

THE SOCIAL ORGANISATION

- 3.1 THE LATCHI-JANGO, SUBBA AND GAPU
- 3.2 THE CLAN STRUCTURE
- 3.3 CLANS AND PROPERTY RIGHTS
- 3.4 CLANS AND RITUAL OBSERVANCES
- 3.5 CLANS AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION
- 3.6 THE LINEAGE AND ITS ROLE
- 3.7 THE FAMILY
- 3.8 INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

Located in a very strategic border area the Totos have had very close connection in the past with the Bhutanese administration which has been alluded to in earlier discussion. The village Totopara and the Totos themselves provided a link between Bhutan on the north and the villages of western Duars on the south. The village Totopara along with many other tracts of western Duars like Jalpesh, Mainaguri, Nathua, Ambari-Falakata etc. were within the political jurisdiction of Bhutan for about 80 years till it was annexed by the British Government after the Indo-Bhutan war in 1864-65. Briefly speaking during this period of social and political inter-linkage, the Totos were the Zapos or slaves of Bhutan under the supervision of the Bhutanese

Zinkafs and Pows i.e., the Bhutanese officials. Also they had to render Hui-hwa (which means portorage service in lieu of remuneration in cash or kind in Toto language) even though they were hardly entitled to any remuneration from the Bhutias because of their slave status.

What is important for our purpose here in this Chapter is to note that this long association with Bhutan has moulded the Totos even in matters of their traditional organisation and administration. The traditional organisation is definitely under stress at present and is also undergoing fast changes particularly because of the introduction of Panchayat system and parliamentary voting practices. But nonetheless they are not completely extinct and sometimes both the old and the new function simultaneously making adjustments and compromises between them.

The Toto village organisation is a dual administrative system having in a sense a parallel with the Bhutanese system prevalent before the emergence of dynastic monarchy in 1907. But it would be incorrect to carry the parallel to its extreme and assume that there is no difference between the two as some scholars appear to uphold citing either Roy Burman or Sanyal. Roy Burman is undoubtedly the first to carry a serious enquiry of the Totos through field work; but it must be remembered that he worked under difficult circumstances and had to chart out a course where there existed none. On the other hand Sanyal depended in a major way upon a few intelligent respondents without visiting the site too often.

3.1 THE LATCHI-JANGO, SUBBA AND GAPU

At the top of the village organisation there is a general council called Latchi-Jango. According to the traditional social custom of the Totos, an individual attaining adult-hood is automatically included as the member of the Latchi-Jango. In exceptional cases the eldest son of a family may substitute his father even though he is not 18 years old. This Latchi-Jango or the community council is the supreme decision making body of the Toto community headed by the Subba or Kazi. The Latchi-Jango may assume two different characters - religious or secular - depending on the agenda under their deliberation.

The religious organisation of the Totos is headed by the Subba or the spiritual head of the Toto community. He is also entrusted to the office of Kazi (Judge) of the village. Thus he has two-fold duties, holding the office of the spiritual head and the post of judge. He is used to perform and conduct the Cm-chu and Maiyu worships and all other worships and festivals under the community level. He is assisted in these works by the Pows and Yong-tongs. He fixes the dates for these festivals and also the subscriptions to be paid by everyone in consultations with everyone. He even offered his services and performed some particular worships in the past in the houses of Bhutias in Dzen-chu and in the Doya villages of Bhutan from time to time. Even as late as in 1989 he performed the Choira worship in Doyagaon and in the house of a Bhutia in Dzen-chu to appease the enraged spirit.

Roy Burman had introduced the Subba as Pow and Head Priest of the Toto community. But from an intensive investigation it is revealed that there is no post of Head Priest among the Totos. Actually he is the Head of the decision making body on the religious affairs and co-ordinator of the religious functions. Though there are existence of some particular priestly clans, but in the past anybody among the Totos had the liberty to become a priest or even be selected as a Subba of the community depending on the personality, attitude and aptitude of the candidate, not necessarily on the basis of heredity. It is of course true that the priests are being selected for some time now from the priestly clans only. Such clans are required to observe some restrictions as regards food and touchability.

In the past the Totos never went to any judicial court or police station to settle their disputes. On the contrary they used to lodge their complaints to the Kaji for settlement in their village council. The Kaji, in consultation with the village council consisting of the village elders, settled the disputes according to their socio-religious customs. He settled the disputes which are connected with the traditional socio-religious customs including divorce, adultery etc.

As a Subba, or the Spiritual administrator of the village, he was entrusted to collect Dao-Khajna or Capitation Tax of the village during the Bhutan regime and was also entrusted to dispose of all types of disputes among the villagers with the help

of the Gapu - the secular executive head of the village - and the village council of elders.

As the supreme authority of the village, the Subba was entitled to get one day's free-labour from each family of the Totos during the farming operation and construction of dwelling house, etc. The Subba had the privilege of having a nGang-pui who served as a messenger and also assisted him whenever called for. The family of the nGang-pui was therefore exempted from rendering any further free-labour to the Subba. To some extent the Government has also accommodated these old practices within the fold of a changed situation. The Subba, the Gapu and nGang-puis are exempted from rendering any free-labour which the common Totos are obliged to provide to the Forest Département for five to six days annually for clearing the jungles along the international boundary lines.

It is revealed that there are two types of priestly professionals among the Totos, which needs some discussion. Next to the spiritual head there are several Pows who perform all the religious functions under the supervision of the Subba. As a superior priest the Pows are required to observe some restrictions in matters of food. Only a Pow is entitled to perform the Modi-pai-powa (name giving ceremony) among them. He is also entitled to perform Badi-Lawmei, a ceremony held in celebration of first butter eating and tying of the baby in one's back,

besides different major worships including Sangai-lawmei (penance) offerings to the enraged spirits. At present there are only 3 Pows or senior priests among the Totos. They are : Budhbare Toto of the Baudhbei clan, Aaitasing Toto of the Budubei clan, and Lashe Toto of the Dantrobei clan. Of course there is no particular rule as to how many Pows can be there. It only happens that at present there are three of them.

TABLE - 3.1

CATEGORY OF PERSONS DISCHARGING PRIESTLY FUNCTIONS

Sl. No.	Category	Income	Duties	Restrictions
1.	Subba (Spiritual Head)	Share of offerings and <u>Iew</u>	Omchu, Maiyu, Sarde-Ko Sokong, Sangai-lawmei etc. worships; officiating in marriage and divorce, etc.	Cannot eat food added with salt by others, or prepared by women of other communities.
2.	Pow (Superior Priest)	- do -	Performing Modi-pai-powa, Badi-lawmei, etc.; Foretelling diseases etc.	- do -
3.	Yong-tong (Common Priest)	- do -	Perform different worships under the direction of Pow.	- do -
4.	Leti-Gehua (Ritual Singer)	nil	Singing sacred songs during rituals.	nil
5.	Baidangi (Exorcist)	Share of offerings and <u>Iew</u>	Spirit worship and exorcism	nil

The Yong-tongs are the common priests or, as one might say, the second class priests of the Totos. They used to perform different worships under the direction of the Pows. Also they assist the Pows and the Subba during the community worships. They also perform some family worships (Hui-kewa) often independently. There are altogether 7 Yong-tongs among the Totos at present. They are : Baire Toto of Budubei clan, Gaizro Toto and Chipte Toto both belonging to Baudhbei clan, Aaitoa Toto of Mankobei clan, Dziding Toto of Mantrobei clan, Chengdongpa Toto of Nubebei clan and Kundarsing Toto of Bongobei clan.

The Leti-gehuas sing their songs during different religious functions, and choose their numbers according to the nature of the ritual. The Totos believe that the songs are revealed in dreams and none other the Leti-gehuas are authorised to receive the divine message as contained in a song. Each Leti-gehua has a separate pattern of songs bearing different motifs. It so happens that they generally emerged from among the ranks of the priests.

The Totos are tradition-bound people and even now they suffer from different types of superstitions. As such they believe that the evils spirits are mainly liable for their diseases, and only by performing magical functions one can get rid of the diseases. The Baidangis or exorcists still now play an important role among the Totos. The exorcists use to put Marua or Mim-be (Eleusine Coracana Gaertn) in flat basket called Chering to ascertain the nature of the disease, the name of the deity or spirit

responsible for it, and also the particular Sangai-lawmei (Penance) to be performed to appease the enraged deity or spirit. They also prescribe the ingredients required for offering the Sangai-lawmei including the sex and colour of the particular animal or bird to be given in sacrifice. Besides a Baidangi also prepares folk-medicines from the locally available herbs.

