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P'a-d'am-pa Sang-gyā, founder of D'ing-ri and master of the *chö* tantric tradition

# TIBETAN FRONTIER FAMILIES

Reflections of Three Generations from D'ing-ri

BARBARA NIMRI AZIZ

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The sphere sat like a dove perched on three fingertips of the raised hand. It seemed weightless although it held the awesome power of a Buddha's prophesy. In releasing the auspicious stone, the Buddha sent it spinning towards Tibet.

The impact sent out a resounding DING when it landed on the hill; the sound reverberated through the Himalayas. Hearing it the Buddha turned to his disciple saying, "There, in that place of DING RI you will accomplish your mission." Thus the Indian *yogin* known as P'a-d'am-pa Sang-gyā set out for D'ing-ri.

That was eight hundred years ago.

This book is the record of a 20th century journey to D'ing-ri, but it is dedicated to its first founder, the *yogin* P'a-d'am-pa Sang-gyā.





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## Author's Note on the Phonetic Transcription

All Tibetan terms have been transcribed according to the system devised by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. I quote from the *Tibet Journal* (Vol 1, No 1, July/Sept 1975), introducing the phonemes used as well as a minimum of explanatory remarks concerning their pronunciation.

<i>Consonants:</i>	<i>High tone unvoiced unaspirated</i>	<i>High tone unvoiced aspirated</i>	<i>Low tone unvoiced aspirated</i>	<i>Low tone voiced unaspirated</i>	<i>Nasal</i>	
<i>guttural</i>	k	k'	g'	g	ng	
	ky	ky'	gy'	gy		
<i>palatal</i>	ch	ch'	j'	j	ny	
<i>dental</i>	t	t'	d'	d	n	
	tr	tr'	dr'	dr		
<i>labial</i>	p	p'	b'	b	m	
<i>affricate</i>	tz	ts	dz'	dz		
<i>Sibilants:</i>	<i>grooved</i>	<i>strident</i>	<i>Vowels:</i>	<i>front</i>	<i>central</i>	<i>back</i>
<i>high tone</i>	sh	s	<i>close</i>	i	ü	u
<i>low tone</i>	zh	z		e	ö	o
					ā	
<i>Aspiration</i>	h		<i>open</i>		a	
<i>Semivowels</i>						
<i>unaspirated</i>	y	r	l	w		
<i>aspirated</i>	hy	hr	lh	hw		
	<i>lh as in "hello" but with the e unpronounced.</i>					

At variance with this system we capitalize personal titles only if they occur in names. (For more detailed information concerning this transcription system, consult *Tibetan Language: Three Study Tools* by Narkyid, 1974. Also see the appendix to this volume for the guide to the transliteration of Tibetan words appearing in this text.)



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## Preface

This is a brief historical portrait spanning three generations of a Tibetan people living in D'ing-ri on the Tibet-Nepal border. Although it begins with a brief look into their religious history, as recorded in the biographies and the teachings of 12th century *yogin*, the study concentrates on the modern era—the time and society of 1885-1960. Eighteen hundred and eighty-five is when my oldest living D'ing-ri informant was born. She has the distinction of being the mother of an eminent contemporary D'ing-ri *la-ma*. But she shares with everyone in the society her early migrant status in D'ing-ri and her present refugee life in Nepal.

The colonization of D'ing-ri over that seventy-five-year span, as chronicled in the following pages, brings to life a picture not of a rigid feudal society but one of a mobile prospering community of opportunists and vagabonds, of not-so-pious monks and of brazen, sagacious ladies.

Some people may find it difficult to accept this view of Tibetan society as it stresses the dynamic and not the quiescent, the secular and not the spiritual forces. There will be those who question how far this inquiry can take us to the heart of Tibetan culture. It is their right to do so, much as it is their obligation then to bring forth further data to test the typification of D'ing-ri in the Himalayas. If this volume provokes others to launch similar journeys and to reconsider some of their assumptions about the character and history of Himalayan peoples, then it will have gone a long way towards achieving its intended purpose.

I conceive of this work as primarily a history, a biography of the place called D'ing-ri. It is only one of the many points of view it could

have assumed. It is the record of a journey which is for me a very human encounter, one fraught with events and sparkling with personalities.

It is with the completion of this work that I express my feeling for my companions, the people of D'ing-ri, now scattered over Tibet, Nepal and India. While everyone I met in the course of my research has made some contribution to it, I have especially to thank by name those twenty-nine individuals who were closest to me and who worked the hardest to bring this history together. They are A-ni Nga-wang Tzön-drü, A-wo Zang-po and his mother Lha-mo, P'ur-bu Do-je, Lhag-pa Tse-ring, K'ang-kyi Nor-bu, Tse-nyi-ma and her children, Tra-rab Tän-pa, Käl-zang Wang-mo and her parents, Metog, A-ma De-kyi, D'ön-dr'ub, A-wo Wang-ch'ug, Ra-ch'u Gyäl-dän, P'a Tse-wang, Nga-wang Nor-bu, Jam-jang Tän-pa, A-ni Dröl-ma, A-wo Ch'ö-tse, Kong-po A-wo, Do-ch'ö Käl-zang, Ge-long Ch'ö-zang, Pä-ma Ta-yä, Tse-tän and Lo-zang.

Final in this list are three individuals who have to be singled out in appreciation for their additional contribution. They are Tr'ül-zhig La-ma of Dza-rong Monastery and the musician and storyteller Bu Nyi-ma. From both of them I derived early inspiration and invaluable support. My field assistant was Ru-nyer Do-je, who although he is not himself a D'ing-ri-wa, was of great value in helping me gather the data, in teaching me the language and in guiding me in the proprieties of the culture.

A culture is like a personality, and to learn about it one has to observe it intimately, to react to it, to ask it questions and to note its responses. This method keeps issues substantive and manageable; it holds the integrity of the culture intact while still allowing personality to sparkle. A good interviewer should be a chalice in which oral history transforms itself into chronicle. Our research must distil from the raconteur the most meaningful things in her life and they must excite into recall, details and persons forgotten long ago or absorbed into general cultural idioms. This is what I had to learn to be a true biographer.

In taking this study through to its present form I was fortunate to have working with me several dedicated friends and scholars. The most tireless has been my husband Irving Kriesberg whose editing work and whose moral encouragement are embodied in every page. I have also to thank La-ma Kar-ma Tr'in-lä for his rendering of the P'a-d'am-pa visualization and for his advice and interpretations on many etymological points. My admiration and gratitude also go to the

artists D'ar-gyā and Nor-bu and Päl-tän whose illustrations are included in the text, and to June Campbell for her assistance in the P'a-d'am-pa and Mi-la-rä-pa translations. Martin Kalff undertook the painstaking job of editing Tibetan words throughout the text and he helped prepare the appendix. Final thanks are extended to T N Madan and E Gene Smith, whose support and advice, along with that of my husband, carried me through the last difficult months of manuscript preparation.

Initial field research on D'ing-ri was carried out in Nepal over an eighteen-month period in 1970 and 1971, while I was a doctoral student at the School of Oriental and African studies, University of London. The period of my training as an anthropologist was generously funded by the University of London and the Social Science Research Council of Great Britain. I am grateful for that assistance and for the support and advice of my teachers at London, especially Abner Cohen and Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf.

In 1975, when I returned to Nepal for further research in Himalayan anthropology, it was a grant from the National Geographic Society which graciously enabled me to undertake critical follow-up work on D'ing-ri in preparation for this publication. The book was brought to completion at Yaddo Writer's Colony in the summer of 1976, where I was awarded a fellowship to complete the final writing in a setting as close to the Himalayas as one can find in New York.

Working in Nepal is both sobering and wondrous; it is an experience which can pose difficulties and hazards. Support from within the country is therefore essential. One of the reasons I have always enjoyed working there is the ready reception offered by persons in the Government of Nepal, who know what I was trying to do, who share my enthusiasm and who are ready to help. Special among them are Dr Harka B Gurung and Dr T N Uprety; to them both I extend warm thanks.

*New York*

BARBARA NIMRI AZIZ



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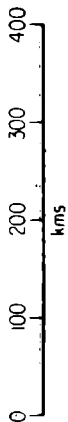
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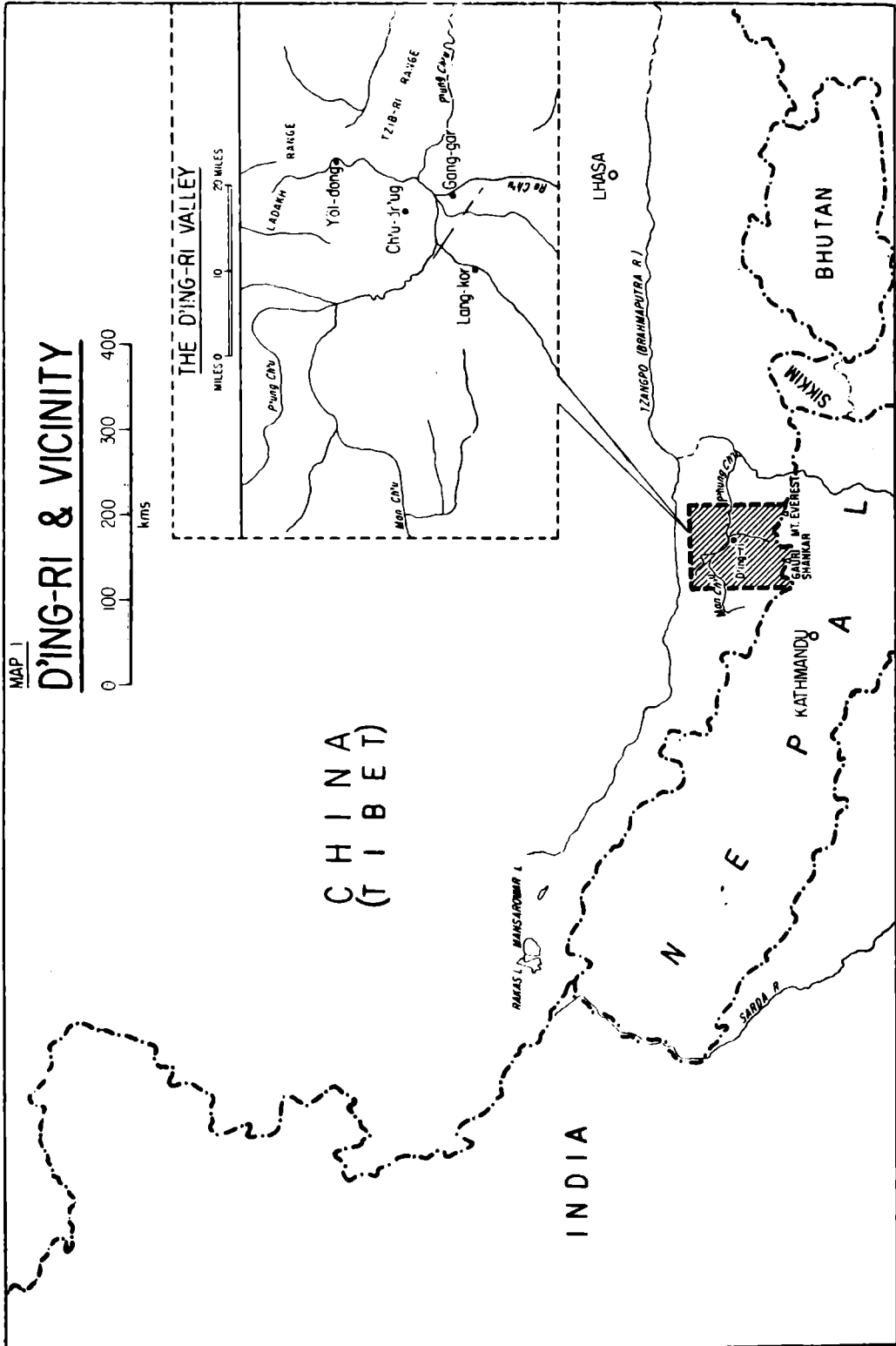
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MAP 1

# D'ING-RI & VICINITY



## THE D'ING-RI VALLEY



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## D'ing-ri in the Himalayas

### PERSPECTIVES

An image which constantly recurs and gains strength as a symbol of the Himalayan experience is the sight of the unflagging movement of individuals through the valleys of Nepal. Living near the Nepal-Tibet border with my D'ing-ri companions I was able to observe and comprehend the reality of the slow but regular pace of local villagers traversing those mountains: part of the ancient flow of individuals and cultures across what we in the west assume to be an impenetrable physical barrier. Daily in north-east Nepal people cross into Tibet, and others arrive from the valleys beyond Everest, Dhaulagiri and Kanchenjunga. Some are on short visits while others plan long-term emigration. With them these individual travellers bring news of neighbouring areas, of financial transactions, marriages, births and deaths of one's friends or acquaintances. They report market prices, demands for new products, shortages, surpluses, misfortunes, triumphs and—probably more now than in the past—political developments.

Over the innumerable paths pressing through unseen mountain passes, along thundering river banks, during much of the year these Himalayan people are moving, carrying goods and conveying news. As they do so, cultures are integrating, fortunes changing and generations learning and building on the history of their predecessors. Witnessing this impressed me. It brought a thrilling awareness of how those earlier waves of migration and change had traversed this Indo-

Tibetan zone and confirmed the realities of D'ing-ri's change and mobility as simply the most recent stage in a long history.

The first half of this century has been a prosperous and dynamic era for the last three generations of D'ing-ri people living in this southern corner of Tibet. That span, beginning from about 1885, the birth year of my oldest informant, and extending up to the nineteen fifties when there were massive changes imposed by the new Chinese communist presence, marks the period with which this book is concerned.

D'ing-ri society at this time can be characterized as engaging migration, providing considerable social mobility, and undergoing steady economic development. This unexpected although not altogether unreasonable situation is a result of the wide range of choices available to the population as its membership grew and diversified. Added to the local dynamics, change in D'ing-ri during this time was fostered by an increasing control from the central Tibetan government in Lha-sa. And the religious institutions in D'ing-ri, following the arrival there of several notable spiritual leaders, operated together with those other factors to effect growth and flexibility in every sphere and at all levels of social life.

The nature of D'ing-ri as a distinct social entity, and the dynamism of its structure and its people became apparent to me in the course of my anthropological work in the Himalayas of Nepal as I assembled tales, histories, songs and spoken idioms, and most especially during my personal observations and my encounters among the D'ing-ri people. These kinds of information—both the impressionistic and the scientific—constitute the anthropologist's tools. With the material gathered it is possible to discuss the realities of D'ing-ri life and history in ethnographic terms; that is to say, by identifying personal behaviour and social relationships and values as they become apparent in the course of sustained and systematic observation. All data presented herein were collected from a single, integrated, localized population of Tibetans. They are of one place, one period and one culture. The assemblage of facts from all facets of D'ing-ri social life, focused in a short span of time, allows us to identify the general pattern of its culture. And once that matrix is known the lines along which choices are made and the directions in which change develops, emerge to paint an exciting picture of growth and flexibility.

I am careful throughout the presentation to limit my discussion to the events and conditions of D'ing-ri. Outside factors, reverberations and connections from other regions of the Himalayas beyond the

D'ing-ri valley are introduced only peripherally, just as my informants, the D'ing-ri people, chose to limit them. External conditions beyond the valley which may partially account for its character are brought into the discussion only in so far as they throw light on D'ing-ri society. Such an approach gives us this detailed monograph, a model for comparative studies with Himalayan communities and with other accounts of how choices and changes can work. That such a small, remote valley, unknown to the west until now, should provide an example of the ancient and ongoing process of migration across Central Asia is perhaps appropriate, given the fact that it is in the hamlets and in the lives of individuals—peasants as much as kings—that these choices and changes occur.

As the social structure of D'ing-ri unfolds throughout the following pages, the fabric of D'ing-ri life which is woven stands assuredly in conformity with the impressions of Tibetan society we have from much earlier studies. For the most part the character of D'ing-ri individuals and of their social patterns is recognizable as belonging to that of Tibetan culture. We find here the rugged traders moving laden *yag* across dry, windy plains through passes leading into Nepal and to the northern lakes, where they meet nomads with their supplies of salt and wool. Agriculturalists till the fertile soil throughout the lower valley, irrigated by elaborate mountainside canal systems where fellow villagers move domestic herds over the unarable slopes above the villages. Their cattle yield rich and abundant quantities of butter and cheese, important in tax payment as well as for local consumption. A common feature of D'ing-ri life is the number of religious men and women found in homes and on the roads as well, residing in monastic communities or lonely retreats. D'ing-ri's population also possesses its share of administrators, here representing those absentee landlords who dwell only in distant cities. A few officials live in D'ing-ri but most visit only on their periodic tours to secure financial interests. D'ing-ri people have not escaped the perennial tax-collector.

In their homes kinship relations are guided by long established principles. Polyandry—that plural form of marriage so often associated with Tibet—is extant. With polygyny and monogamy as well as frequent remarriage it constitutes a common feature of D'ing-ri family organization. Butter tea, *tzam-pa*, barley wine and dried chips of meat are the mainstay of the D'ing-ri diet, as they are throughout most of the country.

In these respects D'ing-ri is part of the wider civilization we recognize as Tibet. However, there is more to a Himalayan villager's life and

culture than the aggregation of such behaviour. What we now have is substantive data on the range of possibilities associated with each such custom, together with evidence and implications of surrounding variables. For example, knowing the social network of a particular person, we can locate the individual in one of the seven social strata. People are interrelated not only as personalities and as friends and kin, but are also linked by virtue of their membership in the same or in differing classes. As such they act with significant differences in their marriage choices, in their tax obligations, in their religious affiliations and observances, and in the extent of their participation in local political processes.

Just as secular life is defined and explained by a range of variables, so is the religious character of D'ing-ri. The entire system of D'ing-ri monasteries and temples reveals itself as composed not of segments locked in a simplistic hierarchy, but of an assembly of individual centres. Each temple community in D'ing-ri supports its own tradition and possesses a unique character determined largely by the personality and history of its founder and chief teacher. As such each centre attracts a clientele composed of both clerics and laymen different in temperament and culture from that of every other religious community. Together these D'ing-ri communities constitute a network through which individuals may move and by means of which personal needs and temperaments are accommodated. D'ing-ri people enjoy abundant diversity and choice in religious facilities; nevertheless religion in the home, in the temple, or in the minds of its practitioners does not constitute a central force in the social structure. And my approach to D'ing-ri society reflects this finding.

In this monograph I adopt a revised method for integrating the religious and secular elements of Tibetan life. This treatment represents a departure from earlier discussions of Tibetan culture and people in that it is not focused on religious elements. Nor does it subsume all other factors to religious systems. Here I adopt the socio-economic priorities which D'ing-ri people defined both verbally and structurally throughout the hours and months we worked and lived together. It is their membership in a social class, their residential arrangements and their economic roles that provide the articulating principles for D'ing-ri social life.

For these reasons my discussion of D'ing-ri's religious system is confined to three chapters. The final chapter combines a review of monastic institutions with considerations of how religion in D'ing-ri serves its people. That is preceded by a survey of 20th century spiritual

leadership in this region, which brings together the histories and contributions of ten contemporary D'ing-ri *la-ma*. The other detailed discussion of religious institutions is found in the chapter on the *ser-ky'im*. The *ser-ky'im*, unlike celibate monasteries and nunneries, are scattered intermittently among lay hamlets through the inhabited valleys of D'ing-ri. As other villagers, *ser-ky'im* members choose to be involved in agricultural economy and family rearing. With nearly 25 per cent of the hundred odd D'ing-ri hamlets being *ser-ky'im*, these little centres of religious activity then constitute a common feature of the culture. Their identification leads to a clearer understanding of the range of religious relationships one can find in a Tibetan valley. The very absence of reference in earlier literature to this *ser-ky'im* tradition may be suggestive of the subtle and perhaps vicarious forms religion can assume.

A number of theoretical issues surrounding descent and marriage are the subject of three lengthy chapters on the family life of D'ing-ri people; as such that section may be of more interest to anthropologists and sociologists. Still, the detailed discussion contributes generally to the strong sense of people making choices from a number of possibilities as their position in the society changes or stabilizes.

There is an extensive discussion of descent and residence aimed at clarifying the role of lineal descent as an organizing principle. Building on an understanding of the economy and social stratification, it can be demonstrated that at least in D'ing-ri lineal descent as an organizing principle is minimal. Once unburdened of the hoary notion that Tibetans were organized into patrilines and lineages, we can approach the material afresh, allowing other criteria to present themselves. And out of the abundance of data on family and village life-choices certain patterns become defined. Emerging as the most dominant is the principle of household solidarity tied to a system of residence rules. A large part of the book is then devoted to illustrating how this system works. It sets out the basis on which the majority of domestic and economic choices are made.

The second part of the discussion on family life builds on the principles thus established. The economic organization of D'ing-ri, together with the residence principle, bears heavily on marriage and family life. From here it is a straightforward exercise to demonstrate the variations of marriage, of kinship terms of inheritance and of disputes.

Throughout the discussion, whatever facet of D'ing-ri life is being considered and elucidated, contains the sense of a dynamic and mobile



community. Migration, with corresponding internal growth and mobility, features in the life of almost every D'ing-ri inhabitant. It is also a feature of the period of D'ing-ri history with which we are dealing. Mobility is observable in all sectors of culture: the spread of religious leadership, demographic fluctuations, marriage patterns, economic developments, and in D'ing-ri's relations with neighbouring communities.

Given the ubiquitous nature of dynamic conditions we identify in D'ing-ri, it should not be surprising that in their discussions with me over the course of our research together, none of my D'ing-ri associates spoke of their life and their valley with any overt references to that dynamic quality. What was happening in their community at this time was not singled out as unusual or noteworthy in terms of change, choice and mobility. On the other hand there is frequent mention of the prosperity they experienced there; most local residents appreciate D'ing-ri for that prosperity, recognizing it as a condition from which every sector of the population benefited.

However, whether or not D'ing-ri people discuss their position in relative or comparative terms, we cannot help doing so. Many historical and comparative questions arise. What, for example, do the periods before and since this stage mean in terms of ongoing social and cultural development in the Himalayas...in Central Asia? One might also ask whether the developments in D'ing-ri at this time are part of the general Tibetan experience, or localized.

We also want to know if the pattern of migration into D'ing-ri as a border region can have more general implications for issues such as resettlement, social integration and economic growth.

Certainly this study invites further comparative studies and we look forward to the results of ethnographic and historical research now in progress. There is a fresh and growing awareness among many scholars working in the Nepal Himalaya that there is here a long tradition of change and development, and that contemporary modern changes we had first noticed are but a late stage in the dynamic history of Central Asia. Historians have of course always been more cognizant of the dynamics of earlier eras. But anthropologists must see this also. The characterization of Nepal as the Buddhist-Hindu contact zone, a concept still central to much research and discussion around Himalayan culture, remains a crucial beacon.

## FIELDWORK

I had not thought about Tibetan culture in ethnic or local terms until my 1969 visit to Nepal, when I encountered a settlement of Tibetan migrants living together in the region of Solu-Khumbu, adjacent to Tibet. These were the people of D'ing-ri: a tenacious and lively group of around 2,000, arrived recently from Tibet. They represent 20 per cent of the original D'ing-ri population. The majority of D'ing-ri people, another 10,000 or more, have remained in Tibet in or nearby their original village, even though they now do so within the new framework of Chinese reforms and policies. The appendant emigrant colony now in Nepal has not moved very far—only across the border, south of Everest. The great Sagarmatha and its companion peaks are all that separate them from D'ing-ri. It is but a few days' walk over familiar territory, and those travellers who ignore the political and geographical impediments maintain the link. Indeed the proximity of the two communities facilitates continuous communication between the migrants and their motherland. In the nineteen sixties the population ratio between the two areas was constantly shifting, with some migrants returning to D'ing-ri and others coming from D'ing-ri to join the Nepalese community. By 1972, with increased political action restricting communication, the two communities became more stable and more separate. The migrant colony is prospering now, peacefully settled amidst its Buddhist kinsmen, the Sherpa people of Khumbu and Solu.

It is in this migrant colony that I settled and began my anthropological reconstruction of D'ing-ri society as it had grown over the period of approximately three decades, a time represented by my oldest D'ing-ri informants. The hundreds of men and women I have come to know as friends and neighbours all knew each other in D'ing-ri. Many are kinsmen and kinswomen. Others, if they did not live in the same D'ing-ri village, were not far away and had probably heard of each others' family. They certainly had mutual friends. Now, although the earlier fortunes of some have been lost, and others perhaps enjoy more prosperity presently than they did in Tibet, the composition of the migrant colony reflects all economic levels and social spheres formerly extant in D'ing-ri. This includes the clerical element as well. Numerous nuns, monks, priests and *la-ma*—sons, daughters, siblings and friends of lay members—have also resettled here with their *la-ma* teachers. D'ing-ri spiritual leaders also left when it became clear to them that they could no longer continue their religious mission at home.

I began to live with the D'ing-ri people in 1969 and to talk with as many individuals as were willing to discuss their past, their family, friends and co-villagers, and to recall for me their histories, songs, encounters, pilgrimages, disputes, etc. To that we added carefully considered quantitative information. With each additional conversation engaged in, I found their histories and comments becoming an integrated whole. Facts combined with attitudes to gave shape and texture to D'ing-ri as a socio-historical entity. The similarities which emerged came into focus as patterns, the most dominant of which I have already introduced and will later substantiate. I learnt that the entire area of D'ing-ri was recovering from what may have been a debilitating war. In the last century the Gorkha moved through D'ing-ri on their way to Tibet. They eventually withdrew but their actions drew the Chinese militia into D'ing-ri to confront and repulse the invaders from Nepal. D'ing-ri was not the same after that. Signs of restoration are recorded in the increase of land under cultivation in D'ing-ri, and in the construction of new houses in the early part of this century. Employment for servants and artisans increased as population, trade and production grew. When *la-ma* arrived in D'ing-ri to provide spiritual guidance for the people, there resulted a proliferation of religious centres. Recognition of these developments are important and I realized in the course of my research that many cultural and social differences exhibited by individuals and appearing from one village to another, were not differences of structure, but simply manifestations of those choices and changes in which D'ing-ri people were participating. Throughout this study the case histories of numerous individuals attest to that process.

This brings me to the final remarks regarding the general purview of my study. This work is an ethnography, since it follows convention in dealing with a single population in characteristic, quantitative terms. But it is also what I have always considered an ethnography to be: a portrait. The following presentation is, in a sense, a social portrait. This is but one of the innumerable profiles of D'ing-ri that are possible. Furthermore, each such profile or portrait may legitimately be spoken of as a history. Indeed they should all be read as histories. We are reminded here of the relation between the two perspectives by the Tibetan word *nam-t'ar*. Usually translated as biography, it is also used in Tibetan to convey our idea of history. This is a lesson to us. And we should not be surprised when we recall that much of Tibetan history is written as autobiographical and biographical account. In this short history of D'ing-ri there is no single hero or personage around which all the facts



are woven, but I perceive the work as a biography and from that see my own role as D'ing-ri's biographer.

### GEOGRAPHY AND ECOLOGY

The central and most populated part of D'ing-ri is a level plain.<sup>1</sup> From its 13,000 foot valley floor, appendant glens spread upwards in all directions until they terminate at the foot of the range of peaks which surround the plain and mark the D'ing-ri region off as a distinct geographical entity. D'ing-ri's main link with the surrounding regions is an eastward channel carved out by the Arun River, which at its point of origin in upper D'ing-ri (Zu-tzo) is called the P'ung-ch'u River. Traversing D'ing-ri from west to east it lies in a trough between the Ladakh range to the north and the Great Himalaya (Mahalangur Himal) to the south.<sup>2</sup> From D'ing-ri the river pushes eastward for some distance before turning south into Nepal. It is only far down into the middle hills that this northern drainage of Everest, starting with the P'ung in D'ing-ri, joins the southern runoff by way of the Dudh Kosi and Sun Kosi. They meet, and together with the Tamur further east, merge into the mighty Kosi plunging down to the Tarai and to Bengal.

