



# THE THAKALIS OF NORTH WESTERN NEPAL

*by*

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**For  
Reena Gauchan and Pushpa V. Tulachan  
and to the people  
Thak Kholā, Panchgaon and  
Baragaon, some of the most  
beautiful areas in the world  
to my way of thinking**





## FOREWORD

The present study is based in the main on field research I undertook from 1981 to 1982 during nine months among the Thakalis of Thak Khola and those who have migrated elsewhere. This was preceded by preparatory stays in the years from 1978 to 1980; I was most recently in Nepal in the spring of 1984. The knowledge I gained in Germany from my readings I was able to expand and deepen thanks to the support of Dr. Horst Brinkhaus of the Nepal Research Centre, where source material unavailable to me previously was accessible.

Personal contacts with Prof. C. Von Fuerer-Haimendorf, Prof. Dor Bahadur Bista of Kathmandu and the Danish anthropologist Dr. Michael Vinding opened up further roads of thought for me into the matter at hand. The good offices of Prof. B. Koelver of Kiel made possible a period of study in the subjects of anthropology and sociology at Tribhuvan University in Kirtipur/Kathmandu under the supervision of Dr. C. Mishra. Further thought was stimulated by conversations with various experts active in the field, in particular those with the American anthropologist William Fisher, the English anthropologist Charles Ramble, the German ethnologist Reinhard Greve and the journalist Ludmilla Tueting. I also obtained important information from the staff of the United Nations Development Program.

Information obtained from selected members of the various Thakali groups, which I taped or wrote down, and which I later made a preliminary appraisal of in the Nepal Research Centre, was indispensable for my studies. I should particularly like to make mention of Pushpa V. Tulachan, Reena Gauchan, Basanta Bhattachan and Krishna Bhattachan from Kathmandu, Krishna Lal Thakaali from Jomosom, with whom Michael Vinding worked together successfully, Shailendra Thakaali from Jomosom as well as Indra Jworchan from Marpha.

I have adopted for my study ethnographic and geographic terms that are in common use in Nepal.

My thanks go to all who supported me during my research with help and suggestions. And special thanks I owe to the American Philip Pierce, who was so kind in helping to translate this book into English.

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## 1. GEOGRAPHIC FACTORS

250 kilometers northwest of Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal, in inner Himalaya, lies the homeland of the Thakalis, in Mustang District near the Tibetan border, in the Thak Khola Valley (Nep : *thak* = Thakali, *khola* = valley). The Thakalis engage there in stock-breeding and farming but are distinguished chiefly as merchants.

The number of Thakalis is estimated today to be approximately 10,000 persons, though this is difficult to confirm given the fact that a portion of them have emigrated from Thak Khola into more southern areas of Nepal : to Kathmandu, the cities of Pokhara and Baglung or those, such as Bhairawa and Butwal, near or across the Indian border.

The Thak Khola Valley, situated within the 29th northern parallel between 83°50' and 84° longitude east, stretches out over 30 kilometers along an old trade route between India and Tibet.

Whereas the valley is open at the south towards Pokhara and at the north towards Tibet, it is bound in east and west by some of the highest mountains of the world, Dhaulagiri I (8172 m) and Annapurna I (8080 m). From the north the Kali Gandaki, rising in the Tibetan plateau, flows through the valley.

Between the towns of Ghasa and Tukuche in Thak Khola (see map) a geographically prominent bend has been formed through which the Kali Gandaki winds its way. Here one is in the presence of one of the world's deepest water gaps. On the west side the eastern flank of Dhaulagiri rises abruptly from 2500 m to 8172 m (valley bottom at Larjung : see map), and on the east side, on the inside of the bend, zones of more or less level alpine pasture lie in front of the west cliffs of the Nilgiris (Annapurna massif) at an altitude of 4000 m.

Along this meteorological line of demarcation, at Larjung, the riverbed is unusually broad and the valley wide and open. The distance between the Annapurna massif and Dhaulagiri is here 35 kilometers.

Thak Khola is subdivided into the regions of Panchagaon (Nep : five villages), called Yhulnga in Thakali, and Thak Satsae (Nep : the 700 houses), or in Thakali Thasang.

The territory of Panchagaon begins not far outside the town of Tukuche (see map) and stretches to a short distance behind Jomosom, the district capital (a small town in relative terms). Among the villages of this region are Chimang, Chhairo, Marpha, Bhumpa, Syang and Thini.

The stretch of land from Tukucho to Ghasa, generally termed Thasang, is further subdivided by the Thakalis living there : the land bordering on Chhakthang ( see map ) is called Kang-chhi-Mārpo (Thak : those living downhill), as it lies lower than the rest of the Thak Khola region. Along with the towns lying on the old trade route—Lete, Kalopani and Ghasa—there are to be found in this region the villages of Taglung, Chhayo, Lharkyo and Dhampu, which subsist principally from agriculture.

In the region bordering Kang-chhi-Mārpo to the north are located, among others, the well-known trading center Tukucho and the relatively large towns of Khanti, Kobang, Larjung, Nakung, Souru and Naphrunghung.

The population south of Ghasa towards Pokhara is called Mhon by the Thakalis and is presumably related to the Magars. The Thakalis call the area they live in Rhong.

On the other side of the Thak Khola Valley north of Jomosom begins Baragaon (Nep : twelve villages). The resident population, though often called Tibetan, is in fact not so. They speak their own language, which, like Thakali, is related to Tibetan. They are called Towas by the Thakalis, or, in deprecation, Bhotyas. The latter term is mostly used in reference to people who emigrated from Tibet hundreds of years ago and who now live in northern Nepal.

To the north of Baragaon begins the formerly independent kingdom of Mustang, also called Lo (Tib.). Tibetan culture has succeeded in preserving itself here up to the present. The region is so-called "restricted area," and as such is not accessible for foreigners, this on account of border complications with China.

Administratively, the Thakalis belong to Mustang District with its capital Jomosom. The district is a part of Dhaulagiri Zone with its capital Baglung.

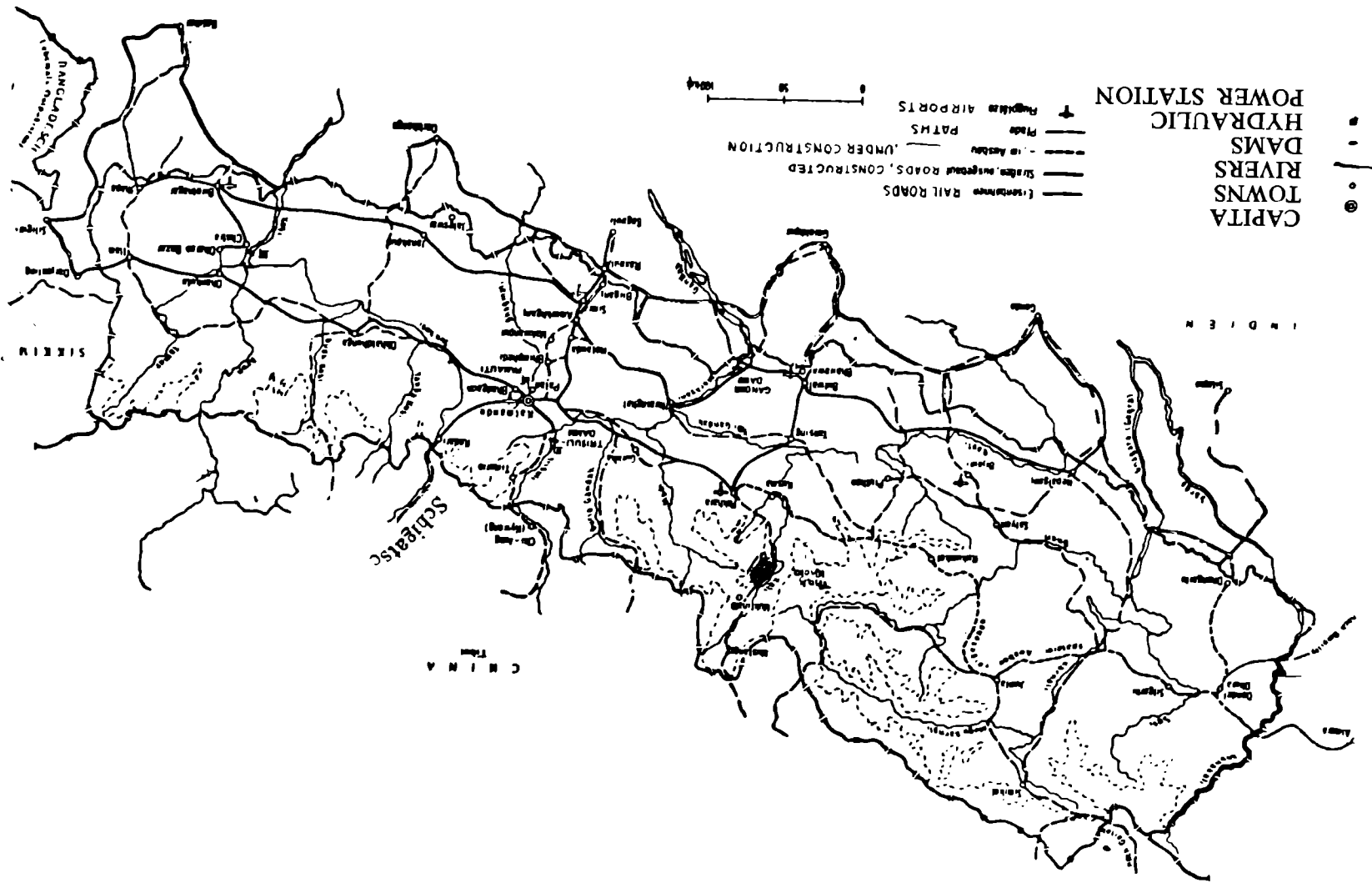
Inner Himalaya is settled at various densities depending upon altitude and access to the outside world. Whereas regions at 4000 m altitude, having few villages, are quite sparsely inhabited (Mustang), along the main trade routes are found in Thak Khola larger villages with higher concentrations of population. In altitudes from 1900 m-2700 m towns have grown up possessing to a certain extent the characteristics of cities (Tukucho, Marpha). The fact that for a long time the Thakalis had a monopoly on the salt trade in the Kali Gandaki Valley favored the growth of these commercial centers along the routes from India to Tibet. Following the closing of the Chinese-Tibetan border in 1959, many Thakalis migrated into the areas of Nepal mentioned above.

### 1.1. Climatic Features

Above the gorge at Ghasa runs the line of demarcation between the moist south side of

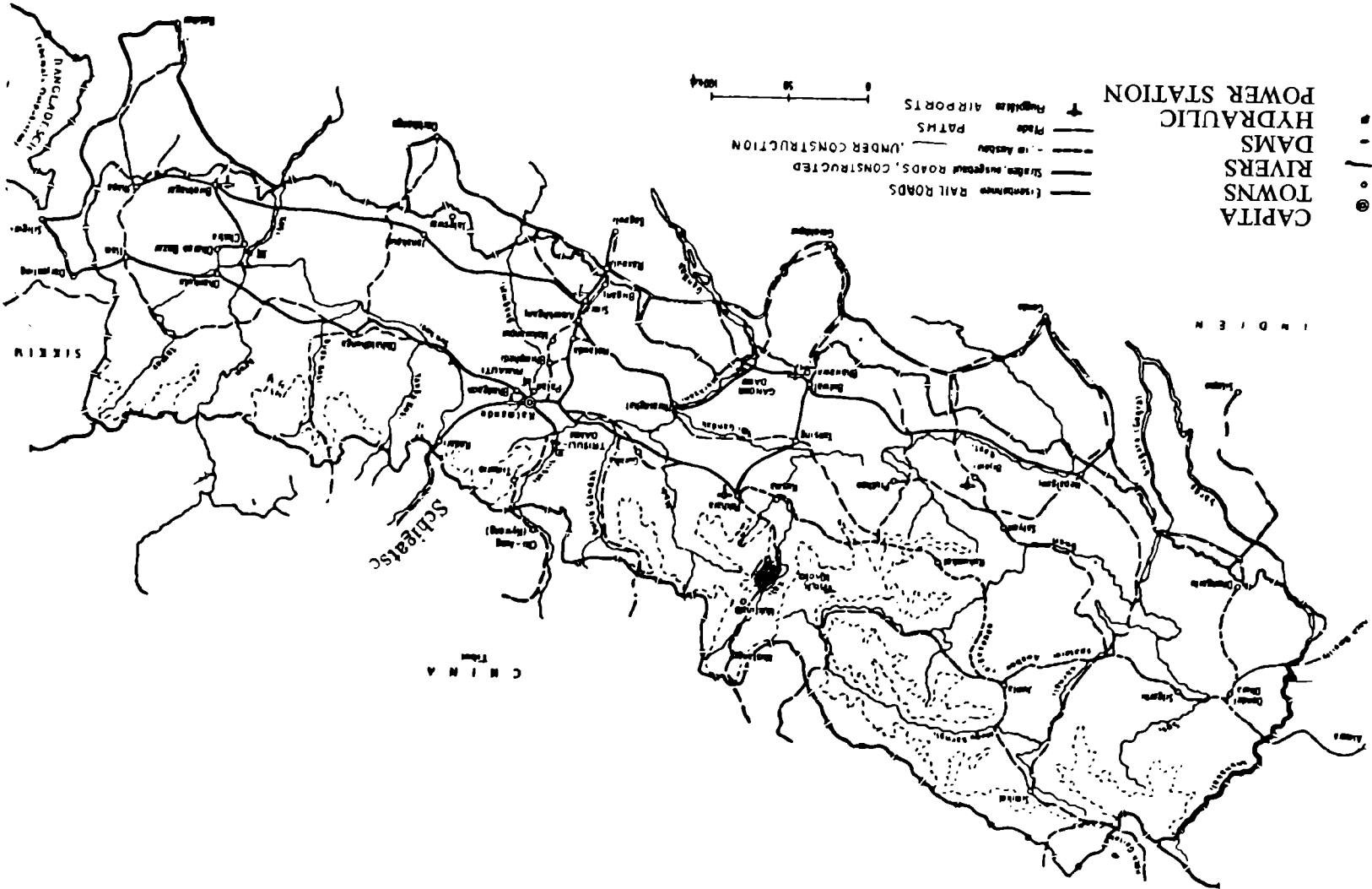
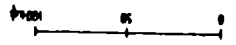


N E P A L



CAPITA  
TOWNS  
RIVERS  
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HYDRAULIC  
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RAILROADS  
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ROADS, GENERAL  
UNDER CONSTRUCTION  
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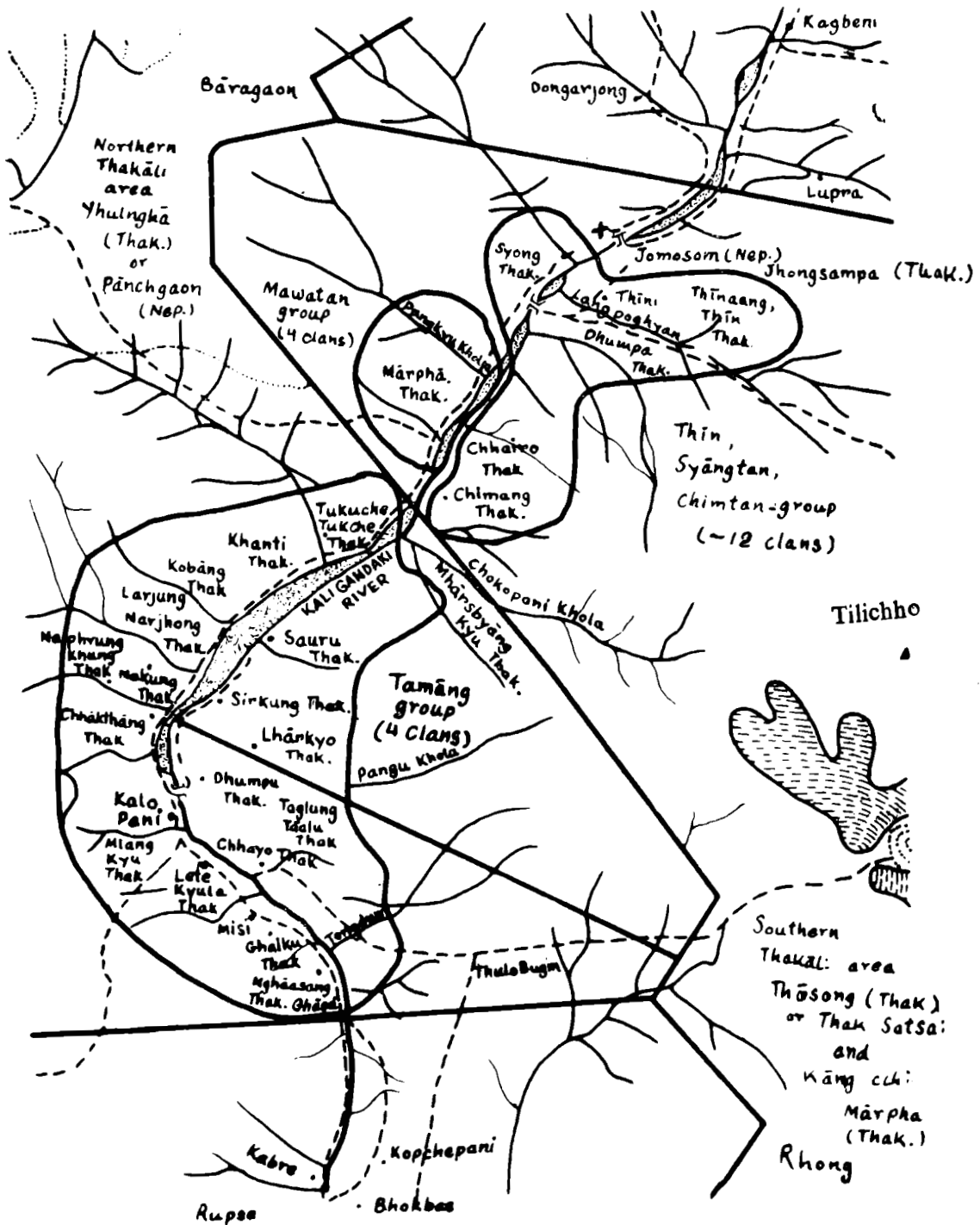
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Map of Thasang and Yhulngkhā  
with their main villages



the Himalaya and the drier north side. The Himalaya here separates the continental climate of Central Asia from the monsoon climate of the Indian subcontinent.

On the south slope of the mountain range yearly precipitation surpasses 6000 mm (in Lumle near Pokhara 6170 mm according to Kleinert, recording period 1970/71). The valleys of Inner Himalaya such as Thak Khola, on the other hand, already lie under the rain shield of the mountains. The region from the upper Kali Gandaki westwards exhibits a dry, arid climate. (In Jomosom Kleinert measured an average yearly precipitation of only 270 mm, of which only 19% falls during the monsoon period). A moderately humid transition zone stretches, in the so-called "knee," from Ghasa to Larjung, Kobang and Tukuhe. Here the northern limit of rainfall irrigation is reached.

For reasons of exposition there are as many as four vegetation zones up to Tukuhe. As to vegetation, the area lies within the zone of juniper forests. But there are also extensive conifer forests, which are succeeded at 3800 m under the timber line by a clearly identifiable subalpine forest zone with birch and rhododendron. Because of the steep cliffs around Tukuhe, these zones are found together within a limited terrain. The regions lying further to the north (Marpha, Syang, Chimang and Jomosom), conditioned by the arid climate, exhibit a pure oasis habitat.

If, therefore, the south side of the Himalaya is covered with luxuriant tropical and subtropical deciduous forests, in the north, from Ghasa on, are found pure coniferous forests, alpine steppes and, in the northern part of the valley, a semidesert, the latter due to low precipitation and a high rate of evaporation caused by the constant wind blowing through the valley.

These different climatic zones give rise to different ways in which the land is cultivated in individual Thakali villages.

Whereas in Ghasa, Taglung and Chhayo, for example, the cropland, irrigated by rain water, is typically used for the cultivation of wheat, barley, millet and maize.

The further up the Kali Gandaki Valley one goes, the colder and windier it gets. There the winters are long and cold, while summers are short and relatively warm. Here, then, the Himalaya forms a clear-cut climatic and vegetational boundary line.

## 1. 2 Demographic Conditions :

Up until a short number of years ago it was not even known that the Thakalis should be considered as being divided into three different and separate endogamous groups. We owe this finding to research of the Danish anthropologist Michael Vinding, who lived and worked in Thak Khola in 1972 and 1975-78 and who has often returned there up to the

present. Before this ethnologists had referred to the so-called "Tamang Thakalis" from Thak Satsae as the only rightful bearers of the name.

Due to their dominant economic and political influence in Nepal, built up in the past and maintained and expanded up to the present, the Tamang Thakalis were very concerned to see that they alone be called Thakali, since the name is endowed with corresponding prestige.

This led to the Thakalis who went under the name of Mawatans (Thak. : those who come from Marpha), or Mhowas, and the third group of Thintan, Syangtan, Chimtan Thakalis (Thak. : those who come from Thini, Syang and Chimang) being labelled by the Tamang Thakalis as epigones of their name who meant to use the term 'Thakali' to upgrade their respective groups in the eyes of others.

For a long time the Tamang Thakalis had success with this claim; even in their written tradition stress is laid on their exclusive right to the name, and they go so far as to attempt to veil parts of their history (cf. the chapter on history).

The Mawatans, or Mhowas, are also called *mhā* or *mhār-che* in the local Thakali dialect (Vinding 1977 : 98), leading one to conclude that the name of the place was originally *Mhā*. The Tamang Thakalis disparagingly refer to these people as "puntan" or "punnel," meaning "lepers" (Valleix 1974). The Mawatans consist at present of four patrilineal, exogamous clans (see the chapter on clan organization). Apart from Marpha, a number of families have also settled in the town of Jomosom.

Valleix (1974 : 271) makes mention of 624 persons, of whom 530 are Mawatans—258 males and 272 females—with the rest being made up of 43 *dāmāi*, 33 *kāmi* and 18 from Baragaon and Mustang.

According to data supplied by Vinding (1979/80) and my own investigations 1981/82, in 1979 there were about 154 households in Marpha and Jomosom, of which 48 were settled there as "permanents," 63 households in which one or more members moved south for the winter—so-called "seasonals"—and 43 households which maintained a second place of residence outside Marpha—so-called "semi-permannts" (for greater detail see Heide, Susanne von der, *Himalayan Culture*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1987). At the time there were 43 households which had moved completely away from Marpha after the border was closed in 1959—the "permanent out" category.

These data account for 197 households, allowing one to set the approximate number of persons at 1000 Mawatans (like Vinding, I assume there are an average of five persons per household).

Alongside only a minimal rise in population, by 1981 the situation was such that, according to my informants, the number of households which had moved completely away from Marpha had risen to 80. Accordingly, the number of those which maintained a residence both in Marpha and somewhere else ("semi-permanents") had sunk to 30. Seasonal migration, too, had declined from 63 to 41 households. 51 households maintained permanent residence in Marpha. The information provided by my informants concerning the number of households which had moved away completely was contradictory. This has to do with the fact that they consider it to a certain extent as a loss in prestige when Mawatans migrate irrevocably to the south. There is, in fact, really no reason for such migration, as the Nepalese government, apart from the well-known "horticulture farm," has taken an interest in cultivating the area around Marpha. Along these lines, further projects have been planned for the future or already partially completed, such as greenhouses and storage facilities. The region from Kobang to Jomosom has been supplied with electricity since 1983. Besides in Tukuhe and Jomosom, there are also storehouses in Marpha, built under the United Nations Development Program. According to the latest information received following my most recent stay in Nepal in 1984, moreover, an agreement between the Nepalese government and China was signed according to which in the near future a road between Pokhara and Baglung is to be constructed, to be followed by a further link to Thak Khola, through Mustang and on up to the Chinese border. In all probability, this road would run along the old salt trade route, passing through Marpha, among other places, though leaving the Yhulkasummi region untouched.

This will surely enhance the attractiveness and prestige of the place and thereby draw former residents back to Marpha.

One may conclude from these data that there is a tendency among the so-called "semi-permanents" and "seasonals" to move out of Marpha. The preferred destination is Pokhara and vicinity, a city of trade conveniently located along routes to India and Kathmandu. From it one may easily reach Marpha via a flight to Jomosom (small, propellered aircraft) or go by foot in 4-5 days.

A further group of Thakalis is called, in accordance with the towns they hail from, Thin, Syangtan and Chimtan Thakalis, or, as Vinding provisionally designates them, Yhulkasummis. Yhulngha is the Thakali name for the territory the Yhulkasummis inhabit. Apart from the three towns mentioned, a number of households have settled in Chhairo and in Jomosom.

In 1979 there were, according to Vinding (1979/80 : 32), approximately 230 households of this group, corresponding to a population of about 1150 (taking an average of 5 family members per household).

Three years later, in 1982, the figure had risen to above 260, of which 164 lived in their place of residence permanently (79 households in Thini, 55 households in Syang, 30 households in Chimang), with the remaining migrating seasonally (for the most part they spend the winter in warmer regions, such as Pokhara, there opening up small teashops, so-called *bhatti*, or carrying on trade with mule caravans; often only one of the family members migrates, so that the information supplied by the informants should not be taken as being exact).

According to my informants only six households can be designated as "semi-permanent," that is households which maintain a residence both in Yhulngha and in the south (generally in Pokhara). During their absence they lease their property in Yhulngha.

Only about 10 families have moved away for good from Thak Khola to the south ("permanent out")—either to Pokhara or along the road link to India—, this with the intention of opening small hotels or *bhattis*. They sold their entire landed property in Yhulngha. Interestingly enough, almost all these cases, apart from two exceptions, involve households which having, deviated from the social norm, would have been exposed to problems and forfeited their integration into village community life had they remained longer in Thak Khola (for such reasons as illegitimate children, marriage to a non-Thakali—so-called "intercaste marriage"—, divorce in the case of woman or, more seldom, for simply being a widow, as these are held responsible for the death of their husband).

What is striking here, in contrast to the Mawatans, is the low number of persons who have decided to migrate permanently out of Yhulngha but who, when they do so, act in response to social pressures.

The number of persons who migrate seasonally in the winter is greater in comparison to the Mawatans. This has to do, among other reasons, with the fact that the Thintan, Chimtan and Syangtan have continued up to the present to restrict themselves to cultivating the land and raising livestock. The Mawatans and Tamang Thakalis, in part because of their history, are significantly more mobile as far as their economic activities are concerned, having tapped greater commercial possibilities for themselves, and to a certain extent they migrated much earlier. "The latest reports I collected in 1984 show that the seasonal winter periods in which the Yhulkasummi move into the lower regions, have, over the past two years, been getting longer. This is due to the fact that Thak Khola has become more expensive (electricity, tourism, plans for a new road to China), and the Yhulkasummi Thakali who live in lodges and *bhattis* over the winter along the larger roads can in comparison earn more there. The usual winter period of three to four months is extended to some five to six months. Generally the Thakali only return to Thak Knola for the two harvesting times.

Here the women remain from the end of May until November for harvesting and sowing, while at other times they concentrate on looking after the bhattis and lodges. These assertions lead on to draw the conclusion that for 1984 there is a movement away from "seasonal" migration to "semi permanent" migration, which disagrees with my prognoses from 1982 (Heide, Susanne von der, *Himalayan Culture*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1987).

The Tamang Thakali group is settled in the regions from Ghasa to Tukuche. They are subdivided into four patrilineal, exogamous clans. Among themselves, the Tamang Thakalis from Thak Khola distinguish those who come from Thasang and those who come from, as it is called, Kāng-chhi-Mārpo. As explained to me, however, this distinction is still made only by a few of the older Thakalis. The region is called Kāng-chhi-Mārpo (Thak. : those living downhill) from Chhākthang south, since there the land lies lower than the rest of the Thak Khola region. Alongside the towns lying on the old trade route—Lete, Kalopani and Ghasa—villages subsisting chiefly from agriculture are also found here—Taglung, Chhayo, Dhampu and Chha. This division comes from informants and is not to be found in literature.

From times immemorial people living principally from the salt trade have settled in Thāsang, as the old trade route passed through their towns. In their function as middlemen who, apart from salt from Tibet, could also collect duty on goods from India, these Tamang Thakalis from Thāsang in time attained greater influence and power, and placed value on being distinguished from the Thakalis from Kāng-chhi-Mārpo.

Of the four clans one lineage in particular understood how to cash in politically and economically on the influence they had won. And it was this branch, too, from which the efforts came to set themselves apart from the Mawatans, the Yhulkasummis and even their kinsmen in Kāng-chhi-Mārpo.

According to Iijima ( 1977 : 73 ) the total number of Thakali speakers in Nepal as reflected in the 1961 census was 4134, some of whom were registered in the midwestern Terai ( this figure, however, does not reveal how many were Tamang Thakalis, Mawatans or Yhulkasummis ). According to Manzardo ( 1978 : 275 ), in 1967 Corneille Jest made a tally of the Tamang Thakalis in Bhujī Khola, counting 81 households there and a further 135 in the district of Myagdi. This count, however, has long been outdated. Manzardo himself, in 1954, counted 20 households with 80 family members in Pokhara. Between 1951 and 1971 they were, to go by his assertions, the fourth largest immigrant group there. In 1972 he counted 300 Thakalis, and in 1974, 83 households, but the rest of his data on other places is incomplete. Manzardo mentions a total of 7000 Thakalis in the whole of Nepal in the year 1975.

In Thak Satsae, according to its own chronicle for the year, there existed in 1979

about 221 households of Tamang Thakalis. Under the assumption of an average of five persons per household, that comes to approximately 1105 persons. Added to these are 25 households in Jomosom and Chhairo, that is, a further 125 persons.

As a comparison I would point to Michael Vinding 1979/80, who proceeds on the assumption of 255 households in all of Thak Khola. In Myagdi District, where a number of Tamang Thakali families immigrated more than 200 years ago, there were 224 household with around 1103 persons according to the Thakali Chronicle. ( For Myagdi District see the latest studies of W. Fisher, who told me personally that he estimated there were about 3000 Tamang Thakalis in Myagdi in 1983 ).

In the districts of Baglung, Parbat, Kaski ( Pokhara ), Gulmi, Syangja, Palpa and Rupandehi (Butwal, Bhairawa), for the most part regions crossed by important trade routes, there were in 1979 a total of 446 households in residence, which corresponds to a population of 2230 Tamang Thakalis. In the remoter districts of Yumla, Dolpo, Rukum and Manang 19 households—95 persons—were counted. 85 households with 425 Thakalis were living in the Kathmandu Valley. That gives altogether a figure of 1066 households with 5330 Tamang Thakalis in Nepal.

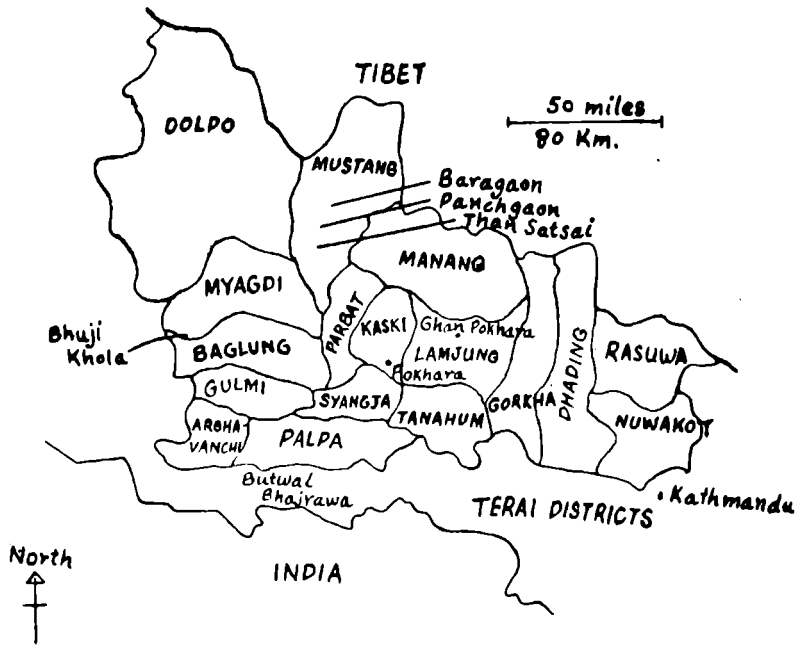
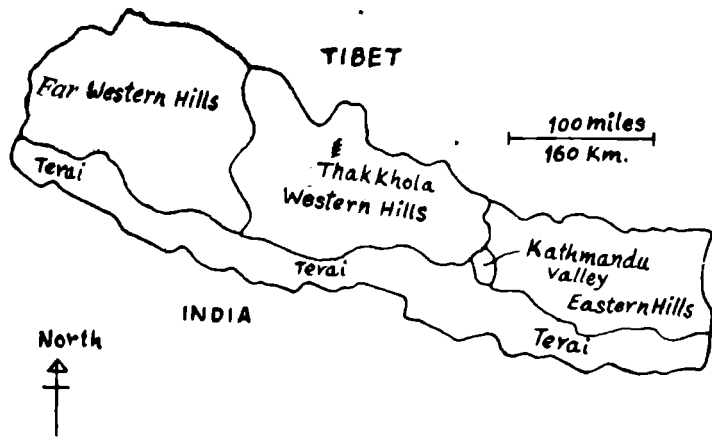
Reflecting a growth rate in the population of 2% per year, the figure would have risen to approximately 5550 Tamang Thakalis by 1981. Still left to be counted, moreover, are further Thakli families located abroad—in India, Japan, England, Brunei and Czechoslovakia. On the authority of informants this number rose considerably in 1984, though it is impossible to say to what level.

According to my studies of 1981/82 the number of households in Kathmandu increased from 85 in the year 1979 to 108 in the year 1981/82, and those in Pokhara from a consistent 83 throughout the years 1974-1979 to 100-119 in 1981. The reason the data vary is because it was often difficult for the person questioned to decide whether he was talking about his main or temporary place of residence.