TABLE - 3.2

LIST OF BAIDANGIS OF TOTOPARA

Sl. No.	Name of the Toto Baidangi	Clan	Sl. No.	Name of the Nepali Jhankri	Community
1.	Lashe Toto	Dantrobei	1.	Dilbahadur Tamang	Tamang
2.	Budhbair Toto	Baudhbei	2.	Krishnabhadur Dong	- do -
3.	Jumsha Toto	Budubei	3.	Jetha Dong	- do -
4.	Baindre Toto	Dantrobei	4.	Purnabhadur Dorjee	- do -
5.	Mohanlal Toto	Dantrobei	5.	Singere Maila	- do -

The name Baidangi is perhaps borrowed from the neighbouring Nepali and Rajbangshi communities. The Nepalis of course use the word Jhankri also for such category of people. In Totopara at present there are five Baidangis/Jhankris each from among the Totos and the Nepalis (Table - 3.2). Of them Mohanlal Toto is the only exorcist among the Toto who is reputed to treat cases of snake bite. The curative measures performed by the Toto Baidangis are less costly than that of the Nepali Jhankris. The ordinary Totos possess great faith on the Nepali exorcists. Taking advantage of this, the Nepali Jhankris exploit the Totos charging them

Rs. 100/- to Rs. 500/- for performing their rites. All the Nepali Jhankris belong to the Tamang community.

The Gapu is the second most important person after the Subba in the traditional Toto village set-up. He is responsible for supervision over the secular affairs of the village. Accompanied by the village elders he settles the disputes related to land, collection of Capitation Tax, qurrels among villagers etc. After the annexation of the village by the British Government the Gapu was entrusted with the task of collection of Capitation Tax at the rate of Rs. 2/- per family. During the Bhutia period it was the Subba who was authorised to undertake this job.

The Subba and the Gapu are selected from the Diringchangohei and Dankobei clans respectively. The posts were not hereditary in the beginning but has become so during the last four or five generations. Even though the Gapu became more important in the eyes of the administration, the office of Subba or Kazi has continued to draw more attention from the Totos themselves. Immediately after the death of Shirong Toto, the erstwhile Kazi of the Totos, in January 1992 his adopted son Wangcheng Toto has been selected as the Kazi. As the major religious functions and community level worships are being conducted by the religious head, the post could not be kept vacant for a long time. For this reason Wangcheng Toto was selected by the Latchi-Jangoa in a special meeting convened for the purpose.

In contrast to this, when Gorkha alias Dinesh Toto, the erstwhile Gapu died in February 1983 due to Cancer, the post remain vacant for a long time. It was only in 1991 that the Latchi-Jangoa took up the matter and selected his son Sugrib Toto as the Gapu for their community. Even then, Sugrib has not yet succeeded in exerting his power because the people at large have not accepted him wholeheartedly as their Gapu. With the abolition of the community property system, it appears, that the office of Gapu has lost much of its relevance because there is little secular affair to be supervised over by the Gapu.

One thing needs to be specially mentioned in this connection. No male child has been born in the Diringchankobei clan during the past four generations. The adopted son of the deceased Subba or Kazi was allowed to succeed him when the occasion arose. Such adopted sons were taken from the other clans of the Totos. As such the Diringchankobei clan affiliation of the Kazis is a controversial question even though no one among the Totos have raised any eye-brow against it. This not only indicates that adoption is taken seriously by the Totos but also that the transformation of the post of Kazi into hereditary status is a big question mark.

As has been mentioned already the Subba held a superior position right from the days from the Bhutan rule. It does not mean however that the Gapu had an insignificant role to play. Located in a strategic position from where the high hills of Bhutan

begins their ascent the Totos were well suited to take up the work of relay porterage for the transaction of goods between Bhutan and Duars. Roy Burman has described in great length how the 13 clans of the Totos were divided in two segments for this purpose. One section maintained a link between trade spots like Cooch Behar, Mainaguri etc. on the one hand and Totopara on the other, whereas the other section was responsible for carriage of goods between Totopara and the high hills. The latter group was supervised over by the Subba and his men while the former group was conducted by the Gapu. By virtue of his maintaining link with the hills and also discharging religious duties the Subba apparently carried more weight with the theocratic Bhutan. But after British annexation the community land of the Totos was recorded in the name of Gapu in 1895. He was also given the responsibility of collection of capitation tax as mentioned earlier. The Gapu thus became the liaison man between the Toto community and the Government officials. The religious authority of the Subba also must have been on the wane to some extent because of the severance of the relations with theocratic Bhutan. The author has himself seen a religious scripture written in Bhutanese characters lying wrapped up in the house of the Kazi. This was handed over long back by the Bhutanese Lamas who occasionally used to make a visit to Totopara to disseminate the lights of Drukpa Buddhism to the ignorant Toto tribals. Needless to say that the book carries hardly any weight these days and remains only as a relic of the past. But, be whatever it may, after the community land was parcelled out and recorded in the

name of individual families and also the introduction of statutory Panchayat System the jurisdiction of the Gapu has been curtailed. And, therefore, the Subba once again comes into relative prominence by virtue of his discharging of traditional religious functions. The post of Gapu has practically ceased to exist after the death of Dinesh Toto whom Roy Burman had met in the early fifties as a promising young man of unusual wits and humours and of whom he has spoken so eloquently in his dissertation.

During the past two decades the Statutory Gram Panchayat has become the most powerful organisation in connection with the economic activities of the village Totopara. Thus the centre of power has shifted in favour of the Panchayat office bearers. Along with this the political parties are also trying desperately to make an inroad and create a power base for them. Side by side a non-political organisation named 'Toto Kalyan Samity' has been formed by some of the Toto youths. The organisation has begun mobilizing effectively the people for cultural and developmental works that will be discussed in greater detail when we take up the contemporary scenario in a subsequent chapter.

3.2 THE CLAN STRUCTURE

A clan has been defined in the Notes and Queries 'as a group of persons of both sexes, membership of which is determined by unilineal descents, actual or putative with ipso facto obligations of an exclusive kind' (89). Among the Totos however sometimes

the clans may also be mono-lineal in nature, having a common Chaisung or presiding ancestral deity. The clan deity is required to be propitiated at least once a year by the clan members according to their traditional custom.

From the papers prepared by previous scholars and from field investigation by the author it is revealed that there are 13 clans among the Totos. But in their paper, Chakraborti and Chottopadhyay have mentioned about the existence of 14 clans among the Totos. It is found from investigation that the Dikbei which was mentioned as a clan by Chakraborti and Chottopadhyay is not a clan but a sub-clan of the Baudhbei clan. There are some similar sub-clans like Yaw-yawbei, Momebei, etc. The Dantrobei clan has altogether 4 sub-clans, namely : Poitung-doo, Gapu-gardo, Karangshe, and Kontoshe.

During his investigation Roy Burman had found no male family head belonging to PISOCHANGOBEI clan. He found one male (single) married PISOCHANGOBEI youth living with his wife in a Linkaijibei family. As such he mentioned nil against the number of PISOCHANGOBEI clan members though he faithfully recorded the name of all the 13 clans.

It is also important to note that, despite steady growth of the Toto population as a whole, 2 clans are on the verge of extinction. These are 1. Manchingbei and 2. PISOCHANGOBEI. The population of both the clans have declined to one family each.

TABLE - 3.3

NUMBER OF TOTO FAMILIES ACCORDING TO CLAN 1957 TO 1991.

Sl. No.	Name of Clan	Roy Burman (1957)	Chakra-borti & Chotto-padhyay (1964)	Dhali (1979)	Field Survey by the author	
					(1988)	(1991)
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Dankobei	13	17	26	27	31
2.	Dantrobei	10	11	25	40	43
3.	Badubei (Budubei)	8	8	7	14	16
4.	Baudhbei (Dikbei)	12	13	17	20	23
5.	Bongobei	9	8	10	17	17
6.	Nurenchangobei	5	8	8	13	15
7.	Linkaijibei	5	5	5	5	7
8.	Nubebei	4	4	9	9	8
9.	Diringchangobei	1	1	2	2	2
10.	Mankobei	4	5	7	6	9
11.	Mantrobei	3	3	4	7	7
12.	Manchingbei	1	1	2	1	1
13.	Pisochangobei	nil	1	1	1	1
TOTAL		75	85	123	160	180

There are only 2 members belonging to Pisochangobei clan living in Totopara. They are Nedu Toto (22) and his sister Muina Toto (25). Kendra, another member of this family has left for Bhutan in 1970 and has not returned since then. On the other hand, there are only 3 persons belonging to Manchingbei clan living in Totopara. They are Eirman, his brother Charushe and his wife Sarita.

It is interesting to note that there is a great similarity between the number of Toto clans and that of the Limbu tribes. The Limbus are also divided into 13 clans. In food habit also they share similarities because they have a taste for roasted meat directly which they call Toto fong. Both the tribes are also reputed to relish all types of meat except that of snakes, dog and cat. Further, both the tribes have taboo on playing their musical instruments, except during the worship or any religious festival.

Roy Burman has mentioned that the Toto clans have been derived from the name of the places of their earlier migration. He surmises that the different clans must have been living scatteredly before their settlement at Totopara. But the present author found that the elderly people among them were not inclined to accept this version. Of course it is always possible that the elders may not be aware of what happened in the past. But there are some other reasons also as to why the conjecture made by Roy Burman sounds implausible.

