often may result in annulling the conjugal ties and dissolving the relationship between them.

When the *Me-hin* is in her first pregnancy period the *Ra-him* is seen at his best doing all sorts of works to assist the woman. He would either erect a new hut for delivery of child or further improve on the earlier compartment and make it more broad and comfortable. At the time of delivery he helps his wife, cuts the umbilical chord, washes her clothes, and after he cleans the house, cooks food and washes pots and pans, collects water and all that is required to run the household. He also takes equal part in looking after the baby. Thus, the nuclear family that results over a period of time out of this consociation, later on, takes a shape of an extended household unit under a *Kim* (a separate house) keeping all the economic and lineal ties with the parent *Makim* and corporate land ownership.

⁶⁵ I was witness to one such case during my stay at the lower Lotukuchu in 1992 when Kougkilang

More than one such extended household may come around the Makim if there is more than one daughter in a lineal house. Younger sisters as and when they get their conjugal partners will bud off the Makim and establish their own houses at such places to attend to the productive activities on their lands.

The houses where brothers have joined separately or together with different sisters of same parents would also undergo the same processes and separation on their wife's land. These brothers keep paying visits to their mother's house at ritual occasions and to contribute their labour to the matrilineal land and to derive their share of food grains for their own family. He also contributes his labour to wife's matrilineal land for a share of food grains for their family subsistence. At the same time he has to provide a share of food grains to wife's ageing parents who would then be not very active in cultivation works.

As these physically separated conjugal families raise their own consanguinal families their parents also get older. There has to be one daughter to look after⁶⁶ the ageing parents in the Makim. There is no hard and fast rule unlike the Khasis⁶⁷. One of the favoured daughters with her husband and children will remain in the Makim while others will contribute equal share of grains and other eatables for their ageing parents. The time also comes when the total land of the matrilineage has to be roughly allotted to the consanguinal sons and daughters who now have their own consanguinal families to maintain and also to those who have not family of their own yet.

The decision is that everybody has to have a fair and equal share irrespective of sex. All the brothers and sons join the sisters and parents to discuss and decide as to who would cultivate where and what part of the land. Once, this allotment is done each sister becomes substantially independent with equal obligations to their parents as long as they live. This also is the time they are concerned with the maintenance of the land under the matrilineal ownership and that it does not go in other's hands. The concern becomes more apparently so, when their parents die one after the other. The best solution they find is in MBC-FZC

got along with Zaba from middle Lotukuchu. I also saw such cases in different parts of the village.
⁶⁶ The lineally owned land is located at many different places. Some are at lower hill slopes, some are at upper hill slopes, and some are on relatively gentle slopes where paddy cultivation can be done. Those fields at the lower hills are relatively fertile and produce number of crops in a seasonal cycle.

⁶⁷ Pranab Kumar Das Gupta, *Life and culture of matrilineal tribe of Meghalaya*, 1984 p-94, p-111.

conjugal relations. In that when the brothers re-allot his share of land along with what his wife has inherited from her parents to their children (which would roughly make a proportion of 50:50 of the total land from both mother and father side for their subsistence) at his old age, approximately the same portion of land comes back or re-allotted back to his matrilineage through his sister's sons (*Lhira*) according to the inheritance rule⁶⁸. It all gives a clue to an idea that 'marriage' in Doya social context is a contractual undertaking between two lineal consanguinal families as a means to an end interest where both the parties are regarded as equals to further reciprocal relations in the subsequent generations.

The consanguinal family with which we started has left behind one or more consanguinal families on the matrilineal land distributed independently in land around the residential land but these are all linked to the primary consanguinal household ritually and spiritually through the matrilineal and household deity. They all carry the matrilineal Riih title. However, when the parents especially mother is no more, it becomes brother's duty to keep up the lineal by performing regular worships and offerings to the ancestral deities and by giving necessary guidance to his sister's children for the maintenance of the lineage and the corporate land property intact. In absence of any brother the eldest husband (Mahnkpa) would normally do the service of the brothers in the interest of wife's matrilineage.