The number of household in Bhairawa declined from 45 household in 1979 to 39 in 1981, while in and around the near vicinity of Butwal the number remained approximately the same. There, both in 1979 and in 1981, there were around 60 households, of which 33 live directly in Butwal, 18 from Thak Khola and 15 from Myagdi, with the remaining families living scattered outside Butwal and on the Indian border. Another 7 families which were not yet listed in the Thakali Chronicle of 1979 had in the meantime settled on the Indian border in Nepalganj.

According to my results, in 1981/82 there existed 280 households in Thak Satsae (28 of them in Tukuche, but I prefer to treat Tukuche separately since there, due to its exposed





Western hill districts of Nepal with main villages,  
towns and regions



location, other patterns are to be found ). Of these about 64 households had, unchanged from 1979 to 1982, land and dwellings in Thak Satsae as well as second place of residence on the outside ( "semi-permanent" ). 27 households had moved permanently out of Thak Satsae over the course of the previous five years ( i. e. no change from 1979 to 1982 ), having sold their ownership of land and house. ( Among the Tamang Thakalis a part of the village population belongs to the so-called *kuriya*. Normally each household in the village send one representative to the *kuriyā*. Here one attends to village affairs, with delegates being appointed in common session for particular tasks, for example, overseer of the forest ( for more details see the chapter on organization of labor ). Elder couples whose children have already married and "officially" started a new family—only then are they recognized as an independent household—are generally no longer part of the *kuriyā*, being considered not up to the assigned tasks. They are assigned to the so-called *phadke*, to which also belong migrants from the outside, such as Bhotyas and members of the Hindu castes. ( Members of the *damai*, *kāmi* and *sārki* castes have immigrated and work as tailors, blacksmiths and cobblers for the Thakalis. They have settled down for the most part outside the village. ) In my inquiries and in those of Krishna Lal Thakali, who worked together with Vinding in 1979 and helped draw up his figures, the attempt has been made to encompass the Thakali household in their entirety. This means, therefore, that household of the *kuriyā* and the *phadke* were counted but not those of immigrants in the *kuriyā*— as occasionally occurs— nor the usually large number of households of immigrants in the *phadke* ).

After 1959, and in part even prior to that, many Thakali families migrated from Tukuche, formerly the main center of activity in Thak Satsae, to Bhairawa, then still a settlement on the Indian border, to Kathmandu and to Pokhara. They retained, however their property in Tukuche and had their former employees, mostly Bhotyas, oversee and cultivate it ( see also Fuerer-Haimendorf 1981 : 177 f. ). For years they neglected their, old holdings, either because the land seemed not to be worth anything or because the efforts to make something of it were too great in comparison to other, more lucrative ventures.

Following the emergence of tourism in Thak Khola in recent years ( the Jomosom trek, a favorite with foreigners, passes through here ) and the successful attempt to cultivate fruits and vegetables plots, many of old owners or their children returned to their property, which, though previously held to be worthless, had in the meantime become capital. ( In addition, the Nepalese government passed a land reform measure, though it had no effect upon the region around Thak Satsae, see Fuerer-Haimendorf 1981 : 178. ) For this reason, in the case of almost all Tamang Thakali families there, with four exceptions where the

concerned sold all their landed property and migrated permanently, one may properly speak of "semipermanent" households ( property in Tukuche and elsewhere ).

In 1982 informants told me that still close to 50 households held property in Tukuche. From 1979 to 1982 the number of Thakali who returned to Tukuche for lengthy periods rose from between 8 and 17 households to 28 households. The disparity in the figures for 1979 is no about due to the fact that the lower was arrived at by the Tamang Thakalis themselves in spring, the higher by Krishna Lal Thakali in autumn. Since the post-monsoon period, and thereby the wave of tourists and fruit harvest, begins in autumn, some of the families were probably late in moving to Tukuche. In 1979, according to what the informants said, 6 of the 17 households were represented in the kuriā, and the remaining in the phadke. In 1982, all 28 households were said to belong to the kuriyā. ( As these statements derive from Tamang Thakalis from Tukuche, with other informants being unable to supply exact information, I have reason to doubt their accuracy. ) Single persons including 3 widows and 3 nuns, consituted 26 of the 28 household.

What is interesting in the case of Tukuche is the fact that more families belonging to other groups are settled there than Tamang Thakali households, whereas in other Tamang Thakali villages the relationship is generally the other way round. Many of these "out-of-towners" consist of employees of the Thakalis who have come to be overseers of their former master's property, drawing in the process relatives and friends after them to Tukuche. For the most part they come from Baragaon and Mustang. They were and still are called by the Thakalis, somewhat condescendingly *Arangsi karāngsi*, which in Thakali is as much as to say "someone out to get a job" ( Fuerer-Haimendorf 1981 : 178 ). Their families migrated from Mustang and Baragaon to Tukuche in search of employment in rich men's house generations ago.

Once that most of the Tamang Thakalis left the place, however, the Arangsi karāngsi began to acquire a large measure of independence for themselves. They cultivated land they themselves had come by and laid out plots of fruit trees. Today most of the small tourist hotels there are in their hands.

When the Tamang Thakalis got wind of the fact that it was again worthwhile investing in Tukuche, they returned and began to lay out principally apple orchards, and tried to restore the village to their ownership. Opposition of a sort thereupon arose among the Arangsi, mixed with adversarial feelings deriving from their former employee status. For the Tamang Thakalis from Tukuche the topic is taboo : "people don't like to talk about it."

Apart from the Thakali households, in 1982 I counted a total of 64 other households in the village : 4 Sherpa families, 12 households of occupational Hindu castes, 1 chetri household, 38 families from Mustang and Baragaon, 1 from Yhulngra and 4 from Marpha.

In Thak Khola live along with the Thakalis, who make up 70% of the population there, such minority groups as the previously mentioned so-called "occupational castes"—Hindu castes such as *dāmai*, *kāmi* and *sārki*, who work for the Thakalis but are generally excluded from the fabric of their social life. One is most likely to find members of these castes in areas where agriculture is engaged in on a large scale, as there their services are more called for (e. g. in Taglung and Chimang).

Moreover, a small number of Magar and Gurung families are to be found in Thak Khola. (Only Magars have settled in Lharkyo : see map.) The previously mentioned Arangsi *karāngsi*, who come from Baragaon and Mustang and so are Tibetan by background constitute a further population group. Much to the displeasure of the true bearers of the name, the Tamang Thakalis, they also call themselves now Tamang Thakalis. And, in fact, it is difficult to distinguish them from Thakalis from Thini, Syang and Chimang, since, apart from outward similarities and many identical habits, their surname also has the same form : "Thakāli".

Finally, a few Tibetan refugee families also live in Thak Khola. From 1959 on they fled in great numbers into the region, but only a few remained there.

In conclusion, I should like to provide a general picture of the entire Thakali population in Nepal (those living abroad are also included). According to Michael Vinding and Krishna Lal Thakali, and the Tamang Thakāli Chronicle, in 1979 there were in Nepal :

1154 households of Tamang Thakalis,  
197 households of Mawatan Thakalis,  
179 households of Yhulkasummi Thakalis.

In 1981/82 these figures increased to

1196 households of Tamang Thakalis,  
202 households of Mawatan Thakalis,  
297 households of Yhulkasummi Thakalis.

For 1979 that adds up to a total of 1630 Thakali households with around 8150 members, and for 1982 a total of 1677 households with 8385 Thakali members.

From the general tabulation it could be seen that the assignment to the categories "seasonal," "semi-permanent" and "permanent out" brought out the differing customs and life styles of the three Thakali groups.

I should emphasize once more that this survey is relatively inexact; as previously mentioned, in 1975 Manzardo had already counted 7000 Tamang Thakalis alone. As a comparison, the new Tamang Thakali Chronicle for 1984, compiled but not yet published,

provides a figure of around 10,000 Tamang Thakalis (Heide, Susanne von der, *Himalayan Culture*, vol. 5. no. 1, 1987).

Nor was I able in my surveys to specify exactly how many of the Thakalis counted were members who had married into the group from the outside, and how many of their offspring were from other ethnic groups, such as Gurung or Thamang. This fails, likewise, to be shown in the statistics of Vinding and Krishna Lal Thakali. As described above, such intercaste marriages play a role, for example, among the Yhulkasummis : their choice of residency can depend on it.

In contrast, I obtained fairly exact information on the intercaste marriages among Mawatans. This perhaps has to do with the fact that, even outside of Marpha, they maintain very close contact with one another and continue to be well organized. Thus I was told that there have been 24 marriages between Mawatans and women of other ethnic groups, usually with Thamang, Newar and Gurung women. I have included these families in my tabulations. Not included were the 27 Mawatan women who have married, above all, Thamang, Brahmin and Gurung men. According to informants the first intercaste marriage among the Mawatans goes back only two generations.

The exact number of intercaste marriage among the Tamang Thakalis could not be determined. However, in 1984 I learned—all those questioned were unanimous—that is a steadily increasing tendency to intercaste marriage on the part of the younger Tamang Thakalis, especially those from Kathmandu and the Nepal-Indian border region.

Further realignments among the population will surely ensue if a road connecting Baglung and the Tibeto-Chinese border via Thak Khola is constructed.

## 2. ECONOMY AND SOCIETY

### 2.1. Village Layout and Farmlands :

As mentioned previously, Thak Khola may be subdivided into three climatic zones, each bearing upon the Thakalis way of life and methods of farming.

Villages such as Taglung and Chhayo, which are exposed to the Indian monsoon climate— and so to heavy rains— and also lie at a high altitude, are able, thanks to the sufficient rainfall, to engage in subsistence production without the need of irrigation.

Since the population there lives almost exclusively from the yields of their husbandry, it is imperative that the village be confined to within as narrow bounds as possible so that accordingly more land can be put to use for agriculture. In Chasa and Lote, too, dependence of tillage land totally upon rain is typical. Apart from wheat, barely and millet, enough maize is cultivated in this region ( Kāng-chhi-Marpo ) that part of it can be sent on to villages in Baragaon and Lo to the north. The neighboring villages in Thasang, such as Larjung, Kobang, Naurikot, Naphrungkhung and Khanti, are located in the transition zone between a monsoon and an arid highland climate. Here, too, houses are nestled closely to one another on terraced levels in order to gain as much space as possible for cultivation. As was the case in the neighboring villages, agriculture represents their means of livelihood ( income through tourism is the exception ).

There wheat, barley and oats are planted as winter grains, and buckwheat as the summer grain, with, variously, maize, millet and potatoes. No further foodstuffs are imported apart from rice, sugar, salt, tea and spices, which are bought up on mule caravans.

As the summer rains are still moderately heavy in this transition zone, two harvests can be brought in without need of irrigation. The winter crops, sown in November, are harvested at the end of May ( The strain of barley *jaon* is especially esteemed as fodder for mules, while the people themselves prefer to eat the strain *uva*.) Following that the fields are turned under evenly, a task reserved for the men. At the beginning of the monsoon in the middle of June, during the warm part of the year, buckwheat ( light and red *papar* ) is sown, to be harvested in November. Sowing is thereby generally the job of women, Potatoes are planted between March and April and are harvested in September. At the beginning of June such vegetables as cabbage, cauliflower, carrots and spinach start growing, and in October they are ripe.

To irrigate the fields, the Thakalis lay conduits from the nearby mountain streams of Dhaulagiri down to the Villages. These conduits consist of hallowed-out boles leading down to an artificial reservoir.

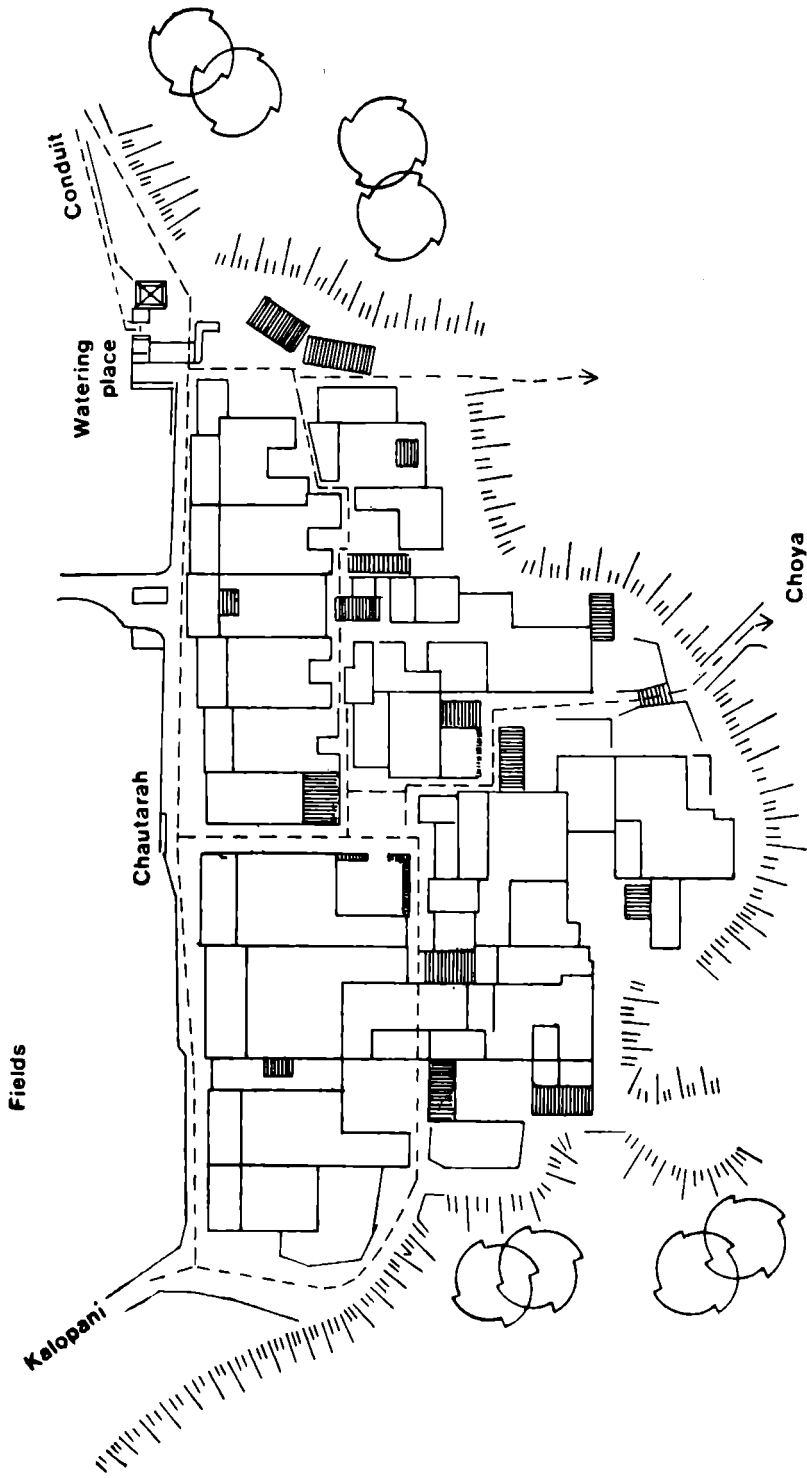
It is interesting how the Thakalis, means of livelihood, i. e. agriculture, affects the architecture and layout of villages : One comes across compact terraced villages whose houses are so closely built next to each other that for long stretches the way leading through the village runs under the houses. In the same fashion, living units are constructed on the side facing the valley and storerooms on the side facing the mountain ( see cross section and ground plans by Kleinert : 1973; see under Thakalihaus, Thakalidorf : 55, 60, 67, 72, 78, 81, 82, 83, 84 ).


Within the Thakali house, stalls are usually found on the ground floor, living quarters frequently with an inner courtyard, lie above them, and on the flat roof there is generally a storeroom stretching along the full breadth of the house. The houses are either spacious or small and narrow according to the external conditions. In Tukuche, the Thakali houses—those not in a state of collapse ( unfortunately )— are built like fortresses, very roomy and artfully constructed. Here, too, there are more storerooms than elsewhere. Due to its open, unprotected position the village is very exposed to the wind, This is surely the reason why all the houses here are built as atrium houses, around large inner courtyards.

Manzardo (1978 : 2) places the village climatically within the third zone, while Kleinert (1973 : 72) would have it that Tukuche lies in the zone between the transitional and arid climates. Agriculture has been much neglected on account of the village's importance as a trading emporium. The Thakalis cleared the forests of the surrounding slopes for their palatial edifices, so that the slopes now appear desolate. Many fields on the terraces above the village are used now only as pasture, and are no longer cultivated. "The lack of water, a consequence of the clearing of the forests lying above the tillage areas, is probably the main reason for the present situation" (Kleinert 1973 : 73). According to Kleinert "these fields are no longer cultivated because they were no longer used after the exodus of many families from Tukuche. Conversely, following the decline of the golden age of trade, the dearth of arable land which had since arisen may have been the very reason for the exodus; once business dried up and the fields were again needed for agriculture, the encroachment practised upon the land's own system of house-keeping could no longer be undone."

His assumption is supported by the cultivation of new fields on the east side of the valley (good climatic conditions) leeward exposure, sufficient ground and air humidity, and a moderately humid coniferous zone. They provide good harvests, in contrast to the previously mentioned fields on the dry terraces above Tukuche. Potatoes, wheat, millet, barley,



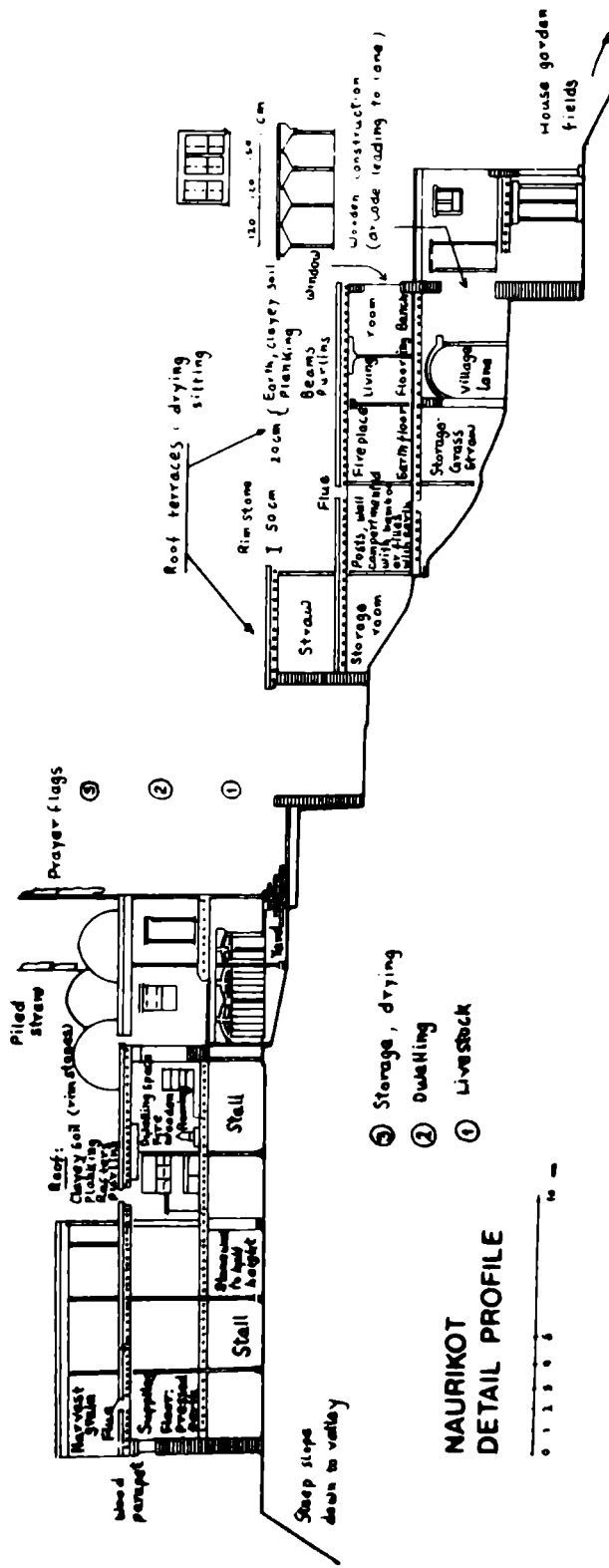


 Shed with saddle roof covered by bamboo

 Paths

Village map of TAGLUNG

After Kleinert 1973.



- ⑤ Storage, drying
- ② Dwellling
- ① Livestock

**NAURIKOT  
DETAIL PROFILE**



After Kiennerl 1973

rape, turnips and buckwheat thrive in the immediate vicinity of the village. In recent years, on the model of Marpha, apples, apricots and peach trees have been cultivated in Tukucho.

Credit for the success of this cultivation goes to the agriculture experts Madhan Rai and Pasang Sherpa, the latter sent by the government in 1967 to the well organized community of Marpha in order to set up an experimental agricultural farm. The Marphalis, or Mawatans, supported this project, and so came about under their supervision the local cultivation of fruit and vegetables. Today in Marpha, along with apple, peach and apricot trees, there are even growing almond and walnut trees (the young trees were imported from Kashmir). With the newly acquired skills, moreover, cauliflower, carrots, beans, radishes, tomatoes, and onions have been planted along with the regular types of vegetables (see map Valeix 1974 : 272). Harvests are already so plentiful that portions of them are transported by mule to Pokhara, where fruit and vegetables from Thak Khola are especially esteemed.

Pasang Sherpa has by now achieved such large harvests that he has been able to build a distillery, where the diverse types of fruit are processed into the popular *rakshi* (local brandy, usually distilled from grains). He passes on his knowledge to the village population, and so it is that the entire economic structure of Marpha has been greatly on the upswing since 1967. If one pauses to consider that Marpha belongs to the 3rd climatic zone, i.e., to the arid region poor in vegetation and shielded from rains by the main chain of the Himalaya, and where cultivation is possible only with the help of irrigation, then one can measure the work and discipline invested here.

Most Marphalis now-a-days have a small vegetable garden and fruit orchard of their own outside the village. These gardens are a sign of the favorable microclimatic conditions obtaining in the trough in which Marpha lies nestled; opened to the southeast, it is largely protected from the strong valley wind. The densely built-up area of the village fills up the trough with a carpet-like plaiting of adjacently constructed houses, growing terrace by terrace up the steep slopes of the surrounding mountains.

The alternation of cold winters and warm; dry summers has a favorable effect upon the orchards. Since summers are relatively free of clouds, the trees are guaranteed sufficient sun during ripening. Added to this is the fact that at this altitude insect pests hardly ever cause problems. The principal water channels are located in the vicinity of the orchards, so that provisions for sufficient irrigation have been made. The water is brought by conduit from a branch of the Kali Gandaki to the village and made to flow in a stonework channel through the town along the asphalted main street.

The same types of grain are cultivated in Marpha as in Tukucho, but, thank to the good care and attention shown the fields, the harvests there are larger than in the latter

village. (This also has to do, of course, with the government's having invested there.) Thus von Fuerer-Haimendorf (1981 : 184-185) reports that in 1976 the Mawatans had a very good grain harvest, while still living on what had been reaped in 1974, meaning that the 1975 harvest had not even been touched.

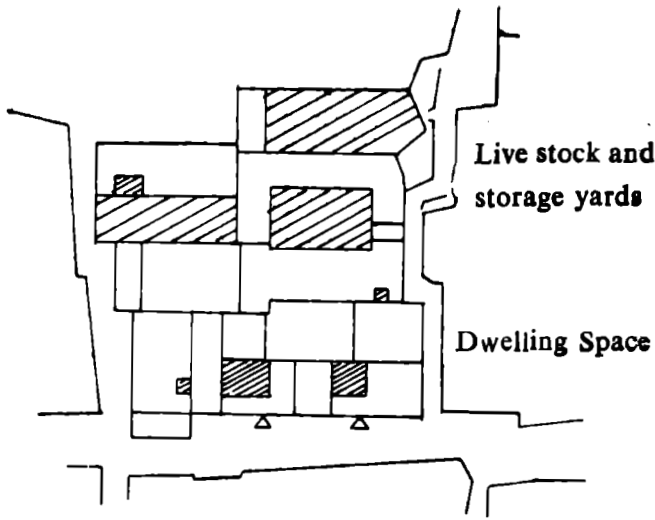
The supply of grains is partly stored in Djhong, the Marpha of old, 300 m above the present village. Djhong is also used as a filial village for stores of wood, which are transported to the main village as needed. In Marpha itself, the storage facilities are built terrace-styled up the slope. (As in Tukucho, large pieces of wood are piled up on the edges of roofs as parapets and windbreaks. Wood is here considerably scarcer than in the lower lying villages.)

A Tamang Thakali explained to me that such large amounts of wood are stored on the roofs also as a precautionary measure, as years ago there was a very cold winter, with villages being snowed in and cut off from the outside world; it was clear to see that the wood would not hold out, and during that time large numbers of livestock died.

In order to raise productivity in agriculture and in the cultivation of fruit and vegetables in Marpha, the Nepalese government is planning further aid projects there in coming years. (Fuerer-Haimendorf made mention as early as 1981 of a plan to construct wind-powered pumps for the new irrigation projects.<sup>1</sup>)

Between Tukucho and Marpha is found the village of Chimang, which lies, however, away from the trade route. It is located on a terrace under Nilgiri on the east side of the valley, where land is less cleared. Due to the limited space available for cultivation, the 37 houses of the village are so close to one another that one can easily wander over the whole of it by passing from one roof to the next. Though the construction of the houses corresponds to that found in Tukucho, they are on the whole much smaller. As is the case in the other Thakali villages, the inner courtyard, which is here quite small though, is the focus of work and domestic activity. As a result of the Chimtang, having specialized in farming, the normal three-storey construction of houses is supplemented by special enclosed spaces for livestock or for the spreading out of the harvest. This is common for the entire region of the upper Kali Gandaki Valley—Marpha, Syang, Jomosom, Thini, Chairu ( see Kleinert 1973 : 90 ).

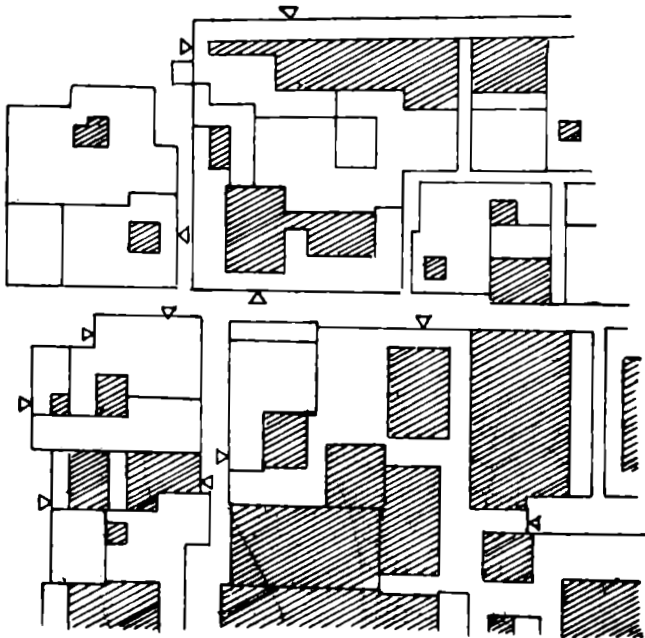
In order to irrigate the farmland, a water conduit was laid down from the branch valleys, and in the dry period in the summer it is directed into the fields or through the village as necessary. A stonework channel transect the whole of the village along the main lane, as in Marpha. Barley, wheat and oats are planted in Chimang as winter grains, and are sown in November. In July, after the harvest, the earth is immediately turned under in



**LODGING QUARTER  
IN SYANG**

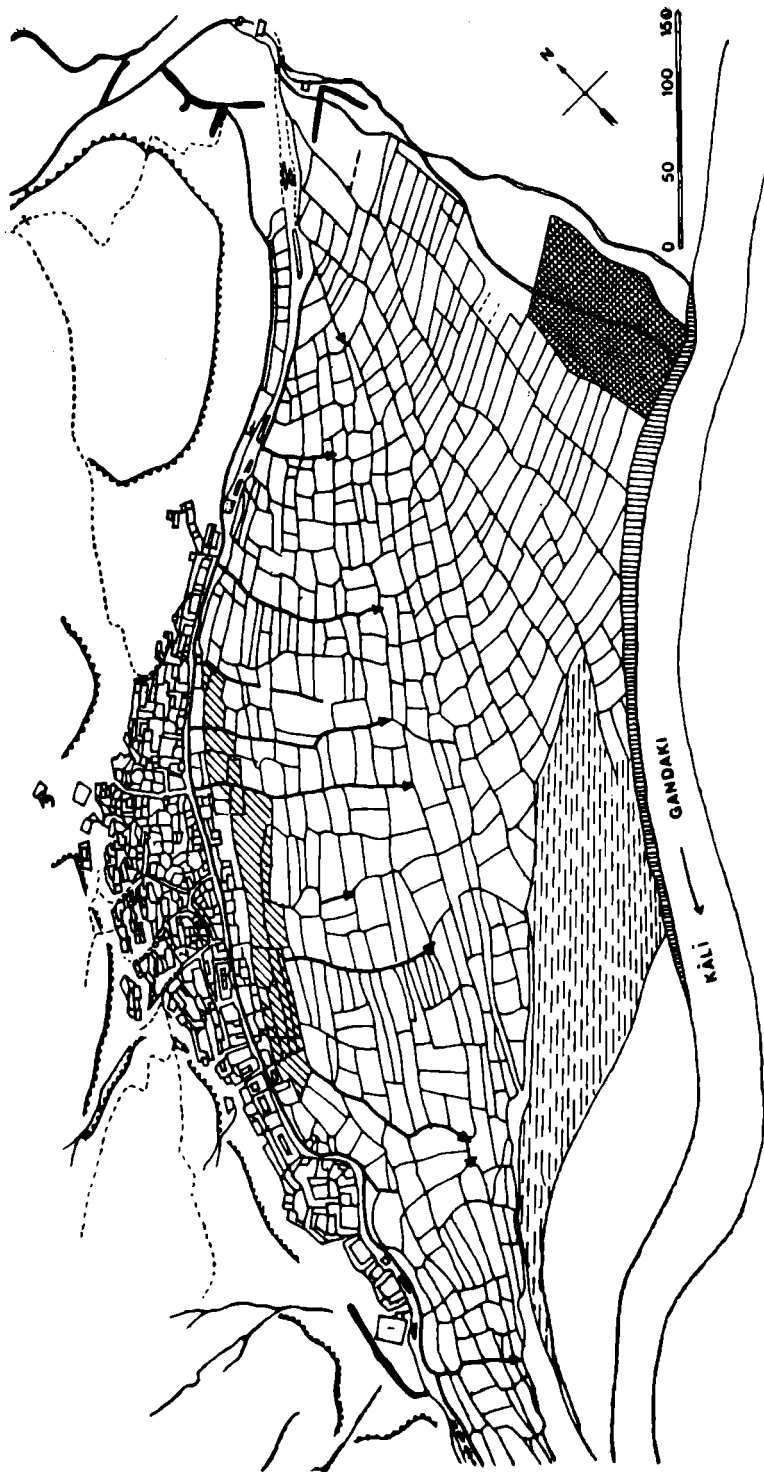
Inner courtyards  
of houses

Livestock and  
storage yards



**LODGING QUARTER  
IN JOMOSOM**

**Lodging Quarters in Syang and Jomosom After Kleihert 1973**



- (1) School (2) Panchayat house (3) Goma
- Irrigation canals
- Maize fields
- Barley, buck wheat wheat fields
- Enclosed fields
- Fluvial erosion
- Escarpment
- Wet pasture land
- Paths

The village layout of Merpha After Vohra 1974

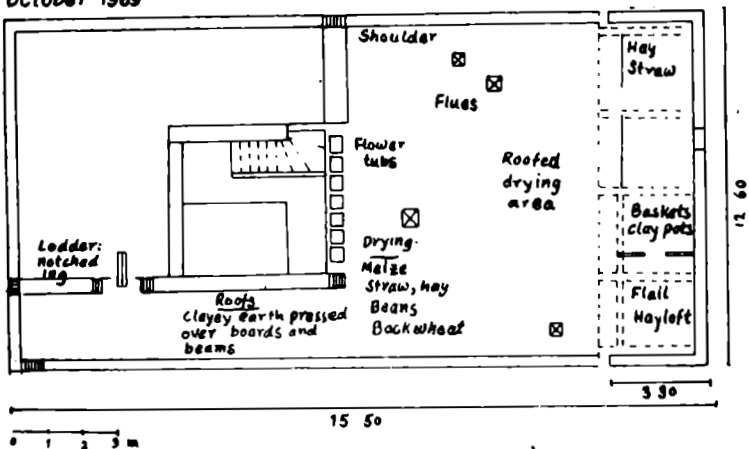
Tukuche

UPPER STOREY

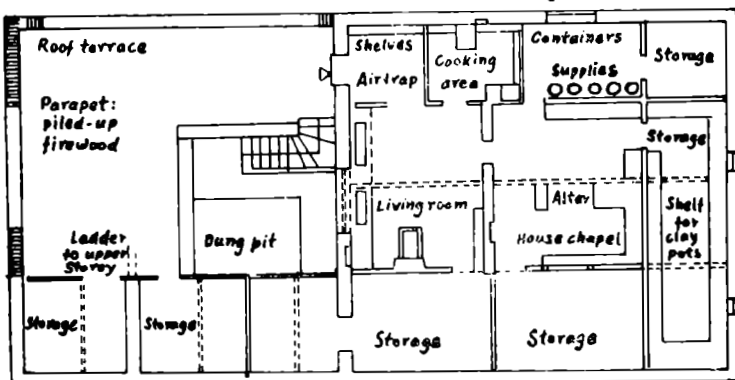
Projection of caves

October 1969

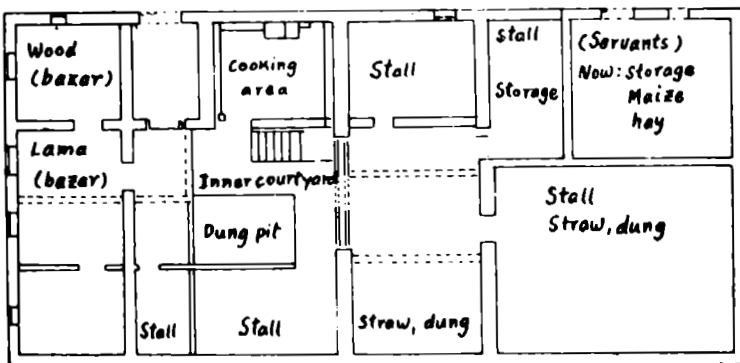
50 cm throughout



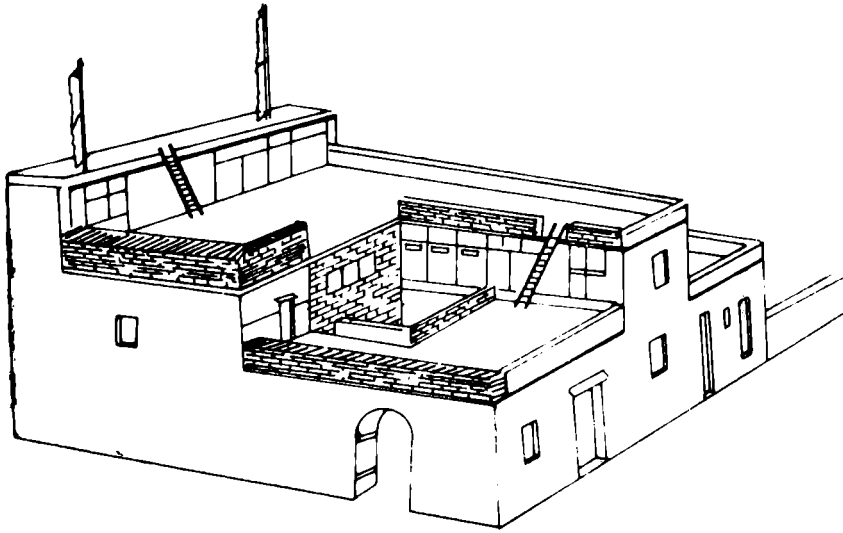
MIDDLE STOREY (dwelling quarters)



LOWER STOREY



- Masonry
- ▬ Grating Covered with clayey earth



**Thakali house Tukucha**

**After Kleinert 1973.**



order to be able to sow buckwheat, which is harvested in October. Near the houses are found a few fields reserved for growing potatoes.