From the southern perspective with which we customarily approach Tibet, D'ingri appears lodged behind Mount Everest. But seen from the other side D'ing-ri is a wide valley located in front of the great Sagarmatha at the uppermost portion of the Arun River.<sup>3</sup> The position of

<sup>1</sup>On early maps D'ing-ri is also spelt "Tingri." In most sources the name is incorrectly applied to the central town of the area, with D'ing-ri Maidan used for the entire plain since *maidan* is a Hindi word for any large, flat field. The designation of the town as a *dzong* is also incorrect; the regional *dzong* or headquarters is further east, at Shel-kar.

<sup>2</sup>Hooker (1854) describes the D'ing-ri region as a broad, sandy valley of the Arun. Burrard (1933), after Hooker, suggests that D'ing-ri may have been glacial. Hooker had reported signs of ancient morain suggesting glacial influence.

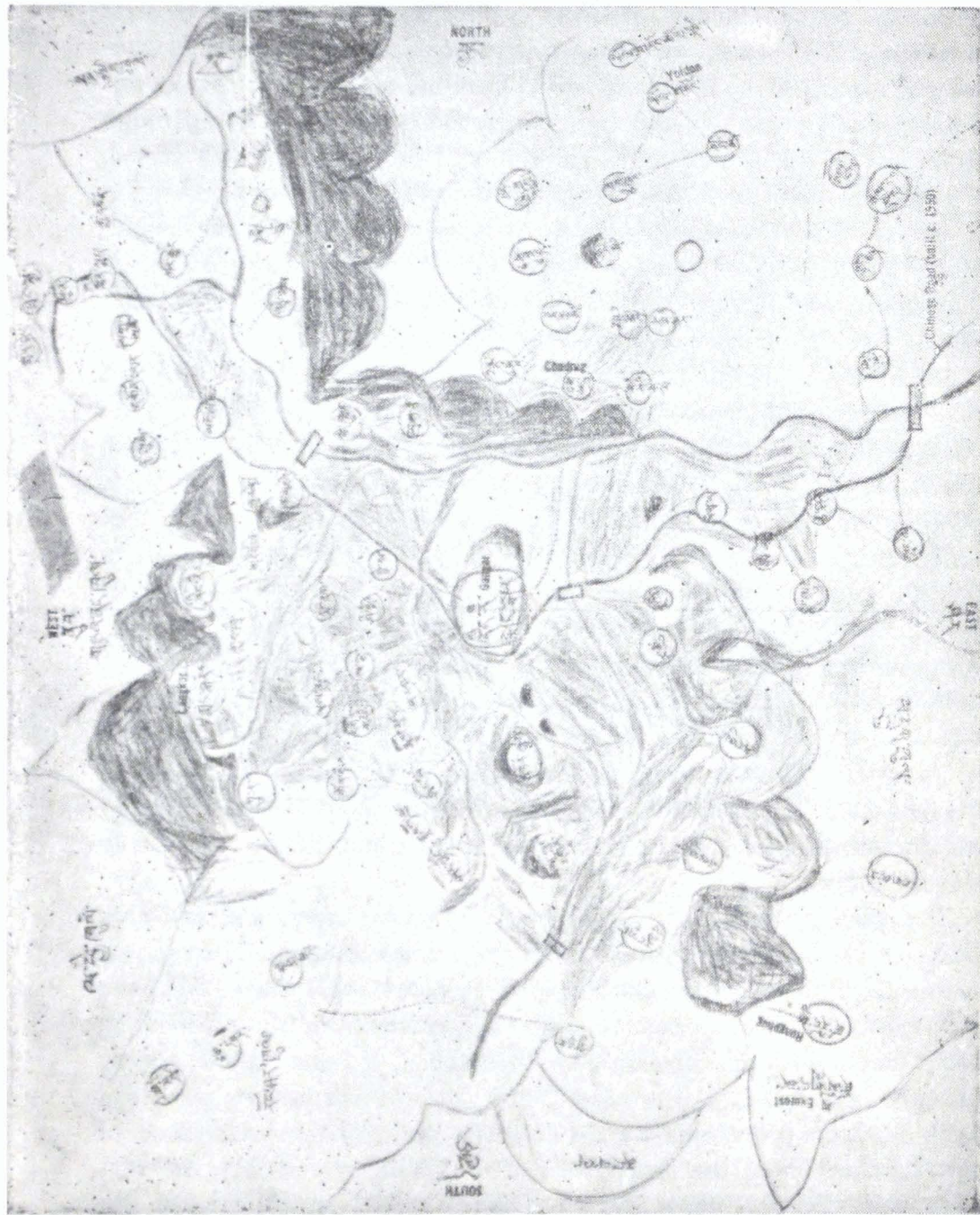
<sup>3</sup>Several early British expeditions to the mountain from this northern approach passed through D'ing-ri and stopped at Dza-rong Monastery, the last habitation before the glacier. Monks from Dza-rong remember those expeditions and showed me souvenirs the British had given them. The Dza-rong La-ma's meeting with Major Bruce is one part of the *la-ma's* autobiography, now available in translation (A W Macdonald, 1973). For the westerners' memories of the encounters see J Roy, *Geog Society*: 1868 (vol 38); 1875 (vol 45); 1905 (vol 75); Bruce, 1923; Noel, 1927 and Howard-Bury, 1921.

D'ing-ri as the source of the Arun which eventually merges with Nepal's Dudh Kosi reflects the common location of D'ing-ri and Solu-Khumbu within the Nepal Himalaya. As Map 2, after Burrard's earlier geological research of the area shows, D'ing-ri is geologically more correctly considered a part of the Great Himalaya dominating Nepal. It lies considerably further south of the main watershed dividing the Arun trough from that of the Brahmaputra running east and west through central Tibet. This is not to say that D'ing-ri is more like its neighbouring region in Nepal, for it is markedly different in climate and terrain from the Nepal side of the Great Himalaya at the point where the two regions meet. The aridity we find in D'ing-ri is created by the impenetrable barrier which those southern peaks pose for the monsoon rains.

Like the rest of the Tibetan plateau D'ing-ri lies beyond the reach of summer rains, and thus experiences that dry, windy climate characteristic of Central Asia. Here we find no lush forests, no closed, protected valleys, no wooden houses with slanted roofs and no fields of tall corn. D'ing-ri's dry valleys are treeless—windy and rocky. The architecture reflects both the shortage of wood as well as the arrangements for protection from the wind. Each house is packed close against its neighbour, making a tight cluster of buildings that comprise a hamlet. Some of these hamlets squat low on the open D'ing-ri plain, while others are lodged in the adjoining narrow valleys or huddle against the mountain walls on the perimeter of the plain. The Tibetan mental map (Map 3) has been drawn for us by a D'ing-ri man, Nyi-ma Wö-zer, who in his own style has been able to express the clusters of houses (designated by him as circles) constituting each hamlet and their disposition to the mountains.<sup>4</sup>

The piercing winds coursing through D'ing-ri carry sand and rock particles like weapons against the D'ing-ri inhabitants. Their squat architecture, their tough clothing and resilient spirit have all been adapted to deal with these conditions. When we see those cliff-hanging rocky hermitages and the desolate herdsheds, it seems these people challenge any promise of comfort. Such acerbidity caused by wind and dryness seems aggravated by the cold we naturally find at a place of this altitude. From the lowest part of the plain, 13,000 feet, the surrounding hills of D'ing-ri extend upwards to the record marked by Everest itself. With Dza-rong Monastery located below the Rong-

<sup>4</sup>For a broader discussion on Tibetan cartography, read my recent paper, *Tibetan Manuscript Maps of D'ing-ri Valley* (Aziz, 1975).



Map 3. Mental map of D'ing-ri, prepared in 1970 by Nyi-ma Wö-zer, a local Tibetan trader. This was drawn spontaneously, without any familiarity of modern mapping.



p'ug glacier (see photographs 13 and 14), we find permanent habitation. At 19,000 feet, this is the highest settlement. Most villages are located between 13,000 and 15,000 feet where even in summer a crispness lingers in the air. With cultivation and habitation confined largely to this 2,000 foot range, almost half the total area of D'ing-ri is wasteland and glacier, with all the population living within 450 square miles of usable land.

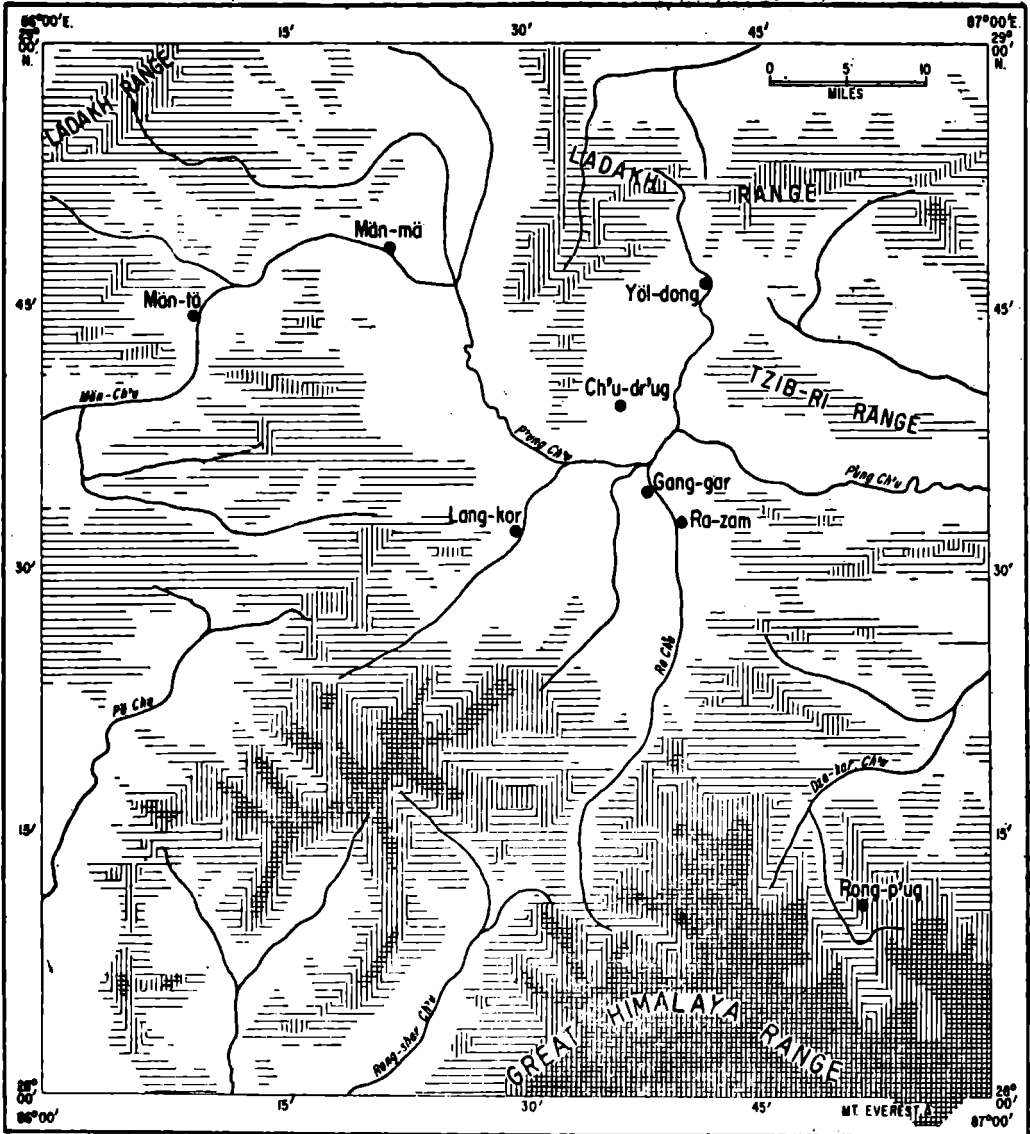
About 12,000 people live in D'ing-ri, distributed among hamlets which spread across the valley floor and into glens radiating out from it. Just over a thousand persons live in the town of Gang-gar and between eight hundred and nine hundred inhabit the monasteries, nunneries and hermitages.<sup>5</sup> It is on the basis of household counts of each village that we arrive at the estimate of the total population. There are more than a hundred rural settlements; a few are small with only a dozen households while others have as many as eight hundred members in eighty to a hundred households.

There is but one town in D'ing-ri. With two hundred and thirty households it is the largest settlement in the region, but also has a special composition and economy. Clustered on a solitary hill that projects 300 feet above the otherwise flat, uninterrupted plain, this market-town affords a strategic military outlook across the flat expanse in all directions. It is this very feature which accounts for the settlement's origin as a military post, and for its name *Gang-gar*, which means "high encampment."<sup>6</sup> Indeed early accounts of D'ing-ri reflect the wider interest in which the area is viewed militarily. In Hooker's report (1854) we read a Nepalese soldier's account of D'ing-ri Maidan. The Nepali compares the D'ing-ri plain to Nepal's central valley (Kathmandu) in these words: "Horsemen could not gallop about Nepal; they would have to keep to the roads and pathways. But numerous regiments of cavalry could gallop at large over the plains of D'ing-ri." Hari Ram's (1885) foray into the area at the end of the last century, as reported in *Records of the Survey of India*, sought out the militarily signifi-

<sup>5</sup>The figure of 12,000 is a rough estimate of the total population by 1959. It includes all the areas discussed in this book, but not the nomadic region of Kya-hrag between D'ing-ri and Khumbu. The 1959 population of Gang-gar is said to have reached 1,200.

<sup>6</sup>The painting of Gang-gar appearing on the cover and in photograph 7 was first published in *Manuscript Maps of D'ing-ri Valley* (Aziz, 1975) where it is discussed in the context of artistic conventions and Buddhist cosmography.





MAP 4 D'ING-RI AND VICINITY  
**PHYSICAL FEATURES**



cant features of the area with the elevated town prominent in his report.

No doubt D'ing-ri is still of strategic importance, but in the period of history with which we are dealing, peace prevails and the town has lost much of its military character. In our conversations D'ing-ri people do not describe their land in strategic terms. They make frequent mention of the aesthetic quality of the flat, open plain with its single hill, from where they can view the sacred hills of Lang-kor and Tzib-ri<sup>7</sup> standing on opposite sides. Quite naturally they are more aware of the easy travel and communication the flat expanse affords their own people than some possible invaders.

Whatever its function to different people, the D'ing-ri plain is a striking feature. Newar traders in Nepal, recalling their earlier travels from Kathmandu to the Tibetan cities, singled out the D'ing-ri plain, a frightening expanse into which they dared not venture. They carefully skirted the villages and pressed through, only stopping at Gang-gar where their commercial interests were in any case confined. These traders, like other visitors to the valley, apply the general name of *D'ing-ri* to the town of Gang-gar and refer to the entire valley as D'ing-ri Maidan.

The town of Gang-gar on the hill is not the district headquarter, the *dzong*, as some maps indicate. The primary administrative centre for the area is Shel-kar-dzong, some miles east, from where subordinate officers are assigned to D'ing-ri and to Nya-nang<sup>8</sup> to oversee the general affairs of those respective areas. The officer called D'ing-ri Zhung-pa has such little work that he is mainly engaged in private business; nevertheless his presence there signifies the increasing concern of the central Tibetan government for the area and for the trade passing through it. As D'ing-ri grew and threats of foreign invasion subsided, Gang-gar in particular changed in character from that of a military post to a commercial centre. Steadily through this century it has become the hub of the growing agricultural population and a clearing and exchange point for the trade moving between Tibet and Nepal.

Given its geography one would not expect D'ing-ri to dominate so

<sup>7</sup>Lang-kor and Tzib-ri are the famous pilgrimage sites of the region known after the illustrious 12th and 13th century holy men who had once lived and taught there. Till the present, these shrines continue to draw faithful pilgrims from all over Tibet.

<sup>8</sup>Nya-nang, frequently cited because of its association with the *yogin* Mi-la-rä-pa, is also spelt *Nyanon*, *gNya-nan*, and *Nilam*.

much trade passing through the Himalayas. On its northern front the Ladakh range is impassable. On the south, from Khumbu and Rolwaling, it is reached by the 18,000 foot high Nang-pa pass, closed by snow for many months of the year. While some Khumbu Sherpa come by way of the Nang-pa pass into D'ing-ri, trade by this route is limited. Exchange across this point is on a far smaller scale than we might expect, and what is traded is carried by Sherpa rather than D'ing-ri-wa.

Proceeding south-east from D'ing-ri one soon meets Everest glaciers, and although much traffic moves in that direction it is aimed only as far as the seat of the grand *la-ma* of Dza-rong Monastery.

Yet confined as it is, the plain of D'ing-ri affords a main gateway for trade and constitutes the best of the alternative routes between central Nepal and the cities of Tibet. The western gateway to D'ing-ri is at its north-west corner, a bend called Män-k'ab. Through this gorge the route passes down through Zu-tzo onto the D'ing-ri plain, from where it is channelled directly east following the P'ung-Arun water-course, through the eastern gateway that links D'ing-ri to Shel-kar and the interior of the country. Further west, several routes merge before coming into D'ing-ri. There is the traffic coming south from the vast nomadic region of Pu-rang. Beyond it D'ing-ri is approached by the major trade route from Ladakh and west Tibet, which merges with Kyi-rong commerce at the place called Dzung-ga, before proceeding into Män-k'ab and D'ing-ri. Much of this commerce only touches D'ing-ri at Gang-gar town.

The trade which engages most D'ing-ri villagers and towns people is that coming from central Nepal by way of Kodari, Nya-nang and Män-k'ab. Nya-nang is the major trading centre on the Nepal-Tibet border, widely known as Kuti. It is through here that the Newar traders of Nepal have established lively commercial interaction with their Tibetan counterparts.

Map 5, of trade routes passing through D'ing-ri (as recorded by Hari Ram in 1885), is confirmed by my D'ing-ri trading friends as representing mid-twentieth century lines of active commerce. The political and geographic boundaries that make such channels difficult for us to conceive do not restrict the traders themselves. This simplified map (appearing in the following chapter) illustrates the unimpeded lines of communication across the Himalayas around D'ing-ri. Routes traversed until recently only by foot and pack animal continue to hold their central position, now that the transhimalayan roads are covered with tar to carry the new traffic by trucks, jeeps and

buses.<sup>9</sup> The best example of this continuity is the recently completed Kathmandu-Lha-sa road. It covers the same track as the earlier one, passing directly through Nya-nang, and through Gang-gar in D'ing-ri. In the most up-to-date maps of Tibetan China, the line representing the major channel of communication between Nepal and Tibet neatly passes through Gang-gar in the centre of D'ing-ri, now labeled as Ting-jih.

Apart from the Kathmandu trade community already mentioned, D'ing-ri may largely be unknown outside Tibet. Yet in Tibet it is widely known by zealous pilgrims who make their way here in large numbers. Conversations with Tibetans from distant parts of the country reveal the wide reputation of D'ing-ri as a holy pilgrimage site. Even if they have not visited it, most Tibetans have at least heard about this place for its association with P'a-d'am-pa Sang-gyā and Mi-la-rā-pa. One an Indian, the other a Tibetan, both *yogin* lived in D'ing-ri and later became recognized as great teachers throughout Tibet. And because both died in D'ing-ri the area has additional significance. Lang-kor in D'ing-ri is the mountain sanctified by P'a-d'am-pa, and people from all over Tibet come here to pay homage to the Lang-kor relics left by him. From Lang-kor the pilgrims journey another day to Mi-la-rā-pa's cave at Ch'u-bar, and those who can, proceed down to Nepal to visit the most exalted shrines of the Tibetan Buddhist teachers.

D'ing-ri then lies in the mainstream of transhimalayan economic and cultural interaction. One might therefore expect the area to develop a cosmopolitan character. This may have happened, had other factors not effected in the valley a sense of distinctness and made it a unified social community. Even as it facilitates Himalayan trade, the geography of D'ing-ri cuts it off from adjacent areas. The mountains towering on three sides over the flat plain indeed offer both protection and seclusion, for within the area there thrives an indisputable D'ing-ri character. The valley is a cultural entity both at the social structural level and in ideological terms. Lang-kor for example may attract pilgrims from all corners of the country but the holy mountain and P'a-d'am-pa belong to D'ing-ri, and people who live here share its special heritage. It is only D'ing-ri-wa who for a variety of reasons

<sup>9</sup>A Chinese road through D'ing-ri (cf Map 3) was built around 1950, but until recently most trade continued largely by foot and animal. Travelling time from Gang-gar to major cities is as follows: Lha-sa 12-14 days; Zhi-ka-tze 7 days; Sa-kya 5 days; Nya-nang 4 days.

make regular visits to the sacred site, and it is they who guard and maintain the shrines.

In a rather different way the administrative system, however minimal, effects further integration of the area. The single appointed official in Gang-gar is the only such deputy in the area; at the same time that he has some authority here, he has none outside D'ing-ri. He is joined by other tax-collectors who are assigned the job of collecting from designated subject families, and together these administrators give the town the role of a centre effecting a certain centripetal pull over those settled in the surrounding hamlets. No D'ing-ri village is more than a day's walk from Gang-gar. And most, radiating as they do around that elevated cluster of offices, inns, shops and houses that make up Gang-gar, are all within five hours' walk. This means a villager can come into town, complete his business, and return home, all within a day. Considering the uneasiness with which rural D'ing-ri-wa view the Gang-gar community, this is most convenient.

One can cross the area from the two extreme corners—Zu-tzo in the north and Rong-p'ug in the south—in less than two days. Dza-rong Monastery is frequented by people from throughout the valley who make their way here to consult their *la-ma*, to visit kindred and to make offerings. Often there is an urgent need for ritual services and it is important to the devotees that their *la-ma* be readily accessible. Divination, astrological calculations, funerary rites, purifying potions, and amulets can be served within a day, two at the most. Besides the Dza-rong La-ma there are several other religious leaders in D'ing-ri who offer these services, and interaction between the clerics and the laity is strong. That D'ing-ri-wa almost exclusively find their religious leadership within D'ing-ri and rarely go to a monastery or *la-ma* outside the area is another indication of local self-sufficiency. As we shall see later the local nature of this system in no way precludes diversity and variety.

Apart from regular trade between D'ing-ri and Nya-nang and a rare pilgrimage to Nepal or central Tibet, most people here find few occasions to leave the area. Within D'ing-ri, however, there is much travelling and intervisiting. Kinship ties link all D'ing-ri villages into a web of social relations and any individual is bound to find some kindred in most other villages. Numerous genealogies and case histories appear in later chapters, illustrating that when D'ing-ri-wa marry they most frequently choose their affines from within the valley. Therefore, over the years households have established kinship ties throughout the region. Every family, except the most recently arrived immi-

grant, is bound to have kindred in several hamlets. Friendships promoted by common religious experience, business contacts, and marriage also, extend between villages. Among the rural population these far outnumber social ties with anyone outside D'ing-ri. The townspeople of Gang-gar on the other hand understandably effect more links with outside families congruent with their wider economic interests.

The very same climate and geography that set D'ing-ri apart and give it its uniqueness also account for much diversity here. Although the area does not experience the heavy seasonal rains or the heat of places like Solu and Khumbu, there is a significant fluctuation in seasonal temperatures and this forces certain changes in the economy and the social organization. First, agriculture is limited to one crop a year. Thus during the limited agricultural season intensive attention and labour is devoted to the land. After the busy harvest, the onset of winter presses each person and household to divert their energy to another economy and this often requires them to relocate themselves. The bitter wind and cold drives herders and their livestock from the high pastures and nearer the protected settlements. Neither they nor the monks, nuns and other hermits can survive the winter on the rocky slopes, and in any case they enjoy the opportunity to be near their friends for part of the year.

The villages easily accommodate these seasonal visitors who are their well-known kin and friends. Work is found for them in the household, either helping with the many domestic chores left for the quiet winter days or tutoring younger members of the household. The monks and nuns are also employed for routine household rites or for reading texts to their family. Only a small proportion of the monastic population stay the winter in these centres. Dza-rong for example shrinks from a membership of about 500 down to less than a quarter of that during the harsh season. Monks and nuns who choose neither to remain there nor to rejoin their household, become itinerants moving through the valleys with others similarly inclined, visiting local holy sites and performing simple religious services here and there. Some join the long-distance pilgrims to Nepal and to other parts of Tibet. One finds nuns young and old in such parties and among them there will be a few more talented in local history and storytelling. Such people are in great demand, called to individual households to entertain the inhabitants confined indoors by winter chores. Even in the villages activity slows: the irrigation canals are dry and the land itself frozen. With

the water shortage, the mills are quiet as well. And since the hermitages and herding huts are empty there is no need for the usual visiting and supplying that keeps people moving between households and these annexes.

But the winter months are far from idle holidays, and householders are busy in the corrals, in the courtyard, and around the hearth. It requires a lot of labour to convert the barley into wine and *tzam-pa*; heavy gowns worn by both men and women are woven at home, foods are prepared for drying, sacks have to be mended and saddlery repaired; raw material such as wool has to be cleaned and spun before it can be dyed. All this requires much work, most of which is done by members of each household, both men and women. Tailoring, boot making, metalwork and additional weaving, however, is undertaken by skilled craftsmen who, during the winter months, move about the villages of D'ing-ri in search of this kind of employment. It is the practice here, when one requires skilled labour from outside, to employ the craftsman in one's own home. For however long the order takes the tailor, carpenter, etc. becomes a member of the employer's household and in addition to his fee, is given food and lodging. Even religious persons invited to a home for a ritual that takes more than a day are similarly engaged. This can swell the membership of a household considerably, and the constant shifting of labour in this manner contributes to the sense of movement and change that characterizes this lively valley. And it is not unusual to find among the permanent residents of a house here, someone who was first introduced as an itinerant labourer.

The swelling of the D'ing-ri household in winter with the arrival of these people from religious centres and high pastures, is partly offset by the exit of others engaged in trade and pilgrimage excursions. Trade, even for the rural population of D'ing-ri, offers economic opportunities the land cannot. And just as they choose to expand and diversify through herding, D'ing-ri farmers extend themselves into trade. Thus among the prospering rural household there is usually one male concerned with the movement of goods, between D'ing-ri and Nya-nang and D'ing-ri and Pu-rang. Unable to compete in the larger trade between Kathmandu, Lha-sa, and Zhi-ka-tze that is monopolized by Newar and Gang-gar families, these rural traders still do well in their local sphere. The big trading families—both men and women—move between cities throughout the year. Because the high passes around D'ing-ri are impassable in winter, those who intend to be away in this season must leave

well beforehand and not return until the snows have disappeared. Pilgrimages outside D'ing-ri likewise fit into this schedule. Visits to holy places in and around the Kathmandu valley are invariably made in winter after the heavy work of harvesting is complete—but before the passes close. One may be surprised at the number of D'ing-ri-wa who have been to Kathmandu in the course of their pilgrimages, especially when one learns that many of these people had never visited Lha-sa.

Over the last century as the population of D'ing-ri has grown, increasingly more land has been brought under cultivation and set off for grazing. Barley, turnip, peas and mustard are the main crops. Produced only for local consumption these comprise the diet of the local population. The barley grown here is a sweet and highly nourishing variety which, after it is roasted and ground into a fine flour, is consumed in a variety of forms. Although some corn, rice and wheat is brought through D'ing-ri from Nepal, it is quickly moved on to the large urban markets and is only rarely scooped onto a D'ing-ri plate. Chillies, however, also imported from Nepal, are purchased and eaten here. A few potatoes reach D'ing-ri from Khumbu, not in their familiar tubular form but in dried slices. Like other dried foods such as turnip and mushroom, these hard chips of potato provide additional variety and flavour to the soup. A highly relished dish—a morning broth called *ch'ang-kôl*—is a soup made from the familiar sweet barley brew. The *ch'ang* is heated and as the alcohol boils off, *tzam-pa* flour and *ch'u-zhib*, the savoury cheese powder, are mixed in. The invigorating hot drink that results may well be the reason for such few complaints of the morning cold.

Dairy produce is plentiful but to meet the local demand additional supplies of butter and cheese are brought to D'ing-ri from the nomadic areas of Kya-hrak (between D'ing-ri and Khumbu) and Purang. A soft cheese is first made from the rich *yaḡ* milk, processed either by drying or smoking into hard lumps, and eaten as a snack. Most dried cheese is milled into the tasty *ch'u-zhib* which is so effective in the *ch'ang-kôl* soup. Yoghurt and buttermilk are also popular dairy foods, but the most abundant and widely used dairy product is butter. Consumed by all Tibetans in unbelievable quantities, butter is also utilized in a striking variety of ways: in formulating cosmetics, medicines, magic potions, house decorations, garnishes, good-luck symbols, sculptured offerings, and in providing light and fuel. Butter lamps consume great quantities but the ubiquitous Tibetan tea also requires heavy amounts. D'ing-ri-wa of every class and role are tireless tea drinkers and butter tea is the only way they will take it.