- (1) An ethnic group generally migrates from one place to another for whatever reason it may be together with an identity of their own. The Bhutias made them slaves and settled them at the present site. But it would be a little too far-fetched to assume that the small tribe of Totos is only an administrative construct of the Bhutias. It is possible that the Bhutias regrouped them according to their needs. It is also possible that there was some

accretion to the community through admixture with others. But there must have been an ur Toto identity around which the subsequent developments had taken place.

- (ii) The language in which the Totos communicate among themselves does not appear to have wide variations across the different clans.
- (iii) The people of different clans of a small community generally does not live scatteredly in different places for the sake of their safety.
- (iv) It is possible that they had to shift their settlements several times during their nomadic life and after they became converted into slaves. If the name of the clan is derived from the place name of their previous settlement then repeated changes in names is what is expected.

It may therefore be concluded that the name of the clan is not derived from the places of their previous settlements or from their totems. Rather, the clan names may have been largely derived from the name of their ancestors in the past. These clans may be categorised into two broad groups according to the nature of their formation. There are some clans which are comprised of the families originating from the same ancestor. These clans may be called mono-ancestral clans where a common ancestral presiding deity or Chaisung is propitiated. Among the Totos the Dankobei, Nubebei, Nurenchangobei, Bongobei etc. belong to this group.

There is another type of clans among the Totos which are comprised of lineages originating from different ancestors. These

multi-lineal clans are generally knitted together with an obligatory worship of a common Chaisung. In most of such occasions the Chaisung of a dominant clan is selected as the Chaisung or the common ancestral deity of all.

TABLE - 3.4

PROPORTION OF FAMILIES IN DIFFERENT CLANS 1957 AND 1991

Sl. No.	Name of Clan	Roy Burman (1957)	Survey by the Author (1991)
1.	Dankobei	17.3	17.2
2.	Dantrobei	13.3	23.8
3.	Eadubei	10.6	8.8
4.	Baudhbei	16.0	12.7
5.	Bongobei	12.0	9.4
6.	Nurenchangobei	6.6	8.3
7.	Linkaijibe	6.6	3.8
8.	Nubebei	5.3	4.4
9.	Diringchangobei	1.3	1.1
10.	Mankobei	5.3	5.0
11.	Mantrobei	4.0	3.8
12.	Manchingbei	1.3	0.5
13.	Pisochangobei	0.0	0.5
TOTAL		100.0	100.0

It will be observed from Table - 3.3 that the population of some of the clans is very small. Such single or lonesome persons may be forced to amalgamate with others to retain their physical existence. If this process continues for some time then amalgamation of clans would be a natural outcome. It will also be

observed from Table - 3.3 that even though there exists 13 clans in all, numerically speaking, only 6 or 7 among them are significant. In 1957 Dankobei, Baudhbei and Dantrobei were the three most numerous clans in that order. By 1991 the order has changed into Dantrobei, Dankobei and Baudhbei. Which clan forms what proportion of the total number of families can be seen from Table-3.4.

If a comparison is made between 1957 and 1991 figures then the different clans can be categorised into three groups :

- (i) Clans registering an increase : Dantrobei and Nurenchangobei;
- (ii) Clans registering a decline in their relative importance : Badubei, Baudhbei, Bongobei, Linkaijibei, Nubebei and Manchingbei; and
- (iii) Clans registering neither increase nor decrease : Dankobei, Diringchangobei, Mankobei, Mantrobei, PISOCHANGOBEI.

There is a very significant increase in the number of families belonging to be Dantrobei clan - an increase of over 400%. Nurenchangobei has registered an increase of 300%. As to what causes this type of differential performance in the growth rates of different clans within the same tribe may be a subject for more intensive investigation in future.

3.3 CLANS AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

It has already been mentioned that the whole geographical

area of Totopara was recorded as the community property of the Totos in the name of Gapu after the annexation of the village by the British Government. At that time the village was completely mono-ethnic in nature. As such, this system may be called as community property system established by the community on the whole landed property. The community property right was as follows:

- (i) No individual had any exclusive right on the land of Totopara;
- (ii) No outsider had the right to construct any house or live permanently on the soil of Totopara;
- (iii) The rivers, streamlets, water holes and the forest areas of the village were treated as the community property of the whole tribe;
- (iv) The right of collection of common crops like pipul, soap nuts, roots and tubers and other leafy vegetables, fuels and fodders and aquatic products were treated as the common to all and any member was allowed to collect the products without any intervention;
- (v) Trees demarcated by any person or planted by him were treated as the personal property but not the land;
- (vi) The Demsha or the house of community worship situated on the Badu (Buduri) hills is the common property of the Toto tribe. Hence, its construction, protection and maintenance are the responsibility of the whole community, under the supervision of their Spiritual head (Subba);
- (vii) The shrines of the different clan-deities (Chaisungs) are located in different clan areas, but these spots are

treated as the common property of all, and member of any clan has the right of offering worship on the spot; and

- (viii) Different clans came to occupy different areas of Totopara either by mutual consent or convention for purposes of residence and cultivation.

The whole area was divided into several sectors both for homestead and jhooming for the use of different clans. This system was introduced perhaps to avert any dispute among the clans, with loosely bound regulations. Roy Burman has mentioned the sectors as given in Table - 3.5.

TABLE - 3.5

AREA UNDER THE OCCUPATION OF DIFFERENT CLANS, 1957

Sl. No.	Name of the area	Name of Clans using the area
1.	Amring	Dantrobei, Dankobei, Nubebei.
2.	Chauliban	Dantrobei, Dankobei, Nubebei, Manchingbei.
3.	Arumphia	Dantrobei, Dankobei, Manchingbei.
4.	Kumbhi & Laibu	Dantrobei.
5.	Tading & Chanduba	Linkaijibei, Nubebei, Mankobei, Manchingbei.
6.	Badauri	- - -
7.	Pidi	- - -
8.	Sayra	Baudhbei, Badubei.
9.	Dading	Baudhbei, Badubei.
10.	Lukun Laksha	- - -
11.	Udingti	- - -

Source : Roy Burman, B.K., Brief Statement on the Socio-Economic Situation in Totopara and Perspective and Programme of Activities in Totopara Welfare Centre, 1955-57 (mimeograph), p. 13.

It is found that the village was segmented into several sectors or areas, and the segments were identified according to certain Toto names excepting the Chauliban. It is actually a Nepali word Chauli = Firewood + Ban = forest. But each of the areas were not absolutely demarcated for the use of any particular clan. It is found that except one or two areas (like Kumbi & Laibu) all other segments were used by more than one clan. Obviously the demarcation was sufficiently loose for the clans to follow.

It should also be observed from Table 3.3 as obtained from Roy Burman that Bongobei, Nurenchangobei, Diringchangobei, Mantrobei, and PISOCHANGOBEI clans had no areas earmarked for them for their exclusive use. Under the circumstances one feels curious to know as to how they made out their livelihood, and also why they were left out in the account of land distribution furnished by the Toto informants. It is also found from the Table that four areas namely Badauri, Pidi, Dukun Laksha and Udingti etc. have not been marked against any clan. As such it may be assumed that these areas were not used by any clan permanently. But practically the picture was to some extent different. From the previous records and from the version of the Toto and non-Toto respondents it appears that at least two out of four were considered as areas for the common use of the whole community. These two areas are Dukun Laksha and Udingti. The other two areas, Pidi and Badauri (Buduri) are the most important areas of the

Totopara village. Badauri (Euduri) is famous for the location of Toto religious house called Demsha because of which the place is now known as Pujagaon. On the other hand Pidi or Pudui is one of

TABLE - 3.6
PRESENT AND PAST DEMARCATION AND CLAN-WISE DISTRIBUTION
AND USE OF DIFFERENT LOCALITIES IN TOTOPARA

Sl. No.	Current Nomenclature	Toto name of the locality	Purpose of use	Toto clans and other residents of the area
1	2	3	4	5
1.	<u>Panchayatgaon</u>	1. Parmiding	C,H	Dankobei, Dantrobei, Nubebei, <u>Nepali</u>
		2. Amring	C,H	Dantrobei, Dankobei, Nubebei.
		3. Arumphia	C,H	Dantrobei, Dankobei, Manchingbei, <u>Nepali</u> .
2.	<u>Mondalgaon</u>	4. Kumbee	C,H	Dantrobei, <u>Nepali</u> .
		5. Gaitring	C,H	Dantrobei, Dankobei, Nubebei.
3.	<u>Subbagaon</u>	6. Pudui	H	Linkaijibei, Diringchankobei, Nurerchangobei, <u>Nepali</u> , <u>Behari</u> .
		7. Chanduba	C,H	Mantrobei, Mankobei, <u>Nepali</u> , <u>Behari</u> , etc.
		8. Laybu	C	Dantrobei, Nubebei.
4.	<u>Mitrang-gaon</u>	9. Yaw-yaw	C,H	Dantrobei, Bongobei.
5.	<u>Pujagaon</u>	10. Buduri	H	Budubei, <u>Behari</u> , <u>Nepali</u> .
		11. Sayra	C,H	Budubei.
6.	<u>Dumchigaon</u>	12. Yaw-yaw	C,H	Baudhbei.
		13. Dukunlukka	C	Baudhbei, <u>Nepali</u> .