Syang, Thini and Chhairo have also specialized almost completely in land cultivation and stockbreeding. Like Chimang, they are not located on the main trade route but above it to the left and right. All land in Syang accessible to irrigation is used exclusively for laying out fields. The main village lies above on the barren terrain of a banked terrace. The groups of houses are divided from one another by narrow alleys, with the small squares at the crossing of the various paths being marked by small chortens, on top of which prayer flags flutter or the horns of yaks and wild sheep are attached. These miniature tower-like structures are also found at one corner of most houses. From Marpha on one comes increasingly across such village scenes ( see the chapter "Religion" ). As in other Thakali villages, all places of dwelling, apart from the gompa, are painted white. The houses in Thini, as in Syang and Chimang, are closely clustered together, and the large inner courtyards common to Jomosom and Tukucho are missing.

Whereas, then, the Yhulkasummi Thakalis are chiefly a farming population, in Jomosom the picture is mixed. Here live, besides Yhulkasummi Thakalis, rich Tamang Thakali merchant families as well as Marphalis, who have attained with the years great affluence. One likewise finds in Jomosom families from Baragaon and Lo. The village, moreover, is a garrison town, meaning that— as the last large population center before the Tibetan border— a batallion of the Nepalese army is stationed there, in a camp outside the town itself, and also that there is an airport. "Jomosom leaves the impression of being a large caravansary" ( Kleinert 1973 : 99 ). "The houses are larger than in Syang and Thini. Large enclosed spaces for livestock and the storage of goods and provisions adjoin the living chambers of the large atrium houses with their typical Thakali floor plan. Entire caravans can take up quarters in these interconnected inclosed spaces as well as seek protection from the constant valley wind, which is here particularly strong." ( Kleinert 1973 : 99 ). Besides in Marpha, fruit growing is carried on in the above mentioned villages. However, since the area is limited ( for reasons already given ) the orchards are usually planted outside the residential areas, near streams in the branch valleys or Nilgiri or the Dhaulagiri massif.

One may note that, as a whole, what stands out with respect to the villages of Thak Khola which subsist completely from farming and not, as in Tukucho, from trade, is the overall favourable condition of their layout and that of their adjoining forests and fields. This is particularly evident in Marpha, though the agricultural boom there is helped along

by additional factors, e. g. village organization, which I shall deal with in the following chapters.

One anecdote to close concerns Tukuche, where in the autumn of 1981 I had a conversation with the head of one of the influential trading families. It casts light on the relation, adverted to earlier, of the Tamang Thakalis to the Mawatans. In response to a provocatively taken question as to whether he saw any connection between the activities of Pasang Sherpa's experimental farm and the economic surge of Mawatans in recent years, he asserted that he had begun planting apple trees 20 years before, when there was no talk of such things in Marpha, and that, furthermore, he owned the largest apple orchard around.

## 2. 2 Stockbreeding :

Stockbreeding does not have the significance for the Thakalis that it does, for example, for the population of Baragaon, Lo and Dolpo, but still it constitutes an indispensable part of their economic base.

The frequent rains in the higher altitudes provide the Thakalis and their northern neighbors with huge reserves of pasture land. In the high-lying pastures are tended herds of yak, goats and sheep, as well as the so-called *dzo*, a hybrid between yak and cattle. Further, the Thakalis keep donkeys, horses ( called the "cars of Mustang" by the local population ) and above all mules, which are pressed into service as pack animals during the harvest and for transporting goods to the north and south. Amazingly enough, one even finds water buffaloes as far up as Taglung.

Yak herds live at altitudes where farming can no longer be practised and only grass and herbs grow—from 4000 m, to 5000 m. Every two or three months the yak herdsman descend into the valley to restock up on provisions; there is hardly a more solitary life than that of a yak herdsman, who generally lives alone with his herd. From yaks the Thakalis obtain milk, butter, cheese, meat and hides. Thread is spun from the hairs of the animals, and from it coarse but very warm blankets are woven. In autumn, when the meat of the animals is especially nutritious ( the herbs being particularly flavorful due to the intense sunlight and periodic rains ), families possessing yaks slaughter one or two of their animals, from whose entrails sausages are made, and whose flesh is processed into dried meat for the winter. Whereas the Thakalis from Syang, Thini and Chimang, as well as from Marpha, take great pleasure in eating yak meat, very many Tamang Thakalis refuse to partake of it as a consequence of their Hinduization ( see the chapter "Religion" ). Since most Tamang Thakalis have officially embraced Hinduism, and since yaks are counted among the bovine

family, the Hindu dietary tabu which prohibits the consumption of beef therefore applies to them. Persons from all three Thakali groups who are native to the area told me, however, that the Tamangs only officially—in the presence of foreigners for prestige ( see ‘History’ )—observe this custom, while inofficially there is nothing they would rather eat more. Thus the head of one family from Tukuche, to my question as to why he did not eat yak meat, responded with a wrinkle to his nose that the meat had no taste.

Otherwise sheep and goat meat is eaten. The wool of the sheep, shorn at the end of June, as well as their furs and skins are employed by the Thakalis for their own purposes, not for trade. Wool used to trade with formerly came from Tibet. Mules and donkeys are not used in the winter for transporting goods northward to Baragaon and Le; instead, dzoppa are called into service.

The herds of livestock tended by Gurung herdsmen or herdsmen from Mustang spend the months from April/May to October on pasture land between 4800 m. and 5500 m. and leave as soon as the first snow has fallen. They descend to lower lying regions, often to fallow fields in the vicinity of villages. Sheep and goats are sheltered in stalls ( Valeix 1974 : 273; Fort 1974:289 ).

Manazardo reports ( 1978 : 6 ) that the areas south of Thak Khola have enough winter pasture but to little summer pasture. For the reason some farmers rent summer pasture from the Thakalis who have more than they need. It is also important that this pasture land be able to be used for grazing pack animals during the year. Without it large-scale trading would not be possible, particularly for the Marphalis, the reason being that in Thak Khola it is cheaper to use pack animals than porters, the normal means of transport in Nepal, to convey goods south to Pokhara or north to Lo. Since mule fodder is very scarce along the way and the pastures are quickly depleted, some animals are laden with fodder. One sees the importance, in the connection, of the barley strain jaon ( which is used exclusively as fodder ) being cultivated in Thak Khola as a winter grain. As a consequence of the Chinese takeover of power in Tibet and the concomitant closing of the Tibeto-Chinese border, a great many Tibetans fled in 1959 and 1960 to among other places, Dolpo, Mustang, Baragaon and Thak Khola. In particular, Tibetan nomads called Khampas crossed the border on this occasion with large herds of sheep, goats and yaks.

The consequence for these areas was a catastrophic overgrazing of the high-lying pastures, which led to the starvation of many animals, particularly yaks, belonging both to the Tibetans and to the local population. Due to the overgrazing the pastures turned to

steppe land to such an extent that even today traces from that time can be seen, and American experts are presently engaged in developing new, resistance types of grass for planting there. Each village is able to support only a certain limited number of animals corresponding to the amount of pasture land. Consideration must therefore be given to whether the pastures should be rented out or used for private purposes.

After trading on a large scale came to an end, and the merchant families in and around Tukuche migrated to other place in Nepal, the Tamang Thakalis naturally had no need of yaks and dzoppa, which are otherwise very suitable as pack animals in high altitudes, to the extent they did formerly. In 1976, however, Fuerer-Haimendorf found that the herding of yaks had increased ( 1981 : 180 ) as a result of the fact that, though farming supplied them with a sufficient livelihood, the Tamang Thakalis who remained in Thak Khola could no longer expand their cultivating activities after land capacities had been exhausted. Tending yaks held out the promise of additional income. Fuerer-Haimendorf ( 1981 : 180 ) reports that a person who owns 30-40 yaks can garner between 3000 and 4000 rupees profit from selling yak butter and calves to Dolpo west of Thak Khola. The calves are used in Dolpo for breeding and as draft animals. In exchange for them the Thakalis obtain grown animals, which they for their part sell to Baragaon for slaughter. In Marpha, Fuerer-Haimendorf found that in 1976, 400 yaks were being tended, whereas in 1962 he had counted only 70. In 1969 Valeix made a count of 102 yaks ( 1974 : 274 ). If, before 1959, the Tamang Thakalis had recourse to the mule and horse caravans of the Mawatans to transport goods, after the closing of the border this ceased to be a source of income for the latter ( Fuerer-Haimendorf found over 32 mules and 220 horses in 1962 ).

In Marpha too, then, as the figures show, a turning to the breeding of yaks apparently occurred, with some of the animals, for which pasture land was unavailable, having to be taken to other, rented lands for grazing. The earnings from keeping yaks appear, therefore, to have been high enough to make it possible to pay the additional price of rent for pasture land.

In 1976, furthermore, Fuerer-Haimendorf found in Marpha only 60 horses being kept, as opposed to the 220 in 1962. He concludes from this that the Mawatans had switched from horses as the most important pack animals to the use of mules ( Valeix : 1969 ) unfortunately fails to distinguish between horses and mules, providing for both species together a figure of 335 ), particularly in view of the fact that mules are more suitably employed than horses for transport purposes along the traditional routes up and down the Kali Gandaki as well as for other uses, as, for example, building and road construction in

Pokhara and the Middle Ranges. Such utilization in turn added up to a new source of income for the Mawatans, whose animals meet a large portion of the market demand. The Thakalis from Thini, Syang and Chimang also own more mules than horses, with the mules likewise being pressed into service for road construction.

The number of dzoppa, too, has, according to Fuerer-Haimendorf, decreased from 89 animals in the year 1962 to 35 in 1976 ( Valeix came up with a figure of 131 in 1969 ), a trend which can be traced back to a shift from high altitude trade routes, such as through Dolpo and Mustang, to paths lying in lower regions, which cannot be traversed by the animals : Like the yak, they are unable to tolerate the milder climate. All these cases show what changes the collapse of trade brought about in stockbreeding, as well as the importance the raising of livestock and mules attained to in Thak Khola afterwards.

### Marpha 1962 and 1976

	Yaks	Mules	Dzo	Goats/Sheep	Horses
1962	70	32	89*	—	220
1976	400	350	35	490	60

from Fuerer-Haimendorf ( 1981 : 180-184 )

★ Cows and dzoppa counted together; Fuerer- Haimendorf does not differentiate between the two.

### Marpha—1969

	Yaks	Cows/Dzoppa	Sheep/Goats	Horses/Mules
Mawatans	101	131	351	355
Outsider	1	7	0	11
Occupational castes	0	0	0	0
Total	102	138	351	366

from Valeix, who subdivides into Mawatans, outsiders among the village population ( e. g. Mustangis or Baragaonlis ) and occupational castes, such as damai and kami ( 1974 : 274 ).

### 2.3 Trades :

As has already been noted, the Tamang Thakalis are one of the most influential and well-known trading communities or groups in Nepal. Originally the trading center of the Thakalis was Tukuhe, or Tukche, which at the time was the largest town in Thak Khola, with big storehouses and palace-like dwellings.

Up until the 1959 upheaval in Tibet, Thakali merchants imported from that country and from the northern high plateau ( Dolpo, Mustang ) sheep, goats, yaks, dzoppa, horses, mules, wool, furs, hides, butter, cheese, medicinal herbs and, naturally, salt in exchange for products from India and Nepal, such as rice, wheat, barley, maize, dhal (pulses), buckwheat, oil, tea, hot peppers, spices, paper, cotton, cotton clothing, metal utensils, sugar, firearms, gunpowder and later, cigarettes, razors and batteries. Certainly the most important was the trade in livestock, wool, grains and salt. In Mustang District itself ( which besides Mustang includes Thak Khola and Baragaon ) local barley, particularly from Panchgaon and Baragaon, was exchanged for Tibetan salt. It is interesting to note in this connection that the Thakalis from Thak Satsae also sold barley to Tibet, though not because, like the Mawatans or Yhulkasummis, they had produced a surplus of it, but because they preferred the consumption of rice to barley. The salt bartered from the Tibetans was re-exchanged later for rice. The Tamang Thakalis were sufficiently well off to be able to afford this "luxury".

The role of the Tamang Thakalis was to a large extent that of middlemen who bartered or bought goods and provided facilities for their storage. A relationship of trust generally developed between the individual trading partners, so that it was customary to advance credit or to postpone actually receiving the bartered wares until the next meeting.

Moreover, thanks to a far-flung network of additional middlemen ( generally relatives of the Tamang Thakalis ) in the Middle Ranges and in Dolpo and Mustang, the Thakalis were able to set up in widely separated villages intermediate stations ( often bhattis ) for their relatives from Thak Khola, and thanks to a transport system consisting of pack horses or mules either in their own possession or in that of the Mawatans and Yhulkasummi Thakalis, by means of which goods might be conveyed, from 1928 onwards the Tamang Thakalis were in a position to despatch the goods directly to their receiver or to pick them up from their source.

Before this network was established, a few Tamang Thakali families had the trading monopoly firmly in their control. At the end of the 19th century and during the first decades of the 20th, up until 1928, these families, offspring of the Sherchan clan, were active as, among other things, middlemen in the salt trade, and at the same time controlled

the important post of district magistrate ( responsible for collecting custom duties; the post corresponds to the title of *subba* in Nepal, which is conferred by the government ), a situation which led to their accumulating money and goods. It was only in 1928 that this customs policy was terminated by the government and trade was opened to other Thakali families, with the government collecting direct levies ( Nep. : *jokaa bhaar* ) from each merchant. Alongside the still dominant *subba* families, the Tamang Thakalis as a whole now began to build up the extensive trading network. ( As a comparison : *subba* families of that period had an annual turnover of around 120 muri, other Tamang Thakalis an annual turnover of 60-80 muri, 1 muri = 2.4 bushels ).

Fuerer-Haimendorf ( 1978 : 346 ) reports on the effects of the measures ( to summarize his remarks ) : The considerable amount of capital that had by then been amassed by the Thakali merchant put them in the pleasant position of not having any longer to bother themselves with small trade, which involved tedious trips on foot or on the back of a horse, and being able to engage in larger transactions in grains, salt, clothing and cigarettes from their houses in Thak Satsae. In 1962 the annual turnover of an average merchant amounted to between 25,000 and 50,000 rupees. For example, there was at the time a business in Kobang with 25,000 rupees, and a horse dealer with 30,000 rupees in annual turnover. Men who went to Kalimpong and other place in India to acquire goods for sale in Thak Khola made a profit of 4000 rupees on an investment of 15,000 rupees.

The influence of the *subba* families is based on historical and political events which I shall go into in detail in the section on history. They enjoyed, moreover, the benefit of a very advantageous geographical location on one of the easiest trade routes to negotiate between Tibet and India.

The passes between Lo ( Mustang ) and Tibet are comparatively low and can be crossed by all types of pack animals. They lead south to Pokhara and the Terai ( the Nepalese flat lands ), avoiding narrow gorges and paths that are too steep, such as prohibit the use of cheap pack animals elsewhere in Nepal. Thak Satsae, and more particularly Tukuhe, lies at a point along this route which is very well suited for being a center of trade. Tibetans as well as Bhotyas from Dolpo, Baragaon and Mustang can make their way to it without exposing themselves and their animals to the insufferable heat of the lower regions ( the region lies high enough, as described previously, in a zone cut off from the Indian subcontinental climate by the Himalaya ). On the other hand, the way to Thak Satsae, apart from the three winter months and the monsoon season, was easily negotiable by merchants from the flat lands and the Middle Ranges. The monsoon period, when the paths from Thak Khola into the lower lying south became unpassable for porters and pack

animals, was precisely the best time to undertake treks from Mustang, Dolpo and Tibet to Thak Satsae; the weather was at its mildest, since in the high regions of Tibet the cold naturally lingers longer, and time is required for the rivers and streams to subside after the snow has melted and for the paths to become passable. Thus trading caravans from the flat lands showed up either in the autumn period between the monsoon and winter or in the presummer season after the winter months and before the monsoon, whereas the caravans from the north arrived in Thak during the monsoon, which did not affect them.

The need naturally arose, therefore, for a place to store goods from the north and south on the border between these two geographically different zones—in this case in the transitional zone of Thak Satsae. The Thakalis have exploited this need. In their function as middlemen, they bought or stored goods from the north destined for the south and vice versa.

But even before political conflicts in Tibet led to the closing of the border, the share of the border trade in the hands of the subba Thakali families had considerably declined (from 1928 on, as described above). Losses resulting from the annulment of customs, however, affected the subba families but little. The wealth and success they had attained to in the years they had an absolute monopoly in Thak Kholā allowed them to function later as pure middlemen who could afford to delegate to Bhotyas from Mustang and Baragaon the task of transporting goods to Thak Satsae, having them work either for a commission or as a means of paying off their often considerable debts to the subbas (see section on history). In the meantime they were busy establishing trading relations in other parts of Nepal, which allowed them to become independent of the trade in Thak Satsae.

In these years before the definitive collapse of trans-Himalayan trade, which came to a complete standstill after 1962, the Tamang Thakalis split up into two populations: 1. on the one hand were the subba families with their relatives, who had, as mentioned above, built up contacts in the south and were able to depend upon a network of people who distributed the goods under the supervision of Thakalis in the Middle Ranges. 2. As opposed to this group of modern thinking Thakalis who saw their chances for the future and adapted themselves quite well to the new areas of settlement, to include the matter of Hinduization (see the chapter on religion), there existed at the same time, on the other hand, a very traditionally oriented group of Tamang Thakalis in Thak Satsae.

Thanks to their capital the first group was in a position to buy land or houses, for example, in the infrastructurally developing Terai or in Kathmandu and to start new lives for themselves as the basis for an expanding future trade. If trade relations with Tibet and India had been preeminent up until then, this situation changed in favor of the new possibi-





**Illustration No. 1**



**Illustration No. 2**





Illustration No. 3



Illustration No. 4





Illustration No. 5



Illustration No. 6





Illustration No. 7

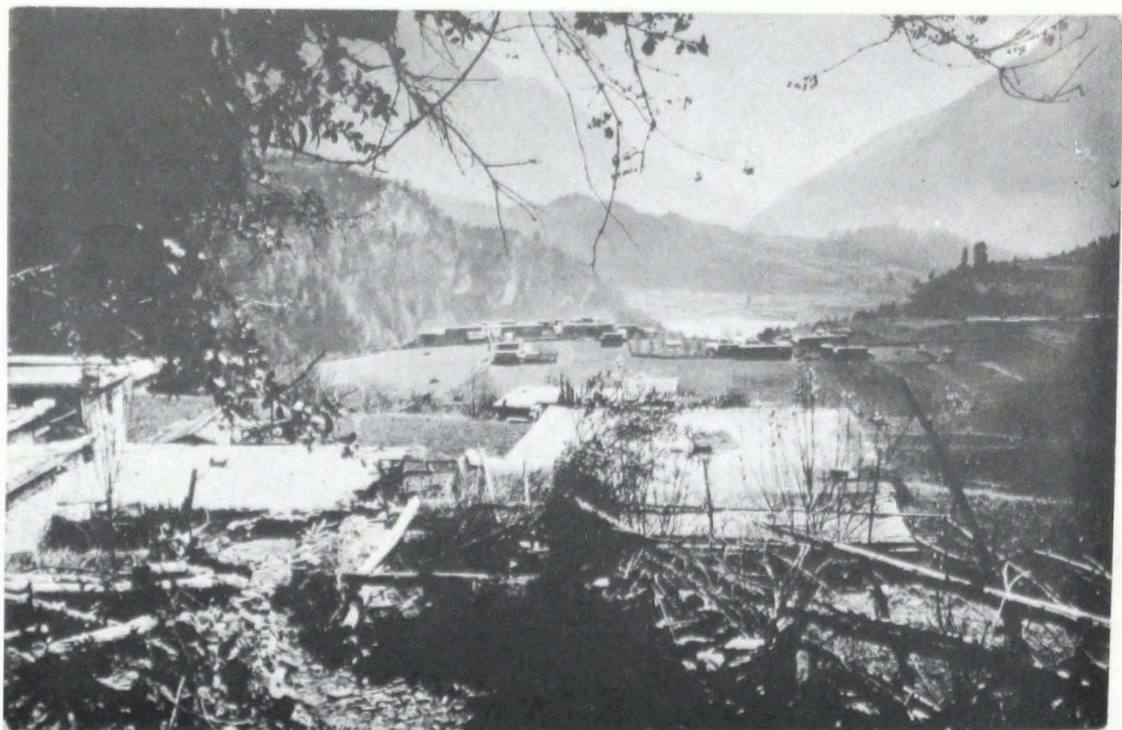


Illustration No. 8

lities in the Terai, due, first of all, to their accumulation of capital and, secondly, and not in the least, to the sweeping measures on the part of the government to wipe out malaria in the southern regions.<sup>2</sup>

The third benefit enjoyed by the subbas was the fact that, after their fall from power at the hands of King Tribhuvan in 1951, many Rana families which had ruled Nepal up until then were forced to divest themselves of some of their wealth, above all land and houses. Since the subbas were generally able to pay in cash, they came away with cheap new property. At the beginning they settled in Pokhara and Kathmandu, but later started up new lives in Butwal in the Terai and Naudanda/Bhairawa ( Naudanda is located on the Indian, and Bhairawa on the Nepali side of the border ). They naturally drew other Thakali families *eng* in their wake; these settled above all in Pokhara, with which they were most familiar. The farms they set up there can be counted among the technically most developed in Nepal.

In 1953 an airport was opened in Pokhara, simplifying the transport of goods between Bhairawa, Pokhara and Kathmandu. Moreover, roads connecting the cities were being planned.

The new government also mandated that schools be opened for everyone who could pay for their education. Under the Ranas the right to attend schools was granted only to the Ranas themselves and their "Chosen favorites" ( among whom were the subba families ! ). The Thakalis, who were generally able to come up with the needed money, placed great value upon insuring a good education for their children. By their farsightedness they well recognized what possibilities thereby opened up for them in the future.

Even though a considerable number of Thakalis had migrated out of Thak Khola, they kept up contact with their relatives who remained in Thak Satsae, and turned up for festivals and ceremonies. The large majority, moreover, still possessed landed property there, administered by the *Ārangsi karāngsi*.

Followig tried and true precedent, the second group in Thak Satsae carried on trade with Tibet and India. Since the opening up of trade in 1928 many of them, as described previously, attained to considerable wealth and were able henceforth to live from their income as middlemen alone. They continued to thrive in Thak Satsae, and "income flowed in" for which no special investment was necessary as formerly. Manzardo describes this quite to the point (1978:42) : "The Thakalis became increasingly sedentary, for there was no longer any purpose in setting out on dangerous trips to Tibet, since their agents, both hired men, working for commission and bond servants, could do the job as well". I describe in the section on

history how the Tamang Thakalis built up this system of "dependent workers and slaves," namely, as always, at the initiative of the subbas.

Manzardo recounts, again to the point, why the second group of traditionally oriented Thakalis, those attached to the soil, were compelled to migrate to other parts of Nepal, and how, in connection with this, traditional trade in Thak Khola came to a standstill after 1962. Concerning the circumstances leading to this he remarks (1978:44) that between 1954 and 1959-60 there was a fundamental difference in the ideas and outlook on life on the part of the Tamangs from Thak Satsae and of those Thakalis who had settled in the south. Under normal circumstances these different interest groups would have further split up into a rural and a semi-urban or urban organization. (In the south the Thakalis set up a credit system of their own, independent of Thak Khola—dhikuri—, found their own social organization, and made changes in various customs, such as marriage rites etc. but things did not develop in this way.

In 1959-60, 60,000 Tibetan refugees crossed the border in flight from the Chinese. This mass movement brought about an overpopulation of the valleys of Mustang District, including Thak Khola and, due to the lack of sufficient grazing land for "refugee" and native livestock, and food and grain for everyone, led to supply problems and even calamity. In the Tibetan refugee camp in Chhairo, built in 1961 by the Swiss, 11% of the population died. In order to alleviate the problem of overgrazing and to be able to live "somehow," the refugees sold their herds of cattle, yaks, dzoppa, sheep and goats. But since both the Bhotyas and the Thakalis (all three groups) also engaged in livestock trading, this selling of animals dirt cheap meant a great financial loss for them, assuming their own animals had not themselves fallen prey to the catastrophe. Added to this was the fact that the Chinese, by their closure of the border, prevented new herds from being acquired once the old ones had been sold off. Thus the old stock could no longer be replenished, and a considerable source of trade income was lost.

About this time, too, the first roads from the Terai up to the mountains—to Pokhara and Kathmandu—were constructed (Tribhuvan Rajpath and Sonauli Rajpath), so that the Middle Ranges could more easily and with less cost be supplied with salt and other goods from India than from Thak Satsae. This development naturally undermined the entire trade there.<sup>3</sup>

Another complicating factor was the increased lack of security in Thak Khola. Among the refugees was a group of martial Tibetan nomads, called Khampas, who had provided the Dalai Lama with protective escort. They were said to have been supported by the CIA as early as 1956 (Manzardo 1978 : 46), and between 1960 and 1971 the Americans

helped them to form a regular contingent of 2000 men in Mustang in order to be able to carry out attacks in Tibet. One of the reasons for their failure, however, is said to have been the provisioning and financial support, which functioned to slowly, and this in a region which was overpopulated and underproductive. This led to the Khampas attacking and robbing the rich Thakalis of the region as well as the trading caravans that still remained, though they seemed to be highly respected by less well-to-do inhabitants of that area.

According to Iijima ( 1977 : 73-82 ) this menacing development induced the subba Hitman Sherchan to persuade the Tamang Thakali population still in Thak to migrate to the more secure lower lying regions of Pokhara, the Middle Ranges, Kathmandu and the Terai. Apart from security, his motivations were also naturally the economic interests he was thereby pursuing.

The farflung trading network proved of course useful now to the Thakalis. Some of them followed the example of the subbas and settled in Bhairawa/Butwal. Hitman Sherchan set up a rice mill and oil press in Bhairawa as a family enterprise. Indraman Sherchan, after having resided at first in Pokhara, settled down in Kathmandu. A wave of migration ensued among the Thakalis, who struck roots in all of the larger population centers, above all near towns on the newly constructed roads ( e. g. Muglin ). According to data supplied by informants, as early as 1967 only 20% of the population of Tukucho were still Tamang Thakali.

In the whole of Nepal there is no small group equivalent, in terms of numbers, to the Tamang Thakalis which has managed to turn the changing social and economic situation to their advantage as they have done, and done in such a radical way as to be led to leave the region of their ancestral origins. This they had to do in order to maintain their standard of living. Inhabitants of villages in Thak Kholā oriented chiefly towards farming, on the other hand, were less dependent upon trade than the merchants from Tukucho. They survived the decline of the salt trade without having to reorder their infrastructure greatly.

These, too, profited later from the expansion of Pokhara as a marketing center and from the roads between Pokhara and Kathmandu. The mule caravans were now employed chiefly by the Marphalis and Yhulkasumis in order to supply Pokhara with potatoes, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower and fruits, particularly apples ( whereas they had previously often been rented by the rich Tamang Thakalis ). In this connection, the significance of the vegetable and fruit farm established in Marpha in 1967 by the government under the supervision of Pasang Sherpa should once again be emphasized ( Fuerer-Haimendorf 1981 : 200, 201 ).

Trade in vegetables and fruit has by now become so important that in 1983, under the guidance of the United Nations Development Program, storehouses were built in Tukuche, Marpha and Jomosom, the latter, if only because of its airport, the present trading center in Mustang District.

#### 2. 4. Tourism :

Since the opening up of Nepal following the assumption of state power by King Tribhuvan in 1951, outside world has become more and more interested in the world's only Hindu kingdom with its old cultures (those of the Licchavis [400 A. D.], the Thakurs [around 750 A. D.] the Mallas [1200] and the Gurkhas [1768], its scenic natural beauty and its manifold religious life. Nepal became exposed to international tourism.

The country being in need of foreign exchange, the government began to consciously promote tourism (the Tourist Development Committee and Department of Tourism were established). In 1972, with German support, a so-called Tourist Master plan was devised. According to statistics, in 1962 exactly 6179 tourists visited Nepal, in 1966 as many as 12,000 and by 1976 this figure had climbed to a respectable 105,108 tourists. To round out the picture, I should here like to cite unpublished data in the possession of the journalist L. Tueting, who put them at my disposal. According to these data, of the more than 100,000 tourists in 1976; 85,769 were non-Indians, with the remainder being Indians, and in particular only such as were registered upon entry at the airport ( data from the Immigration office). One can therefore get an idea of how many additional Indians entered in buses without being registered. In 1983 a total of 179,405 tourists are said to have visited Nepal, of which 129,303 persons were non-Indian (again only Indians who came by air counted). Approximately 4000 trekkers applied for a trekking permit (necessary in Nepal for hiking in the mountains) in 1971, whereas in 1977 the figure had climbed to 17,231 permits. In 1978 the figure increased by another 30%. According to data from L. Tueting, in 1980, 27,460 permits were issued, in 1981 29,500 and in 1983 as many as 32,298 trekking permits were given out, though it must be mentioned that some visitors to Nepal apply for a trekking permit without ever going on a trek, since the issuing of such a permit is cheaper than the cost of extending one's stay in Nepal. Each year between 20 and 30 expeditions into the Himalaya are approved, and the peaks are generally "booked" many years in advance.

I have placed these data at the head of this section in order to provide a picture of the steadily growing tourist trade, especially trekking tourism, which has naturally also influenced Thak Khola, the "Jomosom trek," which goes through there, being the most frequently made one in Nepal.



From Pokhara, this well-known trek in part proceeds directly along the old trade route, passing through Tatopani, Ghasa, Lete, Kalopani, Larjung, Tukuche, Marpha on the way to Jomosom and, still further, Muktinath, a town in Baragaon which is sacred both to Buddhists and to Hindus. Entering Mustang, the region beyond Muktinath and Kagbeni, is forbidden to foreigners. From the beginning of 1974 to 1976 treks could only go as far as a short distance beyond Tatopani, the Nepalese government having sent soldiers to Jomosom and Mustang in order, from there, to proceed against the Khampas and bring them under control (in Jomosom are located a training area and barracks for troops). Rumors are still floating around concerning this period. The region is said to have been at the time quite dangerous for trekkers, and for this reason was declared a "restricted area."

By now the Jomosom trek has become, along with the trip to Mount Everest, one of the most overrun in Nepal, for reasons not the least of which are its scenic attractions (one wanders through various terrains and climatic zones). Before reaching the ancestral land of the Thakalis, moreover, one crosses regions inhabited by Gurung and Magars. Tourists like to go to Thak Khola particularly in the autumn, when the harvest of apples is taken in.

Unfortunately, there are only very inexact figures concerning the number of trekkers in this region.

In 1980, according to Tueting, who obtained her figures from the Immigration Office, as many as 14,332 persons are purported to have been on the neighboring Jomosom, Annapurna and Manang treks, 10,109 of whom fall within the Jomosom trek. (In applying for one of these treks, one automatically receives a permit for the other two. All along the hiking routes there are checkpoints which verify whether persons are in possession of a permit and then make a record of the same. One can therefore later make an approximate tally of how many persons were on the individual treks.) In 1981 this figure increased to 17,053 visitors for all three routes, with 14,435 falling within the Jomosom trek alone. In 1983 there were 21,119 tourists on the three treks as a whole, though exact data for the Jomosom trek is still forthcoming. As a comparison, I give the figures for the so-called Everest trek: In 1980, 5836 and in 1983, 6732 persons traversed the route.

For several villages in Thak Satsae I am able to provide more detailed data concerning the number of visitors in lodges (small hotels) during the years 1981/82; these may make the picture clearer.