These group of consanguinal families which may be called secondary consanguinal families would now have more permanent house like that of Makim but they will not become a Makim as such as long as the original Makim exists and functions as an abode of the ancestress. More or less in the third generation descendants of the secondary consanguinal families will continue to inbreed within the lineal group with greater chances of finding preferred mates as the lineage expands horizontally. When the descendants of the third generation children bind themselves in conjugal units and start reproducing further progeny the first generation ascendants of primary consanguinal and secondary families; their roles in the interest of the lineage would be replaced by the subsequent

⁶⁸ Inheritance Rules:

I) Parents must allot equal share of land to all their children irrespective of sex.

children and grand children. Let some examples of varying types and nature of matrilineal descendant families illustrate the points:

2.6: Case Studies

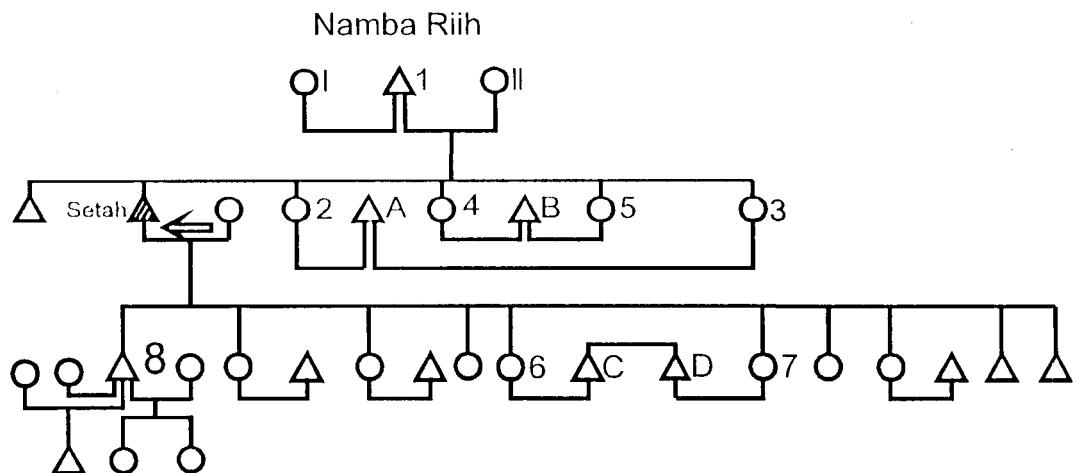
2.6.1 Setah's Matrilineage

Setah (70+) belongs to Namba Riih. He had three sons and seven daughters from his wife Yimjam, who was *transmuted* from her matrilineage in Sanglung, to continue the lineage as all his sisters remained issueless, (2,3,4,5 in G-1). He inherited plenty of land that was again added up as he rose up his family. Most of his productive land was scattered at many different locations in the lower part of Lotukuchu consisting of many Yonk (Jhumming fields), Ding (Cultivation land on gentle slopes), Orange orchards and Cardamom fields. He lives in his Makim at Dillang at the lower Lotukuchu where his father shifted from middle Lotukuchu during his parents' time. When his first child, a son called Sakab (8) married a Tamang (Nepali) lady from near Phuntsholing (where he worked as forest guard and later resigned) and brought her home. Sakab was denied any access and right to ancestral land by his enraged parents. Quarrels ensued between father and son. But later he succeeded in getting a piece of residential land to settle then he later managed to buy some land on which he raised paddy, Yonk, orange and cardamom fields. His son Sakab's is one of the most prosperous families in the whole of Lower Lotukuchu with two daughters (under 14) by sheer hard work of his and his wife. Before he married his Tamang Nepali wife, he had already married two wives one after the other and to the first wife he has a son(now 17yrs, married to a girl in Satakha) to the second he has none. He had to divorce both of them by paying Nama of Nu.⁶⁹/Rs. 1200/- to the first as she had a child and Nu./Rs. 600/- to the second for she bore no child. Now his family with his Tamang wife is best maintained unlike any other among his tribe. After him, Setah's 7 daughters got married one after the other, leaving two in between who in absence of prescribed father's sister's children could attract other male's (belonging to different lineage) attractions.

II) Sister's brothers must allot an equal share of land to his sister's sons (or other property) while allotting land to his own children.