There are many routine practices in the home and shrine where butter expressly symbolizes prosperity.

Although butter is available to everyone, given the unlimited consumption, a household must own many *yag* and *dzo* in order to meet the seemingly endless demand. Indeed it is generally accepted that the prestige and wealth of a house is measured not in land but in livestock. Although none are nomad or *sa-ma-drog* (part-time nomads), a sizeable proportion of D'ing-ri farmers own over fifty *yag* and ten times as many goats and sheep. They are used in bridewealth as well as for sale—goats are exported to Nepal—and local consumption. A few large households make arrangements to send their *yag* to Khumbu to be bred there and the offspring hybrid *dzo* is brought back to D'ing-ri where it is a valued ploughing animal.

Every household is concerned with acquiring animal property. Just as one must have a dog to protect his property and his daughters, so should he acquire a horse, which, like the growth of one's herd, is a distinct sign of prosperity. It is also a sign of economic mobility, and any ambitious household works hard to expand its livestock. The recognition a family gives members who devote their skill and time to the herds is a mark of the importance they attach to this role. It is sometimes a woman and sometimes a man but in either case care is taken to assign an alert, hardworking member to the herds. The horse is perhaps the least essential animal, yet it is prized the most. Compared to other breeds the Himalayan pony appears rather squat and hairy and is not very elegant. But it is an animal only the wealthiest households can afford. The horse is used for sport as well as for routine travel, but it has many ceremonial functions. Because of the horse's role in ceremonial processions such as weddings and funerals and for visiting officials, a family without one of its own is obliged to hire a horse for these occasions.

This review of D'ing-ri geography and ecology sketches the picture of its society as we find it in the middle of this century. The little information available on D'ing-ri's earlier history suggests that it was changing then as it continues to do now. In the following chapter we examine the pattern of migration into D'ing-ri over the last four generations. With that perspective we can begin to evaluate the current state of fluidity and diversity set out in our introductory remarks.

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## Historical Perspectives of D'ing-ri

### EARLY HISTORY

D'ing-ri history has not been recorded in a single continuity. Only two disparate periods have been chronicled in any way at all. The earliest recorded history appears in references contained within the biographies of 12th and 13th century religious figures active in D'ing-ri and singles that time out as an era of religious enthusiasm. The second period is modern, and in contrast to the first, is marked by economic and military developments along the D'ing-ri-Nepal border throughout the 19th century up to the present.<sup>1</sup>

The 600 intervening years that separate these two periods remain obscure. And thus far the available documents dealing with either end of the hiatus provide no clues as to what followed or what preceded them. The chronological gap is reflected in a disparity between the types of documentation of each period. This heightens the problem of relating the evidence, and makes the comparison of divergent eras impossible.

The early history is derived exclusively from biographies of Tibetan religious leaders. As for the modern history of D'ing-ri, none has been

<sup>1</sup>By the present I mean through the nineteen fifties—the point at which D'ing-ri society had reached a new height, just before the 1959 disruption which brought new Chinese reforms and new leadership to the country and drove 25 per cent of the D'ing-ri population into South Asia.

written until this study which is largely based on anthropological research supplemented with fragmented accounts by a handful of western explorers.

Most biographical data is in Tibetan, both in written and oral accounts, but some of it has been translated and enables us to sense how it effects an inspirational link for today's D'ing-ri-wa who know these stories or have heard about them.

Three primary sources for the early history of D'ing-ri exist in English. Each is a translation of a Tibetan text: the *100,000 Songs of Milarepa*, the *Blue Annals* and the *Myths of Lang-kor*.<sup>2</sup> These documents focus on the life and work of two of the most famous Tibetan *yogin*: Je-tzün Mi-la-rä-pa and P'a-d'am-pa Sang-gyä.<sup>3</sup> These men were contemporaries, and both are reported to have taught and travelled primarily around D'ing-ri in the early part of the 12th century. It is from incidental descriptions and references within these accounts that we are able to glean something of the life and early conditions of D'ing-ri. Both saints were of such stature in Tibetan religious history that as heroic figures and teachers they themselves probably influenced the course of D'ing-ri history and culture; and especially the latter, P'a-d'am-pa Sang-gyä, has become a central figure in the mythology of D'ing-ri.

P'a-d'am-pa's role in the founding of D'ing-ri is recorded in a set of myths associated with the relics of Lang-kor, called *Lang-kor nang-ten*.<sup>4</sup> Briefly, the myths recall the miraculous life of the Brahmin *yogin* from India on his fifth and final visit to Tibet:

<sup>2</sup>The *100,000 Songs of Milarepa* used here is the abridged Chang translation (1970). The *Blue Annals* is the English translation of the *Deb-ther snön-po* (Roerich, 1949). The *Myths of Lang-kor* is a work presently in preparation, a compilation of the traditional oral accounts of the founding of D'ing-ri (Aziz and Kar-ma Tr'in-lä).

<sup>3</sup>P'a-d'am-pa's full name is Je P'a-chig-d'am-pa Sang-gyä; he is reported to have come to D'ing-ri in his fifth and final life, and stayed for twenty years until he died (1097-1117 according to the *Blue Annals*). No date for Pa-d'am-pa's (spelled Tampa Sanggyé by Stein, 1972) birth has yet been uncovered. Mi-la-rä-pa is usually given at 1052-1135, but Stein dates him a decade earlier, at 1040-1123.

<sup>4</sup>These refer to the ten precious relics enshrined at Lang-kor Gön-pa. Each relic relates to an event in P'a-d'am-pa's founding of D'ing-ri, and the summation of the ten stories constitutes the well-known folk history of D'ing-ri; these are what I call the *Myths of Lang-kor* (fn 2). The stories are reported to have once existed in written form, but I met only two D'ing-ri-wa who claim to have seen the text. Most local people have seen the relics and heard the



This visualization of the Indian *yogi* P'a-d'am-pa Sang-gyā is a creation of La-ma Kar-ma Tr'in-la. It demonstrates a traditional form in the characteristic *chö* position, but includes a modernistic landscape improvised by the artist.



Near the end of the 11th century, it is said, the Buddha Sakyamuni instructed P'a-d'am-pa to go and teach in Tibet. 'At the mountain Gṛdhṛakuta the Buddha balanced a spheroid stone on his fingertips.' The story continues: 'Throwing it high into the air, he told P'a-d'am-pa that where it landed should be the country of his mission.' The stone, we are told, landed with a resounding *d'ing* on the top of a hill to the north. The Buddha named the hill *Ding Ri* (ri=hill) and sent P'a-d'am-pa to find it. P'a-d'am-pa set out, searching one corner (a third in the Tibetan cosmos) of the world for the sacred stone and its home. He arrived in Tzib-ri from where he was led by his female protector, *dakini*, to the place of Lang-kor. It was here that he finally located the sacred stone (called *d'ing-do-mug-po*) and knew it was in this vicinity that his assignment lay. For about 20 years, until the end of his life, P'a-d'am-pa remained in D'ing-ri travelling, praying, meditating and teaching.

According to accounts in the *Blue Annals*, many devotees came to D'ing-ri to study with P'a-d'am-pa and remained there practicing the *zhi-j'e* religious tradition that he had founded.<sup>5</sup> The *nang-ten* myths describe the founding of Lang-kor in some detail. A few place names are noted in the text, but since they denote small, secluded mountain dwellings of ascetics, they do not convey any substantial settlement or *gön-pa* that may have been in existence at that time. Apart from Lang-kor, no present-day village—not even Gang-gar—is mentioned in the stories of the Lang-kor relics.

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stories in the course of their pilgrimage to Lang-kor where the shrine's custodian, who has committed the account to memory, recites the history for visitors. There are many Tibetans besides the custodian who know the details of the story, passed on orally from succeeding generations.

<sup>5</sup>P'a-d'am-pa's *zhi-j'e* tradition is associated with the *chö* which is a later development of P'a-d'am-pa and his chief disciple, the woman Ma-chig-lab-ky'i-drön-ma (1055-1145 or 1153). Combined, their practices are known as *d'am-ch'ö-dug-ngal-zhi-j'e*. The photograph of P'a-d'am-pa (frontispiece) and Ma-chig (photograph 10) show them in the familiar *chö* posture.

According to the biography of the first Dalai La-ma, Ge-dün-dr'ub, this famous 13th century religious figure was among the early pilgrims to P'a-d'am-pa's place at Lang-kor. That eminent pilgrim makes a note in his diary of his profound reaction to the Lang-kor relics. It seems he was much moved by the experience, according to the translation of the biography now in progress by Joan Kukcher. I am grateful to Ge-she Jampal for this information.

In the fragmented accounts of P'a-d'am-pa's life in D'ing-ri, provided in Roerich's translation of the *Blue Annals*, numerous place names are listed. Many refer explicitly to places outside D'ing-ri from where his disciples are said to have come. The story of the twenty-four nuns of Lang-kor<sup>6</sup> is such a passage. Here, the chronicle specifies the home district of each nun, some of which are recognizable places in contemporary Tibet. Also included throughout the *Blue Annals* accounts are a number of names generally applied to large areas, or else they are employed in vague contexts. A region commonly referred to as the place of origin of some of P'a-d'am-pa's devotees is La-tö. This term is no longer in use, but it had been the ancient name of the entire district of Tzang. D'ing-ri itself is in La-tö.

Mang-yül is another district frequently mentioned in connection with La-tö. Roerich (1949) associates Mang-yül with D'ing-ri and actually equates the two places. Ferrari<sup>7</sup> in contrast reports Mang-yül as the birthplace of Mi-la-rä-pa, while we note on some maps its location in the vicinity of Nya-nang and D'ing-ri. Everyone, including D'ing-ri informants, agree that Mi-la-rä-pa stayed in Nya-nang and D'ing-ri, but the place Mang-yül is not used by D'ing-ri-wa, and it does not appear in the Lang-kor and To-wa stories.

The *Blue Annals* and *mK'yen Brtse's Guide* (on which Ferrari's notes are based) are two Tibetan texts written long after the events they chronicle, and ought to be used with caution. The *Blue Annals* (Ferrari, 1958; Wylie, 1962) was written by a 15th century Tibetan scholar (Roerich dates it at c.1477) Another heavily drawn upon Tibetan source book is the *Reu-mig*, written as late as the 18th century (approximate date 1770; author, Sum-pa K'an-po).<sup>8</sup> And finally for two other major Tibetan source materials, the biography and the songs of Mi-la-rä-pa, neither the authorship nor the dates have been established. For the texts whose dates we know, we must admit the possibility of historiographic error. It is possible that Tibetan writers applied their own terminology, or a naming system current to the period in which they wrote.

The absence of contemporary D'ing-ri names from the early accounts suggests issues more important than bad historiography or transla-

<sup>6</sup>*Blue Annals*, pp 914-920.

<sup>7</sup>Cf the notes of Ferrari's translation of *mK'yen Brtse's Guide to the Holy Places of Central Tibet*, p 66, fn 550.

<sup>8</sup>Cf Das' *History of the Rise, Progress and Downfall of Buddhism in India, 1889*.

tion. Better research might not bring the names into congruence, however well it is undertaken. There is the possibility that earlier names have given way to new ones with the passing of history and administration. This has already been recognized in other Tibetan documentations. For example, the 1965 study by Lalou uncovered a number of discrepancies in the naming of places (Lalou, 1965). Those ancient documents deal with an area of Tibet other than D'ing-ri, but the study still holds relevance for our problems in illustrating how place names changed from one period of administration to another. When comparable data become available that will facilitate this kind of systematic analysis of place names in D'ing-ri, we might have a framework for understanding its early history. For the present we must accept the limitations of these materials and examine what documents we have *à propos* assembling obscure accounts in order to see where we stand. Approaching Tibetan sources in this way, the Mi-la-rä-pa biography and the songs contain something of interest for D'ing-ri.

According to these chronicles, Mi-la-rä-pa did not reside within D'ing-ri, but met P'a-d'am-pa on one of his several visits here. The *Story of To-wa* in the *100,000 Songs of Milarepa*,<sup>9</sup> an entertaining account of the confrontation of the two magicians, is illustrated in one of a set of Mi-la-rä-pa *t'ang-ka* paintings reproduced in photograph 20. The two *yogins'* competition of spiritual powers involves their transformations into other forms. The beginning of the encounter conveys humour as well as philosophical depth:

When the Je-tzün (Mi-la-rä-pa) saw D'am-pa Sang-gyä approaching, he thought, 'They say that D'am-pa Sang-gyä has faultless miraculous powers. I must test him.'

Then he (Mi-la-rä-pa) transformed his body into some flowers set into the roadside. The D'am-pa passed by without looking at the flowers but with full awareness. The Je-tzün Mi-la disbelieved it; just then P'a-d'am-pa turned around and kicked the flowers. 'Oh dear, the Mi-la-rä-pa's body is in these flowers,' he said, and picking them from the road, P'a-d'am-pa sang:

<sup>9</sup>This is reproduced (photograph 20) with the kind permission of the Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm, where this and the rest of a fine set of Ma-la-rä-pa *t'ang-ka* are housed. It is a section of *t'ang-ka* number XVII. Also cf Schmid, *The Cotton Clad Mila* (1952), a publication by the same museum, where each *t'ang-ka* is reproduced in black and white.



'You, who has been singing the melodies of the *dakini* spontaneously, have now had your life breath and your heart taken by the flesh-eating *dakini*. I met them yesterday during the *tsog* offering and they ate all of you, and now your life will only last until tonight. Are you ready to die?' (Campbell, 1974)

It is at this point in the meeting that Mi-la-rä-pa sings his poetic adage, *The Six Readinesses To Die*. At the end of their confrontation, before Mi-la-rä-pa departs for Nya-nang and P'a-d'am-pa returns to D'ing-ri, P'a-d'am-pa displays his humour once again. It is at this point that the two *yogin*, transformed into seven bodies, are each balanced on the petals of flowers—and Mi-la-rä-pa acknowledges their equality. P'a-d'am-pa however notes that the stems of Mi-la's flowers are bent while those he sits on himself remain erect.<sup>10</sup>

In other accounts of Mi-la-rä-pa's travels in D'ing-ri and Nya-nang, some incidental data emerge<sup>11</sup> on the culture of the time. Mi-la-rä-pa himself is reputed to have made the following references to D'ing-ri:

in the harvest time I go to D'ing-ri to beg for alms. . .  
 when the autumn came and harvest was ready. . .  
 though the flour be very dear in Ding-ri, it is not  
 hard for me to get it. . . .

In another part of the same passage, a prince is reported to have thus warned Mi-la-rä-pa about Nya-nang (east of D'ing-ri):

the land of Nyanon is full of fear, a paradise for bandits and murderers. Lepers are there in crowds. . .

with Mi-la replying:

though Nyanon is of bad repute, the people there are candid and ingenious. . . .

<sup>10</sup>The first published translation of this story appears in Chang's 1962 translation of the *Songs*, the chapter entitled *The Meeting with Dhampa Sangje*, pp 606-613. The passage reproduced here is from a more recent translation of the famous encounter, completed by June Campbell. It appears in its complete form in my doctoral dissertation, *The People of D'ing-ri* (London 1974, Appendix I).

<sup>11</sup>Cf Chang, 1962 or 1970.

Other insights from the biographies of Mi-la-rä-pa appear in the *Blue Annals*. There (Part II, p 429) it is reported:

(at the time of a hailstorm) . . . the country folk saw them (Mi-la-rä-pa and his companion) on the summit of the mountain. The Venerable One (Mi-la) fled first and told his companion to join him in D'ing-ri. When the country militia had reached the summit. . . .

These comments suggest that there must have been a considerable settlement in D'ing-ri and Nya-nang at the time of Mi-la-rä-pa's residence there, that is if we are to accept the authenticity of the Mi-la-rä-pa biographies. References to harvest suggest cultivation as opposed to nomadic economy, and the notes on flour and expense imply the existence of a market for exchange, as do the warnings of bandits, murderers and crowds. Together these give one a strong impression that the D'ing-ri Mi-la-rä-pa visited was more than a settlement—indeed, that it was already a developed trading centre.

Perhaps the most puzzling note in the references to D'ing-ri is that of a militia.<sup>12</sup> A militia immediately suggests hostility and war. If there had been even a minor war, we would expect other historical sources to indicate it. However, in published material available so far there is no reference to a war in that area in the 11th or 12th century. The question persists then: what is this militia to be found in D'ing-ri that early in its history?

If Mi-la-rä-pa had visited D'ing-ri in the 18th or 19th century the encounter with a militia would be far more credible. There are well-documented accounts of the two Gorkha invasions into Tibet:<sup>13</sup> the one in 1788-92 resulted in the deployment of Tibetan militia towards the Nepalese border. Although the Gorkha are reported by one historian to have reached beyond D'ing-ri as far as Shel-kar, they eventually withdrew and were replaced by Tibetan troops who, we assume, were maintained along the southern border to guard against further invasion from the south. Later, in the 19th century, the Gorkha again invaded Tibet through D'ing-ri and Nya-nang, with the result that troops were garrisoned in D'ing-ri from then on till the 20th century. The relation

<sup>12</sup>*Blue Annals*, p 429.

<sup>13</sup>Cf Regmi, 1961, pp 200-203; MacGregor, 1971, pp 203, 206; Stein, 1972, p 88; Petch, 1973, pp 170-172.

between the 12th century military situation in D'ing-ri and that of the later period is too remote to warrant speculation. Military activities in D'ing-ri after the late 19th century Gorkha advances belong clearly to the more recent period of D'ing-ri history and for the present at least, more fruitful research can be undertaken here.

### THE MODERN PERIOD

From the middle of the 19th century onward, more substantive and reliable data from the D'ing-ri region provide a clearer picture of the developments of south-west Tibet. The existence there of a militia is reiterated in a number of sources. Hari Ram, an explorer for the British who travelled in D'ing-ri around 1885, draws attention to "the stone fort on a hill (Gang-gar) 300 feet high just north of the village" (1885, p 387).

Furthermore, he reports that "...besides the *Daipon*, there are 40 Chinese military officers in charge of some 500 Tibetan soldiers" (Hari Ram, 1885, pp 387-390).<sup>14</sup> Regmi (1961) quoting Chinese sources, writes that 3,000 Tibetan soldiers and 1,000 Chinese and Mongolian troops were left to guard the Tibetan frontier, but I think Hari Ram's estimates are more realistic.<sup>15</sup> The second invasion of the Gorkha into Tibet in 1854<sup>16</sup> also passed through D'ing-ri. This time, again according to Hari Ram, "...the Gorkhas advanced... as far as Shel-kar slightly east of D'ing-ri" (1885, p 118). One assumes that after the second withdrawal of the Gorkha the Chinese-Tibetan force again took up its position in D'ing-ri. It is probably this garrison that

<sup>14</sup>The "Daipon" (*sde dpon*), sometimes described as a provincial governor, is twice referred to by Hari Ram as being a Chinese officer. Das (1902) in his entry for D'ing-ri (p 624) defines the town as the place where "there is stationed a Chinese militia." For another visitor's view of D'ing-ri, see Gaborieau's (1973, pp 51-59) translation of a Muslim pilgrim's 1882-83 diary of his travels along the route from Kathmandu to Tibet.

<sup>15</sup>Regmi's figure (1961, Appendix II) derived from a report of the war by Sylvain Levy, probably refers to the total number of Chinese troops deployed along an extensive frontier region, while Hari Ram's account, a report of a foray into D'ing-ri is confined to his observations in this one area.

<sup>16</sup>The earlier invasion was around 1788-92 when, according to one historian (Stein, 1972, p 88), the Chinese assumed the defense of Tibet against foreign invaders. Many more details from Chinese sources are being researched by John Killigrew at SUNY Brockport showing extensive Chinese involvement in the area. (By personal communication.) Also see Oldfield, 1880.

took up its position in D'ing-ri. It is probably this garrison that Hari Ram observed in 1885. A remnant of this force remained into the 20th century; recent migrants from D'ing-ri mention that a militia was garrisoned on the Gang-gar hill above the town through this century until about 1940 when a more relaxed military policy in south-west Tibet was affected. Part of the fort has since been converted into a temple, housing a giant prayer-wheel (*ma-ni-lha-k'ang*) above the town. In 1950 some military officers remained posted in D'ing-ri, but the main body of soldiers was removed to other parts of Tibet, mainly Lha-sa and the east.

Numerous political and social fluctuations must have accompanied these military operations through D'ing-ri over the last hundred and fifty years. The simple presence of over 500 troops would have placed certain demands and strains on the local socio-economic structure.

The Nepalese felt the strain on their economy when at various points in the hostilities, it is reported, "... trade hardly ceased to exist." Nepal is described as being "practically cut off from Tibet" during that period, and "subject to Chinese control of trade."<sup>17</sup> If such were the effects in Nepal, one wonders what the repercussions for the inhabitants of D'ing-ri were. Both the invading and defending troops moved through their territory. Hari Ram provides the only explicit references, and it suggests the war had profound social repercussions. Passing through the village of Tsa-da the explorer notes:

...the valley shows abundant signs of once having been very largely populated; but it is said that in the last great war between the Nepalese and Tibetans most of the inhabitants were killed and (now) the place lies almost deserted. (Hari Ram, 1885, p 390)

The devastation from the wars may have been more widespread, but whatever the particular conditions of Tsa-da, by the turn of the century, and indeed even when Hari Ram visited it, D'ing-ri was an active and prosperous settlement. Gang-gar was already a town of two hundred and fifty households<sup>18</sup> functioning as the commercial and

<sup>17</sup>Regmi, 1961, pp 200-203. (Oddly, Petch makes no reference to D'ing-ri in his *History of Medieval Nepal*, but it is mentioned in his later study of *Aristocracy and Government in Tibet, 1728-1969*. Also see Rose, 1971.

<sup>18</sup>According to the town's leader, its official house-count in 1959 is two hun-

administrative centre of D'ing-ri. Trade with Nepal had resumed by the end of the 19th century, and throughout the valleys of D'ing-ri cultivation was extensive. On the October march of the 1885 voyage, further up the P'ung valley, Hari Ram observes "luxuriant crops" being harvested. Following the north-west route out of D'ing-ri to Nya-nang, the explorer passes through Män-(k'ab) mä<sup>19</sup> and P'u-ri, noting particularly the former as being a large village. The economic and demographic developments noted by Hari Ram continued into the present century. The turn of the century brings us into the living memory of present-day inhabitants of D'ing-ri who constitute my field informants. One acquaintance, Tsa-da Nyi-ma, picks up the history of that village with his arrival there as a boy in 1912. Although Hari Ram describes this as one of the villages devastated and deserted in 1885, by the time of Nyi-ma's arrival in 1912, it was already re-developing and growing. Indeed, he and his mother arrived as migrants and became a manifest part of that growth. Embedded in Nyi-ma's own personal history is the growth of the village during the last half century.

### *Case One*

Tsa-da Nyi-ma came to D'ing-ri as a boy with his mother. They were indigent migrants from Sa-kya and arriving in Tsa-da assumed the lowly rank of *d'ü-ch'ung* labourers.<sup>20</sup> There were several families already settled in the village when they joined it but only two held land as tenant farmers (*dr'ong-pa* status). These households leased

dred and thirty. The discrepancy between this lower figure and Hari Ram's of two hundred and fifty houses seventy-five years earlier, is probably a result of quantitative error as well as a reflection of limited growth. The Gang-gar man includes only the tax-paying house, but Hari Ram may have counted all the residences of *d'ü-ch'ung* and outsiders in addition. Although many of the town's inhabitants living here in 1959 had arrived after the turn of the century many others have left, emigrating to other Tibetan cities and to western frontier areas as well as to parts of Nepal. The geography of the town—it is situated on a small hill—imposes physical limits on its expansion. This is illustrated on the cover, while other details about Gang-gar architecture are described more fully elsewhere (Aziz, 1975).

<sup>19</sup>Hari Ram (1885, p 390) spells this "Makpaman" which from his accompanying description could only be lower Män (Maps 4 and 8). We have no figures for lower Män, but upper Män (Män-to) across the river from it has a 1959 population of three hundred and fifty (fifty-two houses).

<sup>20</sup>*d'ü-ch'ung* lit. is small-smoke, and describes the landless labourers who may or may not be sharecroppers. For further details see Chapter Three, and Goldstein, 1971.

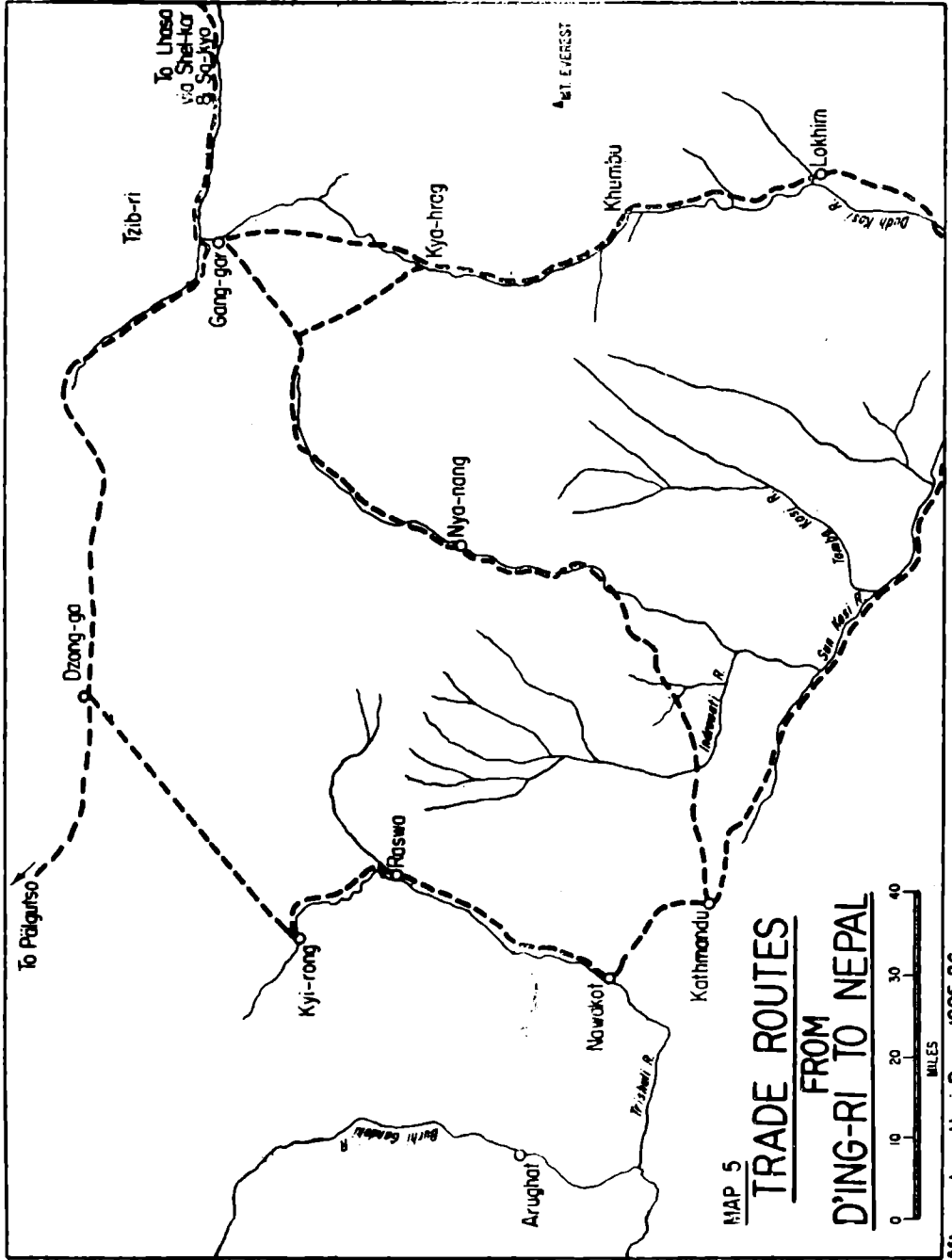
small portions of their holdings to migrant families in return for the latter's labour. So Nyi-ma and his mother, like others, became sharecroppers in Tsa-da. (Nyi-ma notes that the house they took over in the village was an abandoned structure that had become run down. In view of Hari Ram's observations of the devastation of Tsa-da when he passed through it in 1885, this could have been one of the war-ravaged houses.)