Since the Thakalis, in their role and merchants, had already accustomed themselves to providing overnight lodging facilities, and often constructed bhattis for their trading partners (small huts where a person can drink tea and distilled liquor and, in certain cases,

can stay the night ), it was no big problem for them to make the switch to tourists. Many bhattis were put to this new use, and, in addition, a fair number of Thakali families, once they discovered this new source of income, opened small hotels and "restaurants." One should not, however, think of these as establishments in the normal sense of the word; such an edifice is sometimes not even identified as such. For instance, one may inquire about a "restaurant" and then perhaps be requested to eat with the family in question for a few rupees. During the last five years, though, such arrangements have become more seldom. The business has become commercialized. The opening of new facilities has increased with the increase of tourists. Now that the region is under intensive cultivation and the fruit and vegetable farms are producing good harvests, the tourists, too, can be better victualled. And the guests are glad to come, since the Thakalis are famous for their tasty and relatively diversified cuisine, and are also known for their "very clean houses."

The Thakalis from Syang, Thini and Chimang come into hardly any contact with tourism, as these villages lie off the trekking routes. In 1981 a few Yholkasummi families in Jomosom, when asked to, took in tourists. The number of "hotels" in Jomosom is, moreover, rising, especially around the small airport. Tourists must often wait days on end to catch a flight to Pokhara or Kathmandu: either the weather does not want to cooperate and the flight is cancelled or, since the small machines are in general regularly booked out in advance, one must sufficiently apply one's persuasive powers—a large denomination rupee banknote may be the only recourse—in order to secure one of the two government seats from the district chief. Prices in Jomosom are in tune with the waiting times of the trekkers and soldiers stationed there, i.e. very high.

In Marpha, there were, as of 1981, exactly three lodges; I have been told that this number has risen since then. There were, in any case, more "private lodgings," i.e. houses where one could by asking obtain bed and board.

Tukuche boasted in 1981 of eight "hotels," a fairly large number. At the time, in contrast to Kobang and Larjung, an annual tax of 5-15% of the profit had to be paid in Tukuche and Marpha (according to an informant an official comes once a year from Pokhara or Baglung to Thak Khola). In Kobang are located three hotels with facilities for 10-15 persons per house each night. For Larjung my information was more detailed. There are two lodges. One of the two proprietresses said that 20 trekkers might put up each night during the regular season, whereas in the off season, by contrast, the average is two tourists. The second lodge had been in existence for only ten months and provided boarding for about 10 persons a night during the regular season. The owner of the first hotel told me

that more trekkers come every year, so that she could live very well on what she took in by this trade. From these earnings she was able to finance the education of three brothers.

In Kalopani there were three hotels in 1981, in Lete Khola one restaurant and one hotel, and in Lete itself there was one hotel. The owner had sold his yak herd, which, compared to the tourist trade, did not general enough profit. According to his own account he made an annual profit of 40,000 rupees ( including the profit from his farm ), 20,000 rupees of which she spent on himself and his family, with the remainder being invested in dhikuri or, lent out on interest. He kept three employees in the hotel ( Arangsi Karāngsi ). Formerly the lodge had been a bhatti. In Ghasa there were at that time four hotels, 40-50 tourist are said to have put up each night in the whole of Ghasa during the regular season, the most renowned hotel there has been in existence for 16 years, the newest is only one year old, and the othet two have been around for 10 years. One of the owners told me that they make 5-6 rupees profit per tourist per day. He was planning to build a new house, since he could no longer handle the rush.

I also obtained information from Tatopani, which lies on the other side of the climatic border, on the southern, "subcontinental side." Many Thakalis migrated there in winter during the days of the salt trade, as the climate there is very mild. Moreover, the village also attracts visitors, including of course tourists, by virtue of its hot sulphur springs. In 1981 there were seven lodges in the village, four of which belonged to Tamang Thakalis. One of them was patronized by about 25 guests per day during the regular season, each accounting for a turnover of 20-25 rupees. The owner told me that his annual profit amounted to approximately 50,000 rupees, while on the side he tended a small piece of land.

It would surely be interesting to know how many hostels are to be found today in Thak Khola. Already in 1981 and 1983, as the figures show, the flow of tourists was enormous. So far only minor criminal delicts have been committed on the Jomosom trek; generally they originate with the trekkers themselves, who leave without having paid or make off with bed linen or lamps, as one hotel proprietress complained. Nevertheless, three cases of tourists being murdered were registered up to 1981.

Now that Thak Lhola has again acquired some drawing cards with tourism and agriculture, the Tamang Thakalis are beginning to "migrate" back. It is difficult to appraise what effect the planned construction of a road through Mustang to Tibet ( see the chapter "Demography" ) will have on tourism. Jomosom will surely gain influence, and business will probably shift with the tourists to Lo Mantang ( Mustang ), which has been a "forbidden land" up to now. On account of its high-alpine tourism, however, Thak Khola will surely continue to draw many visitors ( Dhaulagiri-Annapura massif ).

## 2.5 Organization of Labor

The homogeneity of the Thakalis, particularly the Tamang Thakalis and Marphalis, has been constantly emphasized by ethnologists. Apart from the clan structure, it results above all from the very tightknit form of organization obtaining within both groups, which differ from each other individually, be it in clan structure, the social bonds engendered therefrom or, for example, in the historical role of the subba families in the salt trade.

The forms of labor organization among the Tamang Thakalis can largely be traced back to the influence of the subbas. Without a description of their influence various organizational forms among the Tamang Thakalis, above all in the administrative sector, would be difficult to understand.

Dor Bahadur Bista writes with reference to the first influential subba, Bal Bir Sherchan ( 1971 : 56 ) : "The subba wished to make sure that the status he had acquired would remain with his family even after his lifetime. He thus thought to gain official recognition for his sons." This he attained by making each year his official contract to collect duty on the salt trade over in the name of another of his grown sons, so that each received the lucrative title of subba. By this artifice status and prestige were transferred to the male members of the family in an almost "hereditary" fashion, bringing them the respected title of subba saheb.

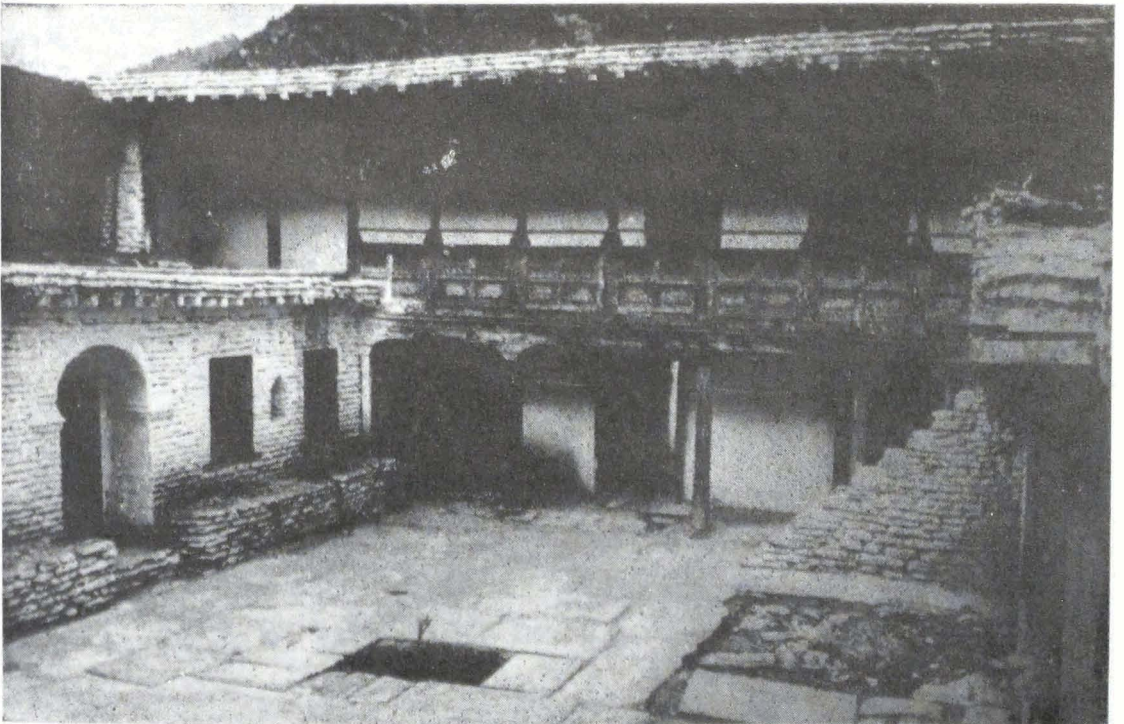
But by means of their official status the subbas were also able to look after the interests of the Tamang Thakalis. Under their leadership the latter enjoyed the possibility of engaging in trade and, connected with this, of exploiting other groups, so that the Tamang Thakalis were collectively better off than the other ethnic groups in and around Thak Khola. This endowed in turn the entire group of Tamang Thakalis with status and prestige. At the same time that the subbas were busy strengthening their position and reputation outside Thak Khola, they were bringing about internally new reforms and reorganizations of their communal system. Good foreign policy must be supported by a firm internal order !

Within this reorganization, they established a so-called Joint Council, consisting of thirteen *Mukhiya* (leaders) from various places in Thak Khola (Dor Bahadur Bista 1971:58). Each year, in rotation, one of these thirteen was elected the new chairman. The original intention was for the thirteen mukhiyas to be reelected each year by direct vote. In practice, each mukhiya, once elected, tried with his charisma and influence to hold on to the post for life and if possible, to transfer it to his son. Thus, with the years, this institution became hereditary.

Several members of the subba families were naturally also counted among the mukhiyas. Later, when the subbas extended their sphere of influence successively into regi-

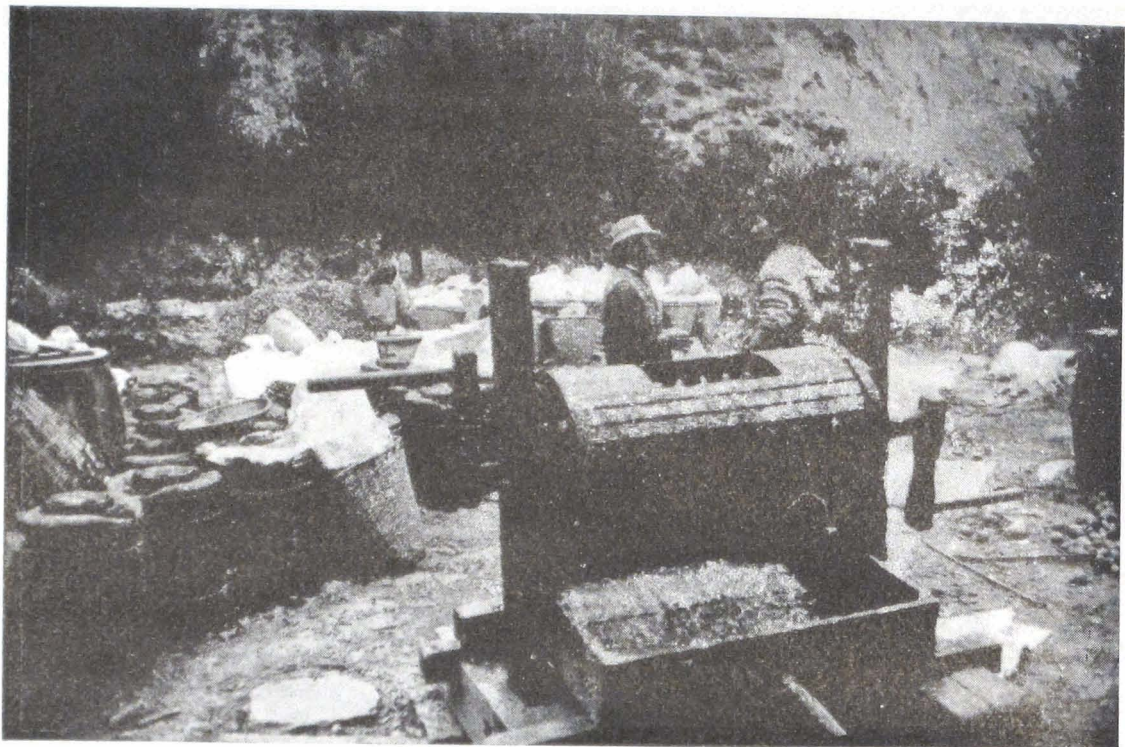


**Illustration No. 9**

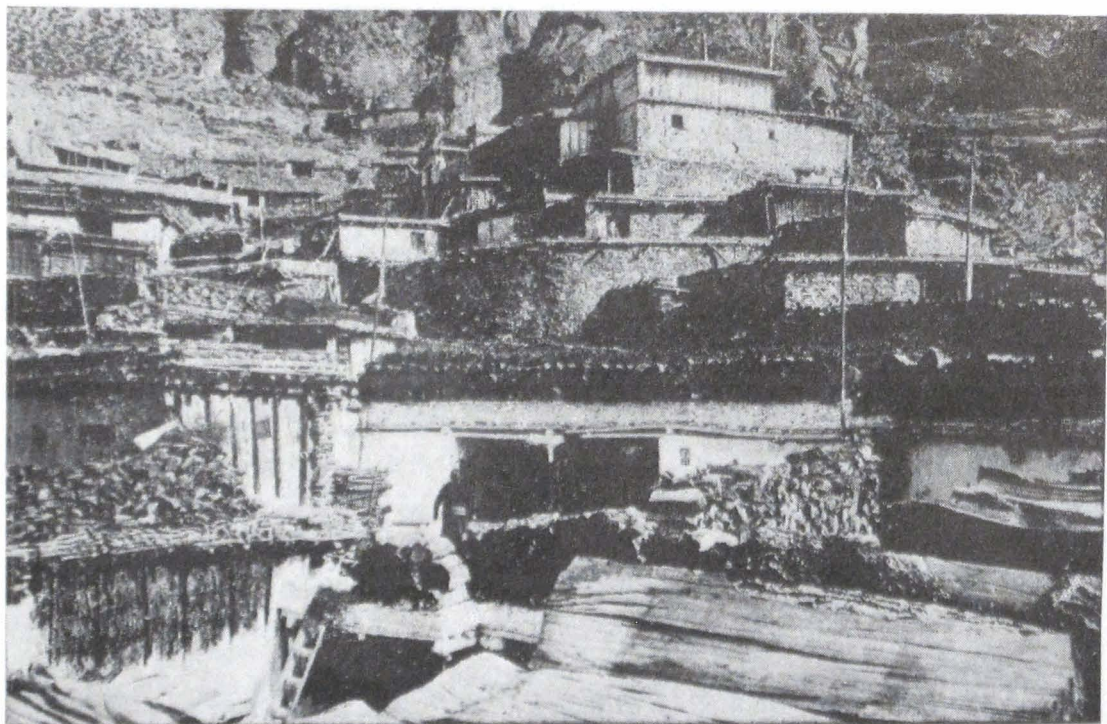


**Illustration No. 10**





**Illustration No. 11**



**Illustration No. 12**





**Illustration No. 13**



Illustration No. 14



ons such as Dolpo and Mustang, they were no longer entitled simply mukhiya. The mukhiyas for their part began to take their cue more and more from members of the subbha families, who acquired the special leadership title of *Chikep*, even among the Tibetan population in the north. Dor Bahadur Bista (1971:58) reports that the eldest members of subbha families held the chairmanship at sessions of the community council (meetings of the 13 mukhiyas), whereas during special events, festivals and ceremonies, as in mediating between conflicting parties, it was the younger subbha members, that is sons of the particular subbhas, who assumed the leadership role. Apart from the usual tasks traditionally under the responsibility of village heads in Nepal, the mukhiyas of Thak Khola consolidated their influence by a variety of means. Thus they developed a secret organization whose existence could not be divulged under penalty of breach of oath, and they introduced their own jurisdiction, binding for all Thakalis. Anyone who went against this and turned, for instance, to the court set up by the Ranas in Dana (between Tatopani and Ghasa) was forced to pay a fine (Fuerer-Haimendorf reports that after 1962 only those disputes which could not be settled by the mukhiyas were referred to the court in Dana; 1975 : 146). Moreover, the mukhiyas established a system by which every sale of land or other transaction had to be registered, until then the task of the governmentally instituted District Land Registration offices.

Since all these measures had the force of law, infractions against them were severely punished. Apart from its legislative function, the Community Council amalgamated within itself all administrative activities of the Thak Khola region, Mustang and Dolpo.

A system to control crime and gambling was even set up. Under the guiding hand of the subbhas or their go-betweens, the mukhiyas, the Sanskritization of the Tamang Thakalis was also pressed forward with. If their culture had previously been under Tibetan and Lamaist influence, now it was forbidden to wear Tibetan clothes, to eat beef, i.e. including yak meat, and to drink rakshi (privately distilled liquor). Lamas were no longer allowed to carry out rituals within households, and the previously mandatory consecration of the second son to a life of celibacy was done away with (Dor Bahadur Bista 1971:59).

The traditional marriage practice of abducting the bride was abandoned in favor of Hindu rituals. Thakalis were even forced to disown their own language once they got outside Thak Khola. In addition, the subbhas spread the legend that the Thakalis originally descended from a king from the west of Nepal, Jumla, who is said to have belonged to the high Hindu caste of the Thakuris. Therefore, so the claim, the Thakalis should really be called Thakuris and so were members of Hindu society. By this means the subbhas gained access to trading relationships of importance to them with established Hindu castes. This

would never have been possible as Budhists or Bhotyas, whom the Ranas looked down upon as underprivileged.

As a result of the upward revaluation as ethnic group that the Tamang Thakalis underwent, and from the social and economic advantages they were able to derive from this, many of them turned, often unconsciously, into faithful vassals of the subbhas. The Subbhas attempted, for example, to open up better educational opportunities for their "folk," with children from the more well-to-do families being sent to Kathmandu, India and later even into countries outside Asia, something extremely difficult during the period of the Ranas, who allowed the privilege of a good education only to special favorites of theirs (Fuierer Haimendorf 1975 : 147, 148).

The internal council of the mukhiyas has continued up to the present to exercise a relatively large influence on decisions affecting the Tamang Thakalis (e. g. building bridges, laying roads). So it is that the Ārangsi Karāngsi in Tukuhe, for example, even though in the majority there after many Tamang Thakalis left the town after 1962, did not manage to gain control of the top positions of the panchayat system instituted in 1951 (Fuierer-Haimendorf 1981 : 178 ). Of the eleven seats in the Local Council they hold eight, but Tamang Thakalis of the old and wealthy families still retain the titles of chairman and vice-chairman. In the Kobang panchayat, to which Larjung also belongs, only Tamang Thaklis are represented, even though more Ārangsi Karāngsi than Thakalis live in Larjung.

One may conclude that with the years, by means of skilled tactics combined with a policy of conforming to Hindu ideas, the subbhas have managed to bring about an intertwining of legislature, administration and judicial authority. This nexus of power may even at times have supported the efforts of the subbhas after 1925 to found an autonomous state; but the matter was not debated publicly, as this would naturally not have been tolerated by the Nepalese government (Dor Bahadur Bista 1971 : 56). (The subbhas at the time perhaps made this move in order to direct attention away from internal problems and so achieve unity. I have difficulty imagining that the Rana regime would not have defended itself against such a proclamation with a show of force.) One sees, in summary, the extent to which Tamang Thakali society was dependent upon the subbhas.

### 2. 5. 1. The organization of labor among the Tamang Thakalis

According to statements by Tamang Thakalis and informants, though somewhat contradictory, part of the village community belongs to the so-called *kuriyā* (Nep. : household). Normally each household sends a representative to the *kuriyā*, where, in their own mutual interest, agreements are reached concerning common affairs of the village, such as the orga-

nization of the irrigation system and the superintendence of wood lands. Kleinert, in referring to the village of Taglung, remarks : "One man appointed by the village community is responsible for the water supply system. He keeps watch over the condition of the system and is authorized to employ villagers for necessary repair work" (1973 : 62). For this purpose each household must, in general, make available one laborer or pay a cash compensation. The same system is also employed for the other communal services, such as improving lanes and bridges or repairing or constructing mills.

The older married couples, whose children have already married and officially started their own families, and are consequently independent households, are generally excluded from the *kuriyā*, since they are considered too old and feeble to put their labor into community affairs. They belong to the so-called *phadke* group, as do immigrants, such as Bhohtas from Baragaon and Mustang, as well as the "occupational Hindu castes" of the *dāmai*, *sārki* and *kāmi*, who work for the Thakalis as tailors, cobblers and blacksmiths. In Kobang, two Tamang Thakali couples who had immigrated from Larjung and Naphrungkot also belonged to it; they had first to establish themselves over a period of years before taking up responsibilities within the *kuriyā*.

Since, unlike the Mawatans, the Tamang Thakalis have not introduced a so-called "pension age" (see Chapter 2. 6.), families generally keep sending one laborer to the *kuriyā* until one of the sons assumes responsibility for the household, and the parents, retiring into the *phadke*, are no longer compelled to discharge such obligations. If the parents are unable to reach an agreement with the sons, then they are forced either themselves to provide the *kuriyā* with labor or to find someone to take their place. But whether a household of Tamang Thakalis belongs to the *phadke* or the *kuriya*, it is always able to make its views known during town meetings. I received reports from Kobang to the effect that even members of the *phadke*, such as *dāmai*, *sarki* and *kāmi*, supply laborers to the village community, even though they do not belong to the *kuriyā*. In Kalopani and Taglung, members of both the *kuriya* and *phadka* must provide laborers to the community, but members of the *phadke* who do not own fields need not do so. In Larjung, in contrast, even a household of the *phadke* which owns no land must do work for the community. In Lete, according to statements by informants, *bhatti* and hotel owners pay 3-50 rupees to the community; normally each household pays taxes to the *Jillā* Panchayat in Jomosom.

The *kuriyā* meets in general twice a year, after the harvests, and consists in Kalopani, by way of an example, of a *mukhiya* (usually a hereditary post), four assistants, who are called *locobar*, one of whom is appointed yearly to share leadership with the *mukhiya*, a general secretary (Nep. : *bahidar*) and two so-called *kundal* (overseers). The job of the

kundal is to watch over the irrigation of fields and to monitor the felling of trees. If an inhabitant of the village intends to chop wood, he must ask permission from a locobar or otherwise be prepared to pay a fine. Normally households are obligated to drive birds from the fields : if they fail to do so they must again face paying a fine to one of the locobars.

The semi-migrants among the Tamang Thakalis, even though having landed property in Thak, need no longer send a representative to the *kuriyā*. In Kalopani, however, they must send a kundal if the lot falls to them; if they fail to do so they must pay fines of up to 200–300 rupees.

## 2. 5. 2 The organization of labor among the Mawatans :

In Marpha, in spite of the panchayat system instituted by King Mahendra in 1962 (Marpha Syang and Chhairo belong to one gaon panchayat), the traditional village organization was for the most part retained. It is based on a system of elected village representatives from the four clans (*tsho*, Fuerer–Haimendorf 1981 : 181; in Michael Vinding *cho* 1981 : 211) into which the Mawatans are subdivided.

Once a year, during a meeting (*hyul jompa*) of the village assembly, a leader, the so-called *thumi*, is elected for one year from each of the four clans. After the year is up he may be reelected. There are contradictory statements in Vinding and Fuerer–Haimendorf concerning the function of the four thumis. The latter reports (1981 : 182) : “One of the four thumi is chosen as chairman, now known by the Nepali term *mukhiya*. His position is not attractive, for the *mukhiya* is under the obligation to stay throughout the year in Marpha, while other thumi may go on trading journeys during winter when the majority of the villagers have left for the middle ranges or lowlands. The thumi and particularly the *mukhiya* supervise the work of eight other village officials known as “*tshowa*”, who act as messengers and guardians of public order. Two of the *tshowa* are described as “*tsilowa*”, and one of these acts as village accountant while the other organizes the work of the remaining *tshowa*. They take turns in the discharge of these duties, one *tshowa* working every eighth day. The *tshowa* are appointed in rotation from the landowning inhabitants of Marpha (*kuria*), and any *tshowa* who leaves the village when his term of duty comes must provide a substitute or pay a fine.” Michael Vinding describes the thumi in the following way (1981 : 212) : “Now the headmen function according to a rotating system, so that each sits for forty-five days during the winter and for forty-five days during the summer as the village headman. This arrangement has been made so that the headmen have a chance of going to the south for business during the winter. The headmen are assisted by ten village workers (*chowa*). They

also see that the village law is respected especially that stray animals in the fields are caught and their owners punished. The schowa sit for one year and the duty is taken in turn by the villagers."

The term *mhichen* also turns up in Vinding; it refers to eight experienced and respected members of the community who are appointed as mediators by the four thumis from their respective clans. "The eight mediators ( *mhichen* ) sit for a period of one year and serve in case of conflict, give the headmen advice on important matters and check the accounts when the headmen rotate" ( Vinding 1981 : 212 ).

I was told in 1981 in Marpha still another version, namely that, in rotation, two clans send to chowas each and the other two clans three chowas each to the village council—i.e. altogether ten chowas. The meetings are held in the village house or in another public place. One of ten chowas is elected by the council as organizer of the chowas ( the so-called *minger* ), and two are appointed *chilawa* ( in Fuerer-Haimendorf : *tsilowa* ), a kind of general secretary who, apart from finances, sees to the collection of outstanding fines ( as an example : an owner must pay a fine when he fails to notice that his livestock is damaging other's fields or seed ). I was further told that one delegate from each household must be present at the village meeting as representative of his clan. This meeting takes place twice a year, in August and in November.

What is particularly striking in Marpha, as compared to the Tamang Thakalis and Yhulkusummis, is how fused clan, household and village organization are. There a household has certain rights and duties vis-a-vis the community, as, for example, the obligation to send a delegate to the communal meeting, and the duty to perform work for the village organization ( such as the repair of irrigation canals ). These rights and duties depend, among other things, upon the individual social status of the households and upon whether they own land. Moreover, only households with at least one male member aged between 18 and 61 may send a representative to the village meeting. Strict regulations of this sort are found only among the Mawatans.

At the age of 61, I was told, the head of a household in Marpha, generally the father must divide his property between himself and his sons. He goes officially into retirement and no longer needs to furnish his services to the community. His sons, however, who until then had officially belonged to their father's household, must now officially start new households of their own ( hence the division of property ). If one son, usually the youngest, remains behind with the parents, he need not provide service to the Council ( village community or village assembly ), since he is engaged in taking care of his parents until their death. In this case the father remains the head of the household, with the son assu-

ming this function after his demise. If, for example, a father has four sons after his retirement at 61 who are old enough, three of them must provide services to the village assembly and one remains with the parents. Were the son remaining with the parents to break away officially from the household ( i. e. start a new one of his own ), then he too would have to furnish his services to the Council. In this way the division of a household, apart from the care of the elderly, also serves the village organization, which gains a working force from it.

The group of semi-migrants, that is, who still hold property in Marpha, must fulfill their duties towards the council by providing labor. Thus they either send paid workers or come up to Marpha themselves from their new residence. Those without property or possessions—who have migrated permanently—no longer have any obligations towards the community.

### 2. 5. 3. The organization of labour among the Thakalis of Thini Syang and Chimang

The Thakalis from Syang, Thini and Chimang each have a differently organized village assembly, though charged with tasks similar to those found among the Mawatans. Since the Yhulkasummis have ten clans and lineages with various subdivisions (often containing only a few members), in Thini and Syang it seemed advisable to form two organizational groups of patrilineal descent : the phajan thowa (Tib. : *thowa* = big) and phajan cyangpa (*Thak* : *cyangpa* = small). "Phajan thowa of Syang includes syantan phobe (clan), pasin thowa phobe and pasin cyangpa phobe, while phajan cyangpa includes saker phobe, jhisin phobe, che phobe, and phobe and mhacya parpa phobe. Phajan thowa of Thin includes bom phobe, gam some phobe, scrane phobe, chuku phobe and the lineage gampa dampā of gyabcan phobe, while phajan cyangpa includes jhisin phobe, pai sante phobe, cham dhorche phobe, gam kemi phobe, pal phobe and the lineage gam some phobe of gyabcan phobe" (Vinding 1981 : 216).

Formerly an annual assembly (*hyul jompa*) was held in Thini during which a village head (*gampa*), his representative (*thyumi*) and eight mediators (*mhichen*) were elected. Further, four village servants (*chowa*) were elected from each phajan. But this traditional political system has now been replaced by the national political panchayat system.

In Syang, the traditional village organization exists side by side with the panchayat system. The village assembly (*hyul jompa*) meets in the middle of August, and the members of phajan towa nominate a village head (*thyumi*) for two years from the phajan cyangpa and vice versa. The thymis are consulted, for example, in cases of divorce and when problems arise in dividing up property, but there were only two such cases during the last two

years. Moreover, three village servants (*chowa*) each are appointed from the phajan; these attend—in rotation for the period of a year, as in the case of the Mawatan—to such things as irrigation, the protection of fields from animals etc. I was told that each household sends a representative to the village assembly who, in case of need, must put his time at its disposal to do work on repairs and the like. It is only Syang for which I am aware that a person there who officially starts a new household need not assume any duties in the village assembly or stand for election as *chowa*. The advantage of this is that one can devote himself exclusively to improving his economic status and to stabilizing his new household.

The political village organization in Chimang differs from that in Thini and Syang. Since there are only two clans in Chimang, namely *kya phobe*, the clan of the *ayalama* (see chapter "Religion")—i.e. the priests and *gyalgi phobe*, the village head (the *thyumi*) is elected from the latter clan, as priests are not in general supposed to have anything to do with political decisions.

But as I have been told, there has not officially been any *thyumi* in Chimang since the national panchayat system was introduced by King Mahendra.

The village, which is smaller than the other two, still continues, however, to delegate authority to three village servants (*chowa*) who are elected in rotation from each household. Along with their normal duties, they see to it that the villagers are kept informed of the panchayat; they also impose monetary fines in cases where village regulations are transgressed, e. g. cutting down trees without notice or permission. Due to the influence of nearby Tukuche and to the fact that it belongs to the Tukuche gaon panchayat, the *chowas* are often called, as they are among the Tamang Thakalis, *kundals*.

Chimang also has the regulation that the head of a household must retire at age 61. The ceremony is performed by the village assembly and is called in Thakali *thar chgung*. Here, however, there is nothing compelling the grown-up sons officially to start their own households afterwards in order for the village assembly to be able to recruit new representatives, as is the practice among the Mawatans. Grown-up sons are still able to remain in the house of the father, i.e. to form a single joint household, which has only to supply one laborer to the community.

#### 2. 5. 4 The organization of labour among Thakali women

Common to all three groups of Thakalis are women's organizations. A distinction must be made between the so-called political organizations and associations of a more private nature. The latter are called *weyme* a Thakali word meaning "old women." The women of a village come together for these more or less obligatory meetings, held principally in the spring

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Common to all three groups of Thakalis are women's organizations. A distinction must be made between the so-called political organizations and associations of a more private nature. The latter are called *weyme* a Thakali word meaning "old women." The women of a village come together for these more or less obligatory meetings, held principally in the spring

and autumn, in a different friend's house each time, in order to discuss together village and family affairs, to spin and weave together and to enjoy good food and drink. Usually the hostess is presented with small gifts. In each case it is the eldest woman of a household who takes part in the weyme.

In addition, according to statements by informants, women's organizations have been in existence in the individual villages since 1979; called *mahila-sangathan* in Nepali, they are concerned with public affairs, above all with taking a stand against gambling with dice and cards, during which the men often lose huge sums of money and belongings. One of my informants ascribed the founding of these organizations to the influence of and contact with Hindu society. Interestingly enough, the women's organizations among the Tamang Thakalis in Tukuche, Kobang and Chimang ( though the statements were contradictory ), as opposed to those in Marpha, Thini, Syang and among the Tamang Thakalis from Kāng chhi Mārpo, were not able to put a stop to play. It is only permitted to play during Tihar, as in the rest of Nepal, but not during the important holidays of Toren Lha and Dasain.<sup>5</sup> If someone violates this prohibition, in Syang he is put in jail, in Marpha he must pay 500 rupees fine, and in Kalopani the household where play took place must pay 300 rupees, and each participant 90 rupees fine. It is particularly in Tukuche that the passion for gambling is prevalent among the male population, which may be explained, among other reasons, from the fact that they have enough free time : having in general sufficient money at their disposal, they let others do their work for them.<sup>6</sup>

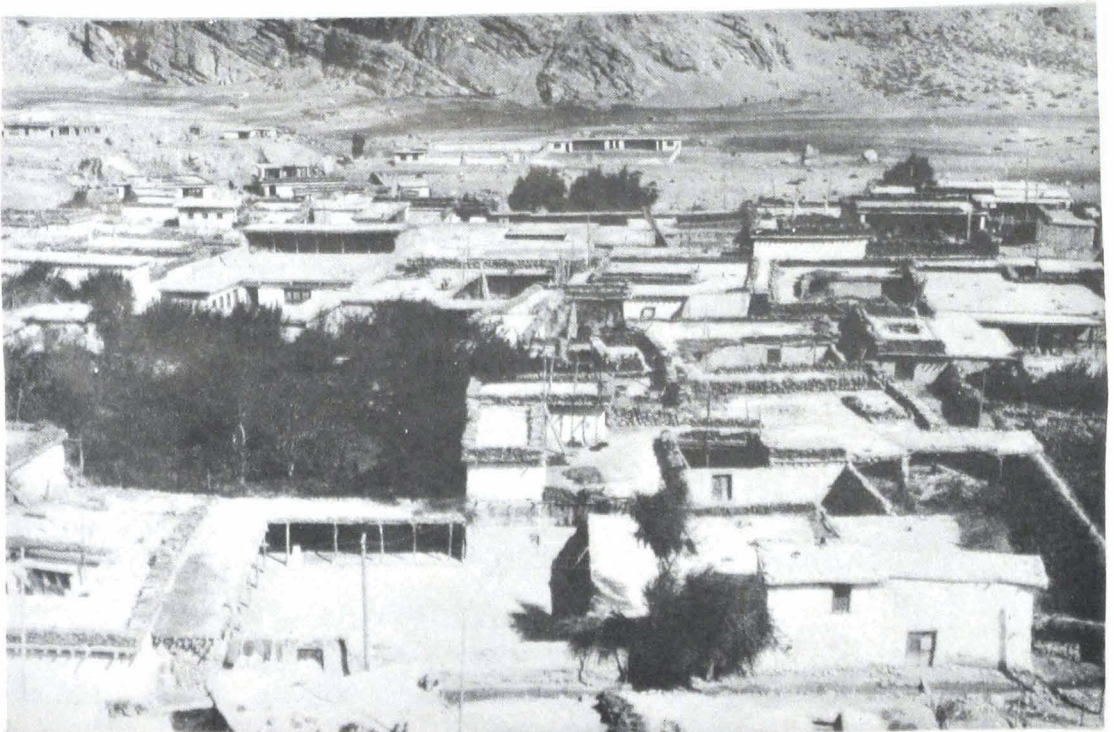
### 2.5.5. Further forms of organization

Apart from the above-mentioned ones there are further forms of cooperation in all three groups. Among these is the so-called *gusari*. Under the *gusari* system sheep, goats, yaks and mules from various households are brought together into herds and kept as common property. The participating households divide up profit from the sale of wool and milk and compensate for damage caused by the herds in accordance with the number of animals they have contributed to the *gusari*. A new-born animal is regarded as common property, and the death of an animal affects all members of the *gusari*. It is usually brothers and close relatives who form such an association.