(contd.)

1	2	3	4	5
<u>Localities situated outside the above demarcation.</u>				
	14.	Tading	C	Originally common use for all; at present occupied by <u>Nepalis</u>
	15.	Chouliban	DF	Originally for common use; at present washed away by R. Hourri.
	16.	Uiding-tee	C	Originally for common use; at present occupied by <u>Nepalis</u> and only two Totos
	17.	Nokidong (Poargaon)	C	At present under the occupation of <u>Nepalis</u> mainly and a few Totos.

Note : C = Cultivation, H = Homestead, DF = Degraded Forest.

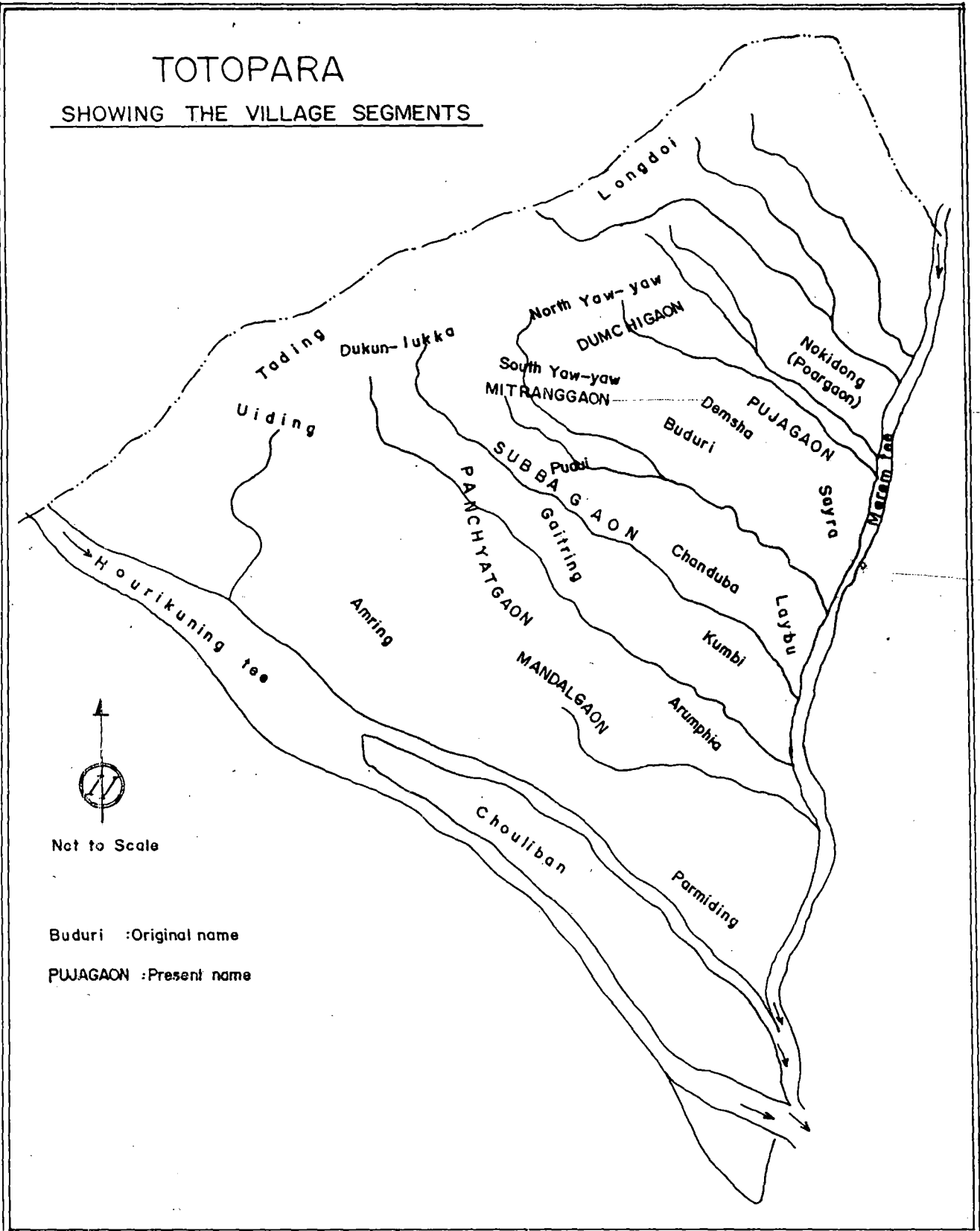
The name of communities other than Toto is underlined to focus attention on their influx into practically all the parts of Totopara.

the oldest settlements of the Toto tribe. The Buduri area is inhabited by the Budubei clan members. The Pudui is adjacent to the present Totopara bazar. It is the major homestead area in the village (including Subbagaon) for atleast three clans. At present the whole area including Pudui is called Subbagaon.

The present author has recorded more than 17 segments in the village (Table - 3.6 and also Map No. 4). Except a few places, all the segments are used by the Totos either as homesteads or for farming purposes. The remaining areas like Tading, Uiding-tee,

TOTOPARA

SHOWING THE VILLAGE SEGMENTS



Cahuliban, Dukun-Lukka and Nokidong etc. areas were left for common use of the whole community. These places are reserved as the common property of all the clans for gathering fuel, fodders and other forest products. Of course during the past few decades there has been much encroachment upon these lands by the immigrant Nepalis. The Nepalis have also settled in areas which were once upon a time partly or totally utilised by the Totos only. From sometime back the whole village has been demarcated by the local authorities into six segments named after their convenience and also the latest fashion as will be shown in Table - 3.6. The clan-wise concentration of the Totos in these six segments has been summed up in Table - 3.7 for an easier comprehension of the situation.

TABLE - 3.7
AREA UNDER THE OCCUPATION OF DIFFERENT CLANS : 1991

Sl. No.	Name of the area	Name of Clans using the area
1.	Panchayatgaon	Dankobei, Dantrobei, Nubebei, Manchingbei.
2.	Mondalgaon	Dantrobei, Dankobei, Nubebei.
3.	Subbagaon	Linkaijibei, Diringchankobei, Nurenchangobei, Mantrobei, Mankobei, Dantrobei, Nubebei.
4.	Mitrang-gaon	Dantrobei, Bongobei.
5.	Pujagaon	Budubei.
6.	Dumchigaon	Baudhbei.

From Table - 3.7 it will be noticed that all the clans

except PISOCHANGOBEI are accounted for in the land distribution pattern. We have already found that PISOCHANGOBEI is an extinct clan for all practical purposes, and therefore its omission is easily understandable. It is also pertinent to make mention of the fact that the Nepalis are found in all these segments excepting MITRANG-GAON. The Beharis are found in Subbagaon only because they stay there for business purposes.

It would be of some interest to have a look into the change that has been brought in the name of the localities in Totopara. In as much as there is a Subbagaon and a Mondalgaon named after the Subba/Kazi and Gapu/Mondal respectively, similarly a new locality has come up named Panchayatgaon where the statutory Gram Panchayat office is located. MITRANG-GAON is named after an influential Toto - MITRANG TOTO. PUJAGAON is the place where the centre of worship of the Totos named DEMSHA is located.

How this new divisions of Totopara along with their new names have been accommodated within the fold of the traditional social organisation of the Totos can be seen from the following illustration. In the past there were only two nGang-pui deployed by the Latchi-Jangoa to carry on the orders of the Subba and Gapu respectively. As has been mentioned already the nGang-puis were selected to work as messengers and assist the Subba and the Gapu in the execution of their functions. In the recent past HARKE TOTO was the nGang-pui for the Subba, and MONGALDAS TOTO worked in the same capacity for the Gapu.

But in the recent past changes have been made in the composition of the nGang-puis in view of the growth of Toto population on the one hand and the changed administrative divisions of Totopara on the other. The number of nGang-puis has been increased to six to cater to the needs of the six different localities (Table - 3.8). There is practically no clan restriction in selecting a nGang-pui. Any efficient person suitable for this office can be selected from any clan and also any segment of the village. But it is interesting to observe that this new innovation and adjustment have been made at such a period when the importance of the office of Subba or Gapu is on the decline because much of their power or functions are gradually being usurped by the newly emerged institution of Panchayats.

TABLE - 3.8

THE nGANG-PUIS OF TOTOPARA, 1991

Sl. No.	Name of the nGang-pui	Clan	Name of the locality
1.	Goba Toto	Baudhbei	Mandolgaon
2.	Jumsha Toto	Budubei	Pujagaon
3.	Barchan Toto	Baudhbei	Dumchigaon
4.	Harke Toto	Damkobei	Subtagaon
5.	Simbole Toto	Bongobei	Panchayatgaon
6.	Mongaldas Toto	Dankobei	Mitrang-gaon

Source : Field work by the author.