⁶⁹ Nu. Stands for the word Ngultrum. It is the name of Bhutanese currency, which has money value equivalent to Indian Rupees. Indian currency is also widely used in all transactions in Bhutan.

G-1: Setah's Case



Note: Setah's father had two wives; one was issueless, the second wife (II) gave birth to six children. Setah is the second son. He had to buy a woman for his wife. Between Setah and his wife, they have nine children. Sakab is the eldest of all. Two daughters (6&7) got married with two sib brothers.

All other sisters have married with men belonging to different lineage carrying different or *same* Riih names. It seemed they did not mind tying conjugal bonds even with their foes (Rosant, two of Setah's *Mahukpas*/resident-son-in-laws who are Rosant with whom the setahs had committed Nubara 50 years ago) Setah's last two sons: Nopchey (17 years) and Norbu (15 years) were not married as they were studying in the school. Setah had an elder brother Mukki, aged nearing 80, who also had plenty of land inherited equally from their parents. He remained single without issue and his brother's sons and daughters were subsisting on his share of land, which he was soon going to allot to them, as he was getting senile. Because his brother's sons were the only rightful claimants of his land, Nopchey and Norbu were taking better care of him and help and assisted in his needs whenever they found time out the regular school hours.

When I was staying at Dillang between 1991 and 1992 I noticed 3 of Setah's matured daughters were sleeping in the budded narrow rooms of sidewalls of the Makim separately. Then in 1992 when I came back from home Kongkilang, the last daughter had her husband Zaba and was staying in the same budded narrow sleeping room. All others who were already married or newly married when I came there had extended into small semi-permanent huts (*Kim*) around the Makim with their husbands forming consanguinal and conjugal families.

During the year 1992 Kongkilang got pregnant and her husband Zaba with the help of other resident-husbands put up a hut near the Makim and moved in along with his wife leaving the budded narrow connubial room vacated. Setah with his wife along with his 3rd daughter and her husband and children (minor) lived together in the Makim. This daughter while

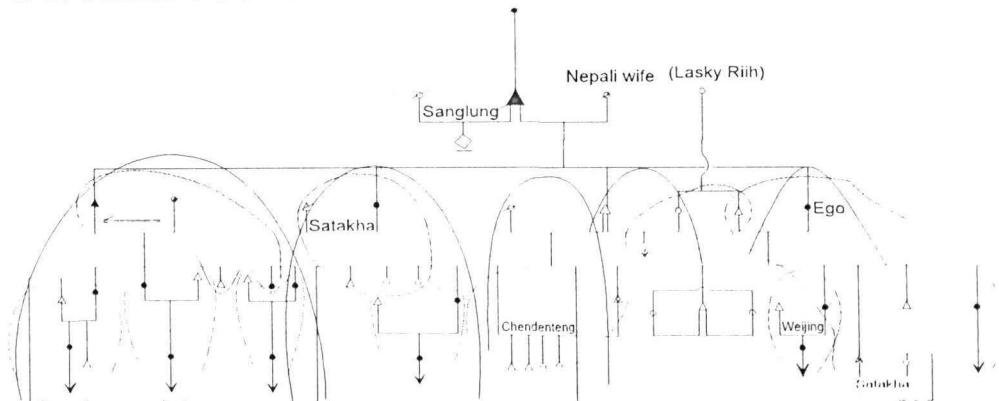
looking after ageing parents in day-to-day affairs will later inherit the Makim. (Incidentally, the husband of this daughter happens to be the most matured, learned and responsible among his 5 Mahnkpas.) While others will supply equal share of required food grains to the parents and unmarried brothers still continue to share food together with parents. In the Makim there were two Jikpus (fireplace), the other one was for the parents and unmarried ones and the other added one was for his daughter who lived along with them. But there was no restriction in using the parent's Jikpu.