Another form of cooperative arises from the possibility of having a herdsman tend the animals of various households, not as common property but as continuing to belong to their owners. Under this form of *gusari* common costs, such as the herdsman's wages, are apportioned according to one's share of livestock. Profits from the sale of milk or wool are entered in the records by household and not in common.



**Illustration No. 15**



**Illustration No. 16**





Illustration No 17



Illustration No 18

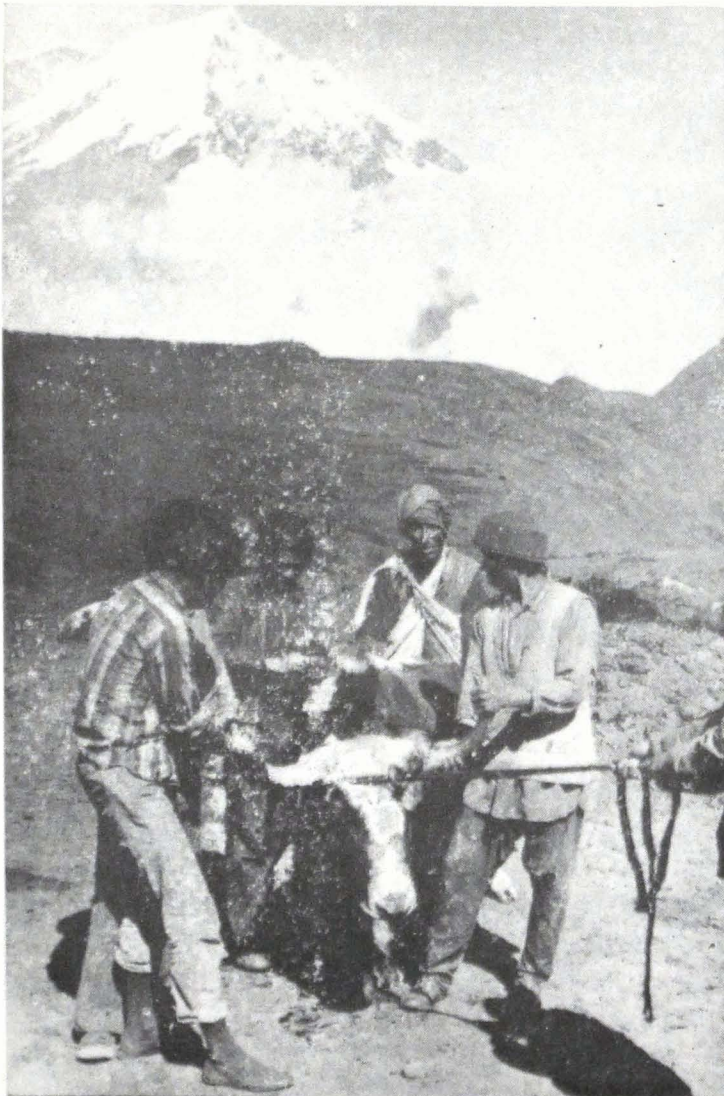


Illustration No. 19





**Illustration No. 20**



**Illustration No. 21**

A special form of labor organization exists among young Mawatan and Yhulkasummi women, and more seldom among Tamang Thakali women. It is similar to the gusari. Each year during the winter a considerable number of young women journey to the Middle Ranges south of Thak Khola, where they run small restaurants and hotels (bhattis) for, in some cases, as long as half a year. Some of these women are the only female migrators of their households to go south. They run these hotels usually with a close friend or relative. Profits and expences are shared evenly. They live from the money they make in common. Vinding (1979/80 : 38) reports concerning the women : "the women in these temporary, joint enterprises share all work and all expenses,...The women like the people taking part in "gusari" are usually relatives. For example, the husbands of two sisters had a herd of mules together as gusari, while one of the sisters operated a bhatti together with her sister's husband's sister."

A further organizational form are the temporary labor groups formed in most Thakali villages at harvest time. One or two members from various households (usually women) come together, working in common in the fields of the individual members of the group by turns until each field has been harvested.

Finally, I should like once more to emphasize the significance of the forms of political and economic organization described above, which make clear the differences of the three Thakali groups. Surely one of the reasons, for example, why the government set up a fruit and vegetable farm in Marpha was the model tightknit organization there, whereas in the region around Tukuche a certain amount of lethargy and disregard for the existing organizations set in following the emigration of the influential families after 1962. At present there is less known concerning the exact forms of cooperation in Thini, Syang and Chimang than among the Mawatans and Tamang Thakalis. Thus one looks forward to further information about these villages from Michael Vinding, who has spent a long time in the region.

#### 2.5.6 The dhikuri system

"A Dhikur is a type of nonkin rotating credit association formed among friends and acquaintances who have similar financial needs and interests." Though the Thakalis claim that the dhikuri system, or dhuku ti system, originated with them, according to Messerschmidt, this is doubtful. The system was probably introduced by Bhotyas or Tibetans. Its etymology, in any case, is to be sought in Tibetan ( Tib : bru-skor-ba, pronounced like dru-k' or-ba, from which the old Thakali term for dhikur, namely dhu khor, is derived ; "grain rotating turn by turn," Messerschmidt 1973 : 155 ).

Informants state that the first dhikuri systems centered on wheat and barley, and that

it was only later, after trade in kind had fallen off, that monetary dhikuris developed. These latter could be found in Thak Khola from the end of the 19th century. Nevertheless, the grain and stock dhikuris have continued to exist up to the present.

It was among the Tamang Thakalis, above all, that the dhikuris were built up into an important economic component of their social system. Manzardo describes the importance the dhikuri principle had in consolidating the trading network of migrated Tamang Thakalis in Nepal (1978 : 98) : "The settlement of the Thakalis in Pokhara and the movements from there to Kathmandu and Bhairawa in the Tarai in the early 1960's represents the final and most complex stage in the creation of the Thakalis' business empire in Nepal and presents an examples of how social lineages through dhikur are used both financially and organizationally to increase Thakali cooperation and profits. The migration to Pokhara and the presence of dhikur there has enabled many Thak Sat Sae Thakalis to recover from their losses after the close of the salt trade."

Basically, the dhikur represents a system of credit consisting of a number of shareholders who at a certain predetermined point in time bring together into a common fund a certain predetermined amount of money, grain or livestock, depending upon the form agreed upon in advance. The person who called the dhikuri into being is the one who first receives this fund, since he generally needs the reserves from the fund as investment capital. He need not pay any money into the fund, as he is the first person to receive it. No more than he do any of the following fund takers pay the predetermined sum.

The shareholders of a dhikuri draw up exactly formulated articles on how much money each person has to pay in and over what period of time the dhikuri is to continue in existence.

The idea behind the system is to provide its members with investment aid, as, for example, in starting a new business. For this reason the dhikur system is of particular importance for the migrated Thakalis.

In order for the system to be fair for the following and final shareholders who have a right to the dhikuri fund, with each new round a predetermined additional sum must be paid into the fund. I shall illustrate this by means of an example : It was agreed among eleven shareholders who meet once a year that each had to pay 100 rupees into the fund. 10 rupees was fixed in advance as the additional yearly incremental sum for the coming funds. At the first meeting, therefore, ten shareholders pay in 100 rupees each, producing a total of 1000 rupees, which is turned over to the shareholder (and founder of the dhikur) who did not pay 100 rupees into the fund this time round ( fund taker ). After one year the eleven shareholders meet again, and the first fund taker and nine other members each



pay 100 rupees and 10 rupees increment—i. e. 110 rupees — into the fund. This yields all together 1100 rupees, which is handed over to the second fund taker. In the third year ten shareholders each pay 110 rupees plus 10 rupees increment; the third fund taker receives the amount of 1200 rupees. After ten years, therefore, the last dhikuri shareholders—the eleventh fund taker—receives 2000 rupees, and with that the dhikur is terminated.

In the above example the fund was paid out yearly, but the shareholders could have chosen a different time span, e.g. twice a year, as is customary among the Thakalis. The final fund taker enjoys, on the whole, financial benefits : he receives more than he pays in, but the time he had to wait is correspondingly long, and this is his reward.

Normally the first fund takers are always the “money borrowers,” and the last fund takers the “money lenders.”

The normal case is for a dhikur to consist of 20 to 30 members ( Messerschmidt has also discovered dhikuris with 63 and 105 members ). The largest sum realized up to present was over 52,000 rupees, though a dhikuri with 100,000 rupees starting capital is in the planning stages ( to be operated by rich Tamang Thakali merchants ).

Both men and women may participate in the dhikuri. Women who are not well off financially often acquire a sponsor who lends them the necessary capital. “Social and economic responsibility are criteria which tended to limit membership to adults, but participation by young people is not ruled out; a father may sponsor his child, or an elder brother his younger sibling” ( Messerschmidt 1973 : 144 ).

An administrator and a secretary, generally persons enjoying the trust of all shareholders, are appointed during the formation of the dhikuri. They see that the meeting fixed in advance proceed in an orderly manner and that the sums are paid out to the dhikuri members. Most dhikuris—excepting small associations—lay down the condition that each person taking part in them must supply a guarantor to step in for him in case he is not able to pay himself.

The actual course of a dhikuri and the rotation of the shareholders is fixed in advance : either the fund is paid out according to the needs and economic status of the individual members, or lots are drawn or dice cast.

The Thakalis have elaborated different variations of the dhikuri system, as, for example, the so-called *shigu* or the “social fund,” which Messerschmidt ( 1973 : 150 f. ) and Vinding ( 1984 : 86–91 ) have described in detail.

According to what I have been told, the migrated Thakalis began initiating dhikuris with increasing frequency, even with members of other ethnic groups, something that had

occurred in Thak Khola only seldom. In Pokhara, the decision has since been made by the local Tamang Thakali organization not to start up officially any more dhikuris, since in recent years some of the shareholders have apparently often committed themselves beyond their means and become unable to pay. This is in part due to the practice some Thakalis have of participating in many dhikuris at one time.

## 2.6 The Structure of the Household among the Thakalis

### 2.6.1. *The household*

The household ( Thak. : *mohme* ) among Thakalis is the place where household members reside, work and eat, and where the fruits of labor and property of individual household members are gathered in order to satisfy their material needs. Members of households, moreover, represent the most important group of property owners in Thakali society. Land, animals, capital and labor are controlled by the household. In comparison, religious organizations, i.e. Buddhist monasteries and temples, kin groups such as the patrilineal descent groups, the *ni mah syah* and the village organization ( see the chapter on labor and village organization ) are in possession of a relatively small portion of the land and capital. Vinding terms the *mohme* "the most important social economic group of the Thakali society" ( 1980 : 21 ).

Property channeled into the household continues to be in the legal possession of the individuals who added it to the household. Any income from such property or possessions, however, is divided in common among the members of the household.<sup>7</sup> A household is governed by the head of the household, usually the father. What is important is the fact that decisions concerning the use contributed property is put to can only be made with the consent of other adult members of the household. One case is known of a Thakali man who sold for 8000 rupees the house inherited from his father, and in which he and his family lived, without informing his wife of the transaction. She was justifiably very angry, mainly because she would have asked much more for the house. She let the buyer know of her intention to bring the case before the village head in order to nullify her husband's decision for reasons of his having acted without her knowledge or consent. But were the buyer to pay an additional 1000 rupees he could have the house. This sum he decided to pay.

In general, Thakalis only conclude contracts when they know that their opposite has discussed the transaction with the adult members of his household.

### 2.6.2. *The order of residence*

Manzardo notes concerning the choice residence among Thakalis ( 1977 : 68 ) : "The Byanshi do retain some of the features noted in both Thakali and Sherpa society, namely

the nebulous freedom from joint family control as nuclear families are formed at marriage through neolocal marriage pattern .....” Vinding confronted him with his results, published in 1979/80, concerning the choice of residence made by newly married Thakali couples. Starting from the fact that Manzardo’s statements concerning the neolocal ordering of residency ( oriented towards Murdock [ 1949 : 16 ] ) are that newlyweds choose their place of residence independently of the parents of either of them, Vinding shows, with reference to 85 Thakali couples from Thak Khola, that after their marriage 94% of them set up house in the household the husband was a member of before the marriage took place. This percentage comes to 80 couples from all three groups of Thakalis.

#### Residence Pattern\*

	<i>Yhulkasummi</i>	<i>Tamang</i>	<i>Mawatan</i>	<i>Total</i>
The couple stayed, one month after their Wedding, in :				
<i>The Husband's Former Household</i>	26	40	14	80
— husband's father's household	14	30	11	55
— husband's own household	12	8	3	23
— husband's own household including husband's first wife	0	1	0	1
— husband's elder brother's household	0	1	0	1
<i>Own Separate Household in Husband's Village</i>	0	1	1	2
<i>Own Separate Household in Wife's Village</i>	1	0	0	1
<i>Their Natal Households</i>	2	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>85</b>

\* From Vinding 1979/80.

In 55 cases the couple settled down in the household of the father of the husband. In cases the wife moved into the household of the husband, which the latter had set up before his marriage independently of his father. These cases involve only seldom divorced persons or widowers. The husbands were either already old or had founded the new household in their younger years after the death of their father, and had only married afterwards. In one case the newly married couple settled down in the household of the husband's elder brother, and in another case the husband already had a first wife, so that the second wife he had just married was integrated into the already existing household.

Only three couples set up a completely new household, that is, one where the husband was not previously a member. As an example, Vinding cites the case of a couple

which settled down in the village where the wife had previously lived with her parents, but which started their own household instead of moving in with the wife's parents. This couple represents an exception, in that normally a couple does not reside in the village of the wife's parents but in that of the husband's. "This rule is obviously interconnected with the patrilineal inheritance system. It will be interesting in the future to see if a change in the inheritance system enabling daughters also to get a share of the land is associated with the change in the residence pattern and the household forms" (Vinding 1979/80 : 33).

Vinding discovered two cases among the Yhulkasummi in which even after their marriage the husband and wife each lived in the household of his or her own parents and only later lived together. This setup is based on the custom of the Yhulkasummi to have their daughters do work in their own house after marriage. This custom has since been officially banned. In 1974 the Yhulkasummi reached an agreement that anyone violating this ban would be fined 50 rupees.

### 2.6.3 Types of household

In what follows I wish to set forth the results of an investigation by Vinding concerning the various types of household among the three groups of Thakalis. These results he collected between 1972 and 1978. I was able to convince myself of the accuracy of his findings during my later visits to Thak Khola. Until then no other ethnologist had dealt with this topic so exhaustively as he had.

He counted in the whole of Thak Khola a total of 640 Thakali households of all three groups, and included every fifth household within his study. As the table shows, Vinding subdivides the households into four different main categories: "single", "nuclear", "joint" and "special cases," with "nuclear" and "joint" households undergoing further subdivisions.

#### Distribution of Household Types\*

	<i>Yhulkasummi</i>	<i>Tamang</i>	<i>Mawatan</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Single Households</i>	7 (15.2%)	5 (9.8%)	8(33.3%)	20(16.5%)
<i>Nuclear Household</i>	28 (60.9%)	34 (66.7%)	12(50.0%)	74(61.2%)
Nuclear	18	28	8	54
Broken nuclear	10	6	4	20
<i>Joint Household</i>	6 (13.0%)	9 (17.6%)	4(16.7%)	19(15.7%)
Lineal joint	2	5	2	9
Broken lineal joint	4	3	2	9
Collateral joint	0	1	0	1
<i>Special Cases</i>	5 (10.9%)	3 (5.9%)	0	8(6.6%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>46 (100.0%)</b>	<b>51 (100.0%)</b>	<b>24(100.0%)</b>	<b>121(100.0%)</b>

\*from Vinding 1979/80.

The most frequently occurring type is that of the nuclear family, represented by 74 households, 20 of which are so-called deviating forms of the norm: 6 households consist of married couples without children, 5 households of married couples whose children have already left the household ( Vinding does not say whether they have started a new household of their own or are away at school or work and therefore do not belong to the household ), 5 households of widowers with unmarried children, 2 households of widows with unmarried children, 1 household of a divorced man with children and, finally, 1 household of a divorced woman with children.

Of the households consisting of single persons ( "single" ), 7 are represented by widows, 1 by a widower, 6 by unmarried men, 2 by unmarried women and 4 by divorced women. As the Mawatans informed me, Vinding's figure of 8 single households in Marpha leads to a percentage giving a false impression of the general frequency of single households in Marpha. According to their statements these 8 single households are the only ones in the whole of Marpha.

Furthermore, 19 households of the examples investigated are so-called joint families. Vinding does not distinguish here between extended and joint families. Under his term "joint" fall additionally such family configurations which other anthropologists take as being "extended" ( Viveló 1981-247-253 ).

Of the 19 households, 9 households consist of one married couple and their married son and his wife ( lineal joint ), 1 household of a married couple, their children and a younger brother who is still unmarried ( collateral joint ), and 9 families of a widower or a widow with a married son and his wife ( broken lineal joint ).

Comprising the 8 special cases are unusual household configurations, as, for example, that of an unmarried woman with her illegitimate child, the household of a divorced man, with his widowed mother and his unmarried brother ( a monk ), the household of three brothers, one of whom is divorced and two unmarried, together with their unmarried sister, the household of a widower with his three grandchildren, the household of a widower with his unmarried brother ( a monk ) and his unmarried son etc.

Statistically, apart from small deviations ( see table ), the frequency and distribution of the various types of household among the three Thakali groups are in agreement with one another.

#### 2.6.4 *The cycle of development*

According to Vinding ( 1979/80:34 ) the cycle of development of a Thakali household, connected with the preference for certain types of household, reflects the fact that Thakali

groups have traditionally favored nuclear families: "The Thakali themselves say that they prefer to have nuclear family households rather than joint family households, since the latter are bound to lead to conflicts."

It is against this background, in my opinion, that one should view the custom among the Thakalis whereby a son who has just married normally lives with his wife in the house of his parents as part of a joint household only for a short period of time. Most couples leave the joint household within the next five years and start a new household. A few couples remain for a longer period with the parents, but the latest they move away and set up a new household is when the husband is the youngest or only son. In that case, after his marriage he generally lives with his wife in the house of his parents until his father retires from his official duties (one could say : is pensioned off) or dies (see the chapter on hereditary succession). Then the youngest son takes over the household.

The assertion of Thakalis that they would prefer the nuclear family to the joint family is comprehensible against the background of conflicts well known from Hindu society to exist between members living in joint families, both in lineal collateral joint and collateral joint families. In lineal joint families, this conflict usually centers on the relationship of mother-in-law to daughter-in-law, as my informants attested. "She (daughter-in-law) must work harder than any member of the household including her husband's younger sisters. She must not eat too much because that does not "look good". She cannot serve her old friends a cup of tea without her mother-in-law's permission". (Vinding 1979/80 : 34). Thakalis are also of the opinion, however, that such joint households function where man and wife are first-order cousins (cross cousins). As one woman informant attested, in such cases the daughter-in-law has already known her parents-in-law and her husband's sisters for many years.

In lineal collateral joint families, conflicts frequently arise between the wives of the married brothers. ".....the wives often feel that they, their husbands and their children are not treated properly and that they do not benefit as much from the joint enterprise as do the other brothers and their wives and children". (Vinding 1979/80: 34). Thakalis seem to be aware of these problems; during my interviews I was constantly apprised of the dangers inherent in joint families.

The reason why lineal joint families are formed is that someone has to look after the parents as they grow old, and once working in the field has become too difficult for them. The Thakalis have the following ways of dealing with this problem : One possibility is that the parents divide their property among their sons, live separately—usually in a room in the house of the youngest son, which is generally the house in which they had formerly maintained their own household—and have their needs seen to by all their sons. This arrangement



**Illustration No. 22**



**Illustration No 23**



Illustration No. 24

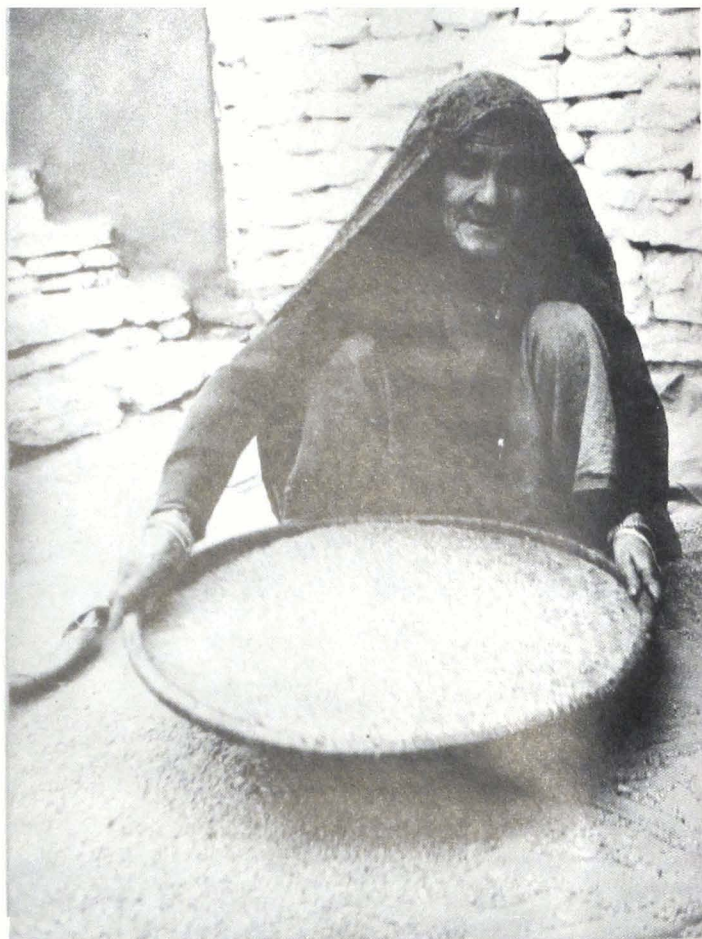


Illustration No. 25



is the one preferred by the Yhulkasummis. As a second possibility, found predominantly among the Tamang Thakalis, the parents normally retain a portion of their possessions and live together in the same household as their youngest son and his wife.

Vinding discovered that in 15 cases of the 18 households designated by him as lineal joint families, the son living with his wife at the house of his parents was either the youngest or only son (1979/80: 35).

In Thak Khola there are only two cases of lineal collateral joint families, that is a family consisting of the parents and two or more married sons and their wives in one household. Interestingly enough, some of the subbha families for a long time formed such a lineal collateral joint family. The father was a widower and lived together with several sons, their wives and children. He was formerly one of the biggest of the big businessmen involved in the grain and salt trade in Thak Khola, and during his career had built up a large trading network in Nepal; among other things, he held a monopoly on cigarettes and owned a timber business and rice mill. He was, in fact, among the richest men of Nepal. Both father and sons were also politically active, at first in Thak Khola and later at the national level. There were various reasons why the sons did not leave their parents' household to form their own following the marriage of the youngest brother. "The father and his sons were influenced by Hindu values and had no intention of following the Thakali tradition, if there was no good reason to do so. On the other hand, there were several reasons to stay together. Investments had been made in many distant places and the father had problems in finding trustworthy managers other than his sons. Furthermore the family was involved in a conflict with the father's elder brother and his sons, especially concerning the economic and political leadership in Thak Khola and the surrounding area" (Vinding 1979/80: 35).

Principally economic and political considerations, therefore, led to the formation of such a type of household. But mutual conflicts were already preordained; it was only the authority of the father which held the joint household together, but after his death the group fell apart, and the sons began to quarrel over money. By now five independent households have been formed, and it is only the rice mill which is still operated in common and whose profits are shared among one another.

In a similar case of lineal collateral joint household among the Mawatans—here, too, it is an influential, well-to-do family—no conflict among the brothers and their wives has occurred up to now, since the wives are sisters. This was a very important fact in the eyes of informants, and they view it as the main reason why the household has continued in existence.

Among the Mawatans, however, there is a rule prescribing that men who reach the age of 61 are to retire from public life. If a Mawatan has more than one grown son over 18 years of age, the latter have to form their own household once he retires, which is the same as saying that from that time on they have to provide labor services to the community ( see the chapter on labour organization ). Formerly they were counted among the members of the father's household, and only one laborer was furnished to the community. The youngest son is the only one who need not provide services to the village. In the case of the previously described family from Marpha, therefore, the lineal collateral joint family will have to split up once the father turns 61.

All this means, in other words, that local village manners and customs partially determine the form household types take : This is one reason, among others, why there are so few lineal collateral joint families in Marpha. Michael Vinding draws from his investigations the conclusion that the preference Thakalis have for the nuclear family shows that social considerations are more important in their eyes than economic ones. It will be interesting, against this background, to study in greater detail the households of the migrated Thakalis.

## 2.7 Clan organization

### 2.7.1 General remarks

In spite of contacts—especially among the Tamang Thakalis—with the social and religious ideas of Hindu, caste-oriented society, the Thakalis in Thak Khola have up to the present largely been able to preserve their close-knit, self-contained endogamous groups. The Tamang Thakalis and Mawatans have even managed to maintain their own economic base within the context of Hindu society in spite of internal change, something which is in fact unusual in Nepal among ethnic groups that have been exposed to such social and cultural upheavals. In general, ethnic minorities are more likely to be absorbed into the Hindu caste system.

Such a homogeneity of the groups leads one to posit a compact social structure among the Thakalis : "Unlike many of the groups in Nepal, the Thakalis seem to thrive on social change. Instead of causing a loss of identity or social breakdown, the Thakali reaction to change is unified and involves cooperation between members of the entire group to permit orderly changes in social behavior" ( Manzardo 1978 : 62 ). Manzardo, who has concerned himself with the Tamang Thakalis, notes further that the cohesion may be explained by, among other things, the fact that the group has remained relatively small and

bounded, and above all, by the worship of the four ancestors and four gods representative of the four clans of Tamang Thakalis.

Fuerer-Haimendorf has the following to say on the cohesion of the Tamang Thakalis : "The fundamental equality of the Thakalis in both parts of the Thaksatsae ( i. e. Thak Satsae and Kāng cchi Marpo ) derives from the fact that members of the same clans are found in all thirteen villages, and an insistence on basis status distinction with reference to locality would strike at the root of clan solidarity" ( 1981 : 2 ). Both Fuerer-Haimendorf and Manzardo remark how intertwined the division of the Tamang Thakalis into four exogamous patrilineal clans is with their mythology and preserved history. Manzardo notes ( 1978 : 65 ) : "it will also become apparent that entry into this group brings with it a great many benefits which have led other closely related Thak Khola groups ( such as the Marphalis and Panchgaonlis ( i. e. Yhulkasummis ) to attempt to make claims based on certain historical evidence, for their being included within this group. So far none of these claims has been recognized by the Thakalis ( i. e. Tamang Thakali ), and these groups remain excluded."

Of the other Thakalis, as can be gathered from what Michael Vinding wrote in 1981, and as I myself can confirm, it is particularly the Mawatans, but also the Yhulkasummi Thakalis, who manifest a very noticeable group cohesion, based on a close-knit clan system clearly set-off from the outside world.

### 2.7.2 Tamang Thakalis

Fuerer-Haimendorf characterizes the internal structure of Tamang Thakali society as being of a simple and very symmetrical mold not often found in societies with such a high material standard of development.

As already mentioned, there are four exogamous patrilineal clans among the Tamang Thakalis, and they are called : *cyogi* ( Nep. : *gaucan/gauchan* ), *salgi* ( Nep. : *tulacan/tulachan* ), *dhimchan* ( Nep. : *shercan/sherchan* ) and *bhurgi* ( Nep. : *bhattacan/bhat'achan* ). According to Vinding ( 1981 : 208 ) the ending *gi* is a shortened form of *ghyu*, which is related to the Tibetan word *brgyud*, meaning lineage ( line ).

The Nepali names were introduced at the beginning of the century by the subbhas, as I was told, in order to conceal from Hindu society, in particular the Ranas in Kathmandu, the fact that their names were of Tibetan origin. Since Bhotyas ( groups Tibetan in origin ) were looked down upon in the society of the time, the subbhas did away with any hint of their true past. Even their language, Thakali, was not allowed to be spoken outside

Thak Khola, or inside it, for that matter, in the presence of members of the Hindu castes. This has contributed to the current dying out of the language. The younger generation has only a limited mastery of Thakali.<sup>8</sup>

The clans can now no longer be precisely localized, but one has come to assume that the cyogi has its origins in Nakhung or Naphrungkhung, the salgi in Dhojo or Bhujungkot, both of which are today deserted villages, the dhimcan in the Kobang of old, and the bhurgi in the Khanit of old, then called Narsang. Each of the four clans consists of a number of subclans or lineage groups identifiable by name (Vinding 1981 : 209), which are in turn subdivided into two or more lineages. Among Tamang Thakalis, according to Vinding, the lineage groups bear the name *phobe/phowai* or *ghyuwa*. Their names are derived, for example, from ancestors, status (e. g. king = *pompar*) or a place (*lhakhang dungi* = near a temple).

Fuerer-Haimendorf also subdivides the four clans into several lineages, and these in turn into subgroups, for which, however, he is no more able than Michael Vinding to find a term. Fuerer-Haimendorf mentions, with reservations, the terms *powe* for clan and *gyuba* for lineage (1981 : 11). The term for clan in Manzardo is *gyu*, and he calls the subdivisions of the clans patrilineages or, in Thakali, *phobhe*.

These three anthropologists as well as C. Jest made a record during their stay among the Tamang Thakalis of all names of the various lineages they were able to obtain (Fuerer-Haimendorf 1981 : 7, 8; Vinding 1981 : 209; Manzardo and Jest 1978 : 66).

Each of the four clans originally had a subclan called *dhyatan phobe*. Since the *dhyatan phobhe* of the *dhimchan* clan has since died out, only three *dhyatan phobhes* still exist today. According to Vinding (1981 : 209) and statements by my informants these *phobhes* were formed by the youngest brothers of the original clans. The members of the four *dhyatan phobhes* are not allowed to intermarry. Thus Tamang Thakali society is not only divided by the four patrilineal clans into four exogamous groups, but patrilineal descent is also the basis for a further exogamous group.

This is all the more interesting in light of the fact that Fuerer-Haimendorf (1981 : 3) sees the regulation of marriage as being the main function of Tamang Thakali clans. One ought at this point to go into incest tabus, but that would be to go beyond the scope of this study. "Clan-membership determines a person's marriage to the extent of excluding about one quarter of all Thakalis [he has apparently failed to consider the *dhyatan phobhes*] from the ranks of potential marriage partners, and I have never heard of a case where this restriction was flouted. Even illicit sexual relations between clan-members were as inconceiv-

able to my Thakali informants as brother-sister-incest, and I had no means to ascertain whether they ever occurred in secret."

Thanks to Vinding's intensive studies one is now aware of cases among Tamang Thakalis of splitting off and reforming within the lineages (1981 : 209 ). Thus the tancang phobhe originally acquired five sublineages from the cyogi clan : lara phobhe, saicyang phobe, bhuicyang phobhe, sanke dhorche phobhe and ghera phobhe. The ghera phobhe split off from the other four subgroups (sublineages) and formed an independent lineage, the ghera phobhe, while the others continued to function under the name tancang or lara phobhe.

One is also able to tell from the lineage name who the religious specialists of the clans are. Thus the bompo lama of the so-called white Bon sect (Tib. : *bon dkar*), which, in Thak Satsae, can only be found in Naphrungkhung, comes from the lam phobhe of the cyogic clan. Specialists calling themselves *dhom*, and representing a pre-Budhistic religious orientation, come from the dhom phobhe and the balamtem phobhe of the cyogi clan and the two dhom phobes of the dhimcan clan. In addition, there are the religious mediators between the village inhabitants and their tutelary gods who also come from specific phobes; for example, the mediator between the inhabitants of Taglung and their god mhan cham pra comes from the mhatasi phobhe of the cyogi clan, and the mediator between the Thakalis of Thasang and their tutelary god nari jhowa comes from the dhom phobhe of the dhimchan clan ( Vinding 1981 : 210 ).

The organization of the various lineages differs only slightly one from the next, and has been described in detail by Fuerer-Haimendorf ( 1981 : 9 ) and Vinding (1981 : 210). Accordingly, each lineage has one leader or head, called *gampa*, who administers the group's money and documents and arranges for general meetings. Should conflicts arise within the lineage or with someone on the outside, it is his job to act as mediator between the opposing parties. The group head is nominated by the members of the lineage in question; this personage is at the same time often the eldest man of the lineage, and is generally notable for his special charisma together with a good name, intelligence and an authoritative personality. The members of the lineage appear to assume that his sons also share these properties, as after the death of the head his son is usually elected to the vacant post, which may therefore almost be termed hereditary. If the members of the lineage happen to be unsatisfied with his performance, they can remove him from his post before his death or "retirement."

Supporting the *gampa* is an assistant, called *gundal* in Thakali, who sees to it that the lineage meetings go without hitch. Such meetings generally take place in his house.

This post is relinquished at the end of a year in rotation to another member of the lineage living permanently in Thak Khola.