Nyi-ma does not mention any kin other than his mother. When he married it was to another *d'ü-ch'ung* migrant who had moved to Tsa-da from Gang-gar town after her first husband, a soldier, had left D'ing-ri to go to the eastern region in K'am.

Nyi-ma's history is echoed in that of Tob-gyäl, another Tsa-da resident with whom I spoke. Tob-gyäl also remembers that when he arrived in the area only two families enjoyed land-holding rights as *dr'ong-pa* tenants and he became a sharecropper of one of them when he settled in the village. He points out that these two leaseholders became increasingly wealthy over the next four decades by managing the sharecropping to their own advantage.

According to both Nyi-ma and Tob-gyäl there was a significant increase in the population of Tsa-da during this century. They named five families who had migrated here at the same time they did: three came from Kong-tza in D'ing-ri; one came from Ngam-ring and one came from east of Shel-kar. They all started as *d'ü-ch'ung* but some moved up to tenant status.

By 1959, the population of Tsa-da reached thirteen households, a medium-sized village by D'ing-ri standards. Compared to the observation by Hari Ram this represents a considerable rate of growth over the last seventy-five years. The history of each of my D'ing-ri informants confirms this growth. Whatever was the state of development before the wars or the survival afterwards, it is clear that since the end of the 19th century and continuing throughout this century, D'ing-ri has been experiencing a period of rapid socio-economic expansion. Firstly, the population was increasing both by birth and by migration. Secondly, in the wake of military stability in D'ing-ri and increasingly good relations with Nepal, the Tibetan authorities in Lha-sa and Zhi-ka-tze effected more control over D'ing-ri. Although increasing control by the Lha-sa administration may have curtailed or curbed certain kinds of private development, it still promoted settlement and trade in the area. Associated with these developments during the last seventy-five years,



After explorer Hari Ram - 1865-66.

there has been an increase in the size and the composition of religious institutions in D'ing-ri. This is most strikingly illustrated by Dza-rong Monastery, now the largest *gön-pa* in D'ing-ri, although it was built only in the beginning of this century. Another *gön-pa* on the edge of D'ing-ri, Shel-kar-ch'ö-de (cf Chapter Eleven) has greatly expanded in recent times, a growth coextensive with that of government administration.

There are two levels of development that we are observing: expansion of the larger political superstructure, and the migration of individuals. The second level of growth brings out the microdevelopment of the economy and social structure, compiled through the assembling of numerous case histories from my D'ing-ri informants. Its rich detail and personal quality reveals dimensions of the culture not otherwise available. It is from this microperspective then, that our history proceeds.

A review of the first personal histories indicates a pattern of migration into D'ing-ri from other parts of Tibet. The rate of settlement is high although it varies from one part of D'ing-ri to another. So that by observing the growth itself, another dimension—that of social heterogeneity—emerges. In preparation for the next chapter on social stratification, the remainder of this section is devoted to reviewing the nature of migration.

#### MIGRATION AND HETEROGENEITY

New settlement seems to have been a feature of modern D'ing-ri, with people from all parts of Tibet arriving here at a fairly constant rate. J'ang-ngam-ring, Pu-rang, Sa-kya, Lha-tze and regions east of Shel-kar seem to have been the main areas from where people arrived to settle and farm in the rural areas (see Map 6). Migration from the far west or far eastern parts of Tibet was minimal, or occurred only after an earlier transitional period in one of those areas noted above. A few K'am-pa and A-do traders arrived in D'ing-ri and remained in the town, as it was here that their economic interests lay. They were joined in Gang-gar by other migrants from the urban centres of Zhi-ka-tze, Gyäl-tze and Lha-sa. The few Nepal (mainly Sherpa) and Nya-nang migrants to D'ing-ri also confined themselves to the town of Gang-gar. The town attracted people of all classes: wealthy, independent traders and administrators, retired military and government officers, other officials on business, artisans, thieves, runaway servants and debtors. Even pilgrims, intending only to pass through the area, some-



times decided to settle here. It is reported that many of the artisans in D'ing-ri came originally from J'ang-ngam-ring, the area not far to the north-east, with a reputation for its skilled craftsmen. The rural population is perhaps not as heterogeneous as that of the town, but those regions also attract people from a variety of economic and social backgrounds. Retired administrators, servants of aristocrats and other officials were awarded leases on large holdings in D'ing-ri to settle and cultivate. They moved into rural areas and became farmers, developed their holdings, and established themselves as *dr'ong-pa* householders. Others like Tsa-da Nyi-ma were poor migrants without property who first worked as labourers on a *dr'ong-pa* farm or found employment as itinerant artisans. Some of the poorer migrants prospered and were able to move on to the higher *dr'ong-pa* rank through a combination of marriage and economic success. However, many remain in the ranks of the low *d'ü-ch'ung* class that constitutes about half the rural population dispersed throughout D'ing-ri.

Migration into both rural and urban D'ing-ri is effected through three channels: marriage, appointment and enterprise. Both women and men move into the area as spouses of someone already resident, but in addition to this there is a pattern of preferred marriage that attracts women from other parts of the country. (This will be elaborated in the chapter dealing more specifically with marriage.) The second mechanism—political appointment—attracts men mainly into the town. Military officers from all parts of Tibet were sent to this region to administer the troops referred to above; after service some became businessmen remaining here with their families. Their children often marry other townspeople, thus securing ties with the town. Most other appointees are tax assessors and collectors sent to administer the rural holdings of absentee landlords. They usually reside in the town where they look for markets in which to invest the tax products they collect. Though their appointments are often temporary, many of these men marry D'ing-ri girls and establish households there. Such people bring elements of city culture from central Tibet to Gang-gar. Gambling games, dress, beliefs and rituals, songs and festivals imbibed by the townspeople through these channels are part of Gang-gar life, but remain unknown in the surrounding villages.

The carpets we see in Gang-gar, both in the technique of weaving and in design, derive from Zhi-ka-tze styles and contrast with village products. The music of the town is different too, bearing a similarity to that of central Tibetan cities from where it was introduced. It is possible

to date the arrival of the Lha-mo drama<sup>21</sup> and the musical traditions of Gang-gar to 1930, when an old monk from central Tibet arrived in the south and single-handedly introduced the Lha-sa dramatic art to a few local D'ing-ri-wa. Socio-cultural influences from Lha-sa and other cities are strengthened by constant exchange with Gang-gar.

Regular inter-city trade is a part of that process of migration contributing to the exchange. The infusion of Lha-sa culture into D'ing-ri by outsiders is supplemented by direct access the D'ing-ri-wa have to cities. Gang-gar men born in the south frequently visit the northern cities, each time returning with new ideas, fashions and wives. Wives of Gang-gar traders who have arrived from larger centres express a certain disdain for local D'ing-ri customs and hold tenaciously to their own city culture when they move into D'ing-ri. Gang-gar women go into great trouble to maintain their city values. They constantly express criticism of rural styles, and in their conversations with me, they made a special point of contrasting their culture with that of the adopted town. This extends to birth practices, notions of spirit and impurity, economic roles, as well as the more obvious manners of dress, jewellery and speech.<sup>22</sup>

I do not want to create the impression that D'ing-ri Gang-gar is a more sophisticated place expressing a culture closer to an ideal Lha-sa form. This superiority is confined to native Gang-gar-wa themselves. They, in turn, are held in some contempt, both by urban Tibetans and by the surrounding villagers, who see Gang-gar as a decadent community infested with thieves, suspect migrants of dubious origins, loose women following the single traders and—certainly not the least—cruel, greedy administrators.

There is no doubt that the town attracts unsavoury characters. Traders away from their home and families behave with little regard for their reputation and morals. Between commercial contracts they spend most of their time in dark, smoky inns in the town, drinking, gambling, and meeting its friendly young hostesses. One result of their temporary

<sup>21</sup>This is an epic myth told in dramatic form, which although it has been familiar to other Tibetans for a long time, was introduced at Gang-gar only recently. There are many rural parts of Tibet where the drama remains unknown.

<sup>22</sup>In customs surrounding the most basic matters of birth and death, practices vary from one part of D'ing-ri to another. The sharpest differences lie between Gang-gar customs (newly imported from Lha-sa, Zhi-ka-tze and Nepal) and those of the rural areas.

stay here is an unusually high number of illegitimate births. In contrast to rural areas where girls are guarded by their families, or where when a slip occurs the responsible man can be identified, cajoled, and a marriage arranged, sexual liaisons here cannot be controlled. In recalling the highlights of their visits to Gang-gar traders spoke with more enthusiasm about their wild gambling adventures where thousands of *srang*<sup>23</sup> were won or lost in a night, than about girlfriends or illegitimate children. From the men's own accounts, one is left with a vivid impression of a sleepless settlement beset by brawls, long-nursed rivalries, and the constant brewing of barley *ch'ang* (beer). Gang-gar is the only place in D'ing-ri with a jail.

A pernicious element in the population is that of criminals who arrive from other parts of Tibet. It is not a place of repose for them but provides easy access to the border if they are troubled by pursuers. Some of these refugees are harmless *d'ü-ch'ung* labourers who have left their lands without permission; others are more culpable delinquents, felons who have come to D'ing-ri with crimes of incest, murder and theft behind them. If such an arrival is strongly suspect, he remains an outcast<sup>24</sup> and may be forced to pursue a mean vocation to survive. Some of them continue southward into Solu-Khumbu in search of more anonymity.

The safety Gang-gar affords—away from central Tibet and close to the border with Nepal—is doubtless a factor in attracting migrants of an ignominious nature. For the most part, people outlawed in other regions who arrive in D'ing-ri are permitted to settle and remain unharassed as long as they do not cause trouble locally. The following are two cases of outlawed men whose settlement in D'ing-ri Gang-gar is illustrative of these conditions.

### *Case Two*

Ch'ö-dzim, born in 1913, is originally from P'ün-tzog-ling where he had been a celibate monk in a large sanctuary. He tells the story of his leavetaking from that early career. It began with a trip he made to Lha-tze (on the way to D'ing-ri) on behalf of the P'ün-tzog-ling establishment. Ch'ö-dzim was accompanied on

<sup>23</sup>One *srang* was about half a rupee (Nepal currency) in 1974 when ten rupees made a dollar.

<sup>24</sup>See the following chapter where the Tibetan *ya-wa* is discussed in some detail.

the Lha-tze journey to collect tribute from monastic subjects there by three other monks. And it was in the course of this that some awful misfortune befell the party; it led to an assault on our friend by the three other men who blamed him for the incident.

Whatever the incident was, it instilled in Ch'ö-dzim enough fear to quit the party and all association with the monastery; so he fled southwards to D'ing-ri. Arriving in Gang-gar as a runagate, the now apostate monk, joined by a low class Sherpa woman who was to become his wife, fled further south into the region of Khumbu in Nepal.

They stayed in the woman's village, Namche, for a few years but in 1953, decided to move back to D'ing-ri Gang-gar. They have built a house in the town which also serves as an inn (*ch'ang-k'ang*). While his wife and daughters manage the inn, Ch'ö-dzim has returned to the road employed as a petty trader and assistant to wealthy merchants in the town.

Although Ch'ö-dzim usually appears to enjoy life and people with more humour and sensitivity than most, he retains a coarse, defiant attitude, and when drunk and angry, seems quite capable of gross behaviour. Even as he approaches old age he fails to exhibit patience and contemplation, and he has never shown the grace and gentility that so characterizes rural D'ing-ri-wa.

#### *Case Three—Nor-zang, the Migrant Monk*

Compared to Ch'ö-dzim, who is almost his own age this monk's early life is far more cloudy and suspect. Nor-zang is still a religious practitioner and earns a livelihood in Gang-gar town performing services for the laity, mainly the lower class residents. His noble occupation, performed with somewhat less regard for ascetic principles than it ought to be, does not absolve him of a taint that he brought with him when he migrated to the D'ing-ri town some years ago. I learned from others that he came to Gang-gar in 1945 from Sa-kya, after he had been involved in a homicide there. He is tolerated here although it is known that he is a fugitive, and he stays on without kinsmen or the fellowship of other clerics, since they never include him in their community rituals.

Criminal types are probably more likely to come to these border areas because, in the event that they commit an offence, they can more readily escape the law by going to Nepal—only a few hours over the Nang-pa

pass from D'ing-ri. Namche village is said to be a refuge for Tibetan criminals, similar to that which Gang-gar offers Sherpa outlaws. Perhaps the Sherpa of Khumbu are not entirely unjustified in placing new migrants from Tibet who arrive in Khumbu among the lower-ranked *khamba* and *khamendu* classes of their society.

The Khumbu Sherpa have been observed to discriminate between certain Tibetan migrants who settle among them; while the Sherpa assign very low status to some, they treat other Tibetans almost as equals, accepting them as affines in well-to-do, respectable households.<sup>25</sup> Given the extensive economic and religious ties between the Sherpa and their Tibetan neighbours from D'ing-ri, it is probable that the Sherpa know who among the Tibetans are of higher rank and good repute, and who are villains and outlaws. I suspect that the Tibetans placed in the low *khamba* ranks in Nepal were already members of the lowest D'ing-ri classes, some of whom could not return to D'ing-ri without fear of incarceration or social ostracism. After dealing with a wide range of D'ing-ri people for only a year, I found that I was able to classify them with considerable accuracy. The accent, attitude, concerns and skills of this class is particularly distinct and easy to identify after some experience. Other Tibetans with whom I associate are quick to warn me against suspicious members of their own community. Of low class *ya-wa* (see Chapter Three) and ex-criminals, they say: "Can't you see something unusual about them? Can't you tell they are bad people? They are wild, unpredictable, have bad demeanour and a black spirit (*sem-nag-po*)." Of course, Tibetans believe people are bad because they are possessed by malevolent spirits;<sup>26</sup> they fear rather than condemn them because of this.

With a complex pattern of new settlement accompanied by emigration, Gang-gar town has a highly transient population. The community was undoubtedly well-established when Hari Ram listed two hundred and fifty households, and yet from the records of migration since his visit, the town has not grown with the steadiness experienced in rural D'ing-ri. Almost all my elderly Gang-gar informants are migrants from other parts of Tibet, arriving in this area after 1900. However, if the population remained relatively unchanged since Hari Ram's visit, one wonders what have been the factors contributing to this condition. There are indications of a high rate of infant mortality and con-

<sup>25</sup>Fürer-Haimendorf, 1964, pp 32-35.

<sup>26</sup>Two common names for these spirits are *nö-pa* and *lu*.

siderable emigration to Nepal. Gang-gar's comparatively low birth-rate is rumoured to be the result of a venereal disease that caused sterility, and that is blamed for the miscarriages and the frequent still-births reported here.

As for emigration into Nepal, there are many examples, both from Gang-gar and from Khumbu, of movement in that direction; the four Sherpa houses in D'ing-ri are all located in Gang-gar. There are hundreds of D'ing-ri people in Nepal dispersed over a number of different villages in Solu, in Khumbu, and beyond Nya-nang. A whole house does not usually move intact, but individuals emigrate. Often their move is facilitated by marriage so that the D'ing-ri-wa (almost all from Gang-gar) we find in Nepal are married to a Nepali, usually a Sherpa. The Sherpa histories describe an almost continuous expansion with the absorption of waves of migrants from Tibet. The Tibetans are reported to have come from as far east as K'am, but many arrived most recently from D'ing-ri.<sup>27</sup>

Three cases of D'ing-ri migrants into Gang-gar follow. They are described in some detail as examples of the processes noted above, and because they provide vivid personal profiles.

*Case Four—Tr'in-lä (seventy), from Gang-gar*

This man was born in Mü, some distance north of D'ing-ri.

He was the youngest son of poor farmers working for others as lease labourers. An unpleasant matter with his elder brother caused a family split and Tr'in-lä came alone to D'ing-ri. He was twenty-five years old and came directly to Gang-gar, where it was easiest to secure part-time work. He started as a domestic servant of a Gang-gar trader who eventually introduced him to the daughter of a petty trader from the east.

After their marriage, Tr'in-lä and his wife worked for various Gang-gar households. She became an excellent weaver and found a lot of employment within the town, but Tr'in-lä remained a servant. The couple had five children—three daughters and two sons. As they grew, each in turn was farmed out as a domestic in other traders' houses, all in Gang-gar. Since that entails the child living at his employer's, Tr'in-lä's household never seemed to grow. By 1940 only one daughter was living with him and his wife.

<sup>27</sup>Cf Furer-Haimendorf, 1964; Oppitz, 1968; and Sañs rgyas bstan'jin and A W Macdonald, 1971; all of them provide information on Sherpa migrations.

About this time a new shrine was being built at the summit of Gang-gar hill above the cluster of houses, and the patron, a rich local trader, needed a custodian for the *ma-ni-lha-k'ang* it was to house. When Tr'in-lä was invited to become the *nyer-pa* (keeper) he and his wife and daughter moved into the new temple. His wife continued to go to local houses to weave and his young girl grew to be very pretty.

After 1959 the three emigrated to Nepal, and by chance a Kazara<sup>28</sup> boy, the ambitious son of a rich Kathmandu trader, fell in love with this girl. (He had visited D'ing-ri from Zhi-ka-tze some years earlier and had first seen the girl then.) Parents would not ordinarily give up their remaining child at the time she should be starting to work for them, but since this marriage promised such economic mobility, they permitted it and welcomed a monthly allowance from the boy.

Some years earlier the two elder girls had been given by their parents to a Sherpa trader in Khumbu. Although he is an outcast *ya-wa* (*khamendu* in Sherpa) he was rich, and Tr'in-lä was easily persuaded to sanction the marriage. As a *d'ü-ch'ung* he had not been terribly concerned about the intercaste union, and the generous brideprice made it easy to accept. The sister brides migrated to Khumbu with their husband.

*Case Five—Tse-ring (sixty), a Wealthy Trader in Gang-gar*

This man, now retired, was born in Gang-gar, the son of a Sherpa woman, (who moved here from Khumbu), and a Newar trader. His father, who was rarely in Gang-gar, stayed with another wife and family in Zhi-ka-tze. When the Sherpa women died the Newar's sister was in the process of moving to Gang-gar to marry, so she adopted Tse-ring and raised him as her own son. He was bright and ambitious and eventually inherited all the property of his father's sister's house. In time he built it into an even more successful business. There were plans for him to be married to a Zhi-ka-tze woman from a highly placed family, but Tse-ring made his own arrangements with a *d'ü-ch'ung* woman from J'ang, who he had met in Gang-gar.

<sup>28</sup>*Kazara*, an ethnic term for descendants of Newar men and Tibetan women, constitute an economic class of merchants who live in the market towns of Kathmandu, Nya-nang, D'ing-ri, Zhi-ka-tze and Lha-sa, where the two groups most frequently interact. About sixty Kazara live in Gang-gar.

Eventually this J'ang girl's younger sister joined them and Tse-ring lived in polygyny for many years. He still claims that he never liked the younger wife; that, he says, is why when the elder died, he left home and became an ascetic.

The two sons born from his senior wife had long before become partners with Tse-ring and expanded the assets of the house even more, so that by the time he retired, this adopted half Sherpa had become one of the richest men in Gang-gar.

Tse-ring's eldest son had married a Shel-kar girl. His only daughter became a nun at Tzib-ri in D'ing-ri when she was fourteen. (She eventually came to Nepal, where in 1974 she married a Sherpa from Solu.)

*Case Six—Sam-tän, Chief D'ing-ri Administrator (seventy)*

I do not know the precise birthplace of this highly capable man, but I believe it is in one of the regions adjacent to D'ing-ri. He comes from a family of administrators who had links with the Lha-sa bureaucratic structure, but his history is an excellent example of a self-made man operating in his own locality and utilizing various systems which tie the entire country together.

Sam-tän received his early education and training with his father's brother, while the latter worked as the medical officer at Shel-kar-chö; but he did not become a monk himself. Spotted as a bright young man, he was taken from Shel-kar to Lha-sa to work with a high government official, and then appointed as the government administrator to Nya-nang. This was around 1930. It was at Nya-nang that he learned to speak fluent Nepali, and his usefulness as a border official was developed by the government. From there he moved to Shel-kar to become the *dr'ung-yig* (secretary) of that monastery; this was a highly prestigious and powerful post. During that appointment, he was received as a *mag-pa* (son-in-law) to a D'ing-ri household of high status, with an only daughter, Ch'ö-drön. They moved to Shel-kar so that he could continue his work with the monastery.

After a successful service of about twelve years there the government made him the chief executive of D'ing-ri. Sam-tän was the first "local" man to take charge of D'ing-ri, the previous officers having been Lha-sa-born men. He held this post for over twenty years until the Chinese removed him in 1959. During his period of service, Sam-tän became very wealthy. As is customary for Tibetan officials, he reinvested much of the tax his office collected and developed his own business along-



side that of the government. As far as the government is concerned he was a successful administrator, having increased their control in the area and promoted the local economy. But according to local D'ing-ri-wa I spoke to, he managed this through a cruel and impersonal policy and at the expense of his local popularity.

The pattern of migration into the rural parts of D'ing-ri is different from that of Gang-gar town. We find that the migrants in the villages of D'ing-ri have generally come from other rural areas of central and eastern Tibet. There are almost none from Zhi-ka-tze, Lha-sa and similar centres, who moved directly into small villages, although a few migrants from cities came to villages after a transitional period in Gang-gar town.

Rural development in the area, already in progress in the later part of the 19th century when Hari Ram passed through, has continued to grow over the last seventy-five years. I spoke to several villagers who had arrived here since the turn of the century, and others whose parents had migrated to D'ing-ri within this modern period. However, the majority of the rural population trace their ancestry within D'ing-ri through four generations, that is back to the early 19th century. In general the rural people contrast with Gang-gar inhabitants who are mostly later arrivals. (There are four Gang-gar households whose ancestors were early *dr'ong-pa* settlers. The rest of the town's inhabitants count only two generations here, with a handful calculating three.)

The rural people express a more conservative attitude than townsmen and have a greater sense of continuity through the household and through the village. Yet, although more settled, rural agriculturalists show themselves to be linked into a general pattern of migration that characterizes D'ing-ri. One can usually locate the original migrant to D'ing-ri within the last four generations of a household's history. Working back through their families' genealogy, some informants provided details of four generations of continuous settlement (usually in the same residence) in D'ing-ri.<sup>29</sup> None could list five generations within D'ing-ri, but after arriving at the third or fourth, recognized the original settler who had come here as a migrant from another part of Tibet. Interestingly, the original migrant does not simply fall into a blurred history of unspecified provenance. He is assigned to a specific

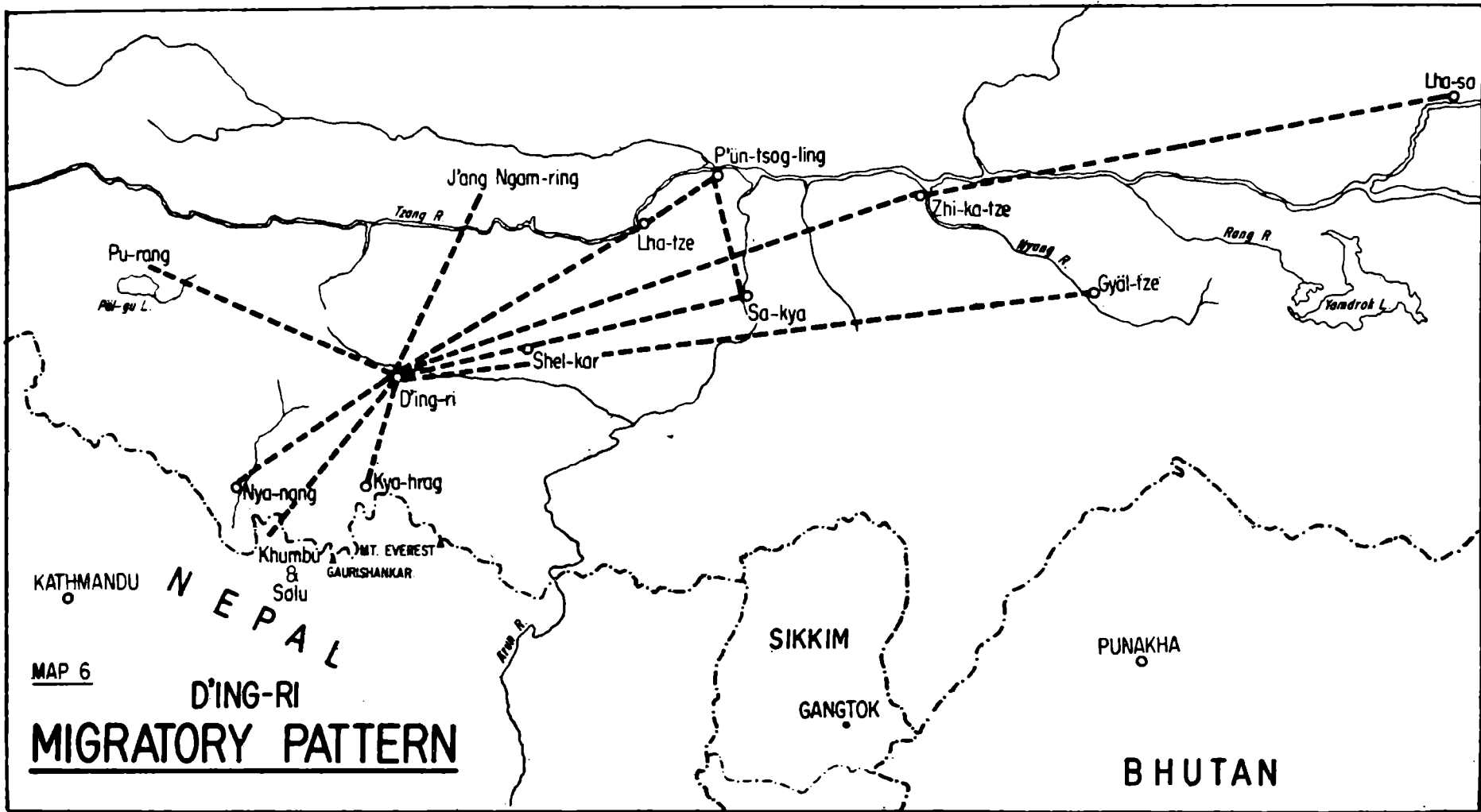
<sup>29</sup>Family history is reckoned in terms of ascending generations in one particular household. See also, *ibid*, Chapter Five.

locality outside D'ing-ri. Sometimes the descendant talking to me even knew the particular conditions of his ancestral migration to D'ing-ri; of course, he did tend to have more precise information if the latter was one of privileged rank coming to take up new lands leased to him for some noble service.

In its recent history, D'ing-ri is remembered as an area where land has been plentiful. Almost everyone I met who has some knowledge of past conditions commented on the availability of new markets and arable land, and some even attributed the high migration to the new opportunities that presented themselves. Zu-tzo in north-west D'ing-ri on the way to Pu-rang was one of the least developed parts of D'ing-ri, remaining relatively uninhabited until about the middle of the 19th century. Several of my informants come from there; the older ones recall how undeveloped the valley was in the days of their youth. They even remember some localities, formerly vacant and uninhabited, which in 1959 had become villages of several households. Indeed, in all my inquiries among Zu-tzo people, I found no one who could trace their descent further back than four generations; furthermore, they all claim original ancestry in another part of Tibet. These external associations are somewhat puzzling, for while they go a step beyond D'ing-ri to an outside locale, they provide no information about that "place of origin" beyond its name. They are unable to tell us anything about the members of their family who remained there and did not migrate to D'ing-ri, since no contact between the branch that remained and that of the D'ing-ri *émigré* is maintained. Kong-po D'ar-gyā's family history below embodies the pattern that we see among so many established rural households of D'ing-ri.