Setahs had already allotted equal share of land to all his married daughters and unmarried sons, too. These daughters along with husbands and children were always on the move working on their allotted lands (Yonk) and orchards and also contributing their labour to the share land kept for unmarried school going brothers in order to help their parents and also to meet their own food grain requirements. Setah had not allotted his paddy fields as it was not enough for allotment and there was hardly any place to raise more paddy fields (*Ding*) as such land was relatively scarce in their territory. So, he allows all his daughters and Mahnkpa(s) to contribute their labour in the paddy fields to extract whatever food grains they could for themselves and a share for him. But to one of his daughters he had given his cattle to look after in place of access to the paddy fields. The milk produce from the cattle was shared with her parents and some portion of it she kept for her cash earnings by selling cheese (*Tatsi*). There was also mutual exchange of help to each other among the daughters' families in times of need and also between each and their parents. They all get together in the Makim at the time of annual ancestry and deity worship (*Loh*) and also when important decisions are to be made.

2.6.2 *Challamo's Matrilineage*

Challamo (60+ years) of Satakha village is married to Chedoji (65+ years). Chedoji is a son of Ya-Chirpey of a neighbouring village Sanglung. Challamo is daughter of late Pincho and a Rai Nepali woman. Challamo had one elder brother called Kasadao, one elder sister called Anima and also had one younger brother, Ganesh who died in a mysterious way about eight years ago leaving behind two wives in Sanglung village. The first wife had 5 sons and 3 daughters and second had one young son. The second wife, Chezangmo was Chedoji's younger sister.

G-2: Challamo's Case



Challamo and Chedoji gave birth to six sons and two daughters out of which the last child, a daughter called Chunglham(18) was studying in Sengten Primary School in class-VI and another son working outside were not married.

Her first daughter, Cha(n)-pem died along with her 4th unborn child during labour. She left behind her widowed husband along with one daughter and two sons in April 1992. Her husband looked after her kids in the house. Challamo's father was an influential man during Penlop's time, and was active representative, mediator and an organiser between his tribes and the Penlops in serving the needs of the then rulers. In the whole Satakha village there were just two households and one belonged to her father Pincho's matrilineage with maximum land authored. So among Challamo's brothers and sisters they had a considerable size of land, which was inherited and shared. Challamo's daughters and sons had enough land allotted to them needing no more supplementations from their father's (Chedoji) land from Sanglung, which is adjacent but separated, by a falling ridge and a stream called 'Kamchal'. All her sons are married and established well living in different parts of Satakha with their wives and children raising food crops, orchards, and cardamom fields, wherever they have their allotted lands. When Challamo's daughter died there was a question as to who should take care of the land allotted to her for her family. Long discussion was held with all the consanguinal members, including Challamo's brothers, sisters, resident-husbands and sons. And finally decided to pass the land over to deceased's daughter who was just attaining her teens. On the very day the dead body was to be encased in the Chen. On asking why the land was passed on to a young child when her father was still keeping at home and he had to look after the children, they said that the Mahnkapa was lazy, irresponsible and unreliable man. But the husband had to stay there working on the wife's field for three consecutive years, looking after his children. Then he would be free to decide for himself for his future life. If he so desires, he could always go for a second wife or return to his maternal household in Lotukchu to look after their land and his sister's children.

Challamo has plenty of land still but less manpower. She had the maximum paddy fields also on which sometimes, she engaged/allowed

other people (residents of Satakha who were related but do not have the right of access to her land such as her daughter-in-laws, brother's children or sister's son) to work on her paddy fields. Sometimes, she also engaged hired labour called *Lei-la* for which she had to pay in cash or kind immediately or after the crop yields. If some body asked for use of the land then she gave it on Adhiya (50:50 share basis). This system got introduced to them with the advent of Nepali community in their neighbourhoods. They did not know it earlier.

Challamo's eldest son got married with her brother's daughter (MBD+FZS) belonging to different Riih, Humchat. Her second son got married with two sisters in Lotukuchu belonging to Dohtag Riih and third son also got married with a woman in Lotukuchu belonging to Metchat Riih (MBD). Since, Challamo's brother, Ganesh was no more and there was no one to look after her daughter-in-law (BD) at her natal home she decided to bring her for his son at her home in consultation with the girl's maternal uncles in Sanglung. She said it was quite necessary action as there was no matured female at her home to look after her household and that her last daughter Chumlham always kept out of the house for her studies.