The most important meeting or festival of the lineage, the so-called *jho chawa*, takes place in September/October. For three days the members meet and exchange news, and eat and drink with one another ( Vinding 1981 : 210 ). A new gundal is elected, and the gampa delivers a report giving an account of money taken into and expended from the common fund. ( The fund is lent out, usually at interest, to needy members of the lineage. The surplus accruing from this interest is used to cover the cost of meetings. ) Further, old documents by important ancestors, who upon occasion wrote down how the members of the group were to behave towards one another—not to fight, not to commit fraud, to help out one another etc.—, are brought out and read aloud from. On the third and last day of this festival the lineage generally extends invitations to the woman who have left the lineage to marry into another group and to their husbands. This enlarged group ( *ni mah syah* or *nemyang syah* ) may maintain a fund of its own in order to be able to cover costs for this special get-together.

Thus the persons included in a lineage are 1. the patrilineally related men, who constitute the core of the phobhe, and to whom the word phobhe applies in the strictest sense; 2. the unmarried woman ( Thak : *chelli* ) who are patrilineally related to the men of the phobhe, and 3. the *dayusya*, or *dasyu*, that is, the women married to the men of the phobhe. This group is not a patrilineally descent group in the narrow sense of the term, precisely because it includes the woman who have married into it. The members of the patrilineal descent group, namely the phobhe and the chelli, have no general meetings or functions of their own, so that, according to Vinding, they do not represent true social groups but rather merely exogamous units. Members of the lineage also meet in cases of death or marriage ( for more details see the chapters "Death" and "Marriage" ).

What distinguishes the Tamang Thakalis from the other two Thakali groups are the four ancestors and founders of the four clans, taken from Tamang Thakali legend, and the four clan deities, also a part of the Thakali mythology. Thus each clan has a specific ancestor and a specific deity. Vinding and Gauchan have translated and provided a commentary on the Tamang Thakali legend which contains the names of the ancestors and deities ( Gauchan/Vinding 1977 : 97-184 ),

Besides the previously mentioned religious specialists, each of the four clans has a further specialist ( called in Thakali *pare* ) who acts exclusively as the mediator between his clan and its corresponding deity. These four paires come from very specific lineages. The *pare*

of the cyogi clan comes from the pare phobhe of the cyogi clan, the salgi pare comes from the pare phobhe of the salgi clan, the dhimcan pare is from the lhakhang dungi phobhe of the dhimchan clan, and the bhurgi pare comes from the pare ghyuwa (phobhe) of the bhurgi clan.

Every twelve years, in the year of the monkey (Thak. : *pre lho*), the biggest festival of the Tamang Thakalis takes place, celebrated in honor of the four deities (Thak. : *lha phewa*, meaning the epiphany of the gods). For this occasion the masks of the gods are taken from their temples. The four gods are also worshipped during the so-called *shoi shoi-lawa* festival, which is celebrated every nine years. During both of these festivals the four pares recite the four clan legends (Thak. : *rhab*), which describe the passage of the four ancestors and four gods from the west to Thak Khola.

Whereas no difference in status is normally made among the clans, during these festivals the pare of the cyogi clan (*gauchan*) is given precedence, followed by the pare of the salgi clan, that of the dhimcan clan and, finally, the pare of the bhurgi clan. This is only meant, however, to exemplify the kin relationships among the gods.

Each clan is headed by a *gampa*. All four *gampas* plan in common the *lha phewa* festival and maintain respective control of the funds which serve to finance the festival. As is the case with lineage heads, here too the post is open in principle to every member of the clan, though in fact the father usually passes it on to his son. Here again the head may be relieved of his office for malfeasance.

### 2.7.3. Mawatans

As opposed to the Tamang Thakalis, the Mawatans do not pay reverence to any particular ancestors and gods corresponding to their clans. Four exogamous patrilineal clans are, however, found here, and play an important role in the political organization of Marpha.

The clan names are : *rhoten phobhe* (Nep. : *lalcan/lalchan*), meaning ruby; *puta phobhe* (Nep. : *hiracan/hirachan*), meaning diamond; *gumli thowa phobhe* (Nep. : *juharcan/juharchan*), meaning jewel; and *gumli cyungpa phobhe* (Nep. : *pannacac/pannachan*), meaning emerald.

Since the *gumli thowa phobhe* (*thowa* = big) and the *gumli cyangpa phobhe* (*cyungpa* = small) are the separate parts of a formerly common clan, their members cannot intermarry.

For two or three decades now the Mawatans, like their neighbors the Tamang Thakalis, have been assuming Nepali names instead of their original ones, providing the

occasion for those Tamang Thakalis with sharp tongues to claim that the Mawatans are imitating them in order to pull alongside in status.

The village organization in Marpha is oriented towards the clans. Thus the Mawatans are subdivided into four groups, with each clan originally constituting one of these groups ( a group is termed *cho* : see the chapter on labour organization ). But since the gumli cyangpa phobhe is very small, the lineage ducen nhurbu of the puta phobhe was assimilated into its cho. Vinding takes explicit note of the fact that the ducen nhurbu lineage is a part of the gumli cyangpa phobhe—cho—only in a political context. Members of the ducen nhurbu lineage can therefore marry members of the gumli cyangpa phobhe. I have already, in the previous chapter, gone into the duties of each cho and of the village organization.

The four clans are made up of a total of 18 subclans/lineages, as Vinding calls them, representing the most important patrilineal descent group among the Mawatans. Only a few of these lineages are known by name.

The form and function of the lineages is on the whole similar to what is found among the Tamang Thakalis. The Mawatans, too, have a head ( Thak. : *thyumi* ), an assistant ( Thak. : *dhimpa* ) and a common fund.

Here, too, religious specialists are recruited from specific lineages. Thus, for example the dhom from Marpha originally comes from the lam phobhe. As is the case among the Tamang Thakalis, lineage membership is closely associated among the Mawatans with certain festivals. At the end of May or the beginning of June, upon the occasion of the *phobhe pa thungpa* ( Thak. : *pathungpa* = drink beer ), the lineages met up until recently in old Marpha, Dzong, a village located on a plateau above the present-day one and said to be the actual place of origin of the Mawatans. The members remained together for ten days, exchanged news, ate and drank, and performed a small play ( Thak. : *lha newa* ) in which one man appeared as a god and two other men as goddesses. These festivals have since, however, been done away with. One of the reasons I heard for this was that the costs for the long festivities were very high, and that work was neglected.

Another festival, namely the *mane pa thungpa* ( Thak. : *mane* = reliquary stone wall ), has taken on that much more importance. The "mani walls", as they are called in common parlance, run in long rows along the paths which lead into the village. The festival takes place in the middle of July, with the members of the lineage groups meeting for three days in the house of the current assistant, scene of a joint celebration. Formerly small cere-

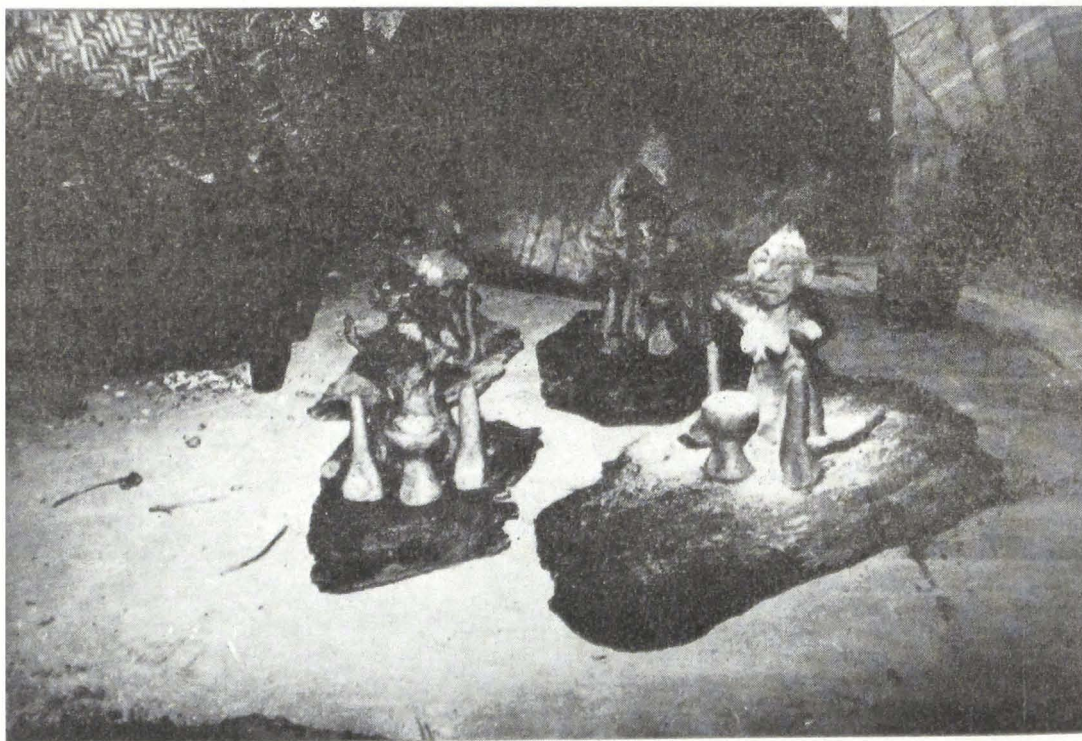




**Illustration No. 26**



**Illustration No. 27**



**Illustration No. 28**

monies were conducted in honor of the ancestors who were heads of the lineage, and who had built such a wall, or mane. Since 1977, however, by common consent of the inhabitants, the mani walls are worshipped in common during one ceremony.

As is the case among the Tamang Thakalis, on the third and last day of this festival the women who have married into another clan are invited to come with their husbands from their respective villages. This group may also have a fund of its own to finance such a get-together.

As all three Thakali groups are known for their bouts of eating and drinking, always a part of any festivity and a very big drain on money, one gets some idea of how enormous the expences for the phobhe pa thungpa must have been for them to go so far as to abolish this festival.

Some lineages have a place of their own for religious getherings ( Thak. : *lhakhang*) or a so-called "book house" ( Thak. : *chekhang* ) where Buddhist writings are stored. These groups meet separately on special occasions, during which the writings are read from. Finally, the lineage members also naturally come together at someone's death or marriage.

I am not aware of any subdivision of the lineage into further subgroups, such as occurs among the Tamang Thakalis. This is probably due to the restricted size of the entire group. It will be interesting to draw upon as a comparison the forthcoming studies Barbara Parker carried out in 1982.

#### 2.7.4 The Yhulkasummis :

The clan structure of the Yhulkasummis and that of their lineages/subclans is no longer as clear as in the case of the Tamang Thakalis and Mawatans. Vinding, after many years of study—he himself lived in Syang—, came up with an ordering of clans, whose relation one to another he posited in the following table. (Table 1 : from Vinding 1981:214)

gyalgi phobe	....gyalgi samtü phobe	....chuku phobe
		....gyabcan phobe
		....pal phobe
	.....	.....dancan phobe
kya phobe	....karsang phobe	....pai sonte phobe
		....cham dhorche phobe
		....gam kemi phobe
		....gam sone phobe
	.....	.....lhaki sonam phobe



jhisin phobe	.....jhisin phobe ( Thin )
... Jhisin phobe ( Syang )	....kyodo syang phobe
	....kisim pal phobe
che phobe	.....che phobe ( Chairo )
	.....che phobe ( Syang )
sakar phobe	.....blite sonam phobe
	.....yisi cheta phobe
	srane phobe
bom phobe	.....nameless phobe
	.....kewa pai angyal phobe
	.....gampa phobe
	san phobe
syangtan phobe	.....lhaki ghyuwa
	.....nhiti ghyuwa
	.....palten ghyuwa
pasin phobe	.....pasin thowu phobe
	.....pasin cyangpa phobe
	.....mhacya parpa phobe

The partilineal descent groups among the Thin, Syangtan, and Cimtan Thakalis. Actual social groups are in italics.

[ Tab. 1 : from Vinding 1981 : 214. ]

The Thin, Syangtan and Chimtan Thakalis have a whole series of exogamous patrilineal clans and lineages: *gyalgi phobhe*, *kya phobhe*, *jhisin phobhe*, *che phobhe*, *sakar phobhe*, *srane phobhe*, *bom phobhe*, *san phobhe*, *syangtan phobhe*, and *pasin*, or *pacai phobhe*. Of these, *che phobhe* and *srane phobhe* are lineages, whereas all others are clans ( Vinding does not say what the reason for this is ). *Sakar phobhe*, *srane phobhe*, *bom phobhe*, *san phobhe*, *syangtan phobhe* and *pasin phobhe* are found only in one village, each forming a social group. *Gyalgi phobhe*, *kya phobhe*, *jhisin phobhe* and *che phobhe* are found in more than one village, and constitute exogamous units.

Each of the clans and lineages mentioned above, apart from the *san phobhe*, and the *srane phobhe*, consists of a number of subgroups—lineage subgroups—each with a name of its own ( see table 1 ). *Gyalgi phobhe* is composed of the lineage *gyalgi samtu phobhe* from Thini and the lineage *dancan phobhe* from Chimang. *Gyalgi samtu phobhe* consists

in turn of three subgroups : chuku phobhe, gyabcan phobhe and pal phobhe. Kya phobhe is said to have originally been composed of the sarti phobhe, the bharti phobhe and the namti phobhe. But the sarti phobhe has since died out, and the namti phobhe has only one member, who was "adopted" by the bharti phobhe. Bharti phobhe consists of the lineages lhaki sonam phobhe in Chimang and karsang phobhe from Thini. The latter ( karsang ) is itself composed of four subgroups : pai sonte phobhe, cham dhorche phobhe, gam kemi phobhe and gam some phobhe. Jhisin phobhe consists of two lineages, both bearing the name of the clan, though represented in different villages : one lineage called jhisin phobhe from Thini and another called jhisin phobhe from Syang; the latter has two subgroups : kyodo syang phobhe and kisim pal phobhe. Even though there are only two families left in it, the che phobhe still exists, with each family constituting a separate lineage or clan. This means, therefore, that there is one che phobhe lineage in Syang and one che phobhe lineage in Chhairo. Sakar phobhe comes from syang and consists of the subclans blite sonam phobhe and yisi cheta phobhe. Srane phobhe, located in Jomosom, is labelled a lineage by Vinding and is not further subdivided. The bom phobhe comes from Thini and has three subclan groups : one without a name, one called kewa pai angyal phobhe and another called gamba phobhe. San phobhe from Syang, according to Vinding, is a clan group, and is not further subdivided. The syangtan phobhe is located in Syang and consists of the lineages lhaki ghyuwa, nhiti ghyuwa and palten ghyuwa. From Syang, too, is the pasin phobhe, subdivided into the lineages pasin thowa phobhe, pasin changpa phobhe and mhacya parpa phobhe.

Vinding comes to the conclusion that there are two types of patrilineal descent groups among the Yhulkasummis. He calls the gyalgi samtü phobhe, karsang phobe, sakar phobhe, bom phobhe, syangtan phobhe and pasim phobhe so-called "high level groups, because at a lower level they have segments which are actual social groups" ( Vinding 1981 : 215 ). The others, those groups on the righthand side of the table, he calls correspondingly "low level groups," since they do not split up further into social groups. "18 of these low level groups are segments of high level groups, while 9 are not" ( Vinding 1981 : 215 ).

He is of the opinion that the high-level groups of the Yhulkasummis are comparable with the clans of the Tamang Thakalis and Mawatans, whereas the low-level groups correspond to their lineages/subclans.

As in the case of the Tamang Thakalis and Mawatans, the lineage names are coined after ancestors (e. g. blite sonam), positions (gyalgi = king) or specific place (syangtan).

Certain clans and groups may not intermarry. Previously, for example, the gyalgi phobhe could not marry into three lineages which since have died out : the bompo phobhe,

rachan phobhe and the nhaken phobhe. Hardly any information is still available concerning these three lineages; the only thing known is that the religious specialist from Thini, the Bompo Lama, was formerly recruited from the bompo phobhe. Moreover, it is forbidden for the members of the kya phobhe, jhisin phobhe, che phobhe, sakar phobhe and srang phobhe to intermarry. The same applies to members of the syangtan and pasin phobhes, though a few years ago this prohibition was infringed by these two clans. After some conflict, however, the marriage was accepted by society. Whereas syangtan phobhe, san phobhe and pasin phobhe originally come from the vicinity of Syang, the other clans have their origins in the village of Thini.

As was true of Marpha, in the present case, too, the clan groups play an important function in the political organization of the villages ( for more details see the chapter on labor organization ).

The low-level groups of the Yhulkasummis, as was the case among the Tamang Thakalis and Mawatans, have a leader ( *gya, thyumi* ), an assistant ( *dhimpa* ) and a fund for financing common gatherings. In addition, there is a so-called *syangpa*, who brews beer for the festivals. San phobhe, yisi cheta phobhe and mhacya parpa phobhe in Syang and dancan phobhe and lhaki sonam phobhe in Chimang have their own houses in Thich their meetings are held. The other lineages meet in the house of the current assistant.

The most important general festival for the low-level groups is *jho cawa*, which is held along with the ceremonies for the mani walls and the worship of ancestors. As is customary in the two other Thakali groups, during this festival, which lasts several days, the women who have married out of the lineage groups are invited to come with their husbands on the last day of the *jho cawa* ( *ni mah syah* ). Again; as in the case among the Mawatans and Tamang Thakalis, they may maintain their own fund to cover the costs. Among the low-level groups there are also gatherings when one of the group's members marries or dies.

The high-level groups have their own organizations, own funds and own meetings. They normally come together once a year or, more seldom, for *jho cawa*. Though the groups normally meet in private houses, the bom phobhe and syangtan phobhe have special meeting houses. Here, again, on the last day of the *jho cawa* the women who have married into other groups are invited to come with their husbands.

When one of their members dies or marries, the members of the corresponding high-level group are not obligated to come together. Still, it is usually customary for the heads

of other lineage groups belonging to the same clan group to be invited to marriage ceremonies and burials of a member from one's own group.

Some of the high-level groups possess, as in Marpha, their own religious meeting houses or "book houses" ( Tib. : *che khang* ), where Buddhist writings are collected and, at special meetings, recited.

Finally, I should like once again to emphasize how important patrilineal descent is for the social structure of all three Thakali groups. It binds the group members to one another by, for example, various duties or festivals, and this leads to a particularly strong feeling of solidarity.

Patrilineal descent is also important for women, but their situation differs from that of their brothers in that, once they marry, their clan membership shifts from that of their husband. Strong bonds, however, still exist with former clansmen, as is apparent, for example, from the invitation for the final day of the jho cawa. Should a woman divorce her husband or become a widow, she can return to her father's clan. The father's clan also plays a large role during marriage and burial ceremonies. If a woman has a conflict with her husband, she receives the full support of her paternal clan relatives.

With the passage of time the lineage group associations are losing more and more of their significance, a fact which, particularly in the case of the Tamang Thakalis and Mawantans, can be traced to their migration to various parts of Nepal in the past decades. (Lineage festivals, for example, are no longer attended by all members, since the trip to Thak Khola is too arduous ) Surprisingly, their lineages have not further split up into new subgroups to correspond to the new villages and towns they have migrated to. A Thakali, no matter whether he lives in Thak Khola or somewhere else, is still a member of his group.

## 2. 8 Hereditary Succession

In all three groups the major portion of what belongs to the household comes from the husband's side of the family (often the house itself, fields, household and field tools, kitchenware). From this it may be assumed that the husband's property has been handed down from father to son for generations.

A Thakali may transfer his possessions to his sons even before his death. This he can do at their marriage or at the time of his "retirement." Vinding (1979/80 : 25) writes in this regard : "Thakali men retire politically at the age of 61 ( jharche-th ). This means that they no longer represent their households in formal political organizations and no longer carry out political duties in the community. Property may also be divided before a



man becomes 61 years old, if he so desires." Vinding was not sure whether a Thakali is compelled to distribute his possessions among his sons upon reaching the age of 61 or not.

According to statements of my informants this is the case only in Marpha. But in Marpha all sons except the one who remains in his father's house in order to look after the parents in their old age are obligated, assuming they are at least 18 years old, to start a new household. This in turn implies the obligation to furnish labor services to the community.

Among the Yhulkasummis in Chimang, too, there is an ordinance ("jural rule") prescribing the retirement from public life at 61 (Tib. : *thar chyang*), but this is not at the same time associated with the distribution of inheritance or property among the sons. Nor need the latter, as they do in Marpha, officially separate from the father's household in order to set up one of their own.

Among the Tamang Thakalis there is, as I have been told, no custom of retiring at the age of 61. The first step in distributing property is laying aside a portion for each son who marries or starts his own household. Some families, for this purpose, give the sons a small portion of the inheritance, with the remainder due to them being turned over after the death of their father. This portion is called by the Thakalis *mana thi chuwa* or, especially among the Yhulkasummis, *pho cho bo cho*. Each son generally receives as *mana thi chuwa* one to two fields, occupational and kitchen utensils, money and perhaps a house and animals.

Next a portion of the property is laid aside for the daughters who marry—the *daijo*. Traditionally the *daijo* includes grain, money, kitchenware and, in very rare cases, a field. Due to the influence of Hindu society, particularly among the migrated Thakalis, the share going for this dowry has much increased in recent years.

For the remainder of the property, finally, there are two possibilities when it comes to dividing it : 1. It may be split up into as many even parts as there are sons, with an extra portion for the parents. This latter includes the house. After the property has been divided up once and for all, the parents live in a joint household together with their youngest son, who is now the head of the household. The parent's share is fixed in writing, and is later used to cover expenses for their burial ceremony. Normally not very much of this is left over for the sons to divide up among themselves. The youngest son usually receives somewhat more for having lived with the parents until their death.

2. The patrimony may also be divided up in another way. The Yhulkasummis make predominant use of this. The property is split up into as many parts as there are sons; the parents do not receive an extra share, retaining instead only the most necessary items, such

as clothes and jewels. The patrimony is divided evenly among the sons, but the youngest one, who generally lives with the parents the longest, receives a somewhat larger share. After this property is divided the parents live in a separate part of the house of their youngest son. The sons are now together obligated to furnish their parents with food, firewood and other necessary items. They also defray in common the expenses for their funeral services.

A widow does not have control over the property her husband has left behind, but she does have use of it; she can, that is, either live in her own household in the house of her youngest son and have her needs seen to by her sons, or she can receive a portion of the property and remain in the joint household together with her youngest son, or she can live by herself, with her needs being provided by her children.

She may also return to her parental household. In such cases her status corresponds to that of a divorced woman. Vinding ( 1979/80:26 ) : "The Thakalis say that in both situations the woman returns to the soil of the syang ( syang sa re yewa or syang sa yan yewa th ); a woman's syang refers to the male members of her family of procreation, especially her brothers".

In both situations, as a widow who returns to her parental household or that of her brothers, or as a divorcee, the woman transfers her membership in the patrilineal descent group of her former husband to that of her father. A widow has the right to take all the possessions she brought with her into the marriage back to the household of her father or brothers. ( Such wording is, to be sure, very vague. Suppose that the wife's daijo consisted of money that has since been spent; she can no longer, of course, take it back with her; that is, the transfer is no longer reversible. ) The advantage of such a recourse is that a woman can remarry and need no longer work in the house she has left.

In doing so, however, she forfeits her right to bring up her children from the former marriage. For this reason it is normally only young or childless women who return to the household of their father.

According to Thakali custom daughters have no right to the property of their fathers. "Here the Thakali tradition agrees with Nepalese law. In recent years, especially in connection with the International Women's Year 1975, there have been inner changes, concerning women's right to inherit. These changes, however, have had little effect. A married woman has still no right to ancestral property if she has any brothers" ( Vinding 1979/80:27 ). The property of a Thakali man who has died without leaving behind any sons is traditionally passed on to the closest members of his lineage ( *siki* ). Among these are reckoned,

for example, his brothers and their sons. Part of the patrimony in such a case, however, is expected to be given to the daughters of the deceased if they have taken care of him during his life ( especially when the sons of the deceased's brothers have done nothing for him ).

Thakalis have particularly divergent opinions concerning the inheritance rights of daughters. Many surrender a portion of their property to their daughters or pay out a sizable daijo to them. Some fathers even go behind the backs of their sons and siki to give their daughters a just share. Fathers may put this down in writing, but this does not guarantee that after their death the deceased's siki will not raise a claim to this portion of the inheritance. In such case and, in general, whenever conflicts arise over inheritance the village council is usually called in as mediator. Of course, a decision according to Nepalese law can be sought, but Thakalis prefer local channels.

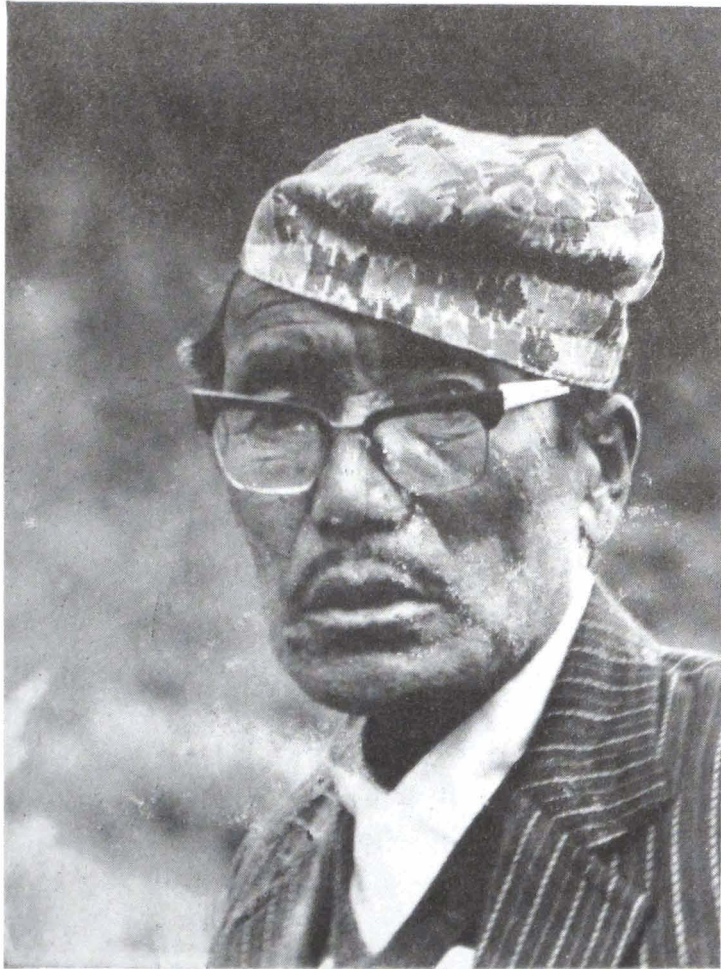
### 2.9 Marriage

"Marriage continues to be the major basis for organizing interfamilia alliances of a more permanent nature, and is conceived largely in terms of a political or business alliance between families" ( Manzardo 1978 : 74 ). In all three Thakali groups I heard many reports of past capture marriages, alongside of which exists the form in which the parents arrange the marriage—the arranged marriage—, still the form commonly observed. The capture marriage is only very seldom met with due to the influence of Hindu society. I only heard one report, out of Kalopani ( Tamang Thakali ), of a capture marriage which has taken place recently. The parents were usually quite well informed of their children's intention to stage a capture marriage. Since, with capture marriages, the complex and costly ceremonies of a "normal" marriage were done away with, this method of marrying was generally agreeable to the parents.

In theory, all three Thakali groups are endogamous, but, particularly among the Tamang Thakalis, so-called intercaste marriages have already taken place in the past. In the days before the salt trade came to a standstill, Thakali traders, who did, after all, get around a lot, often took a second wife alongside their Thakali wives. Usually the second wife belonged to a different ethnic group and lived in a different geographical region. The trader did not have the same duties and restrictions to attend to vis-a-vis the relatives of his second wife as those of his first. By means of this second marriage, moreover, he enjoyed the advantage of having created new trading relation with another ethnic community. The wives thus functioned as local business partners. The children of such an intercaste marriage were and are regarded as Thakalis; they generally extend their father's trade relations and thus, apart from the expansion of business, also contribute to the build-up of a trading network throughout Nepal.



Illustration No. 29



**Illustration No. 30**





Illustration No. 31



Illustration No. 32





Illustration No. 33



Illustration No. 34



When trade with Tibet had to be discontinued, many Tamang Thakalis settled in places outside Thak Kholā and set up new businesses there. "For those Thakalis, who settled in bazaars, polygyny became less frequent, for a single home relationships between several wives are difficult, especially if those wives belong to separate ethnic groups. There was no profit in setting up two wives in separate houses in the same bazaar, as they would compete with one another" (Manzardo 1978 : 75). Polygyny decreased among these Thakalis, but it continued to exist among those who, in their function as traders, visited many villages. The ethnologist W. Fisher attested to the truth of this for me with particular regard to the Thakalis from the region of Myagdi.

Moreover, Nepalese law has since begun supporting monogamous marriages except in cases when the marriage has continued ten years without issue. Several cases are known to me among the Thakalis in which, because no child has been born, two wives live together in the household, either two Thakali wives or one Thakali wife together with a woman belonging to another ethnic group (in one case even with an American woman; but such cases are rare). I am not aware of there being of polyandry among the three Thakali groups.

According to Manzardo (1978 : 75) an intercaste marriage may be of such a nature that a Thakali takes a wife from a completely different ethnic group. This is not allowed in theory, but exceptions have already been registered in the past among well-to-do Thakali traders. Things have since changed, moreover, inasmuch as older members of Thakali society, while generally not condoning intercaste marriage, at least do not try to prevent it if such is the express wish of their son—or daughter—, especially when the prospective husband comes from a wealthy family. Characteristically, it is members of the subbha families who first married their daughters to members of other ethnic groups, such of them as were, again, well-to-do.

Intercaste marriage of men and women is not so widespread yet among the Mawatans as it is among the Tamang Thakalis (and in the case of the latter they occur, in general, more among those who have migrated). As for the Yhulkasummis, this form of marriage appears only sporadically.

Interestingly enough, among the Tamang Thakalis there are cases in which influential men or famous lamas from other ethnic groups have been accorded the status of a Tamang Thakali by virtue of having been received into the group. They were able to marry Tamang Thakali women, and the children of such a union were regarded as Thakalis. Men accepted into the group in this manner were generally esteemed, quite well off and able to exercise considerable influence in the surrounding region.

The clans of the three Thakali groups are generally exogamous (for more details see the chapter "Clan Organization"). Preference is given to matrilineal cross-cousin marriage. "The preference for the matrilineal cross cousin may be seen as recognition that such marriages provide a means for a continuing alliance between two lineages" (Manzardo 1978 : 76); he continues : "But Thakalis also recognize that lineages may be linked by patrilineal cross cousin marriage and brother-sister exchange marriages. In any case, all of the possibilities described here occur among the three Thakali groups."

The "exchange" marriage is particularly favored among the subbha families of the Tamang Thakalis. They belong to the langa dhungi lineage of the Sherchan clan and marry, preferentially, members of the dhyatan lineage of the Tulachan clan. This marriage exchange is said to have first occurred during the flowering of the salt trade between Tibet and India. A genuine aristocracy arose among the Tamang Thakalis from this preferred marriage bond. Money and goods flowed between the two lineages, and the Tulachan/dhyatan thereby acquired a share of the subbha's wealth.

Several years ago the Council of Thirteen Headmen of the Tamang Thakalis considered replacing the four-clan system by a lineage system built up along the lines of the high castes of Nepal. Under it lineage members would have been able to intermarry, so that, for example, a member of a Gauchan lineage could have married a member of another Gauchan lineage.

This reorientation would have had two advantages : The first would have been greater prestige within Hindu caste society; the second, the enlarging of the group of possible marriage partners (the Sherchans are the largest group, followed by the Gauchans, Tulachans and Bhattachans). But this idea was strongly resisted on the grounds of being too incestuous. "The suggestion was felt to dangerously with the incest rule so the idea was strongly opposed and is seldom spoken of today" (Manzardo 1978 : 91).

Vinding, during his stay in Thak Khola, found several significant differences among the three Thakali groups as to their preference for specific forms of marriage. Of 50 Tamang Thakali marriage in Thak Khola, 13 (26%) were cross cousins of the first generation (7 FZS-MBD marriage, 6 MBS-FZD marriages), 21 (42%) marriages were between Thakalis who were not related at all and 16 marriages were between relatively close relation; 2 marriages (4%) were intercaste marriages between Thakali men and, respectively, a woman from Baragaon and a Magar woman (Vinding 1979/80b:329).

Of 21 Mawatan marriages, only one (5%) was between first degree cross cousins (FZS-MBD marriage), 7 marriages (33%) were between unrelated Mawatans, and 13 marri-

ages (62%) were between relatively closely related Mawatans; 1 marriage occurred between a Mawatan man and a Tamang Thakali woman.

Of 40 Yhulkasummi Thakali marriages, 6 of them (15%) occurred between first-degree cross cousins (4 FZS-MBD marriages, 2 MBS-FZD marriages), 7 marriages (18%) between unrelated couples, and 27 marriages between relatively closely related ones (68%); 2 marriages were intercast marriages with a woman from Lo and a Tamang Thakali woman respectively.

Finally, the frequency of marriages between couples of the same village amounted to only 26% among the Tamang Thakalis, but 85% among the Yhulkasummis and 90% among the Mawatans.

As opposed to Manzardo, Vinding is of the opinion that the Thakalis show no preference for the one or the other form of cross-cousin marriage. But there is a saying according to which the daughter of the mother's brother is the primary cross cousin. One informant said that mothers generally prefer to see their sons married to the daughters of their brothers, whereas fathers to see them married to the daughters of their sisters. It is interesting to hear the various opinions of Thakalis in appraising the cross-cousin marriage. Some approve of this kind of marriage, since the spouses have known one another well since childhood, and this is true of the parents. And the relationship of the daughter-in-law to the mother-in-law and to the younger sisters of her husband is also good. Others voice the opinion that extreme enmity could result between two such closely related families if differences arose in the marriage. One argument I heard was that such a union could prove fateful as regards the transmission of genetic material, but the informant conceded that this was incomprehensible to the old Thakalis. I myself know of one case where bodily defects have cropped up among Tamang Thakalis over a period of several generations.