Before the land of Totopara was recorded and distributed in the name of individual Totos the whole geographical area was

treated as the communal property of everyone. As such legally there was no question of establishing the right of any clan, family or an individual. However, as has been seen from above discussion the different areas of Totopara was loosely demarcated for the utilisation of different clans who enjoyed certain rights over them. In the past the clan members generally possessed the rights of -

- (i) Control, distribution, demarcation and utilisation of the particular areas;
- (ii) Each clan had a separate graveyard which every clan member had the right to use in case of death of a family member.
- (iii) Each clan had their own clan house near the Demsha for the construction and maintenance of which all clan members were responsible.
- (iv) The trees and the groves (orange, Jack-fruit, Bamboo etc.) planted by a particular family was treated as the property of that particular family, but the land was treated as the property of the clan, or resumed as the community property.
- (v) No clan had the right to sell or distribute the clan properties to anyone or settle any non-Toto in their midst.

After the introduction of the individual land holding system in 1969 the clan-property rights have practically come to an end.

There were separate graveyards among the Totos for burying the deadbodies of different cluster of clans in different part of

the village. In old days, they used to bury the deadbodies along with personal belongings including coins, ornaments and arms etc. This is also a reason why outsiders were not allowed to stay in the village or particularly to step into the graveyards. But after the encroachment made by the outsiders into Totopara, these graveyards have attracted the attention so much so that thefts of valuables from the graves have become a common occurrence. The thieves regularly pick up the metal utensils, coins and ornaments which were lying buried along with the deadbody.

However the Totos have not yet given up their traditional practice. During the burial of Dinesh Toto the erstwhile Gapu of the village, all his belongings including wrist-watch and transistors were placed in the grave. The same thing has taken place after the death of Shirong Toto, the erstwhile Subba of the Totos. Because of his long association with Totopara from the early 70s the author had very intimate relation with both the deceased, and had the privilege of attending the funeral ceremony of Shirong Toto. Wang-cheng Toto, the adopted son of Shirong, expressed his displeasure during the funeral because the author failed to present any money or other valuables to be placed in Shirong's grave. Unfortunately the author was not aware of this custom till then. The Totos believe that each of the dead person has to show his account of treasure to their ancestors after their arrival in the world of dead, and this explains the origin and continuance of the custom.

Even now the Totos are very reluctant in allowing any non-Toto at the site of the grave while the burying is taking place. This is done to keep the exact place of burial as secret as possible. But the restrictions on using the clan graveyards have been slackened for want of sufficient land. It may be mentioned here that the site of the present Tribal Welfare Bungalow was one of the graveyards of the Toto community in the past. It was abandoned only after the construction of the Bungalow there.

In the old days the Totos had their separate clan houses near the Demsha on the Badu (Buduri) hills for the use of different clan-clusters. Later on the clan houses were built for temporary use during the performance of the Omchu and Maiyu festivals only. This system continued till the 50s of this century after which it was abandoned due to want of raw materials for house construction especially after the devastating flood of 1954 when the natural grass lands growing on the bed of river Torsha was badly eroded. Since then instead of building separate clan houses around the Demsha they began using the Demsha itself for both worship and congregation. In its exterior look the Demsha is nothing but a bigger model of their traditional Na-ko-sha (dwelling house).

The Demsha was used in the past not only for their annual worship but also as an assembly and court house for the disposal of intra-community litigations. Two sacred drums (Bakung) are

preserved there for being used during the performance of worship and also for calling the people to assemble or raise an alarm when necessary. The beating of these drums on occasions other than above or for fun is strictly prohibited.

In recent years the traditional Demsha of the Totos has been replaced by a brick built house with tin roofing signaling a major departure from the past when it was customary to use only the locally available material and craftsmanship for the construction of the Demsha.

3.4 CLANS AND RITUAL OBSERVANCES

The Totos are very much traditional in their religious observances. Various kinds of Champo (worship) and Sangai-lawmai (penance) take place throughout the year. The worships can be categorised depending on the level of participation at the family, clan or community. To illustrate, Tsa-gDang-pa is the deity of the house or the family, the Chimadora is the ancestral deity of the lineage, Chaisung is the ancestral deity of the clan and Itspa is the Supreme God of the whole Toto community. Each clan or a cluster of clans has a separate Chaisung which are worshipped by the clan members unitedly or individually under guidance of an elderly clan member with the help of a priest by offering particular ingredients and sacrifice of animals according to their tradition.

Besides Chaisung the Totos have separate totems for each of their clans. They assume a certain correspondence between the two. The Chaisungs are represented by different plants and other natural objects located in a particular spot within the territories of the clans and are demarcated as the clan-emblems or shrines. Sometimes the totems are represented by a particular species of animal. Since each of the members of a Toto clan have great sentimental attachment towards the Chaisung they are knitted together in a single centripetal forum.

Like the other primitive ethnic groups of the world the totems of the Totos have two aspects - social and religious. However the social aspects play a more dominant role than the religious aspects. The totemic symbols are rather related to their livelihood and to the day to day functioning of the Toto tribe. There is no restriction against eating or killing the totemic symbols amongst the Totos. But they are tabooed to perform some works in the name of their totems. As has been mentioned already there may be a clan shrine located within the clan territory within which the Chaisung is represented by one object or another. But the Totos have no shrine or any particular spot for their totems as the existence of the totems is more at the psychological rather than physical plane. The distribution of the clan shrines, Chaisungs and the totems for each of the clans is shown in Table - 3.9.

Om-chu (Oung-chhu) and Maiyu are the major annual religious festivals of the Toto people. They believe that the welfare of the

TABLE - 3.9

NAME OF THE CHAISUNG, SHRINES ALONG WITH LOCATIONS AND TOTEMIC SYMBOLS
FOR THE VARIOUS TOTO CLANS

Sl. No.	Name of the Clan	Name of the Chaisung	Location of the Shrine and description	Birds/Animals to be given in worship	Totemic Symbol
1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Dankobei	Chen' (Lama Lapang/ Basarang)	A Stone near the house of Kaibura (Karbura); Remnant of a mango tree near Diptee stream in the vicinity of Hairum's house.	One red hen	Red horse
2.	Dantrobei	Bas'rong	A Stone near the house of Ramesh Toto; Remnant of a mango tree in front of Banipa's house.	One pig	Elephant
3.	Badubei	Ngedoo-pa	A Stone at Badu hills (Pujagaon); A Stone under Parali tree by the side of Nitingtee.	One pig	Tiger

(contd.)

1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Diringchangobei	Basudang	A Stone (as for Nurechangobei).	One Hen & One Cock	Elephant
10.	Mankobei	Lei-choung	A Stone behind the house of Hari Mudi.	One Pig	Red Dog/ Red Buffalo
11.	Mantrobei	Darong (i.e. Sun)	A piece of cloth tied like flag to a bamboo in the <u>Chima</u> .	One Pig	White Goat
12.	Manchingbei	Lanteng-jee (Bingdinepa)	A Stone in front of the house of late Shirong Kazi (Subba).	One Pig	Monkey
13.	Pisochangobei	Sarka	<u>Chima</u> of the house	One Hen	Red Horse.

Note : Apart from the bird/animal to be given in worship of the Chaisung (Column-5), sun-dried as also cooked rice, butter, ginger etc. are offered on a plaintain leaf. Also incense of Titepate is burnt and enough of Iew is offered on the occasion by all the clans.

Source:Field work by the author.

community throughout the year depends on the success of these two festivals. In fact, the whole community comes close to each other on the occasion of these two festivals. They exchange food and drinks to their relatives in this occasion and also present new garments to their beloved one. The main religious function of these festivals is that each of the clans have to propitiate the highest God, Itspa, by offering necessary items by rotation during the festival days with the help of the Subba and his deputies. Besides every clan has to participate in the community worship to the Itspa and pray for the welfare of the whole community.

As mentioned earlier the Totos have two age old drums (Bakung) which are preserved within the Demsha to be used only during the religious occasions or in case of emergency. One of these drums is considered as male and another female by the Totos. Some of the early scholars have described the drums as Mahakaal and Mahakali. They have also described the Badoo (Buduri) hills as Kaleswar or Pujabari. The author does not agree with these versions which must have been obtained from Nepali informants who have substituted their own cultural idiom while understanding these phenomena. Previously these drums were kept in the clan house of the Baudhbei and Badubei clans who were entrusted to take care of the Bakungs. Their preservation of the drums gave the Baudhbei and the Badubei clans a superior status over others. But since the abolition of the separate clan house system the drums are being kept in the Demsha itself where the aforesaid

clan members take due care of them. As a matter of fact, the drums are very common and identical to that of the drums used by the Mech (Bodo) and the Rabhas of sub-Himalayan Bengal and Assam. The author was told by the elderly respondents that the drums were presented to their ancestors by the Rabhas.

No religious function is observed by the Totos during the marriage ceremony except worship of Itspa which is done by sacrificing a cow and offering its heart along with some other portion of the body for seeking his permission. During this function a member from Badubei clan must hold the front legs of the cow that are being offered to the God.