Challamo's 4th son's (Jochung's) marriage has a different story. Her son Jochung works in Police department away from the village. However, when he was posted at Sipsoo (a sub-division of Samtse district) he managed to develop a connubial relation with a Laskey girl of upper Lotukuchu during short holidays in the village. In short time he left the girl impregnated in her village. He tried to convince the girl's parents to allow her stay at his posting place for some days. The parents unwillingly allowed them against the tradition. After some time when it was known to parents that the girl was fast pregnant and it was time for the man to pay the Nama, the parents sent messages to bring their daughter home but they didn't and time passed without paying the Nama. In the course of time Jochung got posted at Samtse Police Station where the girl; gave birth to a child in the district Hospital. It became a social problem for Jochung who neither became a husband nor a father in the society without having paid the Nama during the specified time and the necessary labour services at the girl's matrilineage. He tried to convince the parents but they would not accept him. Lots of unpleasantness came up between the parties. Ultimately the girl was called back home after the childbirth de-recognising her conjugal relation with Jochung. Jochung had to be happy with his job but he didn't give up.

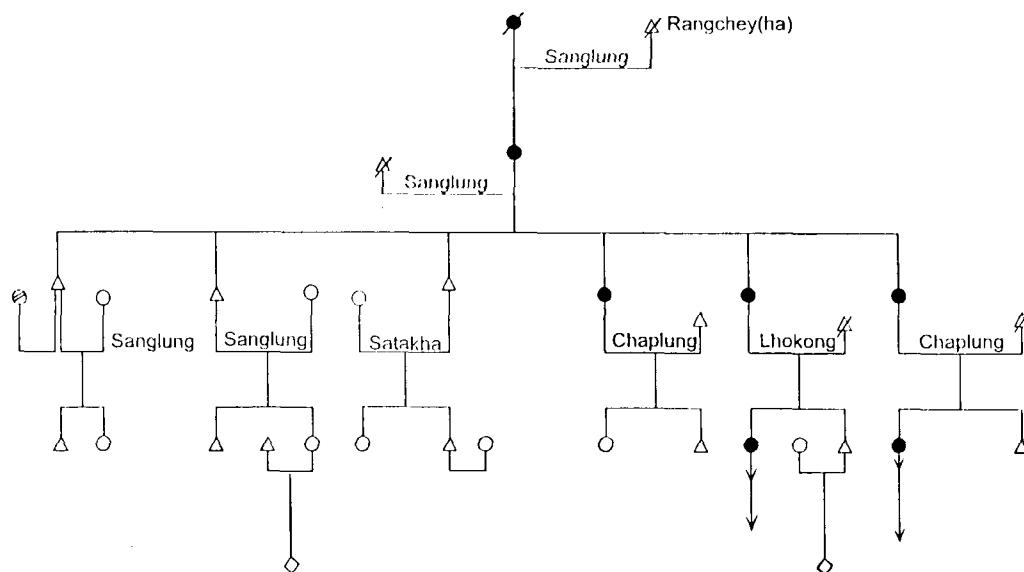
After a long persuasion with the parents through good offices of village elders it was agreed that Jochung should pay a heavier Nama to an elders congregation to get his relation with the girl legitimised. It was done and he was allowed to take his wife to his posting place. Jochung's, case has set a change in the otherwise static/conservative and traditional society of the Doyas.

2.6.3

Chedoji's Matrilineage

Chedoji belongs to a big consanguinal family in Sanglung village. His mother Ya-Chirpey (116 years old) is the oldest person surviving among the Doyas presents. Her father was a Drukpa from Rangchey - a Drukpa village one and half day walk to the northern hills towards Ha district. Chedoji is the sixth son among the twelve children whom his mother gave birth. Now Chedoji had only four brothers and three sisters. All others died at young age without leaving behind any offspring. They had around 50 acres of land including paddy fields, Yonk, Orange orchards and Cardamom fields among themselves still maintained as a corporate land organised by Chedoji and his elder brothers. His father died 35 years ago. All the brothers and sisters were working at different parts of the land supporting themselves except one of his sisters along with her children who looks after their old mother at their Makim. Besides working on the land in production works two of the sisters were looking after cattle near the stream called Kampti 30 minutes downhill to supply milk to the Makim and to all brothers and sisters.