## 2.10 Death

When a Thakali man dies both the members of his family and lineage and those of his in-laws' family assemble, and the case is the same with women, though in reversed order. It is above all else important that the sons-in-law of the deceased be present. "The traditional death ceremony as a whole serves to crystalize relationship between Thakalis. Although basically a ceremony involving the family and ultimately the lineage, it requires the presence of one's affines when the knowledge of coming death is certain, regardless of the location of their respective homes" (Manzardo 1978:71). From my own experience I know, for example, that the relatives of a Tamang Thakali woman who lay dying in Thak

Khola travelled from widespread parts of Nepal to the bedside of their dying grandmother, mother, mother-in-law and aunt.

The three Thakali groups have slightly varying burial and death rites. In the case of the Tamang Thakalis, for example, the relatives assemble, as described above, and erect a surrogate of the deceased person made of wood or bamboo (Thak. : *mendo*). It is usually covered with the latter's clothes. If the deceased is a man, a cap (*topi*) is placed on the surrogate's head, and, if a women, a chain (Nep. : *mala*) is put on the mendo. A shaman, called *dhom* by the Thakalis, is summoned, and during the succeeding ceremony he sings and beats his drum in accompaniment. On the evening following the death, or the next morning in cases where the death occurred at night, the body of the deceased is cremated on a pyre built alongside the river and ignited by the eldest son. A ceremony takes place during this. On following days, too, various rites take place, during which each kin rank from among those relatives taking part has its specific function. On the third day, for example, *saksum* takes place, during the course of which the sons-in-law go down to the river, retrieve one of the deceased's bones and place it next to the surrogate described above. A banquet is held on this day for all close relatives. On the sixth day following the death a ceremony again takes place, and again the relatives are given a meal. The most important ceremony takes place on the thirteenth day : the *mang raji*, or *mhang rahwa*. (According to Vinding a *mhang* is a supernatural being responsible for having killed the deceased.) Manzardo (1978 : 86) followed the course of this ceremony among Tamang Thakalis from Pokhara. There it took place on the thirteenth day after death. Vinding for his part describes this ceremony among the inhabitants of Syang, where it was conducted on the third day after death (1982 : 333).

According to Waddell (1885) the making of likenesses or surrogates of a dead person is a Tibetan custom originating in the *bonpo* rites (see the chapter "Religion"). Thus one may assume that a relation exists between the shamanistic ideas of the Thakalis and those of Bon belief in Tibet.

Manzardo writes concerning this ceremony : "...the rebirth status of the dead will be discovered" (1978 : 72). On the 45th day following the death a ceremony for close relatives again takes place. If the deceased was a woman, all of her female friends meet on this occasion; if the deceased was a man, all of his male friends assemble. Finally, at the end of a year last ceremony with lineage members and friends takes place, and with that the year of mourning is officially over.

In the case of the Tamang Thakalis there are special lineage burial grounds, called *kimi*, where the mortal remains—the ashes of the cremated body or a bone—are stored. Each Tamang Thakali lineage has its own *kimi*, which, like the others, is located on the heights above Kobang, where the first Tamang Thakali village is said to have originally stood. Bista describes the grave as follows : “The *kimi* shrine is built of stone and mud, usually about three feet square and four feet high, with a little hollow inside. In the hollow must be placed a piece of bone of each family member on his death” (In : Manzardo 1978 : 89).

According to statements by my informants a number of *kimis* are also located in the vicinity of Taglung, another indication of the significance and autonomy of the Tamang Thakalis from Kāng chhi Mārpo. The *kimis* in question are those of the *ghera phobhe*, *mhatasi phobhe* and *chyupa ghyuwa* (= *phobhe*).

The *kimis* are newly whitewashed in a special ceremony each year at the time of the lineage gathering of *jho chawa*. Some Tamang Thakalis have so-called *mane*, or *mani* walls, built as a remembrance for themselves. Their descendants every year perform a small ceremony, called *mane ramden*, in honor of the founders of these reliquary walls. Each person who passes the wall during the ceremony is offered *chang* (beer).

These ceremonies again have the purpose of bringing together all relatives and to reinforce the bonds of the various lineages. In this way, too, the Tamang Thakalis who have remained in Thak Khola can keep in contact with the migrated Thakalis, who go up to Thak Khola for this ceremony.

The Mawatans do not have suah burial grounds. They cremate their dead on common burning grounds, called *cha*, near the Kali Gandaki. Formerly each patrilineal descent group had its own burning grounds in the vicinity of old Marpha, Djhong. But transporting the dead up the steep path to Djhong proved to be too laborious, and the community decided in favor of a cremation site.

As described previously, the Mawatans also worship, in a big ceremony in the village temple, those descendants who had *mani* walls built. In former times a ritual was performed for each wall, but this practice was suspended in 1977 by the community to cut back on costs.

The Yhulkasummis, finally, have both burning grounds for the individual kin groups and *kimis*, in which the bones of the deceased members of the group are deposited. These *kimis*, however, do not look like those of the Tamang Thakalis, being, rather, more like *chortens* (votive reliquary shrines).

In the vicinity of Thini are found the burning grounds of the gyalgi phobhe, bompo phobhe, jisin phobhe, bom phobhe and kya phobhe, in Chimang those of the dancan phobhe and kya phobhe, and in Syang those of the syangtan phobhe, san phobhe, pasin phobhe, che phobhe, blite sonam phobhe, yisi cheta phobhe, khyodo syang phobhe and kisim pal phobhe.

The Thakalis in Thak Khola believe predominantly that the soul of the deceased goes to heaven. Conceptions of life in heaven differ, but everyone is convinced that they will meet deceased relatives there after their death. For some the way to heaven has been blocked. This is supposed to happen to those who carry around unfulfilled wishes, or to those whose relatives have performed the death rites incorrectly. If the latter occurs the souls of these dead return to the village and inhabit some other person (Thak. : *mhang maiwa*). In such cases a ritual specialist (*dhom, aya lama*; see the chapter on religion) must be consulted to perform the necessary ceremonies on the possessed person in order for the soul to attain a state of rest.

If the deceased has died by his own hand or at the hand of another, or while giving birth, if, that is, he has died a violent death, then his soul will linger about as a *sinti*, and there is no possibility for these souls to go to heaven. They chiefly haunt the area around the burning grounds. Thakalis are horribly afraid of these *sintis*.

Some Thakalis assume that alongside heaven there is also a hell, where it is either frightfully hot or cold. Dead persons who have led a "good" life go to heaven, and those whose life has been bad to hell. Still others assume that persons whose conduct in life has been bad are reborn as animals after death, but such ideas are the exception.

On the whole, Thakalis in Thak Khola tend not to believe in rebirth after death. The Buddhism of the Thakalis differs in many respects so much from orthodox Buddhism that one might even be inclined to suppose that the Thakalis are not Buddhists. But Vinding for one believes that this is a matter of definition (1982 : 315) : "If we choose a strict definition which includes the belief in the endless cycle of rebirths, then the Thakalis generally speaking cannot be said to be Buddhist. A better approach, however, is to use a broader definition and define a Buddhist as one who regards himself/herself as a follower of the Buddha; one may then proceed to describe and analyse the various forms of Buddhism. If we choose this broader definition then most Thakalis of Thak Khola are Buddhists". (For details see the chapter "Religion.")

### 3. RELIGION

Thak Khola is located in the zone where Tibetan cultural influences from the north come into contact with Hindu cultural influences from the south. Thus a mixture of native cultural elements with elements brought in and assimilated from the outside can be witnessed. This syncretism is above all reflected in religion, which is here a combination of animistic, pre-Buddhistic elements joined with Buddhist and Hindu ones. Adherents of Catholicism are now found among the migrated Thakalis, and some young Thakalis in Kathmandu even call themselves atheists.

Thakalis in Thak Khola generally refer to themselves as Buddhists, though the Tamang Thakalis, above all those from Thak Satsae, have become more and more exposed in the last forty years to the process of Hinduization and Sanskritization ( see the chapter on Trade ).

The groups of Mawatan, Thin, Syangtan and Chimtan Thakalis who are engaged in farming and stockbreeding fall within the sway of the Lamaist Nyin ma-pa sect, which is related to the Tibetan tradition of "White Bon" ( Kvaerne 1972 : 22 f. ), as opposed to the pre-Buddhistic "Black Bon" tradition.

The oldest tradition is that of the so-called *dhom*, a kind of medicine man and tribal priest in one, furnished with shamanist attributes and having ties with the pre-Buddhistic Black Bon tradition of Tibet ( Stein 1972, Tucci 1980 ). In Marpha and among the Tamang Thakalis these specialists are called *dhom*, Whereas among the Yhulkasummis their name is *aya lama*. There still exists a practising *dhom* among the Tamang Thakalis, whereas in Marpha there are no more now. Six *aya lamas* are found among the Yhulkasummis.

Thakalis are furthermore acquainted with the So-called *jhakri*, medicine men or faith healers who, in Thak Khola, belong to the tailor caste of Hindus. The *jhakris* have either emigrated from the Middle Ranges or the south of Nepal to Thak Khola, or else they go up to Thak Khola from time to time to offer their services as healers ( on the Subject of *jhakri* cf. Hitchcock and Jones, eds. 1976 ).

Both —*dhom* and *jhakri*—attempt by the use of shamanist practices, involving all sorts of rites and ceremonies, to cure the local inhabitants who have been possessed by evil powers and supernatural beings. However, the *dhom* differs from the *jhakri* in that 1. his status is bound up with specific patrilineal descent groups ( see the chapter "Clan organization" ); 2. he does not, as opposed to the *jhakri*, fall into a trance; and 3. he performs the obsequies, something the *jhakri* does not do ( Jest 1966, 1969, 1976; Vinding 1982 : 291).



Since, along with his shamanist traits ( shamanism as defined according to Shirokogoroff 1925 ), the dhom assumes the character of a tribal priest, his activities invite comparison with those of the Hindu Brahmans and Buddhistic lamas. "The priest-shaman dichotomy is only a theoretical one-for the purpose of definition in practice the fine distinctions are lost by the countless variations and local forms of religious traditions" (Greve 1984:2).

Greve made the attempt to classify and define the terms "shaman" and "priest" within Tibeto-Burman traditions, taking the Thakali dhom as his model.

Tibetan Buddhism, or Lamaism, began to make itself felt in Thak Khola, according to David Snellgrove (1961, 1969, 1979), the 11th or 12th century, and from then on became ever more influential. Temples and monasteries were built, the Tibetan script was introduced, and the second son of each family could expect to become a monk. Dor Bahadur Bista says in this connection (1971 : 54) : "They [the Thakalis] practised at the time of their rise to fame a primitive tribal religion involving shamanism and animal sacrifice and remained ecologically outside the boundaries of Mustang. Nevertheless in order to civilize themselves the Thakalis turned towards the north [i. e. towards the inhabitants of Mustang, who are related culturally, linguistically and ethnically with the Tibetans, and whose royal family maintains close ties with the aristocracy in Lhasa]...The Thaklis built Tibetan-style Buddhist Gompa temples in every convenient place and established a few monasteries with learned Lamas and disciples. They even laid it down that the second son of every family should live in celibacy and study to be a disciple in the Tibetan style. They also established a nunnery for the women and made similar rules."

But in spite of all efforts by the Tamang Thakalis to adapt themselves to their neighbors, a strategy which appears to have been an economic necessity, the Mustangis did not regard them very highly. According to Bista, the Tamang Thakalis are said to have mixed the shamanist ceremonies and rites with their native tribal religion : "There four clans assembled to worship all the gods jointly. Large feasts lasting several days were given on such occasions and at other times as, for instance, on the initiation of boys every five years" (1971 : 54). The influence of each of the clan and village heads grew constantly during this time, as did the power of the priests, since the more successful the trading business of the Tamang Thakalis was, that much more money they had to spend on festivals and ceremonies. Furthermore, a rivalry arose among the various religious specialists. All of these developments were based on the economic success of the rich traders, who, with their money, were able to make themselves felt within their preferred religious persuasion. Several sons of these rich traders—often subbhas—became important abbots of large monasteries in Mustang and Tibet, and this brought the Tamang Thakalis great prestige.



**Illustration No. 35**



**Illustration No. 36**



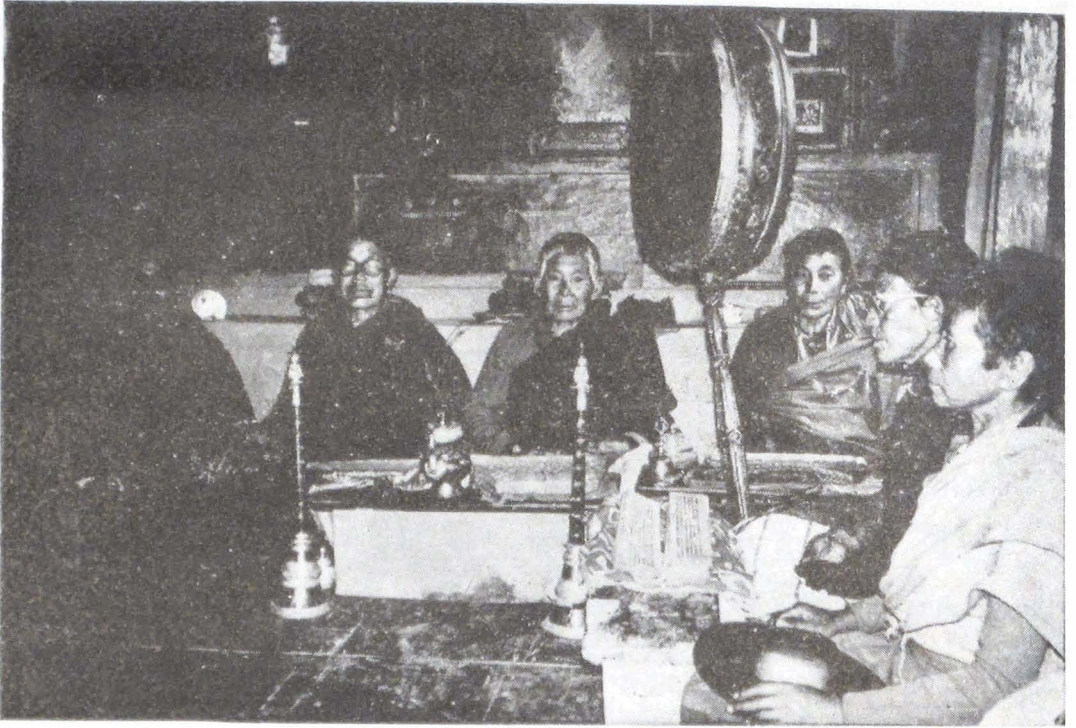


Illustration No. 37



Illustration No. 38





Illustration No. 39



Illustration No. 40



Illustration No. 41



At the end of the 18th century Thak Khola, like the rest of Nepal, came under the rule of the Shah dynasty. These orthodox Hindu kings looked down upon the Thakalis as Bhotyas who partook of the meat of yaks, and therefore of cattle. As has already been described, the Thakalis, especially the Tamang Thakalis, thereupon made changes in their image by, for example, officially renouncing the consumption of beef and taking on Hindu rites and customs. This is still visible today, especially among the migrated Thakalis. These changes originated with the subbha families.

Today the situation continues to be one in which there is greater conformity to Hindu customs, views and ceremonies among Thakalis living in Kathmandu and on the Indian-Nepal border than, for example, those in Pokhara, where both the Tamang Thakalis and the migrated Mawatans and Yhulkasummis tend to be Buddhist oriented.


Taken as a whole, however, Buddhism has lost ground among the Thakalis. Two temples, for example, have closed down in Thak Satsae, and three in Thini. Even today, however, I would still tend to call the Mawatans and Yhulkasummis Buddhists, whereas the Tamang Thakalis have taken on Hindu traditions (for example, they often have a Brahman come to Thak Khola, and often, too, they celebrate their weddings according to Hindu rite).

It is difficult to describe the religious views of the Thakalis in a general way: their religion contains so many elements of the most varied traditions. Moreover, the Thakalis are a very complex and heterogeneous ethnic group.

I mentioned above, for example, that the Thakalis, contrary to Buddhist doctrine, do not believe in the rebirth of souls. All along the line, in fact, the Buddhism practised by them has taken on a character of its own: "The kind of Tibetan Buddhism found in Thak Khola could be called the Little Tradition (or Folk Tradition) of Tibetan Buddhism in contrast of the great tradition of Tibetan Buddhism found in the religious centers of the Tibetan culture area" (Vinding 1982:312). There is no large monastery in Thak Khola; the single monastery community is located in Syang and was established only recently. Few monks live in Thak, but, in recompense, a relatively large number of nuns and married village lamas (dhom or aya lama) do. This large selection of religious and ritual specialists among the Thakalis leads to unmitigated rivalry—who goes to whom!

In general, it may be said that elders usually first consult the tribal priest—dhom, aya lama and jhakri —, the middle generation frequently goes to Buddhist lamas, and Younger persons, always open to the new and strange, prefer Western medicine when ill.

“The real essence of disease in the eyes of the Thakalis is an obstruction in the harmony between the world of men and that of the gods and spirits....Certain diseases are regarded by the Thakalis as being necessary and belonging to the natural order of things if accepted as a trial or punishment. Thus the powers of heaven or the middle world, Lha and Chan, intervene, shooting the “arrow of disease” (namkhi nasa = “sky disease” Tib., akas ban = “arrow of heaven” Nep.) at the person in question. On the other hand, evil power, too, try to disturb the harmonious equilibrium between good and evil forces...Mortal witches, black magicians, spirit witches and evil spirits attack the man and try to harm him” ( Greve 1982:4 ). The task of the traditional healer, then, is to restore a balanced relationship between “good and evil” and so to create harmony anew.





## **4. HISTORY**

### **4.1 The History as Documented up to the 18th Century**

There are, unfortunately, only very few written documents making reference to the past of the three Thakali groups. In 1978 Jackson published the translation of documents, composed in Tibetan script, which he discovered, however, not in Thak Khola, but in other districts of Nepal and Tibet. He learned from them that a people, whose land was called Se-rib, must have formerly existed in the upper Thak Khola region, the first indications of whom go back to the 7th century A.D. With the aid of other documents which Vinding and Thakali discovered in Thini, Jackson formed a picture of the time, in which Thini must still have been an influential town with the foretress Ga-rab Dzong, today only recognizable from its ruins.

Backing this up are numerous local legends of the Thakalis in which there are constant references to the mighty fortress, from which at one time the whole of Panchagaon, to name one region, was ruled over (Phanchagaon = Yhulngba). The Yhulkasummis claim today that their ancestors, who lived in this region, were the original Thakali-speaking group. In one version of the Tamang Thakali myths there figures a princess, the daughter of the king of Thini, who marries Hansa Raja, the putative common ancestor of all Tamang Thakalis. One part of this legend is recounted in the "modern version" of the Dhimchan Rhab, the clan history of the Tamang Thakalis (see the chapter "Myths and Legends").

Legends dealing with other past rulers and further accounts centered on Thini and vicinity are also worth mentioning. They were published in 1978 by Vinding. Up until then they had remained alive only through oral tradition. Until the documents in Thini were discovered there was no reference, not even in the Tamang Thakali account, to the rulers of the fort. Only the above-mentioned new version as found in the Dhimchan/Sherchan clan history makes reference to Thini. The oral legends were authenticated by what Vinding and Thakali discovered.

Neither of the two texts clan, according to Jackson, be older than the 17th century: "...since they mention the Dar, ldan-pho-brang government of Tibet, which was established in 642" (1978:209). An even older text on the history of Thini is reported to exist, but it has not been discovered up to now.

Both of the texts discovered by Vinding are concerned principally with the founder of the ruling lineage of the fortress Ga-rab-Dzong, the king Gyal-dong-mig-jen. From the texts one learns who was tributary to the kingdom of Thini: among others, Baragaon and Panchgaon.

Jackson therefore posits that Thini may once have been the political center of Se-rib, but this cannot be definitely proved: "Nevertheless, the existence of the kingdom of Se-rib and its one time rule from Ga-rab Dzong may account for the special high status accorded to the residents of Thini in the social order of upper Thak Khola. There persists among the people of Baragaon, for example, the opinion that the people of Thini are the equals of their highest social group" (1978 : 210).

There are indications that, from the 13th or 14th century, Se-rib and Thak Khola increasingly let their political power slip away from them. Other ruling houses put pressure on them from various sides: Jumla from the west and Gung-thang from the north-east. In succeeding years the two constantly traded power in Se-rib and Thak Khola back and forth. In 1370, for example, the Malla kings (from Jumla) lost their edge of supremacy, and Gung-thang ruled the following years over Se-rib. Under them Lo (Mustang) was conquered in the final decades of the 14th century. Later the kings of Lo, who had made themselves independent, took over the rulership of Se-rib. Although the former position of Se-rib as a leading power was severely reduced, Thak Khola continued to remain economically and strategically important. The Kali Gandaki valley was already one of the main trade routes between Tibet and western Nepal. "For centuries the lower limit of Tibetan culture in Thak Khola has been near Kobang, south of Tukuche. There is a temple in that area aptly named in Tibetan "Temple of the Bottom" (smad kyi lha Khang) which Tibetan Buddhists still consider the boundary of their own religion and culture" (Jackson 1978 : 217). The temple may, according to Jackson, have marked the place where caravans and merchants did most of their trading during the 15th and 16th centuries.

In the 16th century the kingdom of Lo lost its influence in Thak Khola and came itself under the rule of Ladakh, while Thak Khola again fell into the hands of Jumla. In the final decades of that century Jumla succeeded in bringing Lo, too, within its sphere of influence. It was only in the early 18th century that, by means of diverse marriages, Lo and Ladakh could renew their ties; Jumla still controlled only Thak Khola and the upper Gandaki. Supplicatory prayers on copper plates from Jumla for the sacred town of Mukti-nath have been preserved from this period (1720). Later, after Jumla was conquered by the Gorkhas under Prithvi Narayan Shah, Lo became once again autonomous. The Shah dynasty

made Kathmandu its capital, and Jumla lost its former political power. "...the shifting of the centre of political power to Kathmandu created at first a situation in which the people of Thak Khola enjoyed almost complete autonomy" (Fuerer-Haimendorf 1975 : 139).

Concerning the rise of the Tamang Thakalis, which may be dated to the following period (Fuerer-Haimendorf 1974 : 140), and their domination of the most important trading relations in Thak Khola, one has recourse only to conjecture : "We have no way of ascertaining in what manner the Thakalis succeeded in joining their dominant position throughout Thak Khola, and whether they displaced an earlier population. The gap between the mythical account of the origin of the Thakalis' clan ancestors and historical data in the narrow sense is bridged only inadequately by the testimony of religious monuments and some references in Tibetan records unfortunately largely undated."

#### 4.2 Myths and Legends

The history of the four clans of Tamang Thakalis was written down in the *Chyoki Rhab* ( Thak : History of the Chyoki/Gauchan ), in the *Sāiki Rhab* ( Thak. : History of the Salki/Tulachan ), in the *Dhimchan Rhab* ( Thak. : History of the Dhimchan/Sherchan ) and in the *Bhurki Rhab* ( Thak. : History of the Bhurki/Bhattachan ), and these are among the most important of Tamang Thakali documents.

The contents of this clan mythology allow conclusions to be drawn concerning the roots and beginnings of the Tamang Thakalis, and are the source of lively debate, not only among ethnologists but among the Thakalis themselves.

The four rhabs were originally written in the Thakali language but in Tibetan script "due to the fact that no Thakali script was ever devised" ( Vinding 1977 : 102 ). The legends were actually written on single long paper scrolls, but around one hundred years ago new copies of the *Chyoki Rhab*, the *Salki Rhab* and the *Dhimchan Rhab* were prepared by a Tamang Thakali. The Tibetan script was replaced in the act by Devanagari script, which may be taken as a display of reverence towards Hindu society. Only the *Bhurki Rhab* was not copied at the time, for unexplained reasons, and has remained unchanged up to the present.

The four rhabs are read out loud and explained during *lho phewa*, or *trelo* ( epiphany of the gods ), which takes place in Thak Khola every twelve years ( on lha phewa see Jest 1964 and 1974, and Somlai 1982 ).

Four masks, which are kept in four small temples ( *lha thau* ) above Kobang/Larjung,

symbolize the four deities of the four clans. Each clan designates a so-called *pande* ( see the chapter on clan organization ) to keep the rhab in his house and to watch over the mask of the deity in the temple. He is also the one who recites the next during lha phewa.

The rhab of the Sherchan clan, significantly enough, is said to have been destroyed by a fire several decades ago, and no one knows for sure whether another copy exists or not. Some Thakalis claim, probably not entirely without reason, that the original was destroyed in order to wipe out any traces suggestive of the true origins of the Sherchan/Dhimchan clan.

To Narendra Gauchan goes the credit for seeing to it that, in spite of this, the history of the Sherchans can continue to be handed down; he questioned old Thakalis on the contents of the missing rhab and recorded his findings. Nevertheless, one must bear in mind that the majority of Thakali informants, consciously or unconsciously, probably had an interest in adapting the legend to Hindu views.

Surendra Gauchan and Vinding translated the four manuscripts and published them in 1977. Jest had already published fragments of these rhabs in 1964. Hari and Maibaum have dealt with the *Salki Rhab* (1970).

A description of the ancestors of the Tamang Thakalis setting off east to Dhaulagiri from the region around Jumla/Sinja (Sinja was a capital city of the Malla kingdom) is given in the four rhabs. Since they could not make it over the passes they stopped for some time in Dolpo. But the climate there must have seemed to the four ancestors to be too bleak, and the standard of living of the local population to be too low, for they wandered on and came to the present-day Thak khola Valley. Here they settled in the region around Khanti, Kobang, Sauru, Naprunghung, Nakhung and Dhocho; this region is called Thatongkor in the rhab. According to Gauchan/Vinding Thatongkor is said to have also been called Thasang (1977:116).

On their way there the four ancestors had numerous adventures to go through with the help of the gods, whose journey to Thak Khola was likewise filled with many experiences. Out of a sandalwood tree in the vicinity of Sinja having only four branches there arose four birds, each of a different color, which proceeded to be incarnated in various beings, until finally they took on the forms of the four clan deities. For example, the god of the Bhurki/Bhattachan clan—his name is Lha Hyawa-Rhangjyung—is born to a nun, after she had swallowed three hailstones, as a "piece of flesh of the male sex...." (Gauchan/Vinding 1977 : 150 ). Later he assumes the form of a yak. Before he reaches Thaton-

gkhor and becomes the protector of Khe Dhamchi Dhamru, the original ancestor of the Bhurki clan, the god goes through several adventures in Tibet. The color assigned to him is black, his element is the air, and he is called the younger brother of the three other deities.

The original ancestor of the Chyoki/Gauchan clan is Khe Ani Airan, whose protector is the god Lha Lāngbā Nhurbu ( Tib. : "jewel elephant god" ), who is the eldest of the four deities, and is therefore called "elder brother." His color is red, and his element fire.

Khe Samledhen Samlechyāng is the original ancestor of the Sālki/Tulachan clan, whose protectress is the goddess Lha Chhyuring Gyalmo ( Tib. : "the sea-monster queen" ). She is called "elder sister." To her are assigned the colors blue/green and the element water.

The original ancestor of the Dhimchan/Sherchan clan is Khe Dhākpa Ghyalsāng, whose protectress is the goddess Lha Ghāngla Singi Karpo ( Tib. : "the white lioness of the glacier" ). She is called "younger sister", her assigned color being white, and her element the earth.

"The four gods of the five elements ordered the four Khe to gather at the meeting place [ in Thatongkor ] even though they could not gather at the birth place [ Sinja ]. The four gods of the five elements ordered them to increase the villages of Thatongkor. The four gods of the five elements ordered that they should earn fame in Thatongkor" ( Gauchan/Vinding 1977 : 168 ).

As mentioned previously, all four ancestors are said to have come from the region of Sinja in Humla District—from Nhubchan. "Khe Aani Airan was born in Nhubchan as a member of the Chan family" ( Gauchan/Vinding 1977 : 110 ). "Chan" is supposed to be either the name of a family or that of a clan. Some Tamang Thakalis claim that Chan is identical with the Thakuri Chan clan, and they trace back to it their own lineage and status, which would then be equivalent to that of the Thakuris in Hindu caste hierarchy. Of interest, furthermore, is the fact that, after the four ancestors settled in Thā ( Thātongkor ), the name Chan became "Thāchan" ( the Chan from Thā ), which was later transformed into Tamhaang/Tamang, the name the group still goes by today.

As mentioned previously, the *Dhimchan Rhab* was newly set down in writing by N. Gauchan; in it two views current among Tamang Thakalis as to their origin find expression. The majority of Tamang Thakalis hold to the view that their ancestors originally emigrated from Sinja to Thak Khola. A second narrative tells of a prince or king, called Hansa Raja,

who fled from Sinja ( it is not said why ) and came to Thasang, where he married Nhima Rāni, the daughter of the king Thini ( Thin Ga-rab Dzong ). She received as dowry the region from Marpha to Ghasa. The Tamang Thakalis, then, are said to be the offspring of this couple. The other tradition, as noted, refers only to the four ancestors and their gods from Sinja; the names Hansa Rāja and Nhima Rani do not appear in it. In his version of the *Dhimchan Rhab*, N. Gauchan tried to take and combine both traditions, but he is not certain whether the story of Hansa Rāja was ever in the missing original version of the *Dhimchan Rhab* at all.

The second version ( Hansa Rāja–Nhima Rāni ), however, is admirably suited to the purposes of the rich Sherchan families, in that it allows them to trace back their roots to nobles from Jumla/Sinja and so to prove that they, as an ethnic group, are of “non-Tibetan origin.”

Other Thakalis claim that one portion of the four clans may have emigrated from Jumla/Sinja to Thak Knola, whereas the other half came from Tibet, and this is seen from the fact that the origin of the Bhattachan god cannot be traced back in the legend to Sinja, his story dealing, rather, principally with events in Tibet ( Gauchan/Vinding 1977 : 149 ).

Further conclusions concerning the past can probably be reached only if more documents are found and translated.

In 1978, moreover, Vinding, with the help of Krishna Lal Thakaali, transferred to writing the oral history of Marpha.

According to it the original ancestors of the Mawatans are said to have been Sheli Rāja and Monnarchya-komo. No reference to either, however, exists in any historical source, though their names do occur in old, traditional Thakali songs.

This version makes Sheli Rāja the brother of Hansa Raja. Both emigrated from Jumla to Thak Khola. There strife arose between the brothers, and Sheli Raja afterwards settled in Djhong ( old Marpha ). The latter was able, by means of trickery, to flight Hansa Rāja's soldiers, who wanted to attack him ( Vinding 1978:192 ). Sheli Rāja had a daughter, whom he gave in marriage to the son of Gyal-tan-me-chen, the ruler in Thini ( see in Jackson under Gyal-dong-mig-jen ). For a dowry she received from her father, among other things, a basket full of gold. She herself bore a daughter, who was married to a prince from Jumla, since their parents were friends.