*Case Seven—Kong-po D'ar-gyā (born in 1927), at Göñ-mar Zu-tzo in D'ing-ri*

The name Kong-po by which this house is known is a legacy of its original ancestors who had come to D'ing-ri from the region of Kong-po much further east. The first emigrants from Kong-po settled in Pu-rang, north of D'ing-ri about 1820. They were several brothers in D'ar-gyā's grandfather's generation; two were powerful administrators in the Pu-rang administration and one was a monk in a government monastery there. Both P'ur-bu, who held the rank of *chi-ky'ab* and Nor-bu who was of lower rank were in charge of thousands of Pu-rang nomads and had been appointed there by the



MAP 6

D'ING-RI  
MIGRATORY PATTERN

BHUTAN

government.<sup>30</sup> This was probably a result of their long and loyal service in Pu-rang.

When the family moved to D'ing-ri, Nor-bu was made a military officer and held that post until his death. P'ur-bu meanwhile built up the family estate at Gön-mar in Zu-tzo. And the monk left his sanctuary in Pu-rang to marry a D'ing-ri woman from Män-mä, so he settled not far from the others. The fourth brother who had been a herder in Pu-rang continued that vocation when he moved to D'ing-ri, but when Dza-rong Monastery was built he became a recluse there.

There were two sons born to the Gön-mar house. One is Do-je, born in 1893; the other is Jig-me. The wife, brought from a wealthier house than theirs, from the village of P'u-ri nearby, was shared by the brothers.

Repeating that pattern, our informant D'ar-gyä has also had a poly-andric union with his brother and their common wife. By the time of their marriage the family had expanded activities into long-distance trade, thereby extending its contacts into the urban communities, which eventuated in the rural family securing its last *na-ma* (bride) from one of the rich Zhi-ka-tze houses. That betrothal remains one of the few examples of a Zhi-ka-tze family effecting a marriage (indirectly by way of Gang-gar) into the rural society.

It was probably the same wealth and prestige that enabled this household to effect another unusual marriage, one that concerned D'ar-gyä's sister Yu-lha. It was after Yu-lha was widowed from her first marriage that they brought her and her three children back to Gön-mar, where she was married to a man in Ku-ra village (south-west D'ing-ri) with a substantial endowment of new lands there.

The growth of the Kong-po house is an example of the opportunities open to hardworking, skilled and enterprising migrants in D'ing-ri. There were a number of tenant farmers like this one, who by 1940 had become locally powerful, and who dared to challenge the government's attempts to curb their growth. Kong-po and several other D'ing-ri houses accepted new limits imposed on them at this time, but only after they had waged a long legal battle against the Lha-sa regime.

<sup>30</sup>*chi-ky'ab* is a high administrative rank, a term reserved for an appointed headman. According to Buck (1969, p 345) it is a "minister who has general jurisdiction...an official who rules over several districts...a superintendent."

The next two cases differ from those above but typify concurrent patterns in population growth. In both examples that follow, a settled family receives a migrant member from elsewhere.

*Case Eight—From the History of a Polyandrous Household in the Village of Nub-lung*

My informant is the younger of two half-brothers who now share the same wife. This man, Tra-shi, is the son of Dröl-ma, a Nub-lung woman. His half-brother is his mother's sister's son. Their father is a trader from Pu-rang who came to D'ing-ri regularly and stayed with the two sisters while he was in the area. When Tra-shi, his sister, and his half-brother were born, the Pu-rang man acknowledged paternity and contributed to their care. However, he never moved to D'ing-ri, so they were never a complete family unit until Tra-shi and his brother married. Although not full brothers they were of the same house and their mothers were sisters, so it was natural for them to form a polyandrous unit when they received a *na-ma* from north-east D'ing-ri.

Tra-shi has always worked at cultivation, and he operated the water mill at Nub-lung in addition to farming. If they had done only this they would probably not have improved their social status, but the family saw that the eldest boy received an education, even if it was only tutorship with a local religious scholar. Within only a few years, Tra-shi's brother was on his way to becoming a doctor, and before long became one of the chief medical practitioners in D'ing-ri, and the family was no longer thought of as *d'ü-ch'ung*. (Tra-shi's sister was sent as a *na-ma* to a Nya-nang house and had therefore emigrated from D'ing-ri when she married.)

*Case Nine—Sö-nam, a Lang-kor Girl, Married a Man from Sa-kya*

From the time she was in her teens Sö-nam had meant to become an ascetic, and she went to Dza-rong Monastery to study with her paternal aunt there. As usual she returned to Lang-kor village for the winter months, and it was on one of these visits home that she was seduced. She became pregnant and had to leave the *gön-pa*. The man, an itinerant labourer from Sa-kya, was employed by Sö-nam's family at the time of the incident and he remained with them for some months following. They were married shortly; a new house was built in the village, and some provision for land further enabled them to establish their new house within Lang-kor.

Cases like these bring out the range of conditions and developments that migration into D'ing-ri has entailed. Whether it is the continuation of an earlier position or a result of local socio-economic factors within D'ing-ri, the migrants spread out into several socio-economic statuses.

From numerous cases similar to these the social structure of D'ing-ri becomes apparent, and one of the first signs of that shape is a differentiation of the rural population into two parts. One part is represented by Kong-po D'ar-gyã, a house of long-settled, continually prospering migrants. The other part, composed of poor itinerants, is exemplified in the cases of Sö-nam and Tra-shi. According to these and parallel accounts the *émigré* ancestors of richer houses (such as Kong-po) arrived in D'ing-ri under far more favourable and accommodating circumstances. Whereas the latter settled through a process of absorption into the lower ranks of D'ing-ri society, the earlier settlers claim a more elite, prestigious entry. If it is true that in the past these new migrants of higher status were leased lands on a rather more generous basis, then the process of settlement and the pattern of migration in recent years has changed greatly.

Records of migrants who arrived here after 1925 show that no one has settled with primary leasing rights in any way similar to those awarded to the Kong-po house. The current generation of migrants, as reflected in scores of personal histories are, with few exceptions, itinerant labourers. Where they find new prosperity, it is usually a result of individual mobility achieved through marriage and economic enterprise. This could only be possible with the more secure social base and a thriving economy which have offset new limitations imposed by a revised government policy regarding settlement in D'ing-ri. After 1925, the Lha-sa administration did not lose interest in the development of this region; on the contrary, it was extending its power here and in doing so it introduced restraints on the expansion of settlers which it had favoured earlier. Immigration and trade continued but the generous land grants were ended.

The richest and most powerful descendants of earlier settlers have become involved in litigation against Lha-sa in their vigorous attempts to thwart the latter's encroachment on their rights. (Many of these cases were still under litigation in 1959 when the Chinese administration assumed complete authority and the D'ing-ri settlers decided to leave the country.) Meanwhile the settled agriculturalists and traders absorbed the new migrants and might even have prospered with their arrival.

An interdependence between the two categories of agriculturalists living in the rural hamlets developed, the expansion of tenants' estate being contingent upon the available itinerant labour force. Labour has been one of the scarce resources in modern D'ing-ri—a fact repeatedly cited by tenant farmers and traders alike as the main factor they strove to overcome. The numerous social arrangements they devised in their daily living, such as pairing sons in polyandry, detaining daughters at home and promoting household solidarity and cooperative labour groups, are discussed at various points throughout this book.

Sometimes mechanisms like polyandry do not prove as effective a labour-producing device as D'ing-ri-wa would like to think, but people are nevertheless aware of the seriousness of scarce labour in their economy, and they are probably right in their conclusions about their type of economic organization largely hinging on the availability of labour.

It is possible that the most astute of the D'ing-ri entrepreneurs developed or utilized a brokerage system to recruit labourers into the area. We have no direct evidence of this, only the accounts of the labourers who came here, having heard that employment was available. A high proportion of individual migrants, as reflected in cases 4, 8 and 9 had no kinship ties to help them upon arrival and had therefore to depend on growing market demands.

What we are able to reconstruct here is the spontaneous foundation of a heterogeneous society. We can trace the beginning of an urban community and its surrounding rural system. We can follow the development of values in the rural population and understand the reasons for their attitude towards the townspeople.

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## Social Stratification

The social and economic differences in D'ing-ri's growing population separate people into distinct social groups, each of which exhibits a set of distinctive features and relates to others in characteristic ways. This chapter will explore these divisions.

D'ing-ri's 12,000 people exhibit a diversity of social rank and economic class greater than any other Tibetan community so far described. We have already introduced several points in this diversity: the rural-urban contrast, the long-settled and the more recent itinerant migrants and the bandits and military officers who both share a particular interest in this frontier community.

### FOUR ENDOGAMOUS GROUPS

Underlying the various economic classes is a more fundamental four-fold system of social stratification. That is to say the society is divided into four socially distinct categories, and it is within each of these that the secondary economic differences further distinguish people. D'ing-ri, and probably much of Tibet, cannot be explained in a simple peasant feudal model; it is not a herding society and cannot therefore be explained by models of nomadic and hunting principles; neither does it conform to the Indian caste system. There are some of each of these social



ideals in D'ing-ri, but applying only one misses the others.<sup>1</sup> The only way to understand the social structure is by piecing it together from D'ing-ri field material and applying the same standards of differentiation and rank that the people use among themselves. This is the first time that such a method of analysis is possible because of the detailed ethnographic data now available from a single region.

There are four social groups in D'ing-ri for which membership is ascribed by birth. Every member of the society (and every Tibetan throughout the country) belongs to one or other of the four: *ngag-pa* (priest), *gcr-pa* (noble), *mi-ser* (commoner) and *ya-wa* (outcaste). As endogamous units combined into a system, these seem to approximate the Hindu *varna* model of society with its fundamental division into four ranks.

The parallel between the Tibetan and Indian systems was the subject of discussion between N J Allen and myself during the years 1970-74. He had gathered new data on Nepalese tribal structures which, together with my findings on Tibetan social organization in D'ing-ri, enlarged our perspective. Allen uses the comparative data in search of an evolutionary theory of South Asian societies (Allen, 1977). He carefully avoids a complete analogy between the Tibetan groups and the Indian castes, although the four-fold parallel is initially attractive. But my own evidence shows that the Tibetan and Hindu systems are dissimilar in several important ways.<sup>2</sup> The Tibetan *ngag-pa* is unlike the Hindu Brahmin in his religious functions; the elaborate principle of ritual pollution in Hindu society is far less developed among the Tibetans; the Hindu economic system of *jati* is absent in Tibetan society. Finally, the Tibetans do not recognize their system as analogous to the Indian one. Unlike the Indian, the Tibetan does not express the social system as a social or religious ideology.

The four-fold system I describe in the following pages is evidenced in social behaviour I observed, living among D'ing-ri people. In none

<sup>1</sup>Most commentators on the society of Tibet have drawn on a peasant-feudal model. They are Bell, Carrasco, Cassinelli and Ekvall, Kawakita, Snellgrove and Richardson, Stein, Tucci, and Vidal.

Ekvall's *Fields on the Hoof* (1968) is an excellent ethnography of a Tibetan nomadic society. Although D'ing-ri proper has no nomads, some of the social mechanisms here also pertain to the *Fields on the Hoof* people.

<sup>2</sup>These ideas were first presented and subsequently published (Aziz, 1974) in a summary paper on Tibetan descent and residence, along with a paper by Allen (1977) at the London Anthropology of Nepal Symposium in 1973.

of my numerous personal interviews with all classes of D'ing-ri people was a conscious system of ordered relationships verbally articulated. But every D'ing-ri-wa is a member of one of the four groups by virtue of his or her *gyü*,<sup>3</sup> an inherited attribute.

*ngag-pa*

*ngag-pa* are hereditary priests, often called *la-ma*.<sup>4</sup> *ngag-pa* priests are married and possess what is known as the *dung-gyü*, a distinctive spiritual quality transmitted by descent. Most of the males who inherit the *dung-gyü* are expected to practice religion; for those who choose not to, the potential is nevertheless retained and passes on to the next generation.

One finds *ngag-pa* of varying economic statuses and with different social ranks as well. Some, like the K'on line of Sa-kya<sup>5</sup> are very exalted; others have a limited reputation and own only modest estates. The latter is the level where we find D'ing-ri *ngag-pa*. Compared to others throughout Tibet, D'ing-ri priests are relatively minor; but whatever their relationships to other *ngag-pa*, when compared to other social groups, they enjoy the highest status.

As an endogamous group, all those with *ngag-pa dung-gyü* prefer to marry others of the same descent. If such a priest takes as his wife a woman who is not descended from a *ngag-pa*, he does not lose his prestige or his rights. However, people then expect his line to be endangered because such marriages usually produce no issue, or at best an heir who is weak.

A *ngag-pa* household is referred to as a *la-dr'ang* or *la-ma* estate, and is usually attached to a *gön-pa* with a larger community of clerics who may be male (*dr'a-pa*) or female (*a-mi*), married or ascetic.<sup>6</sup> There are five *ngag-pa la-dr'ang* in D'ing-ri; none are very wealthy and none

<sup>3</sup>*gyü* signifies heredity. A precise English translation is difficult. Although lineage has become widely used in translations so far, *gyü* is not a descent group as a lineage is. It is only a quality of descent such as "ethnicity" might be. Cf Chapter Six, where descent is discussed in far greater length.

<sup>4</sup>A *la-ma* is a spiritual guide, a superior one, which the *ngag-pa* also are. But *la-ma* is a broader term pertaining to reincarnated spiritual guides and other religious masters. Cf Chapters Ten and Eleven. The common translation of "tantricist" given in many dictionaries should be avoided since it only further obdures the *ngag-pa* identity.

<sup>5</sup>The history of this eminent family is recorded in considerable detail in a study of Sa-kya's political history by Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969.

<sup>6</sup>Cf Chapter Ten on the D'ing-ri *la-ma*.

are known well outside the region, except the Pu-rang La-ma who had come from the vast region of Pu-rang, north-west of D'ing-ri.

*ger-pa* or *ku-dr'ag*<sup>7</sup>

This is the aristocratic sector of Tibetan society. The term *ger* means private, designating the exclusive property rights members enjoy as private landlords. The Tibetan aristocratic culture has been well-documented in several accounts of western writers on Tibet. Their prominent role as government officers, combined with our own curiosity concerning court and political life in Lha-sa, has resulted in their dominating most of our social commentaries.

Each member of this group possesses the *ku-gyü-pa*, obtained only through inheritance. Although they prefer to marry within their own status, Tibetan nobles also contract marriages with women from *ngag-pa* families.

Among the aristocratic Tibetans there is a wide range of social and economic ranks similar to that exhibited by *ngag-pa*. The most eminent noble households in Lha-sa constitute a virtual oligarchy. Although some have less power than others, all are still very wealthy and certainly richer than their neighbours.

Even minor families have access to the most exalted aristocrats through marriage; this is a recognition of a basically equal social status, the recognition of a common *ku-gyü* they share with each other.

All *ku-dr'ag* and *ger-pa* are theoretically descendants of early kings and independent chiefs. Nevertheless, *gyäl*, the Tibetan name for a king or chief, is not applied to all members of this group. It is reserved for only those holding a high office.<sup>8</sup> (I have never heard of a whole class or clan referred to as *gyäl-gyü* in Tibet in the way the Gurung (Pignéde, 1966) apply the term *ghale* to their highest clan.)

<sup>7</sup>The precise difference between the terms *ku-dr'ag* and *ger-pa* is unclear. There is a third, *dr'ag-tän*, listed by Cassinelli and Ekvall (1969, pp 216, 219) and described as a rank higher than *ku-dr'ag*. My informants say the *ku-dr'ag* is an official rank of the *ger-pa*, applied to the nobles who hold high office. The lexicographer Das (1902) lists as the "caste of the nobility" the term *je-rig*, and the "military or royal" caste as *gyäl-rig*. The confusion throughout the literature on the Tibetan etymology of words designated as race, line, caste, tribe, lineage, etc. is more likely a manifestation of the social ambiguities of these terms.

<sup>8</sup>As noted, Das designates *gyäl-rig* as "royal caste." The term is not used in D'ing-ri but in east Tibet, where clans headed by chiefs are extant.

The *ngag-pa* and *ger-pa* together constitute the top stratum of D'ing-ri's social structure; which is higher is impossible to decide. Their occasional exchange of women does not move in any systematic fashion that would allow us to identify one as wife-giver and the other as wife-receiver. Neither is there a definitive prestige or purity principle according to which they can be hierarchically ranked. A D'ing-ri commoner, indisputably ranked below the two, would be hard-pressed to assign a superior position to the priests over the nobles, or vice versa. His judgement is always qualified by the personal status of any particular *ger-pa* or *ngag-pa* according to the current socio-economic condition of that individual.

The five *ngag-pa* families in D'ing-ri represent a total number of forty to fifty individuals, a fraction of one per cent of the population.<sup>9</sup> All five *ngag-pa la-ma* are known throughout D'ing-ri but are nevertheless minor figures compared to their own ancestors or with their contemporaries in other parts of Tibet who have amassed large estates. However modest they seem, these local *ngag-pa* express the ideals of their group; they trace their descent to specific *la-ma* ancestors and continue their work as exalted priests; they practice endogamy and so on.

As for the *ku-dr'ag* or *ger-pa*, there are no households in D'ing-ri which are exclusively of the nobility. Members of this group prefer to live in the large administrative centres. A few own lands in D'ing-ri occupied by commoners, so they collect the taxes and remain at their main estates outside D'ing-ri. There are a number of individual *ger-pa*, men and women who originally came here on administrative assignments or in marriage. (The administrators are usually men, the married *ger* settlers being women.)

The population of *ger-pa* in D'ing-ri, combined with that of *ngag-pa* inhabitants amounts to an estimated hundred and twenty-five, that is only 1 per cent of the total population.<sup>10</sup> (Cf Table A.) Even

<sup>9</sup>No quantitative data exist for this group, although there is frequent mention of the *ngag-pa* throughout the literature on Tibet.

<sup>10</sup>In the earlier part of this century there were five noble households living within D'ing-ri. At that time they were branches of others but by the middle of the century only a few aristocratic individuals continue to reside here. One author (Prince Peter, 1963) writes that throughout Tibet the noble households number three hundred, but we have no figures for particular regions, except the estimate of twenty-four noble houses said to be in Sa-kya principality (Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969, p 357). In either case we do not know what proportion of the total population these figures represent.

such a small proportion of a population shapes its social structure, since with their endogamy and their claim to superiority reinforced by land and office privileges sanctioned by the government, they define the position of other (lower) groups in an overall hierarchy. The implications for descent, residence and marriage practices among Tibetans deriving from such a structure are discussed at length in later chapters.

### *mi-ser*

These are the commoners. (They are also referred to as *mi-mang* and *mang-rig*.) *mi-ser* literally translated is "yellow people." (*mi-mang* implies a populace.)

Tibetans have no name for the *gyü* of common people. They say that all members of this large group have the *mi-ser-gyü-pa*, but they cannot define the associated attributes. So the inherited characteristics of *mi-ser* remain rather nebulous and serve only to identify members, not to imbue in them a special rank or power. The *mi-ser* becomes a kind of residual category welcoming all those who do not fit into other more rigorously defined superior and outcaste groups.

The political and economic role of *mi-ser* is such that it is often translated as "subject people," but writers who applied this term were dealing only with the gross economic and political status of the commoner Tibetan and overlooked his social attributes. To avoid the danger of misleading English terms I would prefer to retain the Tibetan *mi-ser* with its bundle of particular social attributes and its identity as a single endogamous group.

About 90 per cent of the D'ing-ri population falls within this group, so that the *mi-ser* life style dominates D'ing-ri culture. Economic groups such as agriculturalists, labourers and traders are all subsumed with the *mi-ser*, thus differentiating it further. Because so much of the character of D'ing-ri culture is defined by the interaction of these sub-groups, each group will be defined more fully in the second section of this chapter. We proceed now with the last of the four major social ranks—*ya-wa*, which is the lowest.

### *ya-wa*

The outcaste people, called *ya-wa*, are at the bottom of the D'ing-ri social hierarchy. They account for a little over 9 per cent of the total population, but constitute a significant minority. The existence of this group is fundamental in the total ranking system and a key to the

social behaviour and ideology of the Tibetan people.

The outcaste Tibetan is also called *pang-go* and *döl-pa*.<sup>11</sup> All of them are believed to be irrevocably defiled and others must therefore strictly avoid intimate contact with them. When discussing the heredity of *ya-wa*, informants do not specify the *gyü*, except to say that the outcaste possess a *ya-wa-gyü-pa*. Membership in this group is inherited, just as it is in each of the others.

Although birth is the means by which the *ya-wa-gyü* is acquired, anyone can become similarly defiled as a result of his or her extensive contact with the outcastes. This status usually originates in a sexual liaison which incurs severe ostracism for both partners. The miscreant loses his social status but retains his (*mi-ser*) *gyü* since *ya-wa-gyü* is derived only through descent.

Although the town of Gang-gar accounts for less than 10 per cent of the total population, half of all D'ing-ri *ya-wa* live here. (The other half reside throughout the rural areas; cf Table A.) The *ya-wa* are more tolerated in the town. In villages, prevented from holding land even as sharecroppers and subject to continuous disapproval, they find themselves constantly on the move. When they are permitted to stay in a locality, it is only for the purpose of doing the disagreeable but necessary work of butchering and preparing hides.

The above outline suffices as an introduction to the *ya-wa*, compared to the other three endogamous groups making up the D'ing-ri (and the Tibetan) social structure. Hereditary priests and aristocrats are discussed again in the chapters on descent and residence, while the culture of the commoners is elaborated in the later documentation of their internal economic class structure. At this point it is appropriate to enlarge upon the culture of Tibetan outcastes with some detailed ethnography from D'ing-ri.

<sup>11</sup>These words are listed in a number of dictionaries, but no social commentator has written about these people in terms of a caste or class.

Buck (p 62) translates *pang-go* as beggar, but I have been told *pang-go* is the Lha-sa equivalent of *ya-wa*.

Jäschke (pp 268, 647), describes *döl-pa* as men of the lowest and most despised caste, lower than the *man-rig* which Das (p 464) ranks at the very bottom. (*man-rig* is treated by Buck, p 657, as merely "ordinary citizen.") There is another group called *ragyaba* which is variously defined: Landon (1905, pp 209-210) describes these people as a tribe of beggar scavengers; Das claims that Tibetan authorities recognize the *ragyaba* as a tribe of refuge for all rascals in the country.

## TO BE AN OUTCASTE IN D'ING-RI

The group characteristics of *ya-wa* were unhesitatingly and consciously expressed during my regular dealings with D'ing-ri people. I recall a conversation with my cook in which we were discussing a particular outcaste man. She had claimed he was evil, and when I retorted that in my dealings with him I had not found him so, she conceded with the remark, "He's not too bad, but his kind of people are evil. All the *ya-wa* are dangerous," she concluded.

The girl's remarks are illustrative of the general feeling among D'ing-ri-wa that carries a certain anxiety and uneasiness towards all *ya-wa*. Regardless of individual exception, the group embodies evil, threatens defilement and evokes revulsion.<sup>12</sup> Defilement, although it cannot be spelt out by a D'ing-ri inhabitant, may be defined through the analysis of case histories I collected in the course of my anthropological fieldwork.

Like the Sherpa in Nepal (Fürer-Haimendorf, 1964, pp 34-37, 91, 103, 124), people in southern Tibet do not order their social relationships so absolutely in accordance with a principle of ritual pollution as the Hindus of India and Nepal do. Furthermore, outcaste individuals in both Sherpa and Tibetan society have a chance (albeit a limited one) for upward mobility that will lift them into the mainstream of their society. Interaction is facilitated through commensality among all Tibetans including *ya-wa*, who join public gatherings and are served food and liquor along with other guests. In addition to secular foods, *ya-wa* can also take ritual foods, votive offerings (*tsog*) distributed throughout the community.

There are only two rules that are firmly applied in effecting the outcaste of a *ya-wa* from the rest of society. These are the prohibition on sexual relations and on sharing the same drinking cup. Whereas all other Tibetans (within the limits set by incest rules) may engage in sexual relations without fear of pollution, they may not do so where a *ya-wa* is involved. Some leniency may be exercised in particular cases where they become public; clandestine relations go on here as they do throughout the society. But there are no betrothals. Marriages, where they occur,

<sup>12</sup>It is possible that *ya-wa* do not follow the strict rules of incest that forbid sexual relations among kin related through seven generations. As incest is a particularly heinous act for these Tibetans, to associate with any group that practices it may be particularly offensive and bring upon the participant a permanent state of pollution.

are accepted as the only alternative for the non-*ya-wa* partner who is effectively banished from his own social group. Disruptive cases of sexual relations between *ya-wa* and others occur so infrequently that one can live among Tibetans for months without witnessing the social ostracism that can result. The expression of pollution is more obvious although equally firm, however, at parties and feasts.

Practices of drinking together, as the couplet below describes, separates the *ya-wa* from the rest of the society:

If a *ya-wa* is to join the party,  
he first has to sing a solo.

Since it is not customary for anyone to sing a solo at the outset of a party, this is an indirect way of announcing that *ya-wa* are never welcome. They ought not to be there at all.

When *ya-wa* are present, as they occasionally are at Gang-gar parties (and where I worked in Nepal), then there is a subtle mechanism which effectively separates them out from the others—a single rule about who may share the drinking cup that is passed around to each guest, refilled and passed on without washing or wiping. Those who are not defiled share one glass, while each *ya-wa* has a glass of her own.<sup>13</sup>

This method of segregation is arranged discreetly with the *ya-wa* complying to the rule with apparent acquiescence. The practice almost passed me unnoticed at the outset of my research during a party in my house. We were about ten women in all, and as hostess I offered our common glass to one of my guests, not knowing she was a *ya-wa*. Before she could accept—and I recall her hesitation—another woman who was present, gracefully and adroitly removed the cup from my extended hands, assuring me that she had made provision for the outcaste member, and a separate filled cup was immediately offered the quiet recipient. Although complacent at the time of the incident, the outcaste woman later fought openly with my mentor, protesting her treatment at the party. But everyone else at the party agreed that my helper had acted correctly.

It is not usual for *ya-wa* to object to such discriminating treatment. If they do so, they would find themselves completely excluded from social gatherings in their village. Virtually all local gatherings—reli-

<sup>13</sup>This custom is the origin of the euphemistic term *k'a-min-dro* which is a contraction of the phrase *k'a-ira-ki-min-dro* (we do not give our mouth).



gious, political and otherwise—begin or end with drinking, so that prohibiting a person from engaging in that commensality effectively blackballs him from normal social intercourse.

*ya-wa* membership is ascribed by birth. Full *ya-wa* status derives from both parents being *ya-wa*, which is usually the case, given the preference for endogamy within the group. Although it is held that *ya-wa-gyü* is transferred by both parents, inheritance through the father (cf patrilineal descent, Chapter Six) is stronger. The patrilineal preference operating here becomes apparent in unions between *ya-wa* and non-outcastes (usually *mi-ser*).

There are occasional marriages between *ya-wa* and others despite the prohibitions, and several cases came to my attention partly because they caused great social upheaval at the time and also because they invited gossip and social commentary. That they remained the subject of gossip for many years after, greatly facilitated my research, and in the next few pages detailed case histories are listed.

Early in my research I noticed that there is a different treatment of *ya-wa* according to whether they are patrilineally or matrilineally related with their group. Where the father is a *ya-wa* and the mother is not, the child's status is full *ya-wa*. If it is only the mother who is an outcaste in D'ing-ri, then the children enjoy an intermediate status called *t'eo-tr'a-ril*, a rank not as low as *ya-wa* and promising chances for mobility. *t'eo-tr'a-ril*, meaning a cord of twisted, interwoven threads, seems an ideal metaphor.

#### *Case Ten*

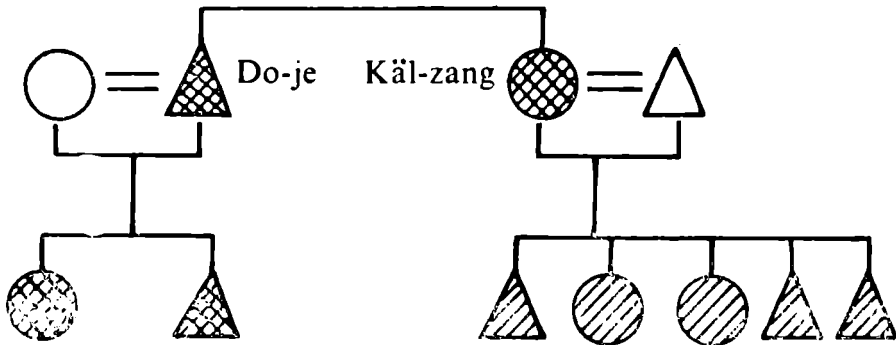
The example of a *ya-wa* brother and sister illustrates the role of patrilineal descent in related cases of *ya-wa* marrying *mi-ser*.