During the construction of a coffin after the death of a person one man belonging to the Baudhbei clan must touch the plank of the bamboo splits prepared for the grave and also carry fire from the house of the deceased person to the graveyard.

Among the Totos persons belonging to the Diringchangobei, Badubei, Baudhbei, Bongobei and Nubebei clans are usually selected for the post of a Priest. For this reason they have to observe some restrictions as regards food.

There are reasons to believe that the Chaisung or the totemic symbols of various clans might have undergone some changes over time in course of migration of the people to their present site. Otherwise one cannot explain the frequent mention of

Elephant as the totem for many clans. It may be remembered that elephant is commonly found in the Duars only and not up in the hills. It is also possible that the association with the Bhutanese have affected the religious emblems to some extent. The Dankobei clan has adopted Chen' as their Chaisung. B.K. Roy Burman has mentioned the Chaisung of the Dankobei clan as Lama Lapang and also as Basarang. The chen' is worshiped by the Drukpas of Buxaduar and other places. Among them the mothers dedicate their baby in the name of Chen' if they suffer from the disabilities of repeated still-birth or high rate of child mortality. The village priest is known among them also as Pows and God Chen' is represented in the form of a crest of a hill made of boiled or sun-dried rice. The Dankobei clan members propitiate their Chaisung - Chen' for the benefit of their clan members in a similar fashion.

It may further be seen that the Mantrobei clan members worship their Chaisung, Darang, which means Sun or Sun-God by hoisting a flag. Hoisting a flag in the premises of a shrine is a religious custom of the Buddhist Bhutias which they do to keep away the evil spirits. Such Chaisung may therefore have been adopted from the Bhutanese tradition in the past.

3.5 CLANS AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

It has been mentioned already that the Subba and the Gapu among the Totos belong to Diringchangobei and Dankobei clans

respectively. Nothing is known for certain as to when this custom came into existence. The Dankobei is undoubtedly one of the comparatively more numerous clans but Diringchangobei from which the Subba is appointed had only one family till late 60s. Even from the latest survey made by the author it is found that this clan consists of only two families at present. The numerical importance of the clans has therefore little to do with their assumption of administrative power.

The question of hierarchy among the different clans of the Totos is a matter of controversy. Some of the early scholars (like Roy Burman and Sanyal) have mentioned about the existence of a loose type of clan-wise moieties or ceremonial divisions among the Totos. The form of these moieties can be classified as follows :

- (i) Moieties on the basis of 'Religious group' and 'non-religious group', or on the basis of commensality with Bhutias, Doyas and Lepchas;
- (ii) Moieties on the basis of taboo with respect to monkey and squirrel; and
- (iii) Clans grouped on the basis of Hui-hwa or relay porterage system.

(i) The first great division that can be made on the basis of religious and non-religious functions is traced back to the Subba and Gapu. Some clans are known as belonging to the group

of Subba while others are affiliated with Gapu. A commensal group is formed headed by Subba who are tabooed to take the food prepared by a woman other than Bhutia, Doya and Lepcha. On the contrary the non-commensal group formed around the Gapu has no taboo in taking such food prepared by others (Table - 3.10).

TABLE - 3.10

COMMENSAL AND NON-COMMENSAL GROUPS AMONG TOTOS

Commensal group (Subba's clans)	Non-Commensal group (Gapu's clans)
1. Budubei	1. Dankobei
2. Baudhbei	2. Dantrobei
3. Bongobei	3. Mankobei
4. Diringchangobei	4. Mantrobei
5. Nubebei	5. Manchingbei
6. Nurenchangobei	7. PISOchangobei

According to the tradition of the Totos the Pow (superior priest), Yong-tong (second class priest) and other persons related to religious functions and worships are selected from the commensal group. Some of the clans of the commensal group are entrusted to render voluntary service during the funeral rites and to take care of the two holy drums kept in the Demsha. As such the commensal group of clans or the clans headed by the Subba (in the sense of the Spiritual head) is considered as superior to the clans headed by the Gapu or the non-commensal group of clans. In case of violation of the taboo the commensal

clan-group members have to propitiate Itspa by offering a red cock and some Iew.

In respect of the commensality with the Bhutias it may be remembered that the Totos were ruled over by the former for a long time. The Bhutanese Lamas came down to Totopara sometimes to supervise over the activities of the Totos and give them religious lessons. Transactions with Bhutan was a deciding factor for the prosperity of the economy of the village. As a result no taboo was imposed on the food prepared by the Bhutia woman who obviously were supposed to belong to a superior community.

Like the Totos, the Doyas were also the slaves of the Bhutias for whom they had to render free labour. As such the Doyas were treated as a fraternal community enjoying an equal status, and there was no restriction on commensality with the Doyas. The Doyas also have a free access in the ritual and festivals of the Toto community. Besides there exists a ritual relation between the two neighbouring communities across the political border. The Doyas used to sacrifice a pig on the burial site of a deceased person as an oblation with the belief that the animal would lead the deceased to the other world. At that time a brave man of the Toto community is informed by the Doyas to carry away the carcass of the pig from the burial ground for consumption. It may be mentioned in this connection that the Totos are carion eaters. On the other hand some of the Toto priests are invited

by the Doyas to conduct special penance by making offering to appease the evil spirits. So it is found that there is a close relation between the two communities and no taboo is therefore imposed on taking food prepared by each other.

Similarly it is possible that no taboo was placed on partaking food prepared by a Lepcha woman because the Lepchas were considered superior to them by the Totos because of the rich culture of the former.

In course of his investigation in the tribal villages situated along the old Hui-hwa routes in Duars the author was informed by Rabha and Mech informants that there was no restriction in Toto's taking food prepared by their women. They said that the Totos used to take shelter in their houses during their trade tours and they were very much accommodative. This must be a reference to the non-commensal group of Totos under the charge of the Gapu who made visits to the plains. At present however the situation has completely changed. Whatever may be the situation at the theoretical level, in practice even the Pows take food prepared by the shop keepers including a Bengalee woman at Totopara itself. It may therefore be concluded that the division within the Toto society on the basis of commensality is more a product of socio-economic circumstances having nothing to do with a rigid differentiation of status among them.

(ii) Some of the clans of the Totos are tabooed to eat or even touch a monkey or a squirrel from which others are exempted. From Table - 3.11 it will be found that all the six priestly clans and two other clans are tabooed to eat or touch the monkey and squirrels. The two non-priestly clans included in this category are Linkaijibei and PISOCHANGOBEI clans. The rest of the clans including that of the Gapu are not required to observe any taboo and therefore they are at liberty to touch and eat the monkey and the squirrel.

TABLE - 3.11

MOIETIES ON THE BASIS OF TABOO ON MONKEY AND SQUIRREL

Clans tabooed to eat or touch monkey or squirrel		Clans not tabooed to eat or touch monkey or squirrel
(Priest's clans)	(Non-Priest's Clans)	(Non-priest's Clans)
1	2	3
1. Diringchangobei	7. Linkaijibei	1. Dankobei
2. Nubebei	8. PISOCHANGOBEI	2. Dantrobei
3. Nurenchangobei		3. Mantrobei
4. Bangobei		4. Mankobei
5. Budubei		5. Manchingbei
6. Baudhbei		

It will be of some interest to observe that among the non-tabooed clans the totemic symbol of the Manchingbei is presented by Monkey. But at present none of the Toto clans considers the

squirrel as a totemic symbol. Since there is no restriction against killing or touching the totemic symbol among the Totos the Manchingbei clan belonging to the non-tabbed group is allowed to eat or touch the Monkey though Monkey happens to be its totem. The squirrels are rarely found in Totopara and not consumed by the Totos. Even though the monkey is a natural animal in Totopara no one among the Totos reported eating the monkey. What relevance such a classification has therefore needs to be further investigated.