Many informants believe that the present three endogamous Thakali groups could at one time intermarry, and this is suggested, for example, by the marriage of Sheli Raja's



Illustration No. 42



Illustration No. 43





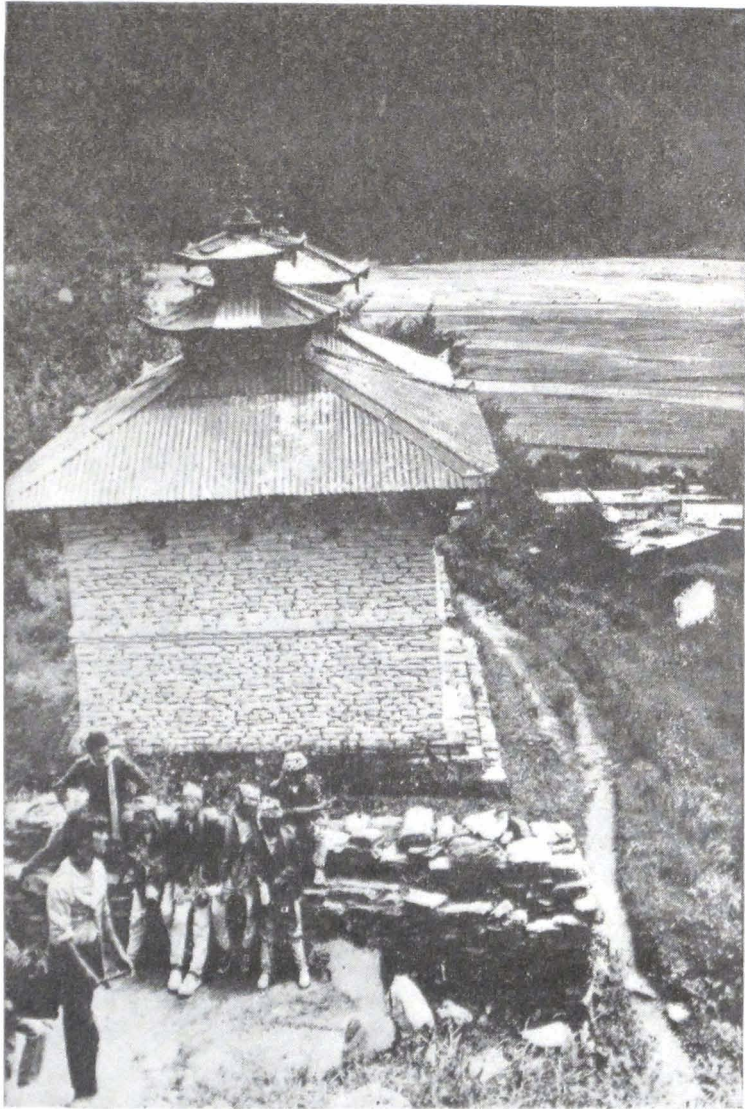
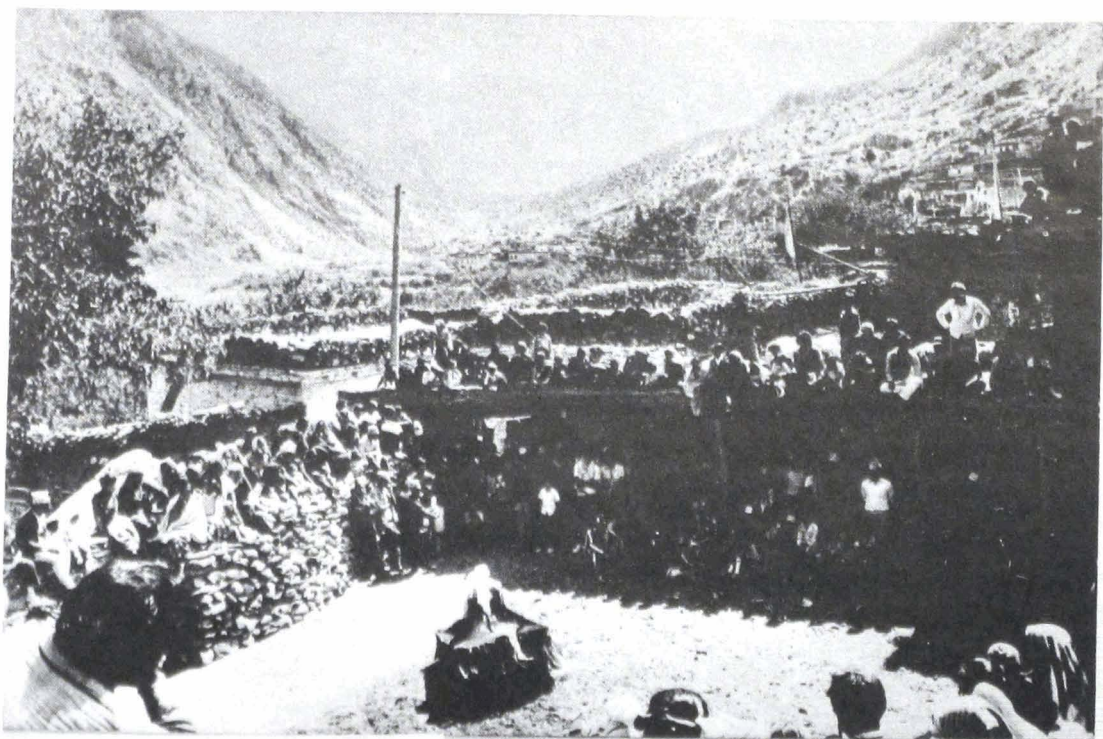


Illustration No. 44



**Illustration No. 45**



**Illustration No. 46**



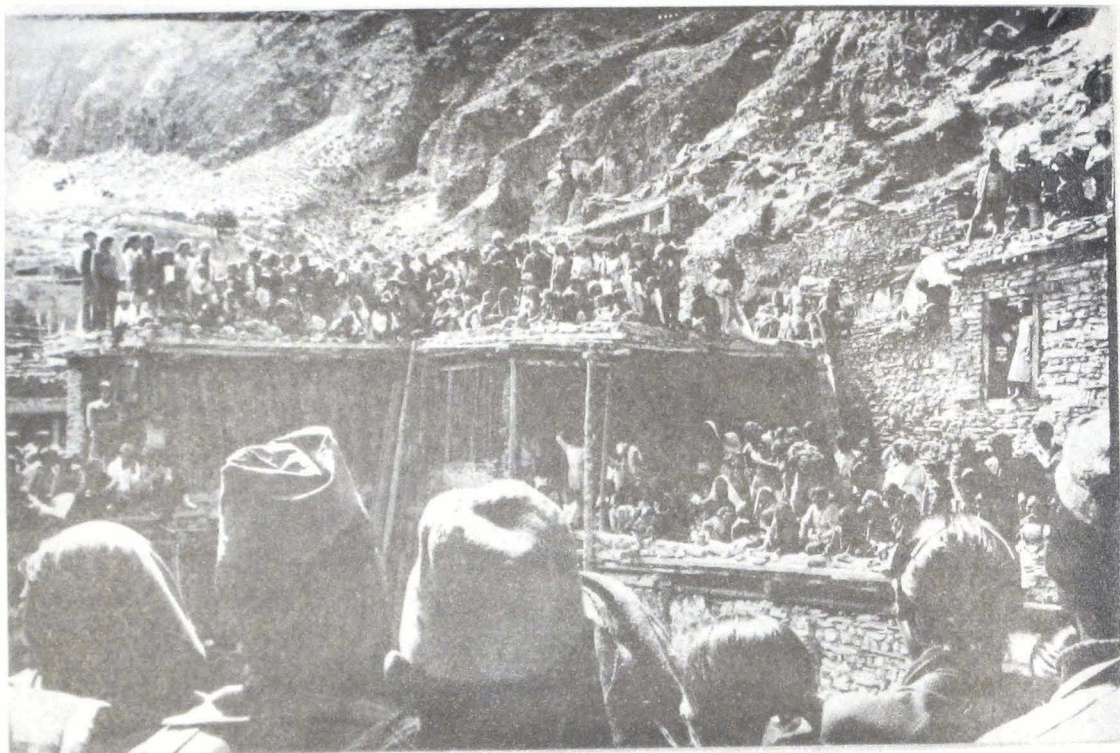


Illustration No. 47



Illustration No. 48

daughter from Marpha with the son of the king of Thini or by the marriage of Hansa Rāja with Nhima Rāni. The split between the three groups may have come about following the death of the king of Thini, Gyal-dong-mig-jen. "In order to settle the border trouble seven men of Thini, seven men of Marpha and seven men of Thak Satsae met near the present border. The men of Thak Satsae were under the supervision of Ngima Rani [ daughter of the deceased king and wife of Hansa Rāja ]. The first round of negotiations failed, but an agreement was reached during a second round of negotiations" (Vinding 1978 : 193 ).

The divisions agreed to at that time correspond to the present regions associated with the three different Thakali groups.

#### 4.3 History after 1800 and the Rise of the Subbhas :

Even though the ruling house of Gorkha had political control over Thak Khola in name, the economic influence of Tibet was still in 1800 dominant. This state of affairs changed dramatically in 1846, when Jang Bahadur Rana, one of the generals of the Shah dynasty, seized power in a coup, named himself prime minister and made the former king a puppet to his own purposes. "Although the Royal Government before the rise of the Ranas were content to receive their tribute from the Mustang Raja and ignore for the most part the situation outside of Kathmandu, Jang Bahadur Rana, who led the coup against the king, proved a man of greater ambition" ( Manzardo 1978 : 21 ).

In 1854, Jang Bahadur Rana assembled troops in order to protect the western districts of Nepal from incursions by the Tibetans. He was principally concerned with guaranteeing the safety of the Yari and Muktinath passes, strategically important points on the trade route through the Kali Gandaki Valley.

A Tamang Thakali from Kobang named Kalu Ram Dhimchan ( later Sherchan ) was a big help to Jang Bahadur during this period. As he had a command of both Tibetan and Nepali, he was taken along as an interpreter for negotiations and offensives into regions influenced by the Tibetans. Informants told me that Kalu Ram, who knew the manners and customs of Tibetans well, informed the Nepalese army when a festival would be celebrated, whereupon an attack against the Tibetans was carried out. That Kalu Ram knew Nepali shows, according to Manzardo, that the Tamang Thakalis had apparently already established trade connections to a small extent between the region in the south under the cultural influence of Hindus and that of the Tibetans in the north, thereby creating for themselves an advantage vis-a-vis the groups from Yhulngā and Baragaon

The Thakalis put the influence that Kalu Ram had gained over Jang Bahadur Rana to use, sending in 1862 a delegation to Kathmandu to ask for a decrease of taxes in Thak

Khola. One of their arguments was that, because of the high imposts, 216 families had already left Thak Khola and settled in Kaski, Lamjung and Myagdi. "According to an order ( sanad ) issued by Jang Bahadur in 1862, a deputation of Thakalis had requested a reduction in the land revenue of R 12,500 which until then had been paid by the 700 households of Thaksatsae. The government did not grant the requested reduction of tax, but offered the Thakalis a choice between the *status quo ante* and the payment of land revenue and other taxes according to the rules then applying to the Humla region of Jumla district" ( Furer-Haimendorf 1975 : 142-143 ).

In 26 paragraphs the procedure was laid down according to which Thakalis were to pay taxes in the future. The most significant change under this "Humla model" was the regulation imposing duties on the salt and grain trade; previously free trade had prevailed for these commodities. In addition, the Thakalis were enjoined to set up a customs post in Rana. The most important provision, however, was the monopoly on the salt trade, which, according to the sanad, was to be enjoyed by the one in possession of the customs contract. This contract was drawn up for a period of three years. Whoever made the best offer to the government won the contract and the right to collect duties.

If someone, for example, offered 10,000 rupees and this was not bettered by anyone then he received the contract. Within the next three years, then, he had to pay the government 10,000 rupees. The difference between the sum and the duties he collected on salt and grain was his profit. The holder of this position was accorded the title of subbha (see the chapter "Trade"). "Since Thak Khola was at that time a remote area far from the center of power the subbha was the highest ranking local official and thus empowered to act as the local magistrate. He therefore wielded political authority, as well as having enormous power" ( Manzardo 1978:24 ).

It is odd that it was a Chetri, not a Thakali, who was first granted this post in 1862. Either the Thakalis had not offered the government enough or they may have appeared to be "Tibetan" to Jang Bahadur Rana. But by 1869, according to written sources, Kalu Ram Dhimchan, who now was called "Balbir" on account of his successes and physical prowess, was in possession of the title of subbha. He was not, however, without his competition. Patiram Sahu ( the Rich ) of Larjung stood surety for his son-in-law Ram Prasad Gauchan, so that the latter obtained the customs contract in 1884. In the succeeding period both families competed with one another frequently. After Balbir's descendants had once and for all obtained rights to the contract, they moved the trading center, previously located in Dana, to Tukuhe and built their houses there. "Because the trail between Dana and Ghasa



was bad, however, Dana continued to remain a secondary entrepot until quite recently” (Manzardo 1978 : 28 ).

Manzardo is led to believe that the few well-to-do Thakali traders of that time, including the families of Balbir and Patiram as well as a few others, having once realized that the mutual competition for the post of subbha had pushed the cost of the contract up so much that it was causing them more losses than profits, agreed in common to make over to one family from among their numbers the title of subbha. Profit from the duties was supposed to be divided among all. As Manzardo recounts, though, the descendants of Balbir's family, which was chosen by common consent to put forward subbhas, managed in the period which followed to consolidate their influence to such an extent that they were able to deprive the other wealthy merchant families of theirs.

“Since all salt had to be sold to the subbhas or their agents, the Thakalis very nearly controlled the prices of all commodities and had to do little more than live off the margin between the cost of salt and grain minus what they owed the Central Government each year. Otherwise....they could just sit in their houses while their profits continued to accrue” (Manzardo 1978 : 28 ). By this means the subbhas and their relatives accumulated enormous capital in a fairly short period of time. Moreover, thanks to their accomodation to the Hindu social order, which they rightly set great store by, the Tamang Thakalis had in the meantime advanced to become the middlemen of Ranas in Kathmandu responsible for collecting taxes in regions north of Thak Khola. The trips, for example, to Dolpo were too arduous for the Hindu district governors from Baglung, and so they passed their job on to the subbhas of the Tamang Thakalis, whom they most trusted.

The subbhas for their part deputed surrogates to undertake the strenuous journey to those regions and at the same time to make business deals with the population in their name. Apart from their economic influence, the subbhas also attained enormous political influence in these regions. Thanks to their good relations with Kathmandu, and by reason of their moneylending, they made the King of Mustang, among others, dependent upon themselves. One of the relatives of the subbha Hitman Sherchan became secretary to the Mustang king and took charge of all his important business.

The clause was also written at the time into the agreement with Jang Bahadur Rana that the holder of the customs contract and his nearest relatives should be empowered to recruit laborers from the surrounding villages for their fields at harvest time. The Subbhas never summoned Tamang Thakalis to their holdings for this work, but only those who

were native to Marpha, Thini, Syang, Chimang and other villages in Baragan. Apart from this corvee labor, many inhabitants of Yhulga, Baragaon and Mustang were made out-and-out serfs of the subbhas : The subbhas having lent out money at a high rate of interest those who could not pay back were forced to send one of their relatives to do service for them; they had to remain in their households until the debt was paid off, something, however, which as a rule did not ever occur, since the interest grew steadily. "In this way the Thakalis gained control of the resources of many other villages ( land, animals and labour ) and were able to exploit them to increase their own profit" ( Manzardo 1978:33 ). Some Tamang Thakalis had not fewer than 80 bond servants looking after their yaks, horses and lands or functioning as their porters. Even though the Rana prime minister Chandra Shumsher officially abolished slavery in Nepal in 1920, the system of bonded servitude continued to exist, since it was not considered as being slavery (Bista 1971:58).


The inferior position one hundred years earlier of the Thakali merchants relative to the Tibetans had in the meantime reversed itself. It was now the Thakalis who controlled the entire region in and around the Kali Gandaki politically and economically.

Interestingly enough, at the beginning of the 20th century the Rana rulers transferred the customs contract for Thak Khola to a Gurung from Ghanpokhara, making him thereby the subbha. Manlal Gurung offered the Rana 50% more than Thakali subbhas, namely 75,000 rupees. Manlal was already the one who had the contract for Bhot Khola in his land. Since he could not pay the entire sum all in one lump, the Ranas granted him the privilege of paying off the amount in instalments. This special financial arrangement led Manzardo to believe that the Ranas had probably called into questions the loyalty towards them of the Thakali subbhas, who had become very powerful, and that they tried with this one stroke to put a stop to their jockeying for position.

But in the long run Manlal was not equal to the ill will and influence of the Tamang Thakalis, all the more for finding himself in a region he was not familiar with. The influence of the subbhas from Thak Khola had simply become too great for Manlal to be able to hold out for long. Building the customs house a new three miles north of Tukucho in Tserok, he tried to gather about him loyal subordinates and, from his base there, to redirect the trade route over Muktinath pass to Bhot Khola and the Marsyandi River.

In 1919 Ganeshman Sherchan, Balbir's grandson, succeeded in driving the son of Manlal Gurung, who had been in possession of the customs contract since 1917, from Thak Khola. Thereafter Ganeshman himself became subbha, and, following him, his offspring.

By now no one in Thok Khola could any longer compete with the rich Sherchan subbhas. "It is unlikely that the actual profits were smaller, for business was still booming but although the Thakali subbha had begun paying the Ranas more regularly, in an attempt to regain their favour, it appears that he was paying them a smaller share of the profit. In this way, the Thakali subbha and his circle grew more independent of Kathmandu, and this was probably one of the major contributing factors to the Ranas' declaring an end to the monopoly in 1928" ( Manzardo 1978:37 ). Along with slavery, Chandra Shamsher repealed laws regulating customs on salt and grain trade in Thak Khola. Trade was again free. The only thing to remain untouched was a single customs post near the Tibetan border, but it continued to be of no significance. The Tamang Thakalis, who until then had no opportunities to establish trading relations, now began to set up their own businesses and engage in trade—on a small scale, to be sure, but nevertheless with great success. But when, in 1959, the Tibeto-Nepalese border was closed and the salt trade thereby came to a halt, many of them began to migrate to other regions of Nepal, particularly to Pokhara but also to the Nepal-Indian border and to Kathmandu. Even before the first great wave of migration the subbhas had established themselves and built up trading relations in these places ( for more details see the chapter "Trade" ).



## 5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Even though the title of subbha has been abolished, family descendants still enjoy prestige and privileges, both among the Tamang Thakalis and among the Mawatans and Yhulkasummis. As I have described in the study, the family of the subbhas continues to be very well off. Its members own factories, rice mills, sawmills and big hotels; even discothecks, the first in Nepal for tourists, were opened by them. They also occupy high administrative posts and continue to be considered the de facto aristocracy of the Thakalis; they themselves see themselves as having assumed this role. Even today they still hold important positions in the various organizations of the migrated Thakalis : for example, as administrators in large dhikuri associations or as heads of the municipal Tamang Thakali organizations in Bhairwa, Pokhara, Butwal and Kathmandu; or they are called upon to intercede in cases of the dispute. The subbhas, to the extent that their position has not been called into question, have always endeavored to further the interests of the Tamang Thakalis, above all economically, while also pursuing the goal, which could not help but serve their own purposes, of building up an as closely knit trading network in Nepal as possible. In the meantime, the Mawatans in Pokhara have also founded their own municipal organization. ( In Bhairawa, two Mawatan families belong to the organization of the Tamang Thakalis ). The Yhulkasummis have not created any comparable associations outside of Thak Khola, probably because those concerned are for the most part "social cases." During my last visit to Nepal, however, I observed that many young Tamang Thakalis, and in some cases Mawatans and Yhulkasummis as well, were beginning to go their own ways, separating themselves from the strictly organized family, clan and group associations. The various organizational forms were heatedly discussed. One may therefore assume that chinks in the ethnic group structure, specially among the Tamang Thakalis, will appear in the future.

### Annotations :

1. In 1984 I was told that a windmill was constructed in Jomosom. After a short time, however, the wind, which is funneled through the Kali Gandaki Valley with prodigious force, blew it down. Since then no reconstruction has been undertaken.
2. One anecdote recounted by Iijima ( 1977:80 ) bears witness to the almost panic fear among Thakalis of venturing into the Terai : Around the year 1930 Subbha Anangaman

Sherchan was sent by the government as a treasury officer into the Terai, "the land of aulo ( malaria )," as it was called by the Thakalis of the time. His family took leave of him in tears, since none of them supposed they would ever see him again. After some time, contrary to expectations, Anangaman again turned up and reported that the Terai was not as dangerous as they had been led to believe. The "Malaria Eradication Program" started up in 1951, and only after that the Thakalis lost for good their fear of the south.

3. Besides from Tibet, salt also came from Mustang, where one of the Tamang Thakalis subbhas had salt mined.
4. Re Tukuche : On account of the good growing conditions and the lucrative tourist trade migration back to the region has since set in.
5. Toren Lha ( name of the particular month in Thak. ) is a three-day festival that occurs annually among the Thakalis. On these days the clans pay reverence in common to their ancestors and exchange the latest news. In the afternoons various games are held including competitions with the bow and arrow.

Dasain occurs in the autumn, stretching over a period of about 15 days. It is one of the most important Hindu festivals, and is celebrated throughout Nepal. Family ties are renewed on the occasion, and presents are exchanged. Seldom are so many animals—goats, sheep and chickens—sacrificed as they are for this festival. On each of the 15 days of the festival special ritual acts are performed. Dasain is celebrated in honor of the goddess Durga. It is now also observed in Thak Khola.

Tihar, the festival of lights, is celebrated shortly after Dasain in honor of the goddess Laxmi and the god of death, Yama, and lasts for five days. Especially significant is the ceremony of the last day of the festival, in which sisters honor their brothers.

6. In Tukuche, in the winter of 1981, I saw for myself that dicing was much more important to one of the old subbha traders than his appointment to meet a powerful trading partner, who roamed around Tukuche cursing in search of him. He finally found him, but even that had little effect.
7. Apart from labor services supplied by individual family members to a household, what is counted as property among Thakali men is, for example, the so-called *mana thi chuwa*, or *pho cho bo cho*, a share of money, fields, utensils, kitchenware, animals and sometimes even a house which sons receive from their parents in setting up a new household of their own.

Traditionally, parents provided their daughters with grain, kitchen and garden equipment and, in more seldom cases, money and gold at the birth of the first child. Wealthy families might have been able to afford to give their daughters a field, but they generally did this only when the husband was from the same village as his wife. This property is called *daiju* or ( among the Yhulkasummis ) *daisa*, though nowadays it is given almost exclusively at the time of marriage.

The property which a woman already owned prior to her marriage is called *pewa*. Connected with it, particularly among the Mawatans and Yhulkasummis, is the institution of *su nar sawa*. According to this custom the daughter receives, for example, each year the harvest of a certain field, which she may sell, with the profit going to her. In other cases she may receive the milk supplied by a certain goat, which she can dispose of as she wishes. The *su nar sawa* normally continues to be in effect even after the marriage. A Thakali woman may channel the income from it into her household, but it is normal for her parents to manage the *su nar sawa* further. Thus a wife can receive an income independent of her household.

8. In recent years the Tamang Thakali youths of Kathmandu have made the attempt to learn Thakali on their own. After an initial phase of enthusiasm, however, most of them lost their zeal and gave up their plans.

On the Thakali language see A. Hari and A. Maibaum 1970.







Illustration No. 49



**Illustration No. 50**





Illustration No. 51



Illustration No. 52

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## APPENDIX

### The Tamang Thakali kinship terminology

yangkhe	FFF	maijyu	MBW, MFBSW, MMZ-
yangmom	FFM		SW
akhe (khe)	FF, FFB, MF, MFB, HF, HFB	syungme	WM, WMZ
mom	FM, FMZ, MM, MMZ, HM, HMZ	acyo	eB, FBS (e), FEBSS (e), MZS (e), MFBDS (e), MMZDS (e), HeZH
awa (aba)	F	ale	yB, FBS (y), FFBSS (y), FMZSS (y), MZS (y), MFBDS (y), MMZDS (y), HyZH
athowa	FeB, FFBS ( e. t. F ), FMZS (e. t. F)	ana	oZ, FBD (e), FFBSD (e), FMZSD (e), MZD (e), MFBDD (e), MM- ZDD (e), HeBW
kaka	FyB, FFBS ( y. t. F ), FMZS (y. t. F), HyB		
agu (aku)	MZH		
mama	MB, MFBS, MMZS		
aguma	FZH		
ken	WF, WFB	picyang	yZ, FBD (y), FFBSD (y), FMZSD (y), MZD (y), MFBDD (y), MM- ZDD (y), HyBW
ama	M		
amthowa (anthowa)	FeBW, FFBSW (FFBS e. t. F), FMZSW (FMZS y. t. F)	solti	MBS, MFBSS, MMZSS, FZS, FFBDS, FMZDS
acyangma	FyBW, FFBSW (FFBS y. t. F), FMZSW (FMZS y. t. F)	soltisya	MBD, MFBSD, MM- ZDS, FZD, FFBDD, FMZDD
aphi	MeZ, MFBD (e. t. M), MMZD (e. t. M), WeZ	syangbo (syangwo)	WB
acyang	MyZ, MFBD (y. t. M), MMZD (y. t. M), WyZ	acyumah	ZH (f. s.), FBDH (f. s.), MZDH (f. s.)
ngeren	FeZ, FFBD ( e. t. F ), FMZD (e. t. F), HeZ	mah	ZH ( m. s. ), FBDH (m. s.), MZDH (m. s.), DH, BDH (m. s.), SDH
phupu	FyZ, FFBD ( y. t. F ), FMZD (y. t. F), HyZ	nguca	eBW, FBSW (FBS e. t.



	ego), MZSW (MZS e. t. ego)		WZD, ZD (f. s.), FBDD (f. s.), MZDD (f. s.), HBD
cang	yBW, FBSW (FBS y. t. ego), MZSW (MZS y. t. ego), SW, SSW	konca	SS, DS, ZS (m. s.), FBDS (m. s.), MZDS (m. s.), WBS, BS (f. s.), FBSS (f. s.), MZSS (f. s.), HZS
apren	HeB		
chawa	WHZ		
ca	S, BS (m. s.), FBSS (m. s.), MZSS (m. s.), WZS, ZS (f. s.), FBDS (f. s.), MZDS (f. s.), HBS	koime	SD, DD, ZD (m. s.), FBDD (m. s.), MZDD (m. s.), WBD, BD (f. s.), FBSD (f. s.), MZSD (f. s.), HZD
came	D, BD (m. s.), FBSD (m. s.), MZSD (m. s.),		



## THE YHULKASUMMI THAKALI KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

khyopen	FF, MF	ani	MBW
moman	FM, MM	syungme	WM, WMZ
awa (aba)	F	mom	HM, HMZ
athowa	FestB, FFBS (est.t. F) FMZS (est. t. F)	pon	estB, FBS (est), FFBS (est), FMZSS (est)
aphowa	FelB, FRBS (el. t. F) FMZS (el. t. F)	acyo	elB, FBS (el), FFBS (el), FMZSS (el)
acyangba	FyB, FFBS (y t F). FMZS (y. t. F)	mayung	yB (f.s.), FBS (f.s., y), FFBSS (f. s., y), FMZ- SS (f. s., y)
agu (aku)	MZH	cyon	yB (m. s.), FBS (m. s., y). FFBSS (m. s , y), FMZSS (m. s., y), yZ (f. s.), FBD (f. s., y). FFBSD (f. s., y), FMZ SD (f, s., y), HyBW
asyang	MB, MFBS, MMZS	srin	yZ (m. s.), FBD (m. s., y), FFBSD (m. s., y), FMZSD (m. s., y), WyBW
aguma	FZH, HZH	ana	eZ, FBD (e), FFBS (e), FMZSD (e), HeBW, WeBW
ken	WF, WFB	chiwa	MZS, MFBDS, MMZDS
khe	HF, HFB	chima	MZD, MFBDD, MM- ZDD
ama	M	udung	MBS, MFBSS, MMZSS FZS, FFBDS, FMZDS, eZH (f. s.), FBDH (f. s., FBD e. t. ego), MZDH (f. s., MZD e. t. ego)
acyam	MZ, MFBD, MMZD, WZ, BWZ	olyang	MBD, MFBSD, MMZSD FZD, FFBDD, FMZDD
amthowa	FestBW, FFBSW (FFBS est. t. F.) FMZSW (FM ZS est. t. F)		
amphowa	FelBW, FFBSW (FFBS el. t. F), FMZSW (FM- ZS el t F)		
ameyangba	FyBW, FFBSW (FFBS y. t. F), FMZSW (FMZS y. t. F)		
agekhen	FestZ, FFBD (est. t. F) FMZD (est. t. F), HestZ		
ngeten	FelZ, FFBD (el. t. F), FMZD (est. t. F), HelZ		
ngicyang	FyZ, FFBD (y. t. F), FMZD (y. t. F), HyZ		

syangbo	WB	came	D, BD (m. s.), FBSD
mah	ZH (m. s.), FBDH (m.s.), DH, MZDH(m.s) BDH (m. s.), SDH		(f. s.), MZSD (m. s.), WZD, ZD (f. s.), FBDD (f. s.), MZDS (f. s.), HBD
chawo	yZH (f. s.), FBDH (f. s., FBD (y. t. ego), MZ- DH (f. s., MZD y. t. ego), WZH	konca	SS, DS, ZS (m. s.), FB DS (m. s.), MZ- DS (m. s.), WBS, BS (f. s.), FBSS (f. s.), MZSS (f. s.), HZS
cang	BW, FBSW, MZSW, SW, BSW (m. s.), SSW		
akhen	HestB	koime	SD, DD, ZD (m. s.)
aten	HelB		FBDD (m. s.), MZDD
acyang	HyB		(m. s.), WBD, BD (f.
ni	WBW		s.) FBSD (f. s.), MZ-
ankhen	HestBW		SD (f. s.), HZD
amten	HelBW		
amcyang	HyBW		
ca	S, BS (m. s.), FBSS (m. s.), MZSS (m. s.), WZS, ZS (f. s.), FBDS (m. s.), MZDS (f. s.), HBS		

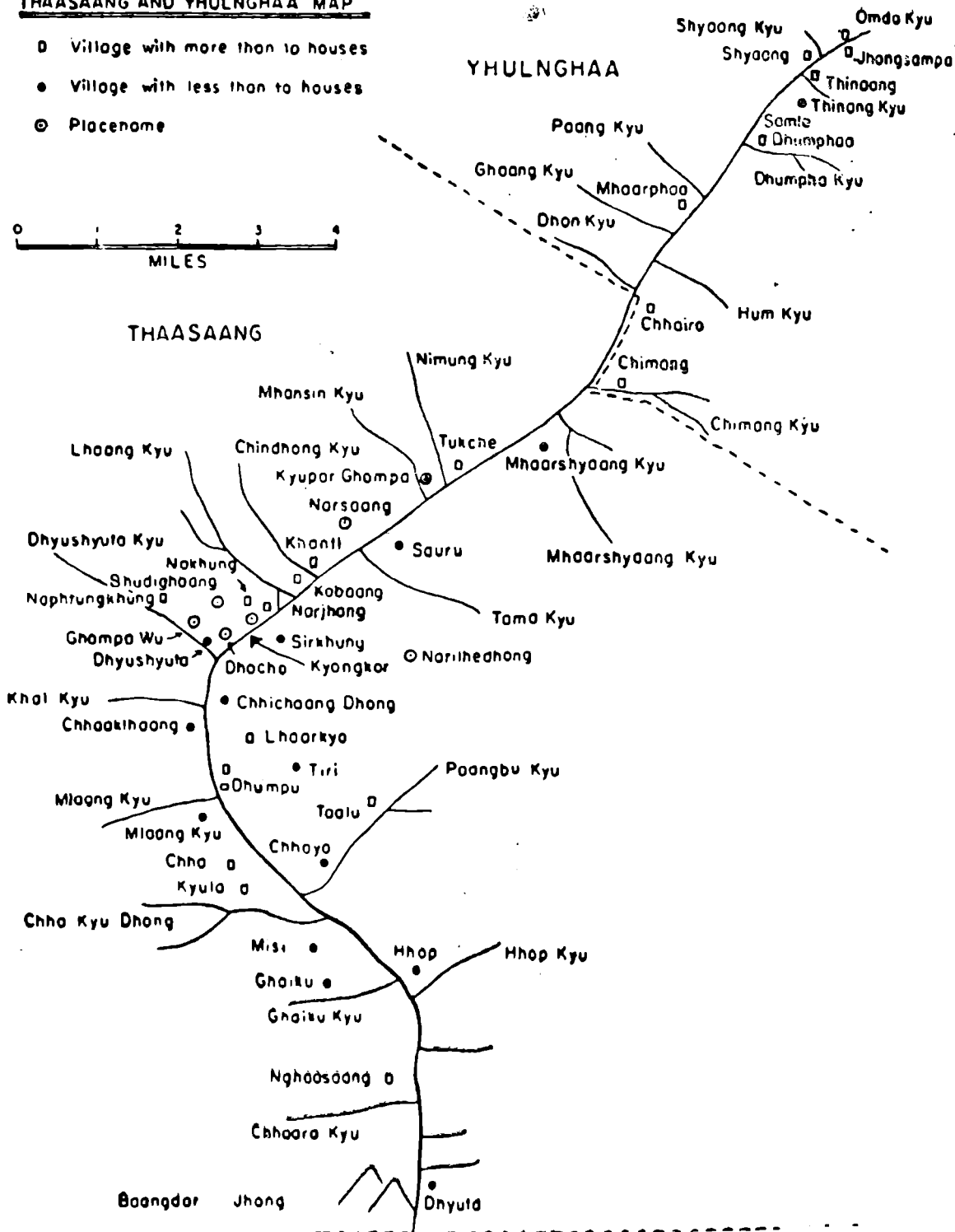
## THE MAWATAN THAKALI KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

<b>khyopen</b>	FF, FFB, MF, MFB, HF, HFB	ale (cyon)	yB, FBS (y), FFBSS (y), FMZSS (y), MZS (y), MFBDS (y), MMZDS (e)
<b>momwe</b>	FM, FMZ, MM, MMZ, HM, HMZ		
<b>awa (aba)</b>	F	ana	eZ, FBD (e), FFBSD (e), FMZSD (e), MZD (e), MFBDD (e), MMZDD (e)
<b>akhen</b>	FeB, FFBS ( e. t. F ), FMZS (e. t. F), HeB		
<b>kaka</b>	FyB, FFBS ( y. t. F ), FMZS (y. t. F), HyB	micyang (srinca)	yZ, FBD (y), FFBSD (y), FMZSD (y), MZD (y), MFBDD (y), MM- ZDD (y)
<b>khicyang</b>	MZH		
<b>asyang</b>	MC, MFBS, MMZS		
<b>akhama</b>	FZH		
<b>ken</b>	WF, WFB	nui	MBS, MFBSS, MMZSS, FZS, FFBDS, FMZDS, eZH, FBDH (FBD e. t. ego), MZDH (MZD e. t ego)
<b>ama</b>	M		
<b>acyama (acyema)</b>	MZ, MFBD, MMZD		
<b>ankhe</b>	FeBW, FFBSW (FFBS e. t. F), FMZSW (FMZS e. t. F), HeBW	solti	MBS, MFBSS, MMZSS, FZS, FFBDS, FMZDS
<b>ancyang</b>	FyBW, FFBSW (FFBS y. t. E), FMZSW (FMZS y. t. F), HyBW	nuiyang (soltisya)	MBD, MFBSD, MMZ- SD, FZD, FFBDD, FMZDD
<b>ngekhen</b>	FeZ, FFBD ( e. t. F ) FMZD (e. t. F), HeZ	syangbo (syangwo)	WB
<b>ngicyang</b>	FyZ, FFBD ( y. t. F ), FMZD (y. t. F), HyZ	chumo	WZ, WFZ
<b>ni</b>	MBW, WBW	chawo	yZH (f. s.), FBDH, (f. s., FBD y. t. ego), MZDH (f. s.), MZD y. t. ego), WZH
<b>syungme</b>	WM, WMZ		
<b>acyo</b>	eB, FBS (e), FFBSS (e), FMZSS (e), MZS (e), MFBDS (e), MMZDS (y)	mah	yZH (m. s.), FBDH (m. s., FBD y. t. ego ), MZDH (m. s., MZD y.

	t. ego), DH, BDH (m. s.), SDH	konca	SS, DS, ZS ( m. s. ), FBDS (m. s.), MZDS
cang	BW, FBSW, MZSW, SW, BSW, SSW		(m. s ), WBS, BS (f. s.), FBSS (f. s.), MZSS (f.
ca	S, BS (m. s.), FBSS (m. s.), MZSS (m. s.), WZS, ZS (f. s.), FBDS (f. s.), MZDS (f. s.) HBS,	koime	s.), HZS SD, DD, ZD (m. s.), FBDD (m. s.), MZDD
came	D, BD ( m. s. ), FBSD (m. s.) MZSD (m. s.), WZD, ZD (f.s.), FBDD (f. s.), MZDD (f. s.), HBD		(m.s.), WBD, BD (f.s.), FBSD (f. s.), MZSD (f. s.), HZD

**THAASAANG AND YHULNGHAA MAP**

- ◻ Village with more than 10 houses
- Village with less than 10 houses
- ⊙ Placename



Drawn By: Graphics Rachana