The man Do-je married a *mi-ser* woman from D'ing-ri and his sister married a low class *mi-ser*. Each has children who, together with their parents, experience some degree of ostracism. They are not all treated alike, however; Do-je and his children are considered full *ya-wa* whereas the sister Käl-zang and her family are less tainted. Although Do-je's daughter is attractive and ready to marry she has no suitors from among *mi-ser* youths. She has few friends and is not invited to share a drinking glass with others. She is pretty and makes herself available, hoping to become pregnant. Young men come to visit the girl but they are careful to keep their visits clandestine, since if they were discovered as regular visitors it would jeopardize

their chances of marrying someone in their own higher class.<sup>14</sup>

The position of Käl-zang's children is somewhat different since the outcaste status obtaining to their mother is weak and their *mi-ser* identity passed through their father is stronger. Their chances of marrying outside their outcaste group is greater and the two girls who have now reached marriageable age talk without hesitation about boyfriends who are *mi-ser*.

The genealogical graph below shows the differential strength of the two branches of the family. Do-je's descendants retain full status, while those of Käl-zang are ameliorated, although still tainted. Do-je's type of union (a *mi-ser* woman and a *ya-wa*) is unusual in D'ing-ri, for although it introduces a pure strain into the marriage, it does not reduce



his or their children's impurity. It therefore affords no opportunity for social mobility.

Since the arrangement Käl-zang made does offer some advantage, this is a more common kind of union. Matrimony is reached by agreement between the couple themselves since no *mi-ser* family would negotiate a betrothal for an outcaste wife. Another possibility for outcaste women is to avoid marriage but have children by higher status men. These children would be *t'eo-tr'a-ril*. Gya-tso, whose case is outlined below, is such a child.

*Case Eleven*

Gya-tso, born in 1945 in Gang-gar, is the illegitimate son of De-ch'en (cf following case), conceived in the house of a local officer

<sup>14</sup>Outcaste parents give their daughters considerable sexual licence, and allow boys to visit them hoping the girls will become pregnant. They may not be so lucky to secure a *mi-ser* son-in-law in this way, but the illegitimate child and its mother would have some chances for mobility.

while the woman was a servant there. Although his mother is still limited in her social intercourse in the community, Gya-tso has over the years been able to take advantage of his intermediate status and ameliorate his position, so that he now has numerous friends in the village. He has little to do with other *ya-wa* apart from his mother, and is known by everyone as a gentle and sociable young man who is never troublesome. One would not guess he is of pariah ancestry and it is slightly apparent only at parties and in his unsuccessful attempt to marry with a commoner.

Since Gya-tso is a musician and a likeable young man he is often welcomed at local parties and by now he is so widely accepted that the communal drinking vessel is shared with him. This offends some villagers, however, including two of his own patrilineal kinspeople who still refuse to share their cup with the boy. Gya-tso's marriage prospects are similarly ambiguous.

Gya-tso had no difficulty effecting sexual liaisons with higher status girls, but when he decided he wanted one of them as his wife, even though she had borne him one child and was pregnant with the second, he encountered some opposition. The couple are not yet cohabiting but a marriage is probable since the girl and Gya-tso like each other, because he shows concern for the children and because he shares in their upbringing. A problem arises over a formal betrothal and the residence of the couple if they marry. According to custom it ought to be a patrilocal marriage but the girl refuses to come and live in the house of a *ya-wa*. (Gya-tso lives with his mother, a sister, and a maternal grandmother.) Her parents will not permit Gya-tso to move into their house. A new residence could be set up, and that is probably what will eventually happen. Meanwhile Gya-tso finds it difficult to break the custom which would have him receive his wife and children at his own residence. As the main provider and the only son, his family depend heavily upon him.<sup>15</sup>

It is unlikely that Gya-tso's children will experience the same problems as he has had, being one generation further removed from outcaste status. The difference between them and their grandmother's experience, outlined on the next page, shows that considerable mobility is possible for matrilineally related *ya-wa*.

<sup>15</sup>I first became familiar with this case in Nepal in 1970. When I met Gya-tso he had one child; by 1971 the second was born, though he and their mother were not yet cohabiting. But by 1975 they had all set up a new household in the village and lived there as a new nuclear family.

*Case Twelve*

When I met De-ch'en in 1970 she was sixty-seven, still very attractive and can even now sing the classical Tibetan songs which hypnotize and enchant. Her fine features are a reminder of the early beauty so few Gang-gar men could resist. Living in the town with her mother, De-ch'en had worked as a servant girl and become the favourite of a high government official posted to Gang-gar. It was daring for him to have her live with him and his wife who was barren, and to let it be known that De-ch'en was his concubine. It is unusual for his wife to have permitted this as well; but the man, Ch'ö-gyäl, was a forceful personality with considerable political power, so his social liaisons had to be tolerated. When De-ch'en gave birth to his son Gya-tso, she was permitted to remain in his house and she and the boy were cared for as long as Ch'ö-gyäl lived. Gya-tso was still a child when he died, but the boy and his mother were ejected from the house without benefits or sympathy.

Although De-ch'en had several suitors afterwards and another child, a daughter, from one of them, she never married. We spoke together about her past and she referred to her status openly, and with some pride over the fact that her lover (Gya-tso's father) had been a high official. De-ch'en also commends Ch'ö-gyäl's wife for her tolerance while it lasted. She now thinks she was well treated and suggests that if she were not a *ya-wa*, Gya-tso would undoubtedly have been adopted by his father, inheriting both wealth and status. That her son has in any case done well and enjoys the friendship of many, pleases De-ch'en. Both she and others pointed out to me that his father had been a powerful individual, thereby reinforcing the more acceptable side of the boy's descent.

Although De-ch'en and her son have experienced exclusion and some obstacles, their rejection is far milder because they live in Gang-gar rather than in the rural areas. Cases of outcaste and commoner inter-relations are less frequent in the villages than the town. But when they do occur, the reaction is far less tolerant. The following two cases taken from recent rural history, both involve rich agriculturalists. They are notorious situations and remain fraught with bitterness.

*Case Thirteen*

Rong-tza house is one of the leading families in D'ing-ri. Over the four generations the family has been settled here, it has extended

its estate and its political influence to become one of the richest of the commoners. Although not an owner of land, Rong-tza exercises control over the other houses in the village who are tied to it as sharecroppers. The high status of the house has allowed it to secure wives over the last three generations from higher ranked families outside D'ing-ri.

My informant is Rig-dzin, grandson of Pā-ma, the delinquent member of the family. Pā-ma was the elder of the brothers sharing a wife in polyandry who had one child. He was the household head at the time he entered into liaison with an outcaste woman working as a labourer in their village. As soon as the affair became known the family was acutely embarrassed and felt obliged to take strong action against the miscreant brother by evicting him from the house. Pā-ma and his new wife eventually had two children and although they remained in the same village, he never again spoke to his family. Having lost all property rights in the original house, Pā-ma had to become a labourer like his wife.

The elder son of the ostracized couple, Lhag-pa is a *t'eo-tr'a-ril*, and as such is not condemned to full *ya-wa* status.

These children, like Gya-tso (case eleven), will not be subject to the same degree of exclusion as Pā-ma was. Indeed, Lhag-pa married a low class *mi-ser* girl. However, even though some in the society accept this, the other branch of the proud Rong-tza family adamantly refuse to rescind. Pā-ma is dead and Lhag-pa's children are now grown and have themselves married commoners without difficulty. The persistent shame and distance the original house feels was expressed by Rig-dzin, initially avoiding any reference to Pā-ma and his descendants in our first interview. Only when I confronted Rig-dzin with what I had learned about Pā-ma from elsewhere, did he acknowledge the matter. I was personally able to observe the continuing strain between the two families, and I also felt the embarrassment in Rig-dzin's voice when he conceded to my questions about the matter.

There has been some amelioration in a similar case below, another rich and long-established household of D'ing-ri agriculturalists.

#### *Case Fourteen*

Here, P'ün-tzog is my informant and the original transgressor. He and his twin Dön-dr'üb, born illegitimately, had been permitted to remain in the house of their mother's brother (*a-zhang*) where they were

eventually accorded equal status with the mother's brother's son. Therefore when the *na-ma* Ch'ö-kyi was received as a bride, the twins and their cousin all shared her in polyandry.

It was some years afterwards that P'ün-tsog had sexual relations with a *ya-wa* villager. As soon as Ch'ö-kyi learnt about this she divorced him, as is her right, and refused him entry into their house.

Like Pā-ma in case thirteen, P'ün-tsog lost all property rights and ended up with a much reduced economic status and with no alternative but to move in with the outcaste mistress. Surprisingly, he was joined a few years later by his twin brother, Dön-dr'üb. So a new polyandric unit was formed with the *ya-wa*, and the original wife was left with her single husband.

For almost fifteen years P'ün-tsog and Dön-dr'ub were excluded from any communication with their original house. But their cousin and Ch'ö-kyi eventually softened their attitude and received the twins as visitors in their home. Ch'ö-kyi is firm, however, that she would never resume intercourse with either of them, and no one in the family shares a drinking cup with the miscreants.

P'ün-tsog in particular says he likes to visit his former wife and their children, since he still feels like a father to those who were born before he was banished from the house. Both brothers still resent having been denied their property rights, and generally agree they have been too harshly treated.

D'ing-ri-wa who are familiar with these two cases express no sympathy for the offenders. But neither are they strongly critical. Their attitude when recounting the incidents is moralistic; these stories are reminders of the dangers which an association with the *ya-wa* can incur.

As a contrast to public reaction, kinsmen of the delinquent men react to this day with shame and condemnation. Cohabitation with *ya-wa* is next to incest in the disgrace it causes the kindred. However, no loss of status is attached to the original family if they have acted in accordance with social rules that demand banishment and loss of property rights.

The foregoing D'ing-ri material shows that Tibetans exercise a degree of personal discretion in the matter of outcaste people, treating each individual a little differently, according to his particular situation and personality. The cases of Gya-tso and his mother De-ch'en illustrate that rules can be relaxed for day-to-day living; the cases of Rong-tza and P'ün-tsog (cases thirteen and fourteen) on the other hand show

how rigorously a principle is adhered to where a family's honour is of more concern. This flexibility is reminiscent of how daily life proceeds among different castes in the Indian village of Ramkheri (Mayer, 1960), where people relax or tighten rules according to varying social factors surrounding each case. As far as drawing parallels between Indian and Tibetan outcastes, we still lack evidence of their similarity, and other writers should proceed with great caution in that area of research.<sup>16</sup> We first require much more data on the *ya-wa* social stratum throughout Tibet. Then we will have to thoroughly investigate the Tibetan concept of *dr'ib* which is a general kind of defilement or pollution exhibited in many social situations, including those surrounding birth and death, and are not always associated with *ya-wa*. One reason we have discussed the D'ing-ri outcastes in such detail is to bring some of those issues to the fore and invite further research in the area.

#### INSIDE THE *mi-ser*: THREE CLASSES OF COMMONERS

The *mi-ser* group, at 90 per cent of the population, is large enough to distinguish itself into three different economic classes—agriculturalists (*dr'ong-pa*), traders (*tsong-pa*) and itinerants (*d'ü-ch'ung*) who work as sharecroppers and artisans. These three groups are economically interdependent and are linked so as to be inseparable. Through marriage and expansion they are sometimes overlapping, but in D'ing-ri the geographical distinctions between the urban town and the villages tend to keep the classes geographically and economically apart.

In a general review of *mi-ser* economic classes one might also wish to include the nomadic and the ecclesiastic people, since both the full-time nomads and the large assemblages of monks have each their own economy. As for the nomads, there are none in D'ing-ri proper. They therefore lie beyond the geographical limits of this study. (A large settlement of several hundred nomadic people live in Kya-hrag area, south of D'ingri towards the Nepalese frontier). The monastic population is not considered a separate class because there are many points where the ascetics remain closely attached to their household of origin and their village economy. Perhaps the large government

<sup>16</sup>As far as social mobility is concerned, the Ramkheri study reminds us that in India it is still almost impossible. There, we are told (Mayer, 1960, p 27) that although there are marriages of mixed ancestry, movement in the social hierarchy can only be downward.

monasteries have an independent economy but those are peripheral to the D'ing-ri social structure.

Of the three classes in our purview the first is the *dr'ong-pa*, agriculturalists who reside primarily in the villages. All *tsong-pa*, traders who are full-time businessmen and officials, live in the main market of D'ing-ri—Gang-gar. Many of these merchants are visitors but most are permanently settled here. There is a group of rich villagers and equally wealthy merchants in each of these classes, who, because of their wealth, enjoy a higher status. They do not, however, constitute a power elite.

Both the villages and the town are inhabited by the third class, *d'ü-ch'ung*. These are people of low rank who work as sharecroppers,<sup>17</sup> labourers, servants, artisans. Although members of this class are of lower social and economic status than the other two, they are vital to the economic and social development of D'ing-ri as the most recent migrants to the area and as the sector where the highest degree of social mobility occurs. They are the only class that straddles both the urban and the rural societies.

Readers familiar with Tibet will notice that unlike other writers (Vidal, Goldstein) I have not singled out the *tr'äl-pa* or tax-payers as a distinctive social class, but I have chosen to discuss it in its two constituent parts—the agriculturalists and the merchants. To speak of a tax-payer imposes the same problem as the term "subject" (*mi-scr*), in being too narrowly a politico-economic status. Agriculturalist and trader are strongly economic terms but they also serve to heighten awareness of rural-urban distinctions.

#### *dr'ong-pa*

These are the agriculturalists who, except for four long-settled families in Gang-gar, inhabit the villages throughout D'ing-ri. All are tax-paying tenant farmers, working holdings leased from the government or another landlord.

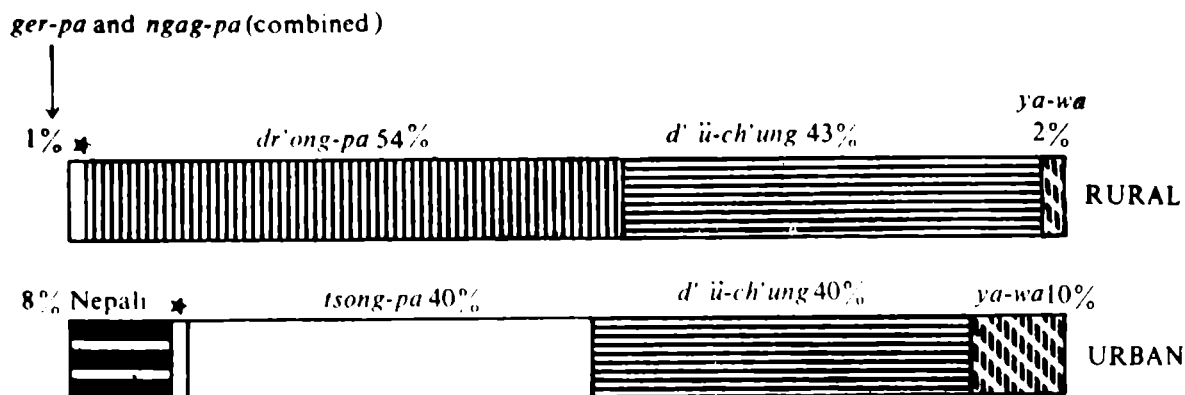
Every *dr'ong-pa* householder is a tenant farmer and as such is bound through his land to a particular landlord. Even though it is almost impossible for him to loosen that tie, the tenant enjoys certain rights. He has hereditarily transferred rights to the holding; he has a voice in the selection of the village leader and in the internal administration

<sup>17</sup>These sharecroppers are all *d'ü-ch'ung*, which in the village is almost synonymous with sharecropping.

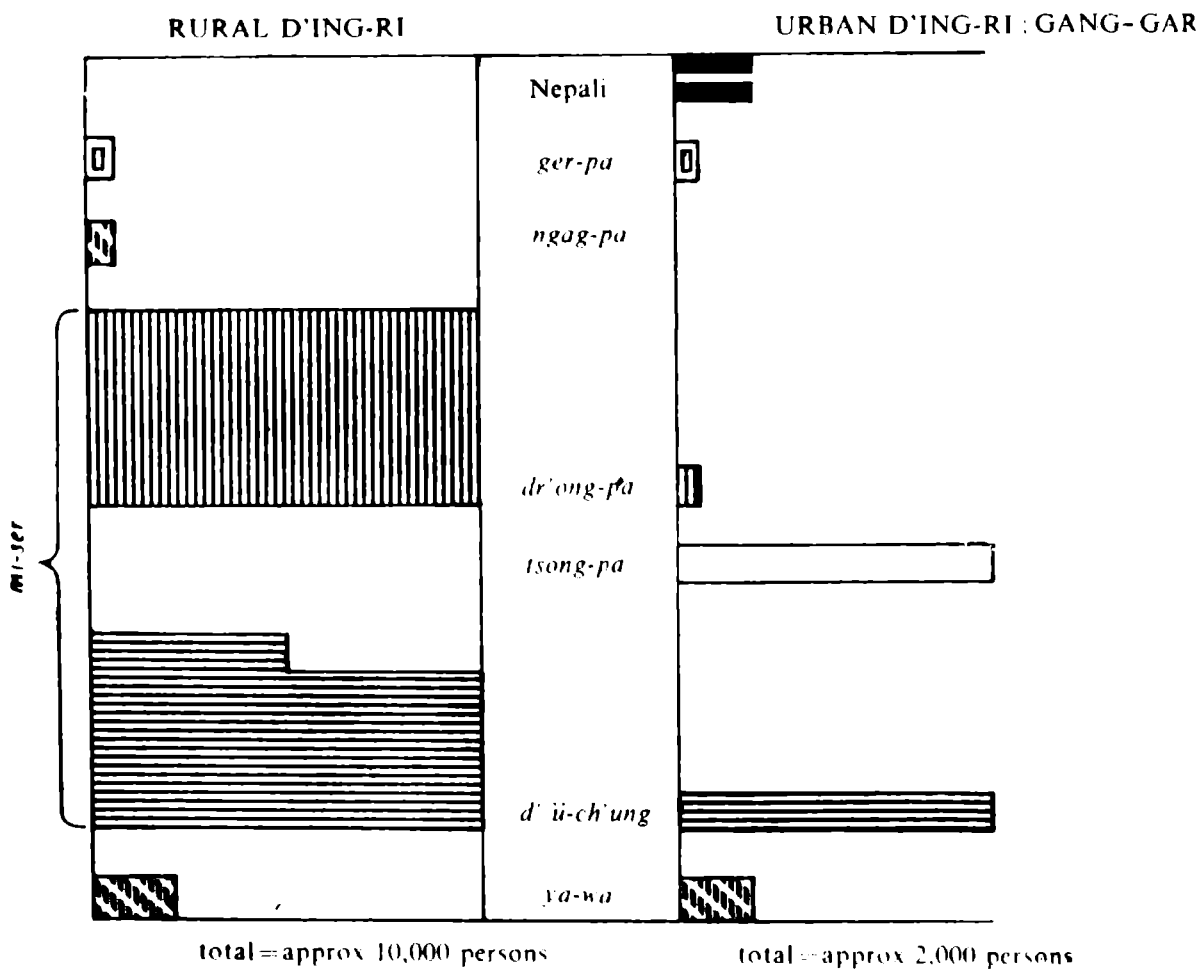


TABLE A

BREAKDOWN OF D'ING-RI POPULATION ACCORDING TO CLASS AND RURAL : URBAN DISTRIBUTION



PER CENT DISTRIBUTION OF CLASSES IN D'ING-RI SOCIETY



of the village and the opportunities for trade and the expansion of property such as sheep and cattle are open to the cultivator, as they are to everyone else.

Most *dr'ong-pa* have their livestock and they also engage in some commercial trade. These are the two areas where initiative and hard work can bring considerable financial rewards, and those agriculturalists who are unusually wealthy have won their prosperity by expanding in these areas, not by developing their land holdings. The most successful *dr'ong-pa* in D'ing-ri have developed their commercial and herding assets by freeing themselves from their land through subleasing to sharecroppers.

By subleasing or by hiring extra labourers, they produce enough grain to feed themselves, meet their tax, and give the labourers a share. Meeting the tax demands of the landlords<sup>18</sup> places a heavy burden on the cultivators and is a constant source of complaint for them, as well as a major obstacle to their making the land pay. It is the drain through tax, they claim, that makes cultivation unprofitable. Commerce and herding, both of which are not as tightly controlled by the government, offer more reward and opportunity for free enterprise.

Even though they complain about the oppressive taxes and express fear of their officials, the rural people enjoy a considerable degree of autonomy within the village, where they run their day-to-day affairs through a democratic local system. One *dr'ong-pa* member is elected to the headship on a rotating basis, while a representative from each *dr'ong-pa* house shares in helping him in the internal administration.

These agriculturalists seem to exhibit the greatest sense of group consciousness among all the social classes in D'ing-ri. This is expressed through their denigration of others, of both the traders and the labourers, and in their deep sense of their own long and privileged association with the area. It is true the *dr'ong-pa* have a sense of continuity and a pride in D'ing-ri culture, but their claim to superiority is an ethnocentric view. If a researcher wanted to determine who the most typical D'ing-ri people were, he would have to choose the *dr'ong-pa*, for it is they who are long established here, being most familiar with local tradition and least influenced by the urban and the itinerant culture. The *dr'ong-pa* class is the most homogeneous of them all, but there is a basic quantitative difference that distinguishes an elite (upper) minority of *dr'ong-pa* from the others.

<sup>18</sup>Cf Chapter Nine.

*Upper dr'ong-pa*

About 10 per cent of these tenant farmers are richer than the others and constitute a kind of elite within the villages. Scattered throughout the area, with only three or four in any single village, they owe their position to historical circumstances and to individual enterprise.

They are the families who came here four or five generations ago after being awarded generous land grants for earlier government service. They are the descendants of the five original *gän-po* (headmen) who enjoyed much more power at the beginning of the century than they do today. Originally the households of each of the following five villages were unusually privileged: Kong-tza Gän-po; Shar-lung Gän-po; Ra-ch'u Gän-po; Yul-ch'ung Gän-po and Shi-pe Gän-po. But since 1959 only Kong-tza Gän-po holds its earlier position, which people parallel with that of a minor noble house. But the four *gän-po* families who lost their power were to be replaced by many more of these rich *dr'ong-pa*, who although they were not to enjoy the same degree of authority, express some similarities.

As it happens the rich agriculturalists find themselves year after year holding the theoretically elected office of *gän-po*. If there are two such families in a village, the office alternates between them and rarely goes to others in the village. This group of houses are each extensively involved in trading and represent the only rural people who leave the villages to go on regular trips to Zhi-ka-tze, Lha-sa and Nya-nang. They distinguish themselves from the other cultivators in their practice of obtaining wives from high status households outside D'ing-ri. If the nobles of Tibet ever marry with *mi-ser* it is in this class of the commoner society. Knowing how close this class is to the aristocrats, local people often comment that they are *mi-ser ger-pa nang-zhin* (just like the private landlords). The English "gentry" might be a fair parallel to these upper *dr'ong-pa*.<sup>19</sup>

As Table A shows, the *dr'ong-pa* class live in rural D'ing-ri. (No distinction between the upper and lower ranks appears in this table.) Surveying the composition of the rural society as a whole the reader will note that apart from a handful of *ger-pa* and *ngag-pa* and a few *ya-wa*, it is largely composed of *dr'ong-pa* and *d'ü-ch'ung* in a ratio of 55:43. The *d'ü-ch'ung* are not confined to the rural areas however, and form a significant proportion of urban society.

<sup>19</sup>Fei (1946) uses the European concepts of peasantry and gentry to interpret social relations within Chinese society

*d'ü-ch'ung*

*d'ü-ch'ung* literally translated is "small-smoke," a most appropriate metaphor for these transient people, the most provisory of all the D'ing-ri classes. *d'ü-ch'ung* have a weak household identity. Consequently their family units are less cohesive. Also characteristic of this class is their unspecified economic role, their low economic status and their exemption from taxation which comes with their disassociation from the land. These conditions allow the *d'ü-ch'ung* to move about with relative freedom and we find them exhibiting considerable social mobility. It is because of all these features that I often refer to them in the text as a class of itinerant labourers.

My day-to-day observations of *d'ü-ch'ung* and my many conversations with them suggest that they are a class of extremely mobile and adventurous people—far from the oppressed and pitiable image of *d'ü-ch'ung* presented by another writer (Vidal) in 1966. But the *d'ü-ch'ung* as I see them do not conform to the picture of indolence and irresponsibility that higher class Tibetans provide.

It is true that on the whole these people are poorer than others; they are also without many rights, as a result of having abandoned their land holdings. Some have been forced into this position through debt, others through exploitation. But many *d'ü-ch'ung* have freely chosen this status, and they find it far more preferable to remain on their land and deal with all the obligations that beset tenant farmers.<sup>20</sup>

*d'ü-ch'ung* are sometimes referred to as *mi-b'og*.<sup>21</sup> Those with such a status will be found tied to specific landlords outside D'ing-ri, since they were once *dr'ong-pa*. Their fall from that to *mi-b'og* is a result of recalcitrance or of debt to a landlord. This shift is often engineered by the individual after he or she decides they can no longer endure the tax oppression. Or it may be a step taken to free oneself from family conflict. Some recalcitrants run away, severing all ties, but many make arrangements with their landlord to pay a retainer fee. This fee is called *mi-b'og*, from where their name derives. It enables an individual to leave the household and his land, but not to lease himself to another landlord and estate. A modest fee of only 1 or 2 *srang* is all the *mi-b'og*

<sup>20</sup>These D'ing-ri farmers often express envy of the *d'ü-ch'ung*'s liberty, an attitude also voiced by Sa-kya tax-payers (Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969, p 61).

<sup>21</sup>Goldstein (1971) in his useful discussion of tenancy rules in an article called *Serfdom and Mobility*, describes the *mi-b'og* as a class of *d'ü-ch'ung*. See also Surkhang's 1966 article on Tibetan tax measurements.

is required to pay each year in order to remain unharassed and free to live in D'ing-ri.

*d'ü-ch'ung* are socially welcomed by all groups even through they are poor. That they were once bona fide *dr'ong-pa* makes people feel comfortable with them, and everyone understands that their low economic status is temporary and can quickly change through marriage or economic enterprise. There are examples, in almost every family's history, of *d'ü-ch'ung* absorption.

Economically the *d'ü-ch'ung* are a boon to D'ing-ri as a ready labour force. In addition to their asset in agricultural development during the height of those seasons, they are skilled as craftsmen and artisans. They are also found in the houses of the rich as domestic servants. No one would dispute that the continuing prosperity of D'ing-ri depends on the availability of the "small-smoke."

When *d'ü-ch'ung* work as cultivators in rural D'ing-ri they obtain rights as sharecroppers and attach themselves to tenant houses in this way. When they stay in the town they are engaged as artisans and as servants for merchants and administrators. A few work independently, operating inns or selling their crafts. Some do well, but others (even an entire family) find themselves so in debt as sharecroppers or servants that they lose the few rights they once had and are taken by their patron as surrogates. For example, *d'ü-ch'ung* are commonly conscripted by a *dr'ong-pa* family who is obliged to give a member to the army or to a government monastery. Unwilling to lose its own members, the house sends a youth from one of its indebted *d'ü-ch'ung* families. It is not as absolute a serfdom as one might imagine, since the donor family is given a fee for its boy, and the family itself sees the monkhood in particular as offering their boy an unusual opportunity for an education and for social mobility.

One of the most common means of upward social mobility for the *d'ü-ch'ung* people is through marriage with other *mi-ser*: agriculturalists and traders. There are numerous examples from our research of marriages that show how the itinerants have been absorbed by matrimony into established D'ing-ri households. (It frequently is a second marriage where it does not involve dowry or brideprice.) Where contact with the other *mi-ser* does not entail marriage, it can still offer other benefits. Experience and social contacts are two advantages any Gang-gar *d'ü-ch'ung* ought to expect from working with a trader or an official. And there are some examples of successful merchants who, as servants in the homes of others, learn the entrepreneurial craft.