G-3: Chedoji's Case



Since, all Chedoji's sons and daughters were well established on their own mother's land in Satakha he was least bothered about them. Most of the time he was found working and tending orchards in his mother's land in Sanglung. He often helped his youngest sister who was widow of his own wife's brother, at Chaplunger where she lived in a make-shift hut looking after cattle and orchards besides cultivating a piece of land along with her minor children. Chedoji told me that he was helping and doing all he can at his old age for the children of his sisters. Once, when I visited him at Chaplunger he was transplanting some orange saplings on a large hill slope. All his elder brothers who were taking residence in their wives' households also often came to see their mother, bring food grains and attended to the household's needs and requirements. The second eldest

brother, Kucho (80) was still active and a master of ceremony himself whenever deities were to be worshipped at the Makim. All the brothers come together to organise and perform all the rituals. Husband of two of their sister's were no more so brother's role in the household becomes more than needful.

Samchijem who looked after the aged mother had three grown up sons and a daughter. Two of her sons were out of the house; one had joined Monastery at Samchi and other had married a girl in Satakha. Her only matured daughter was at home to assist and continue the lineage, while the youngest daughters were born *Behpa* (congenital abnormal but physically productive). The whole land after 1965 Land Reformation Act had to be registered under two brother's name Kucho and Passa (Already taken residence in wife's households with grown up sons and daughters in the same village) as Government had put up a land ceiling of 25 acres under a head of household. Kado Tshering, a grandson of Ya-Chirpey studying in class-VI revealed this information.

SUMMARY

Doyas have been able to maintain to distinctive ways of life despite political and cultural dominance of the Drukpas and that of Nepalese in these surroundings. The basic structure of Doya social organisation is based on matrilineality in contrast to the Drukpas and Rais who surround them. This may be one main reason for the Doyas to have been able to maintain their own socio-cultural distinctiveness despite prolonged others' cultural influences they have been exposed while occupying a lower position in the Bhutanese social strata.

Doya society is organised through number matrilineages (Riih) having distinct titles, origins and associated ancestral deities. Members of a Riih are organised in several extended consanguinal families (Kim) and are linked to one or two main households (Makim) under the eldest female of the line of descent. Each main household is also abode of ancestral and lineal deities. Members of a Riih who may be living scattered at many different places, come together to worship their ancestors once in about three to five years.

There are number of deities who exercise control over health, productivity and climatic conditions of the place. People come together to worship these deities at lineal and territorial levels.

There are four geographically distinct village administrative units for the Doyas. However, Doyas themselves recognise only 3 distinct residential and social units with distinct territorial titles. There may be at least two or three different Riihs descendants residing together in these residential and social units.

There are also further social divisions among themselves based on matrimonial background and residential locations. Descendants of inter caste marriage are socially segregated and people residing on upper hills are known as Rosants, etc.

A strong tendency of intra-territorial and Riih marriage relations observed among the Doyas seems to support the territorial and matrilineal solidarity of their society where extended families under a Makim form a corporate unit possessing ancestral land. A set of matrimonial rules guides each individual to continue and support the matrilineage.

Land property is inherited through the corporate body of around a female head. Everybody under a corporate body have equal share and access to land and landed property. The set of matrimonial rules ensures that the land remain intact under the corporate body through the children of brothers and sisters. Brother has important roles and responsibilities towards his sister's children in continuance and maintenance of matrilineage households and its land property.

An ethnographic accounts is not complete unless we try to see the social world of other's society through their kin and affinal relations among them through which look at each other in their inter-personal interactions in their day-to-day life. Every society evolves certain terms to denote and refer to one's own kith and kin also those who are related by the way matrimonial ties. It has also been discovered that apparently similar relations between member society have been found to have different in attitudes and behaviour towards one another. However, the whole schema of kin terms and relations in a society makes the cosmology of individuals born in the society within which one finds the philosophy of one's life and live wholesomely. Anthropologists, starting from Morgan to Leach in the last two centuries have been studying this diversity of kin terms and relations from different aspects, levels and perspectives to somehow classify them for scientific inquiries. We shall look into the Doya case of kin terms and relations in the following chapter.