(iii) It has already been mentioned that the Totos had to render free porterage service to the Bhutanese officials, which is called Hui-hwa by them. For the efficient functioning of the Hui-hwa the whole community was divided into two separate groups. The first group was entrusted to render relay porterage service for carrying the commodities from the plains areas of Duars and the second group was entrusted to carry the same commodities to a certain distance on way to Thimphu and Paro inside Bhutan on relay porterage system. The clan group which was engaged for carrying the commodities in the Duars area was headed by the Gapu and the group was called Wantengbei (Lower group). On the other hand, the clan group which was engaged for carrying the loads inside Bhutan was called Orangbei (Upper group). It is revealed from Table - 3.12 that there is no similarity between the Orangbei-Wantengbei classification of the Totos with either the division on the basis of commensality or taboos in matters

TABLE - 3.12

MOIETIES ACCORDING TO HUI-HWA TROOPS

Orangbei headed by Subba & conducted by nGang-pui of Gapu		Wantengbei headed by Gapu & conducted by nGang-pui of Subba	
Commensal Group	Non-commensal Group	Commensal Group	Non-commensal Group
1. Budubei	5. Manchingbei	1. Nubebei	3. Dankobei
2. Baudhbei	6. Mantrobei	2. Nurenchan- gobei	4. Linkaijibei
3. Songobei	7. PISOCHANGO- bei		5. Mankobei
4. Diringchango- bei	8. Dantrobei		

of food. If we take the first list of clan division as the hierarchical paradigm then it will be found that four of the clans belonging to the secular clan group have been included in the Orangbei (Upper group). On the contrary two of the commensal clans (Nurenchangobei and Nubebei) have been included in the Wantengbei (Lower group). As such it may be concluded that the group division in connection with the Hui-hwa was not formed on the basis of clan hierarchy but was arrived at as a matter of practical policy designed to regulate the trade transactions more smoothly and efficiently. The clans familiar with the culture and hazards of both hills and the plains were mixed up in such a way as to serve the best interests of their Bhutanese masters. It may further be observed that the carrying activities of the Upper group was conducted by the nGang-pui (Principal assistant and messenger)

of the Gapu while those of the Lower group was conducted by the nGang-pui of the Subba. Thus, here again there was a role reversal possibly to help maintain a strict vigil on the activities of either group affiliated under normal circumstances in a different way. This also helped maintain a balance of forces between the Subba and Gapu in a strategic border point in favour of the Bhutanese rulers.

The moieties formed in connection with Hui-hwa operation in the past have lost all relevance under a changed situation. But they have left an imprint in the ritual worship of the Totos. Before beginning their trade journey Maiyu worship was made in two separate spots near the Demsha. In this occasion they used to sacrifice a cow from each of the moieties separately. The two moieties again were symbolised by the two sacred drums. The big one represented the bigger clan group i.e., Orangbei group, and the small one represented the small group i.e., Wantengbei group. The trade tours between the high hills of Bhutan and the plains of Duars have ceased to exist long time ago but the ceremonies held in connection with them continues as a cultural relic testifying the ingenuity of the human mind.

3.6 THE LINEAGE AND ITS ROLE

Next to the clan lineage is the most important component of the Toto social structure. 'A lineage consists of all

descendents in one line of a particular person through a determinate number of generations. A patrilineal or agnatic lineage consists of all the descendents through males of a single male ancestor; a matrilineage consists of all the descendants through females of a single ancestress' (Notes and Queries : 88-89). In the patrilineal Toto society, lineage plays an important role in the social, religious and the economic activities of the Totos. For the convenience of discussion the role of lineage among the Totos may be discussed under the following items :

- A. Control over the lineage properties;
- B. Control over the connubial functions;
- C. Control over religious and ritualistic activities;

According to the Toto social customary laws the right on the properties of one who dies without a familial successor passes over to the other members of the lineage. The lineage members also enjoy the property right of :

- (i) Bamboo groves planted by the lineage ancestors;
- (ii) Areca-nuts and other trees planted by the ancestors;
- (iii) Land areas traditionally utilised for the purpose of uses by the lineage only.

Such privileges are however reserved only for those members of the lineage who have acquired the right of worship of Chima-dora (Lineage deity) after marriage. The Mouria (orphan)

and minor unmarried persons who have not yet acquired the right of membership of the Latchi-Jangoa may however be entitled to a legitimate share if some elderly lineage member offers worship in his behalf. Any member of the lineage can utilise the bamboo or the other lineage properties for his personal purpose by offering at least one pitcher of Iew to all the clan members. If anybody stays outside Totopara for a long time he is excommunicated by the Latchi-Jangoa. In such case he is denied all right over the lineage properties even including the right over the trees planted by the offender himself. An excommunicated person is not permitted to use anything belonging to the lineage like bamboo, areca-nuts and other trees. If necessary he may purchase the things from his own lineage members like what the non-Totos do.

It is important to note that after the introduction of individual land holding system the land-man ratio among the Totos have become considerably unstable and uneconomic. At present there is no excess land in Totopara which may be occupied by the Totos as what they used to do in the past. As such the role of lineage properties has become more important than ever before.

The lineage has a very important role as regards consubstantial relations among the Totos. In fact the marriage regulation is more closely related to the lineage rather than the clan. Members of the same lineage are descendents from a common ancestor and as such no member is permitted to marry within the same

lineage or to have any sexual relation within the same lineage. In the Toto social customs sometimes a Shak-pa (ritualistic friendship) is made between lineages belonging to different clans. The marriage between any two Shakpa lineage members is not permitted. Marriages within the Mang-pu that is descendents upto three generations on the side of the mother are also strictly prohibited according to the age-old social customs. This may be taken to be a faint trace of matriliney among the people in the remote past.

The lineage has an active role in respect of the control over the religious and ritualistic activities of the tribe. Every lineage has got a lineage deity of its own and the head of the family (male) must worship the deity till his sons replace him after their marriage. The deity is called Chimadora. Besides the Chaisung (the presiding clan deity) each of the lineage of the Totos has a separate Chimadora or ancestral deity named after one of the most powerful ancestors in the male line. In case of multiple lineage within a clan the Chaisung of the most dominant lineage would be treated as the Chaisung of the whole clan. In fact one Chaisung may be dropped and a new one acquired in its place after a shifting of residence within the territory of some other clan but the Chimadora would remain unchanged. Further among the Totos personal belongings of a person are buried along with the deadbody after his death. It is obligatory for the lineage members to attend the funeral and contribute his mite towards meeting the requirements of the funeral.

In short the fraternal feeling within the lineage is much stronger than within a clan. In case of a problem of a particular family his lineage members are expected to rush in for help. The lineage members are also expected to share the joy and the sorrow together and co-operate with one another in the execution of difficult and laborious tasks. The reciprocal exchange of free-labour (Lingcha-Suwa and Nengbei-Suwa) is much more prevalent at the lineage level rather than at the clan or tribe level.

3.7 THE FAMILY

The family is the nucleus of the social institution in the social structure and is defined as a primary group formed through sex relation and sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreation and rearing of children. It is also an economic unit for production, consumption and distribution purposes where the members enjoy common facilities like common residence and foodstuffs. The Totos are endogamous at the tribe level and generally exogamous at the clan level with certain variations. As has been noticed marriages may be permitted between the members of different lineage in case of multi-lineage clans. Also marriages between ceremonially made friendly clans or lineages, that is the Shak-pa members, is prohibited. Again marriage with one's mother's sister's descendents up to three generations is prohibited. Roy Burman had mentioned that the clans were divided into several intra-suitor groups for purposes of

marriage. Each cluster of such inter-exchangeable group has been named as Papumbei. In course of their study in 1964 Chakraborti and Chottopadhyay did not find any preferential relationships and said that they must have become defunct even if they had existed in the past. The present author also did not find any trace of such moieties during his investigation at Totopara.

The practice of endogamy has helped the Totos to maintain their separate identity. While isolating the community from others it has strengthened internal solidarity of the people. The family and lineage properties along with land have also been spared from being usurped by outside communities to a great extent because of the close-knit character of the tribe as derived from endogamy.

Divorce and remarriage of both widows and widowers are fairly common and permitted. On an average about 30 per cent of the couples have divorced at least once in their married life. Drunkenness and lack of initiative in gainful work on the part of the male are often resented by the females leading to either divorce or desertion. Needless to say that the womenfolk enjoy considerable liberty in taking their own decision in such matters.

Polyandry is not permitted among the Totos, but polygyny is prevalent among them. But even polygyny is on the decline as can be made out from Table - 3.13.

TABLE - 3.13

POLYGyny AMONG THE TOTOS

Family type	Chakraborti and Chottopadhyay Survey by the author (1964)		Survey by the author (1991)	
	No. of Polygyny	No. of Families	No. of Polygyny	No. of Families
Conjugal Unit	1	7	-	13
Elementary Unit	4	44	6	121
Extended Unit	4	39	1	36
TOTAL	9	90	7	170

Among the Totos marriage is the final stage of formation of a family, though the betrothed couples are allowed to live together for years as husband and wife before the final solemnisation of marriage ceremony. According to the custom the marriage is finally solemnised at the fifth, seventh, or ninth month of pregnancy of the bride. Pregnancy is the main pre-condition of the Toto wedlock, without which it cannot be solemnised (though some childless couple are at present living in Totopara as husband and wife). A Toto girl has the liberty to change her betrothed match for any number of times if she does not conceive by him within a certain period. In case of a particular Toto girl, there is a record of changing her match for as much as eleventh time till she finally conceived.

There are some obligations between the family of the bridegroom and the bride after Shamebeheo or betrothal function

takes place. Both the families become intimate to each other as they become 'would-be relatives'. During this interim period both the families would exchange food and drinks at the time of their ceremonial festivals. The family of the bride-groom would present new cloths and garments to the bride at the time of Om-chu festival as a token of their relationship. According to the Toto custom the girl would live with her parent's family till she become adult. But in case of Débobehéo (big marriage) she may be taken to the bride-groom's house on payment of bride-price on any suitable day. One notable feature of Toto marriage is that in many cases the bride is found considerably older than the bride-groom. In some cases it was found that the age of the bride-groom is only 11 or 12 years while the age of the bride is 17 or 18 years.