When such enterprising people become competitors with their former patrons, they lose their *d'ü-ch'ung* status.

Structurally, this humble class of *d'ü-ch'ung* makes up almost half the entire population; *d'ü-ch'ung* move between the rural and the urban groups, and they are the point of entry for the outcastes who move into the mainstream of society. Free of the constraints of land taxes and the social obligations of other classes, the *d'ü-ch'ung* are well placed to liaise between the various elements of society. This class is thus more than a pool of itinerant labourers; it is also a fluid social rank where people enter on their way into and out of other less ambiguous statuses.

#### *tsong-pa*

Everyone knows of the Tibetan trader and can envisage him leading a caravan of *yag* across the stony, flat frontier. Yet, few of us ask for whom those sturdy fellows are working, and what they represent in sociological terms. This introduction now points to the *tsong-pa* (merchants) as a social class, and as representatives of different economic interests. Even in Gang-gar they display a degree of ethnic variation and fit into a long-distance commercial system that would raise interesting new questions about the larger and more powerful merchant sectors of Zhi-ka-tze and Lha-sa.

In this purview of D'ing-ri society I intend to treat all merchants here as one class, as a single economic group without ethnic variations. When they are compared to the rest of D'ing-ri society, these issues are minor. In another context, however, they cannot be overlooked. We can be certain for example that the same class in Zhi-ka-tze or in Lha-sa, in Nya-nang or in Kathmandu, is much larger and more differentiated. Each ethnic group there would be larger and might be supplemented with western Tibetan Moslems, and with the Sikkimese and Bhutanese commercial agents, to name only a few. If D'ing-ri is any example of what might be found at the larger scale, those merchant communities would seem an excellent area for the study of ethnicity in Tibetan society. It would also provide an excellent point of departure for a deeper understanding of Tibet's cultural and economic history. D'ing-ri's position on the Nepal frontier, for example, would provide an obvious starting point for research into Tibeto-Nepalese interrelations.

For the purpose of this study we must remain within the confines of D'ing-ri and its small commercial class. I regard the *tsong-pa* here as all the merchants of Gang-gar town. Some are independent traders; many also work as administrative officers, either secular, military or

ecclesiastic. Those who engage in commerce as a secondary occupation, do so as private investors or on behalf of their estate, which sends them to Gang-gar to collect taxes (in kind), which are then reinvested according to local market conditions. There are several monks in Gang-gar who have been sent here from nearby Shel-kar (a government monastery) to reinvest the surplus tax they have collected, or to barter one type of produce for another. These shrewd monks who look after ecclesiastic commerce are among the most perspicacious of their community and no less tough than their lay counterparts.

"Government and business go together," many Gang-gar merchants inform me. The same people see little difference between administrators who are lay and those who are clerics. And no one considers it at all unusual that monks and civil officers are actively engaged in commerce. Certainly the ecclesiastic administrator is a more familiar religious person in Gang-gar than the hermit *yogin*.

As for the government officers, both the military and civil members are here to protect the interests of the central government, which wants a safe frontier and a manageable populace so that trade through the region may continue to grow.

A chief concern of the officers is the collection of taxes; their duties also involve them in organizing levied labour. They also have their administrative links tying them to other places, largely other trade centres. All these conditions place the D'ing-ri officials into a social and economic nexus of commerce. Like the ecclesiastic tax-collectors, government agents receive payments in kind which they then have to convert into other commodities. They are thus brought into the commercial system.

Both military and civil officers find the time to promote their private interests in D'ing-ri. If a civil servant is not personally engaged in trade, his sons, his brothers, and his wife will probably be. With so many of the latter themselves the daughters of other merchants and officers, it is often the spouse of an officer who is the initial link for the household's entrepreneurial activities. Therefore, when we think of D'ing-ri merchants, we must remember that we are referring to a sagacious population of women as well as men.

The reference above to the ethnic composition of the commercial centres derives initially from observations in Gang-gar where, in addition to the permanent residents, there is a transient population of merchants. The presence here of merchants on their way to and from more distant markets gives to the town of Gang-gar the hint of a cosmopolitan

character. There are of course the permanent Nepali settlers: 4 houses of Sherpa and fourteen Kazara (Tibeto-Newar) families. Besides these, there are always several transient Kazara, Newar and Sherpa traders stopping in Gang-gar. There are also other Tibetans from the far eastern regions of K'am and A-do who come here to look after their trade interests with Nepal. This particular group of transients is evidence of the magnitude and far-reaching connections of the trade that passes through D'ing-ri. All that is needed to deal with north-south trade passing directly between D'ing-ri and Solu-Khumbu is the handful of Sherpa traders and a few Gang-gar families. But many more are here because of their involvement in Kathmandu and Lha-sa long-distance commerce.

Whereas the *d'ü-ch'ung* facilitate interaction between the urban and the rural, the migrant and the settled, the trading people operate between D'ing-ri and the wider economy. Nevertheless their interaction with the rest of D'ing-ri society is significant. The commercial people are part of D'ing-ri and contribute to the culture we find here. Their interrelations are as significant as any other class in the economy, the kinship system, the religion and the everyday operation of the entire community of D'ing-ri—as is set out in later chapters.

Till now I have not mentioned another group of commoners who populate D'ing-ri. These are the *ser-ky'im*, whose peculiar role as religious specialists as well as cultivators, and whose segregation into distinct villages warrants a more extensive treatment. Their description, which amounts to a separate ethnography, occupies the next chapter.



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## Ser-ky'im Gön-pa: Rural Ritual Communities

### SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

One-fifth of D'ing-ri's agriculturalists are *ch'ö-pa* (religious ones), who in addition to farming and other lay activities perform specialized religious services. They receive religious training, and through religious work they express a life style different from the rest of the rural population. The *ser-ky'im*<sup>1</sup> economy and marriage patterns are slightly different from other villagers. So is their appearance.

What first distinguishes the *ser-ky'im* is their geographical separation. They live together in rural hamlets whose appearance is like any D'ing-ri village, except that here we see a *lha-k'ang* or temple at one end. All these *ser-ky'im*-occupied hamlets are called *gön-pa*,<sup>2</sup> but they are not monasteries as we generally think of them. They are very unlike

<sup>1</sup>*ser-ky'im* is a composite of *ser* (yellow) and *ky'im* (household). It is not to be confused with *ser-kyems*, meaning a libation. Because the *ser-ky'im* had not been researched either as a social phenomenon or as a religious concept, its lexicographical treatment is inadequate. Jäschke (1881, p 577) defines *ser-ky'im* as a sect of *la-ma*, equating it with *dbon-po*. Neither concept is appropriate to D'ing-ri *ser-ky'im*. In the more modern dictionary (Buck, 1969, p 728) a *ser-ky'im* is described as a Buddhist monk of the tantric school. The translator Wylie (1962) notes the existence of a married monk called *ky'im-tzün*, and explains the term as referring to a school of unreformed monks who marry (p 148, fn 310).

<sup>2</sup>Tibetans use *gön-pa* as a generic term, applying it to a variety of religious centres where the religious reside. It is summarily translated as "monastery,"

MAP 7

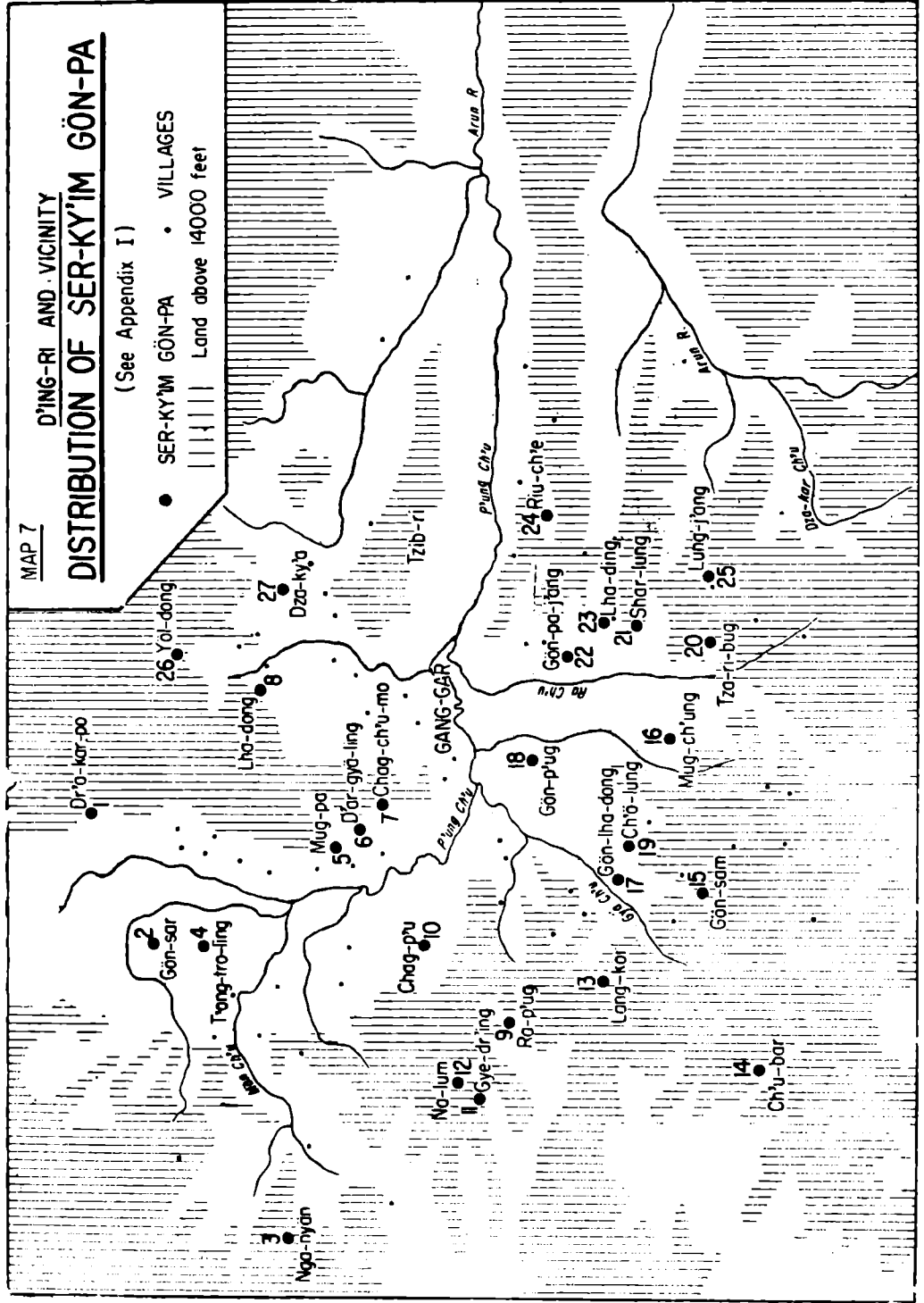
D'ING-RI AND VICINITY

# DISTRIBUTION OF SER-KY'IM GÖN-PA

(See Appendix I)

● SER-KY'IM GÖN-PA ● VILLAGES

||||| Land above 14000 feet



the other *gön-pa*, just as numerous in D'ing-ri, where celibate *chö-pa* live as ascetics and are exclusively engaged in religious work. All inhabitants of the *ser-ky'im gön-pa* are married and live with their family in a separate house. The closely clustered households that constitute a village are surrounded by plots of land belonging to each member.

Representing 20 per cent of the D'ing-ri population, the *ser-ky'im* is quantitatively significant in the total cultural framework. Whether or not it is as high a proportion in other Tibetan communities, here in D'ing-ri it is a forceful variation, and if better understood it may open ways to other features of the culture and history. What we have been fortunate to detail of the D'ing-ri rural ritual communities will provide an ethnographic introduction and extend the groundwork for a more sophisticated comparison—within D'ing-ri and among other Central Asian cultures.

The *ser-ky'im* people do not form just another economic class; neither are they simply a married religious sect. Theirs is a distinct culture within the total framework that we now know as the multidimensional society of D'ing-ri.

Map 7 (page 77) shows the distribution throughout D'ing-ri of the twenty-seven *ser-ky'im gön-pa* identified in our study. Those twenty-seven hamlets represent about one quarter of the total ninety-nine in this region (cf Map 8, Chapter Six). In terms of the number of people, the ratio of *ser-ky'im* to lay is about 2,500 to the total 12,000—only a fifth. The reason for this is found in the smaller size of *ser-ky'im* villages and the much reduced family size. *ser-ky'im* households have about six members in comparison to the average eight to ten people in other rural households. The total number of *ser-ky'im* houses in all of D'ing-ri is approximately four hundred and twenty-five. This figure is reached on the basis of the estimates from census data for most of the twenty-seven villages (listed in Appendix I). Only two members in each *ser-ky'im* household (that is eight hundred and fifty people in all) engage in religious work. But since everyone in the family shares the culture, in this ethnographic outline we are talking about the total *ser-ky'im* population of 2,500 odd.

The largest *ser-ky'im* village is Gön-p'ug, with an estimated two hundred residents. It is understandable that we find it situated near the largest lay population, that is just south of Gang-gar town. The

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which because of its particular "western" implications can be misleading in the Tibetan context. Throughout this book I employ the term *gön-pa* as generally as does a Tibetan, qualifying it in particular cases where I wish to give the reader a clear picture of what type of *gön-pa* is being discussed.

forty or so Gön-p'ug men who practice religion here are said to be among the best *ser-ky'im dr'a-pa* in D'ing-ri. This is not so much due to Gön-p'ug's age but the result of the influence of a man known as Tza-ri La-ma, a monk who came to Gön-p'ug from Tza-ri<sup>3</sup> at the turn of the century. This man taught the other *dr'a-pa* an esoteric technique that has proved particularly effective in exorcizing malevolent spirits causing illness. The *gön-pa* grew because many other religious practitioners came here to study that technique and because a large clientele in nearby Gang-gar kept the demand for various services high.

Chag-ch'u-mo-gön, north of Gang-gar, is another *ser-ky'im* community. It contrasts with Gön-p'ug in its size (there are only thirty-five inhabitants here) and the division of labour between its men and women. While it is the men at the larger *gön-pa* who are religious practitioners, at Chag-ch'u-mo the women (*a-ni*)<sup>4</sup> are the religious, and their husbands carry on with agricultural work. Chag-ch'u-mo *a-ni* work exclusively for the adjacent village of Tr'ag-tze.

It is because of their constant interaction with lay villages that the *ser-ky'im gön-pa* are dispersed throughout the entire area of D'ing-ri and located near lay villages. This is illustrated in Maps 7 and 8. The area north of Tzib-ri range in D'ing-ri is the only populated area which seems to have few *ser-ky'im gön-pa*. This is probably due to the proximity of Tzib-ri itself where there are numerous *gön-pa* whose clerics, although they have a different life style than the *ser-ky'im*, can provide most of the same ritual services. Compare their distribution (Map 9, Chapter Ten) with the location of the *ser-ky'im* hamlets.

<sup>3</sup>Tza-ri is the great holy place Tza-ri-rong in interior Tibet. Abundant with *gön-pa* reliquaries and retreats, it is a popular place of pilgrimage for all Tibetans. A magnificent pilgrimage map which was drawn of Tza-ri is owned by H E Richardson and is now on loan at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. A section of it is reproduced in my article on Tibetan manuscript maps (Aziz, 1975).

<sup>4</sup>These women clerics are also called *p'dn-tziin-a-ni*. It is said by some to be the female analogy of *ser-ky'im*, but I have also heard the term *ser-ky'im-a-ni*. Many translators substitute "nun" for *ani* as they use "monastery" for *gön-pa*. I find it better to avoid these western religious terms in the Tibetan context. *a-ni* is the universal Tibetan kinship term for paternal aunt, but it is as widely applied to female clerics. Buck (1969, p 493) offers *tziin-mo* as "priestess" and the suffix also appears in Wylie's *ky'im-tziin* (1962, p 148) and another word I have heard, *p'dn-tziin*, described as appropriate for women of superior status.

Those members of each *ser-ky'im* household who practice religion are referred to as *a-ni* (for women) and *dr'a-pa* (for men) and are counted among the *ch'ö-pa* (religious ones) in the culture. But their religious work is distinct, just as their community is unlike a monastic or celibate *gön-pa*. That the *ser-ky'im* are married and participate in rural agricultural economy suggests that we look into that culture for a wider understanding of their role.

The *ser-ky'im* community is composed entirely of *mi-ser* status Tibetans so that most *mi-ser* characteristics apply to the *ser-ky'im*. A difficulty arises, however, when we try to identify the *ser-ky'im* more specifically within one of the three *mi-ser* economic classes: the *dr'ong-pa*, the *d'ü-ch'ung* and the *tsong-pa*.

*ser-ky'im* people are cultivators and all live in the rural areas of D'ing-ri. They farm by the same methods as the *dr'ong-pa* agriculturalists but one does not find among them the prestigious and wealthy households that characterize the *dr'ong-pa* class. The *ser-ky'im* are subsistence farmers. None employ sharecroppers; neither do they work as administrators or traders. Compared to the other classes they resemble most the *d'ü-ch'ung*, with their lower social status and their modest prosperity. However, the *ser-ky'im* are strongly distinguished from the *d'ü-ch'ung* by their land-holding status. They are tenant farmers with land rights and tax obligations to a specific landlord authority. To call them *d'ü-ch'ung* is insulting as well as technically incorrect. These disparities force us to consider the *ser-ky'im* as a distinct economic class.

Because all *ser-ky'im* live in units that are separated occupationally as well as geographically, their villages are homogeneous. This contrasts with other villages with their composition of *dr'ong-pa*, *d'ü-ch'ung* and *ya-wa* types. The homogeneity is sharpened by the lack of economic differentiation among *ser-ky'im* households in any given hamlet. Whether this standardization is a result of historical design or economic constraints particular to the *ser-ky'im*, we do not know. Without more historical data on the D'ing-ri *ser-ky'im* it is not possible to explain the *ser-ky'im* composition here as has been so successfully done for the Sikkim *gön-pa*. There, Nakane (1966) uses the ethnic history of that plural society to explain differences in the *gön-pa* population and to compare them with other hamlets. Our knowledge of recent D'ing-ri history tells us that by 1885 the *ser-ky'im gön-pa* already had the separate culture and relationship with other hamlets that we note in the 20th century. If history is to help us, it has to reach further back

from the 19th century. Meanwhile there are a number of economic conditions that go some way to explain *ser-ky'im* conditions.

*ser-ky'im* are engaged in only two types of economic activity—cultivation and religious service. As cultivators they are obliged to pay the same heavy tax, according to plot size, that is the scourge of all *mi-ser*. They are able to subsist off the produce they are allowed to retain, but they have to look elsewhere for their meat and butter supplement. *ser-ky'im* are not permitted to work as herders and traders, the two economies from which other agriculturalists derive their dairy food and meat. This excludes them from areas that offer greater opportunities for private enterprise. It is in these two areas that so many *dr'ong-pa* became wealthy; excluded from those opportunities the *ser-ky'im* have not found prosperity of that degree. We might expect that their religious service yields the *ser-ky'im* a good income and thereby affords a favourable alternative to herding and trade. But this does not happen. Income from religious work is a modest supplement to cultivation and it is not an avenue of economic gain.

In each *ser-ky'im* house one or two people are engaged in religious work; it is regular and guarantees the unit an additional income. This religious work consists primarily of performing domestic rituals for families in the adjacent hamlets. It is done by men where the *gön-pa* is of this nature, or by women where, as one occasionally finds, the adepts are *a-ni* or *p'än-tzün*. There seems to be a division of labour in these communities, so that whichever sex is involved in religious work, the other is responsible for agricultural work. The fact that they specialize in one activity or the other does not mean that a woman whose husband and son are *dr'a-pa* (male religious), cannot also participate in and enjoy the religious life, or that male adepts may not farm.

Because some members of the house are often occupied with religious work there is less labour available to realize their agricultural potential. The scarcity of labour in the *ser-ky'im gön-pa* is heightened by the tendency for these part-time *ch'ö-pa*, as they might be characterized, to become the full-time religious and leave the family to join the ascetic tradition—in a retreat, on the road, or at a celibate *gön-pa*. When celibates want to marry they often join a *ser-ky'im gön-pa*, but there is also a reverse trend. The *ser-ky'im* are already religiously inclined so that many new recruits to monastic centres come from here.

When a *ser-ky'im dr'a-pa* or *a-ni* is called to perform a service at a layperson's house he goes to that patron's house, not to his own *lha-k'ang*. Therefore the *ser-ky'im* are often away from their village, and their own

temple remains locked and unused, perhaps giving the impression that it has been abandoned—or that the religion is in decline. It is possible that some of the earlier accounts of decline come from *ser-ky'im*-type *gön-pa* visited on a typical day when the religious were busy in their clients' homes. Many of the *gön-pa* I had found locked during my treks through Tamang and Sherpa villages in east Nepal, belong to the *ser-ky'im* tradition. And Nakane (1966, pp 222-232) was quick to recognize in her Sikkim study the *ser-ky'im* pattern of the Lepcha and Bhotia *la-ma* there.

As in Sikkim and Nepal, the *lha-k'ang* or temples of these D'ing-ri *gön-pa* are opened for chanting and celebration on high points of the month and of the Buddhist year. (These occasions are outlined in the final chapter.) Even on these days all *ser-ky'im* members cannot be present in their own *lha-k'ang* since the services of some are necessary in the lay community at the same time.

D'ing-ri's *ser-ky'im* population has a kinship system slightly different from the rest of the married population. This results in a certain degree of endogamy and further distinguishes the culture of the rural *gön-pa* from that of other villages. The *ser-ky'im* possess no *gyü-pa* apart from the *mi-ser* inherited status. Their identity as *ser-ky'im* is acquired through training, socialization and marriage. They may marry with any other *mi-ser*, and frequently do so without disapproval. But there is a strong tendency to endogamy; *ser-ky'im* tend to marry other *ser-ky'im* members. Even though they never referred to themselves as an endogamic group, when I reviewed many cases of marriage collected from their genealogies, I found a preference for marriage between *ser-ky'im* people; some *ser-ky'im* partners may come from beyond the D'ing-ri valley, but most come from other *gön-pa* within this area. When I spoke about this to some D'ing-ri friends, they agreed, explaining that no *gyü-pa* (heredity) is involved here—only, it was a more practical thing to do. They recognize that a girl raised in a *gön-pa* will be more familiar with the religious culture and the economy, and therefore more able to adapt to her husband's household. The same applies to a *ser-ky'im* youth sent as a *mag-pa*. Furthermore, if the receiving house is one where males do the religious work, a *mag-pa* marrying in would find it difficult assuming the male role without some prior training as a *dr'a-pa*. Most *ser-ky'im* youths and girls begin their religious training long before marriage, there being an assumption that they will continue after marriage even though it may involve their moving to another village.

The D'ing-ri *ser-ky'im* would want it to be stressed that their adoption of religion by young people is a matter of custom, and also one in which they exercise free choice. They do not inherit any quality that predisposes them to do religious work. In contrast to the inherited religious power of the *ngag-pa* described in other parts of this book, the liturgical abilities of the *ser-ky'im* are acquired only after each has studied texts, developed skills and gained experience in the community. Whereas the *ngag-pa* pattern is based on ideals of descent, the *ser-ky'im* class is held together through a "sense of subculture" of the sort that is distinguished by Leach (1960).

Except for the research of the anthropologists Nakane and Fürer-Haimendorf<sup>5</sup> working in other parts of the Himalayas, nothing has been written about the *ser-ky'im* religious and social culture. Although no mention is made of the *ser-ky'im* system in the literature on Tibet, I am assured by Tibetans from various parts of the country that it is widespread. Communities similar in form and function to the *ser-ky'im* of D'ing-ri are reported in J'ang, Sa-kya and Gyäl-tze, as well as Zhi-ka-tze. All are confined to rural areas. They are also extant in K'am where only males do the religious work. We do not yet know how many places have the (*p'än-tzün*) *a-ni* as well as the male centres, but there are indications that it is not only in D'ing-ri that married women are the adepts in some *ser-ky'im gön-pa*. A group of *a-ni* appearing in a photo taken by the Bruce expedition (Bruce, 1922) is identified as members of a *ser-ky'im a-nii-gön-pa* east of Shel-kar. And in Nepal I have met an occasional *ser-ky'im a-ni* attending services at a Sherpa *lha-k'ang* where most of the practitioners have been males.

The oldest communities in D'ing-ri are Chag-ch'u-mo, Lang-kor, Gön-p'ug and Lha-dong, all *ser-ky'im*. D'ing-ri people are in agreement that all D'ing-ri *ser-ky'im* are older than the rest of the villagers, that is the *ser-ky'im* pre-date the lay hamlets. What this means in developmental terms we do not yet know. The dating of D'ing-ri settlements is still impossible except through the association of a particular place with an historical figure, such as Lang-kor with P'a-d'am-pa Sang-gyā and Lha-dong with Yang-gön-pa. When historical texts of these early teachers are made available they may be found to contain more information on the origins of these D'ing-ri *gön-pa*. Right

<sup>5</sup>Nakane, 1966; Fürer-Haimendorf, 1964; Kawakita, 1957. Additional comparative data may be gleaned from Gorer's discussion of Lepcha Lamaism (1967, Chapter Seven).



now we do not know if the *ser-ky'im* communities are vestiges of early religious estates which were later subject to new tax and administrative control while retaining their religious functions, or if they differentiated themselves from lay culture at a later stage. In Sikkim, Nakane (1966, p 224) found that *ser-ky'im gön-pa* hamlets originated with the migration, into an essentially Lepcha society, of a Bhotia people from Tibet who have been found to be closely associated with the *gön-pa* even to the present time. Formerly some of these *gön-pa* had possessed land and exercised certain rights over local peasants, but these rights were lost after the land reform. Still, Nakane points out, the *gön-pa* and surrounding "parish" hamlets had close interaction, with the peasants continuing to employ religious practitioners in much the same way as they do presently in D'ing-ri.

The D'ing-ri *ser-ky'im gön-pa* have changed little in the period with which this study is concerned, so if they had been differently organized earlier we must look to the period before 1885. Except in one case, that of Riu-ch'e *ser-ky'im-gön* in D'ing-ri which became a community of celibate *dr'a-pa* early in this century, the *ser-ky'im* tradition has maintained the same form over these seventy-five years. The major change has been quantitative, since like the entire region these settlements have also experienced an increase in their numbers.

No new *ser-ky'im* hamlets have emerged in this period. However, the number of households has grown. This increase is attributed to internal population growth and to migration into the area, a natural expansion keeping pace with the general population increase throughout D'ing-ri. Yet one must also take into account the simultaneous growth of new monastic traditions occurring in the same area. The eight hundred and fifty *ser-ky'im ch'ö-pa* have been more than matched by the estimated nine hundred celibate *ch'ö-pa* in the new 20th century D'ing-ri monasteries. The mutually dependent and advantageous coexistence of these two *gön-pa* traditions is discussed in more detail in the final chapter, that deals more specifically with the entire religious network in D'ing-ri. There the recent history of new monastic centres places the *ser-ky'im* in a deeper perspective.

The *ser-ky'im gön-pa* should be compared to one another only with great care. *Gön-p'ug*, which is the largest in D'ing-ri, has the reputation of being the best. Most people have had no direct experience with *Gön-p'ug*, but have heard about the famous Tza-ri La-ma who arrived there at the turn of the century and introduced what eventually proved to be a particularly effective ritual for exorcizing certain types of male-

volent spirits that were marauding the Gang-gar townspeople at that time. In addition to the town, the two hamlets of Ra-ch'u and Ra-zam nearby are the patrons (*jin-dag*) of Gön-p'ug and regularly call *dr'a-pa* from there for their ritual needs. These three communities therefore constitute the parish (an analogy Nakane also makes) of this particular *ser-ky'im gön-pa*. Each *gön-pa* has its patron villages; the unit may consist of only one hamlet or it may reach as many as eight in addition to the *gön-pa*. A *gön-pa* serves only those hamlets in its units, and that group does not change. Members of the parish can choose which of the *ch'ö-pa* in their *gön-pa* they wish and they may always call the same ones. But they cannot request service from another *gön-pa*. When one *gön-pa* like Gön-p'ug is singled out, it is from historical associations and not on any qualitative basis. Each *gön-pa* is separate from the other for administrative and economic purposes. There is no hierarchy, and no ranking system is possible. In Appendix I the *gön-pa* are listed according to their location in five parts of D'ing-ri and reflect no ranking system. Note their distribution in Map 7 which shows how they are located in the higher regions of D'ing-ri, overlooking lay hamlets spread across the valley floors.