There is no major function on bringing the bride to the house of the bride-groom except providing some Iew and food. On the day of bringing the bride, the father of the groom along with some of his clansmen goes to the house of the bride with a pitcher of Iew and one fowl. Some elderly people of the locality of the bride would assemble there. All the persons assembled there would drink Iew. Then the father of the groom would return to his house accompanied by the bride. Some other persons from the bride's family may also accompany her. All the clansmen of the groom are also invited. Iew will be served to everyone so assembled after which the people would return to their places and the function concluded.

On the third day the boy would worship the Chimadora by offering a cock. This is done for seeking the permission of the family deity to accept the new comer as the member of the family. Without invoking Chimadora the bride would not be entitled to enter the Jiri (hearth), and prepare food for the family members. After the Huikewa (family worship) or worship of Chimadora is over, the couple is allowed to sleep together in the newly built Tang-tsa (an auxiliary room attached to the parental house for the stay of the newly wed couple). In some cases the old parents leave the original dwelling house for another or begin living in the Niangko-tsa or farm house. From then on the right of worshipping the Chaisung and Chimadora devolves to the newly married son from the father. But in case a minor has been married the father continues to discharge his duties till the son attains adulthood.

As has been mentioned the Debo-beheo (big marriage) may be solemnised at the fifth, seventh or ninth month of pregnancy of the bride. The scale of the ceremony will depend upon the economic position of the party based on which the number of cows to be killed and pitchers of Iew to be served would be decided.

Besides the clan members the Subba and the Gapu are invited to participate. On the day of the marriage ceremony the couple would be given a new name. In each occasion of marriage even a divorced woman would be given a new name. This has been

for a long time an important part of the Toto marriage ceremony. But at present this ceremonial naming is losing its importance particularly in the case of educated persons. In case of an educated person his/her name is registered in admission book of the school and he/she is identified to everyone by that particular name. On the other hand, for the implementation of various developmental schemes, the name of a person once registered in the Government record is taken as final for his future identity. As such, the use of the ceremonial name is confined within the family circle only.

Sometime after the marriage, a Toto couple generally starts a separate household, either adjacent to the parental homestead or in a separate plot of land. Another important feature is the transfer of Chimadora or family deity from the father to son. This is an important pre-condition for getting the membership of the Latchi-Jangoa (General council of the community). Sometimes in an extended family the father leaves the Nako-tsa or dwelling house for the Niangko-tsa or the jhoom house after the marriage of the eldest son and transfer of Chimadora as mentioned earlier.

At present, due to want of necessary land and house building material the system of Niangko-tsa is being gradually abolished. On the other hand the traditional housing pattern of the Totos is going through an abrupt change particularly after the introduction of the Government housing schemes. These factors

have affected the traditional family style and intra-family relations of the Totos considerably.

However, this type of conjugal family is even now regarded as an ideal type howsoever difficult it may be to practice them in real life. Such families are immediately recognised by the Latchi-Jangoa who as a collective body regards the violation of traditional marriage customs as punishable offence. A good number of Toto women and some of the male Totos have been expelled from Totopara in the past for violating these norms. But in recent years the social organisation of the Totos has become weakened and no effective injunction could be passed by the traditional authorities against the deviants marrying the non-Totos.

As far as the rights of a Toto family are concerned it may be mentioned that each family has a right to construct its house on a plot of home-stead after clearing the area within the demarcated territory of the clan. In the past the same procedure was followed with respect to the jhoom plots. Of course while felling the trees in the jhoom area no one was allowed to cause any damage to any particular tree planted and owned by some one else. The jhoom plots were available for possession and use but not for sale or subletting. Every family has also the right of collection of forest produce for food, fodder or house building material. The collection of common crops like Pipul and selling them to the traders is common enough sight at Totopara. The

families had also the right of earmarking any suitable tree in the forest for cultivation of lac worm and also to tend the bovine animals in the jungle. Apart from that they enjoyed the right to participate in the village politics and community functions.

The duties of a family consist of payment of the annual capitation tax at the rate of Rs. 2/- per family to the Mondal or Gapu, and also the payment of the Chowkidary tax assessed by the Gram Panchayat. Further they have to render a free service for five days in a year to the forest department for clearance of forest roads and the boundary line between Bhutan and India on the northern end of Totopara. Apart from this they have to render one day's free-labour annually to the Kazi and the Gapu of the village as per their traditional rules. The families are also enjoined to pay the subscriptions fixed by the Latchi-Jangoa and participate in the village festivals. As mentioned earlier reciprocal exchange of labour (Nengbei-suwa and Lingcha-suwa) among the different families is a characteristic feature of Toto social organisation. Any one refusing to provide such help would be punished by the village administration during the annual festival in the presence of the Kazi.

The properties possessed by a family can be classified as follows :

- (i) Home-stead and the area under cultivation by the family;

- (ii) Niangko-tsa (jhoom house), Nako-tsa (dwelling house), and Tang-tsa (auxiliary house);
- (iii) Bamboo groves planted and inherited by the family;
- (iv) Areca-nut trees and orange groves planted or inherited by the family;
- (v) Particular trees or groves used and utilised by the family for a long time even if they are situated on the cultivated land or near the home-stead of some other family;
- (vi) Bovine animals and birds reared by the family; and
- (vii) Bullock-carts, utensils etc.

The properties possessed by the family cannot be disposed of or given to anybody without the consent of the family members. As such all the members of a Toto family enjoy an equal right over them. The traditional pattern of inheritance of family properties is equigeniture on the male line successors. The father is succeeded by the married son/sons after the later acquire the rights of worship of Chimadora. A minor son also gets his legitimate share after he becomes a fullfledged family member after the solemnisation of his marriage. Even though the right of the father as a family head comes to an end after the transfer of right of worship of Chimadora to the sons, he is held in a respectable position by all the family members. Equigeniture is not observed only in such cases where a person has been ex-communicated or expelled by the village.

3.8 INTER-PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP

A study of the behaviour and approach in inter-personal relationship among the family members will enable us to get a comprehensive idea about the cultural tradition and norms of the Toto community. The members of a family are structurally related to each other because of the inter-dependence in their functions. The behavioural pattern of the individual members is presented below for the different roles in which they are placed in a kinship network.

The husband is the head of the family in the patrilineal set-up of the Toto society. He is liable to feed his wife, provide all other amenities to her and also to maintain a regular sex relationship to meet the biological needs and that of procreation. Except the husband no one else is allowed to enter into the Chima (the place for the family deity). He has no liberty to assault on his wife and cause any bloodshed. He performs the worship and penance for the betterment of the family whenever an occasion for doing so arises.

A Toto wife maintains the house-hold and prepares food for all the family members. She also assists her husband at the time of harvesting. She is also used to collecting firewood, vegetables, fruits, tubers and fodder from the forest. Needless to say that she looks after the children as well. A Toto wife is used to enjoy more freedom than her counterparts elsewhere. She can desert

her husband if she dislikes him and has the liberty to live with any other man of her choice. In such cases her lover is liable to pay a certain sum to her former husband as and when decided by the village administration. But adultery of any kind during her marital life is strictly prohibited. According to the traditional Toto social custom, the wife has to observe uncleanness for one year after the death of her husband. During this period she is forbidden to remarry and take food prepared by any one other than the family members. However nowadays the period of uncleanness has been reduced to 12 days only after a decision was taken to this effect by the Latchi-Jangoa.

The relation between the mother and the children is to some extent different from that of the relation between the father and children. In contrast to the father who evokes respect and authority in the household, the mother reacts with her children always with sympathy and affection. As such in case of divorce the children generally live with their mother in the house of her second husband till they come of age. The mother takes special care of her daughter and trains her up in domestic works and ritualistic practices.

The brother and the sisters maintain a relation of love and affection tinged with a bit of reverence and reserved attitude. In the absence of father the elder sons are liable to arrange the marriage of their sisters. After the marriage of the sister the brother maintains a close relation with the sister's family. He

along with his wife helps the family of the sister at the time of different social and religious functions and at the time of construction of their dwelling houses. A sister also in turn maintains a close relation with her brothers. It is customary to send occasional food and drinks not only to her uterine brothers but also to the clan brothers. During the marriage of a sister her brother remains present as a special invitee. Like the brothers, the sister and her husband are also supposed to render their labour on a reciprocal basis to the family of the brother during construction of his house and other socio-religious functions. The sisters are not given any share of her paternal properties but in case of divorce by the husband she is allowed to stay within the family of her brother till she marries again.

At present some sort of variations are being observed among the literate and illiterate members of the family in regard to the inter-personal relation, affecting the tradition and integrity of the family. The conflict between the tradition-bound illiterate members and literate and economically independent members is gradually increasing.

But, despite the changes that are slowly creeping in as an inevitable accompaniment of exposure to the world outside the Toto society is still governed by the broad principles of mutual reciprocity. The private and the corporate roles of an individual merge into one at times of both happiness and distress. As has