In the economic design that prohibits *ser-ky'im* residents from herding and trading and exempts them from the military tax, each *gön-pa* is assigned to a particular landlord estate, which for tax purposes treats a *gön-pa* just like any other hamlet. Each *gön-pa* has a direct tie with its landlord and raises its tax requirement as a single unit. The tax on each *gön-pa* can vary according to its size and contract with the landlord. In some cases the landlord is a monastic establishment, but it need not be, and makes little difference in any case. For administrative purposes then, there is no difference between a *ser-ky'im gön-pa* and a secular hamlet. *ser-ky'im* people I spoke to wanted it to be clear that the fact they are *gön-pa* did not entitle them to any tax concessions from their administrator. They felt this an injustice and also complained about their weaker internal leadership.

It is probably according to some earlier decree that the leadership of a *ser-ky'im* hamlet is selected differently from other towns and from the monastic *gön-pa*. Whereas a secular hamlet elects a prominent man in the village, who then has some authority to plead for them, it is the chief celebrant (the *u-dzä*) of the *gön-pa* who automatically becomes the community leader. He is not wealthy as the village leader usually is, and he is too preoccupied with his religious duties to give effective leadership. It is a very different office the *u-dzä* holds, and not as powerful

as that of the secular leaders. The *u-dzä* authority is effective only in the single *gön-pa* and there is no meeting of all D'ing-ri *u-dzä*, nor any ranking among them.

#### RECRUITMENT OF MEMBERS

Those born into a *ser-ky'im* household usually become *ser-ky'im* practitioners; also people who marry into a *gön-pa*, if they did not originate in a *ser-ky'im*, will learn the culture and religion when they join this type of community. These are two methods by which new members are recruited. Two others, migration and contract, might be described as external. The migrant members are most likely to be *ch'ö-pa* already. Either they were *ser-ky'im ch'ö-pa* in another part of the country or they were celibate *ch'ö-pa* who, becoming apostate, have sought out the *ser-ky'im* as a new home offering something close to the religious atmosphere of the monastic *gön-pa* they had become accustomed to.

The contract system of recruitment is the most interesting because it suggests a design, or a historical progression, that affects some of the D'ing-ri *gön-pa*, but not others. Each of the five *ser-ky'im* we have noted has a contract with one of five other lay villages to receive new members from it. This means that every house in the lay partner hamlet is obliged to provide its *gön-pa* with a son or a daughter from each generation. If the *gön-pa* is by custom a community of *ser-ky'im dr'a-pa*, then a son has to be given. But if it is women who do the religious work in the *gön pa*, then the lay house supplies a daughter. Just how parents decide which among several sons or daughters is to go, we do not know; there is no rule that it has to be the eldest, or the middle, etc. If no one of the prescribed sex is available, a member of the other sex is sent, or a generation is missed.

When a child chosen to join the *ser-ky'im gön-pa* reaches puberty he is taken there for training and a few years later married to another member, usually brought from another *gön-pa*. The new recruit's move to the *gön-pa* is usually an easy one, since his natal hamlet and the *gön-pa* partner are adjacent to one another. In addition to geographical ties there are extensive kinship ties of earlier contracts linking the two hamlets of each pair into a close unit. Co-members say they feel as close as if they were in the same village, and in D'ing-ri that means considerable intimacy (cf Chapter Nine). The *gön-pa* and other households are within earshot of one another and many of one's

neighbours are also one's kin. Listed below are five *ser-ky'im gön-pa* and their lay partner.

<i>ser-ky'im hamlet</i>	<i>lay hamlet</i>
Chag-p'u-gön (10) receives girl from	Do-ch'ö
Chag-ch'u-mo-gön (7) receives boy from	Tr'ag-tze
D'ar-gya-ling-gön (6) receives girl from	Te-tung
Yöl-dong-gön (26) receives boy from	Yöl-dong
Dr'ag-kar-po-gön (1) receives boy from	Kar-ky'u

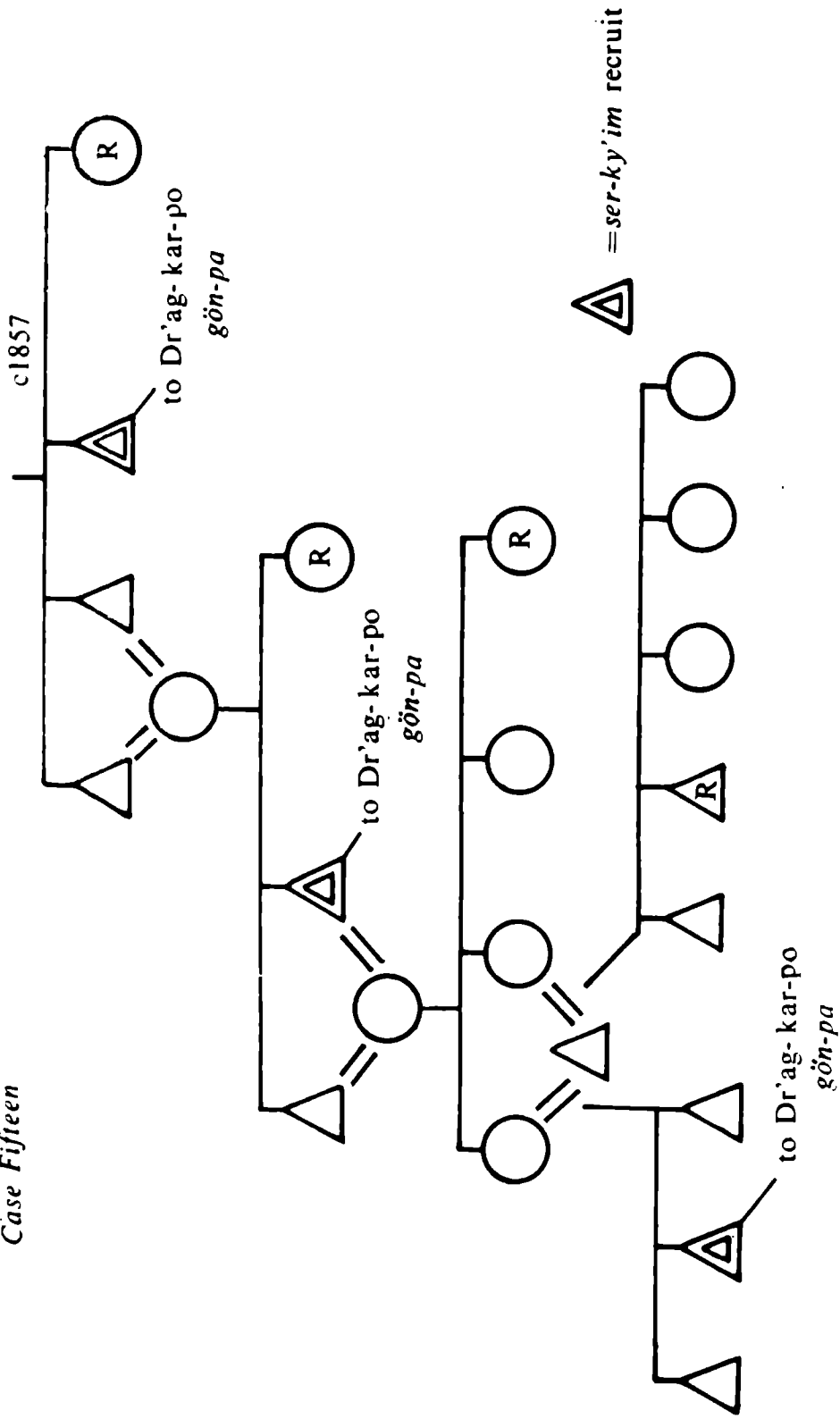
There seems to be no satisfactory explanation of the fact that only some *ser-ky'im* are paired in this manner. It is not described either as an early practice or as a recent introduction. People see no particular benefit in the coupling, and they can cite no economic advantages to the ten participating units. A pair does not share a landlord, nor does it fuse local leadership into one. These arrangements are yet another reason we ought to look into the earlier history of the *ser-ky'im* tradition.

In the genealogy of the U-shar household (p 88) the recruiting arrangement between their village (Kar-ky'u) and their *ser-ky'im* partner (Dr'ag-kar-po) is illustrated along with other family practices. Only in the third generation, when no sons were born, did the house not supply a member to Dr'ag-kar-po *gön-pa*. These allowances are made as when a family is permitted to substitute a female, where only one son is available to serve as the new household head.

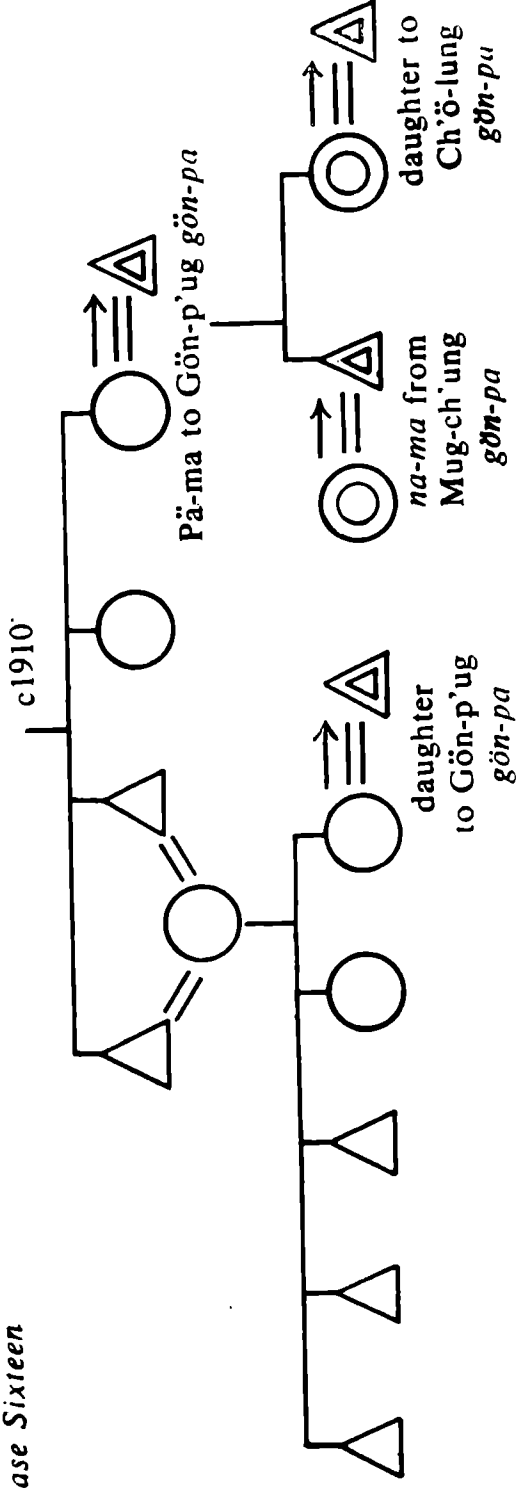
The encircled R appearing in each of the first three generations in case fifteen signifies a woman who has become a religious adept (they too are called *a-mi*) in a celibate *gön-pa*. Although it occurs with regularity, there is no compulsory recruitment involved here. All three women volunteered to become nuns and left the household to live in a distant monastic centre. But they did so only after spending their youth and the economically productive years that followed working at home, unmarried, and under the aegis of their parents and older brothers. If her parents make no provision for her marriage and she passes the age of thirty-five, the *gön-pa* is one of the few places she can find companionship and ambience in which to develop as an individual. Elders admit to keeping a daughter at home because of the need for her labour, and in case fifteen it may have been a way the family tried to compensate for the loss of members to the *ser-ky'im gön-pa*.

The next, case sixteen, shows different behaviour patterns. This family, called K'ang-kyi, is not a *ser-ky'im*. Neither does it have a contract with a specific *ser-ky'im*, as the previous case illustrated.

Case Fifteen



*Case Sixteen*



Two more marriage patterns are illustrated in this case. First, the tendency to endogamy, as exemplified in the marriages of both of Päma's children. The second pattern is in the move from lay status to *ser-ky'im*. Although there are two marriages when laywomen join Gön-p'ug *gön-pa*, there are no instances of *ser-ky'im* members leaving to marry into a lay village.

Marriage patterns in the *ser-ky'im* population, apart from the tendency to endogamy, are similar to that found among all *mi-ser*. There is preference for polyandry and patrilocal residence. Where there exists a discernible difference in rank, hypogamy occurs (a girl from a higher status house going to a groom of lower status). As throughout the society, there is a strong sense of the corporate household in the *gön-pa*. Household ranks and other standard kinship terms are used among *ser-ky'im*, except that here all males are called *a-wo* or *a-k'u*, which mean uncle, and are applied to all religious men.

One feature of the family which does not follow the standard pattern among other agriculturalists is its size. *ser-ky'im* households have on the average six members each, as compared to the eight or ten people one usually finds occupying a *dr'ong-pa* house. *ser-ky'im* family size is closer to that of the *d'ü-ch'ung*. The economic reasons D'ing-ri people give to explain these differences are only partial at best, and I would suggest a factor that is more closely linked to the *ser-ky'im*'s special quality—religion.

It is possible that their religious training inspires in the *ser-ky'im* a value for population control. Religious people of all kinds through this society are generally more sensitive towards the additional sufferings that birth, parenthood and economic enterprise entail. Another religious motivation affecting family size among *ser-ky'im* may be the migration of its more pious members to other (celibate) *gön-pa* in the area. Earlier we mentioned how apostates find the *ser-ky'im gön-pa* "like home." There are as many *ser-ky'im* religious who counter that trend and seek more solitude in the celibate centres. It is far easier for them than for ordinary laypeople to adjust to a monastic atmosphere and to participate fully in it. The *ser-ky'im* already know most of the liturgy and they know how to read, making their involvement in the monastic *gön-pa* that much easier.

#### STATUS OF THE *ser-ky'im*

The lower than average size of the *ser-ky'im* family may also result

from the unambitious nature of these people. Compared to the *dr'ong-pa* who are concerned with enlarging their household in order to expand economically, *ser-ky'im* do not seek new avenues for economic growth and thus experience no concern about household size and labour shortage, an attitude that is related to their general social status.

The *ser-ky'im* D'ing-ri enjoy neither the ritual status of religious functionaries nor the economic status of other agriculturalists. Their depressed economic condition is not shared by other religious persons such as the *ngag-pa*, the reincarnate *la-ma*,<sup>6</sup> and the administrative monks whose wealth is related to their religious work and achievements.

First, of low economic status *ser-ky'im* is a result of low fees which are on the same scale as that of artisans. Like an artisan, a *ser-ky'im ch'ö-pa* is called to the client's house, fed while there, and paid a modest daily wage. His payment for religious work is a reflection of the patron's view of those services, that is, largely as a technical skill. This brings us to the second point, the non-prestigious quality of *ser-ky'im* religious work. The *ser-ky'im* has no charismatic quality. He has no inherent religious power.

Neither has he the idealism of the ascetic or teacher. He knows nothing that any layman cannot learn if similarly trained. Aware of this, people treat *ser-ky'im ch'ö-pa* very much as they do other laymen. I noticed a change in my own behaviour towards *ser-ky'im* over the two-year period I worked with D'ing-ri people. The initial deference I had extended to them, relating to them as I had learnt to relate to ascetic *dr'a-pa* and *a-ni*, was dropped and replaced with the familiarity and directness I used with all villagers. Friends could never understand my curiosity in the religious work of the *ser-ky'im*. "Anyone can be a *ser-ky'im*," I was told.

What we see here is not parallel to the *gön-pa* of Sikkim as described by Nakane, but it is similar to the Sherpa *gön-pa* as I have observed them in Nepal. In Sikkimese villages the (*ser-ky'im* type) *la-ma* enjoys considerable status, with lay peasants competing to have a son accepted as a *gön-pa* novice. Among the Sherpa, the status of these village *la-ma* in Sikkim is exhibited only by the head of the village *gön-pa*. The

<sup>6</sup>The *ngag-pa*, whose religious power is inherited, is discussed in Chapters Three and Six, and the reincarnate *la-ma* who succeeds through a process of spiritual reincarnation are the main subject of Chapter Ten of this ethnography.



Sherpa head is called a *la-ma* as well. He inherits his position and is often a reincarnate *la-ma* in addition. The rest of the inhabitants in a Sherpa *gön-pa* are referred to as *dr'a-pa* and operate analogously to the D'ing-ri *ser-ky'im dr'a-pa*, sharing a similarly inferior social status.<sup>7</sup>

The minimal internal differentiation of *ser-ky'im gön-pa* keeps status in the background within the community. There are only two offices, neither of which involve much power or economic benefit. One is the *nyer-pa*, custodian of the temple (*lha-k'ang*); the other is the office of the chief celebrant called *u-dzä*. Each holds a limited term and rotates around to all members. While in office, incumbents are addressed as *u-dzä*. Otherwise the familiar kinship terms *a-wo* (male) and *a-mi* (female) are applied to *ser-ky'im* practitioners. The title *la-ma* in D'ing-ri obtains exclusively to reincarnate teachers and *ngag-pa*.<sup>8</sup>

The status of the *ser-ky'im* may well be a relative factor changing from one phase of religious history to another, or in response to the proximity of other kinds of religious leadership. The variations noted across the Himalayas remind us that no absolute *ser-ky'im* style or status exists.

What we observe today in each locale may well be an adaption to a number of related social conditions, to the history of the *gön-pa*, to the configurations of religious leadership, and to the proximity of other religious communities. We ought not to forget the twenty-seven other *gön-pa*, all different from the *ser-ky'im* type, which are set into a much wider religious system within D'ing-ri. As far as the recent history of D'ing-ri religious systems is concerned, the evidence, discussed more fully in the final chapter, suggests an intensive and balanced interaction. What we await now are more detailed-diachronic studies to show just how social change occurs among these religious institutions.

#### *kor-k'ong* RITUAL UNITS—THE WARDS

Every *ser-ky'im gön-pa* is linked to one or more lay hamlets into a ward known as the *kor-k'ong*. We have been able to identify twenty *kor-k'ong* in D'ing-ri, each with one *gön-pa*, and some with only one

<sup>7</sup>The communities of married *dr'a-pa* are so widespread among the Sherpa that accounts have been given in several recent studies: Aziz, 1972; Funke, 1970; Fürer-Haimendorf, 1964.

<sup>8</sup>A sociological treatment of the reincarnate *la-ma* appears in *Reincarnation Reconsidered* (Aziz, 1976). In the same volume another contributor (Paul 1976) describes *ngag-pa*-like Sherpa priests.

other hamlet, but others with several. Each *kor-k'ong* is a geographical unit. It is a cluster of hamlets near one another and with a special interaction through ritual service. The membership households in each *kor-k'ong* constitute the parish of the *gön-pa*.

Individual *kor-k'ong* have no names. People simply speak of "our *kor-k'ong*" or the one attached to such and such *gön-pa*. The villages in a *kor-k'ong* can be defined as a corporate unit for ritual purposes. Not only do co-villagers patronize the same *gön-pa*, they meet together on local festivals; they exchange the *tsog*<sup>9</sup> offering, and together they sponsor the monthly *lha-söl*. As far as we can tell, the *kor-k'ong* has no corporate existence or function outside these rituals. Each hamlet retains its political autonomy, each leader has limited roles within his own hamlet, and each unit its own economic relationship with outside administrations. The *kor-k'ong* does not have any bearing on the pattern of religious life that individual households and persons effect with other *gön-pa* and other kinds of ritual specialists.

I first became aware of the *kor-k'ong* when collecting demographic data through the D'ing-ri villages. Each villager quoted three figures when I asked for census data from his locality: the number of households in his hamlet, of those in the *kor-k'ong* and the head count of the *kor-k'ong*. They know the precise numbers because when they sponsor a *tsog* ceremony in their home they are obliged to distribute to all members of the unit. If a household is wealthy it provides one portion for each member; if poorer, there will be only one for each house in the *kor-k'ong*. Although an individual may not often meet the others in his *kor-k'ong* he must, nevertheless, furnish each house with a share of *tsog*. Likewise he regularly receives *tsog* from other members without meeting them.

This exchange, together with the occasional gatherings at the *ser-ky'im* temple, appears to be the extent of *kor-k'ong* interaction. However, the cohesive ideological force of this reciprocity should not be underestimated. If there are a hundred and fifty member households in a *kor-k'ong*, the members are likely to receive a share of *tsog* from someone two or three times a week, and it is possible that two *tsog* are distributed on the same day. One accepts these offerings with a genuine sense of sharing the good *karma* generated by this symbolic act.

<sup>9</sup>Beyer's recent account of the Cult of Tārā (1973) provides excellent explanations of the *tsog* and its role in the ritual context.

It makes it easier for people to live together when they share common cures as well as mutual hazards. The *kor-k'ong* reciprocity may go far in helping the D'ing-ri villager to develop his sense of identity with his neighbour and with his universe.

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## Economy

Much of what is happening in modern D'ing-ri is related to the particular character of its economy. At a very general level it can be said that D'ing-ri exhibits a peasant-feudal economy that conforms largely to what has been described of Tibet as a whole. Within that general framework there are two subsystems operating at a local level. One is the coexistence of rural D'ing-ri and the town of Gang-gar and at the same time the relative isolation between the two. The other subsystem is the interdependence among the three major socio-economic groups of commoners—the agriculturalists who are engaged in production, the *d'ü-ch'ung* who provide the additional labour and skills and the merchants who are concerned with both marketing and administration.

The strength and size of each economic class and their interactions can be explained in terms of four major economic factors:

- (i) D'ing-ri, the enterpôt for Nepal-Tibet commerce;
- (ii) labour, the scarce resource;
- (iii) house and village, two corporate groups and
- (iv) economic hierarchy, a world view.

By highlighting these four factors, as I propose to do in this chapter, we can describe the interaction of classes here and throughout Tibetan society, and we can appreciate the growth of D'ing-ri and the equilibrium that has become established here.

## D'ING-RI: THE ENTREPÔT FOR NEPAL-TIBET COMMERCE

D'ing-ri's position on the trade route between Nepal and Tibet has been instrumental in its own development for the last century, and probably longer. The simplified Map 5 in Chapter Two, after an earlier drawing, shows the pivotal position of D'ing-ri on two major trade arteries: that moving between central Nepal and the interior of Tibet, and that of east-west commerce flowing across Tibet, towards Ladakh. That this entrepôt had been a focus of attention for the Gorkha in their earlier invasions of Tibet (cf Chapter Two) is easier to understand when we note its strategic economic position. The relations between Nepal and Tibet, fluctuating as they did, are particularly manifest at a centre such as D'ing-ri. Therefore, as peaceful relations between the two neighbours were restored, the trade that was contingent upon that calm increased. In place of forces sent here to guard the frontier there came merchants and administrators. We are not talking here about local trade, but long-distance trade moving between the major markets with luxury items and foodstuffs.

Rice is the main commodity imported from Nepal. This and other grains are destined for the interior Tibetan markets. This entrepôt is the first one in the district and comes after a four- to five-day journey from the Nya-nang checkpost. At D'ing-ri loads must again be checked. Since they are sometimes redistributed here, new personnel and a certain amount of reorganization are involved. The merchants here are representatives of other dealers, and it is their concern to receive and forward shipments when they reach D'ing-ri.

If Tibetans in other parts of the country do not know of D'ing-ri as the holy land of P'a-d'am-pa and Mi-la-rä-pa, they will certainly have heard of it as a lively and maybe even decadent commercial arena on the frontier with Nepal. It conjures up an image of fierce competition for many, like the Sa-kya native I recently spoke to, who, although he had not been to D'ing-ri, had heard about it from his father. The senior man was also from Sa-kya, and had gone from there on to the D'ing-ri market-town (Gang-gar) with his servants to purchase rice and *dzo* (livestock).<sup>1</sup>

The rice trade through D'ing-ri is also known to the people of Sa-da in the Gyäl-tze area, further away from D'ing-ri than Sa-kya.

<sup>1</sup>*dzo* are bred in Solu and Khumbu in Nepal and imported from there into D'ing-ri.



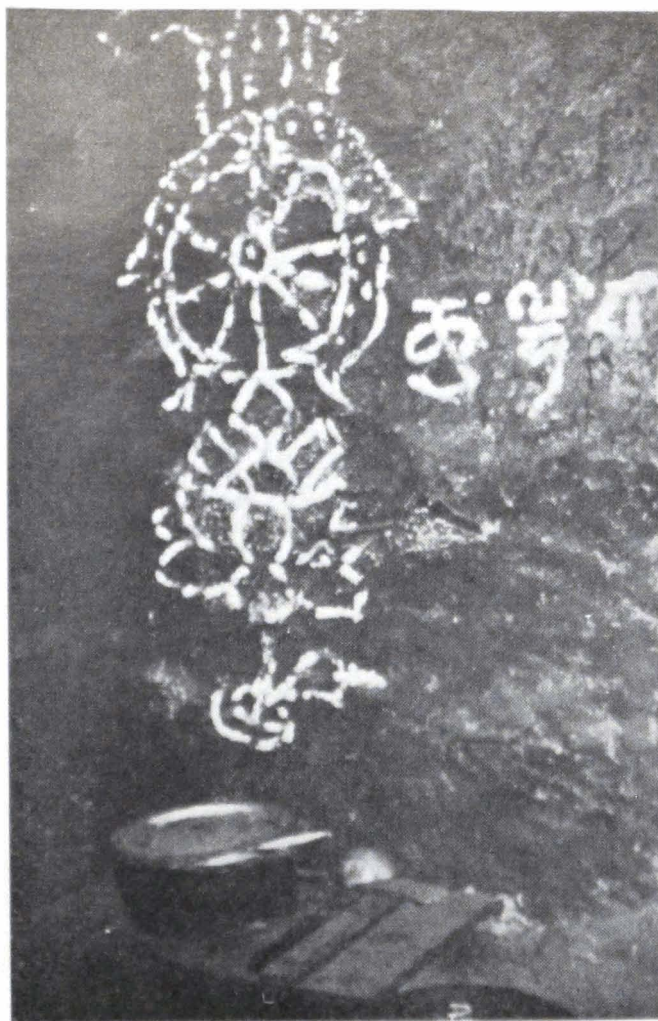
*Above*, two brothers married to sisters from Shing-ri. *Below*, a widower from Lha-dong shares his second wife with his son. Almost 30 per cent of all marriages in D'ing-ri are polyandrous.





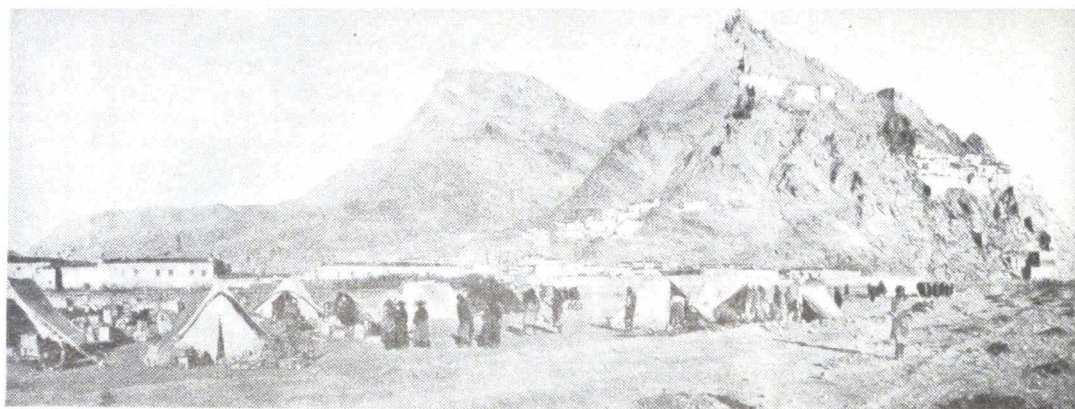


This *a-ni* from P'u-ri village prepares clay images to be interred in a *ch'ö-ten*. The sunny courtyard, like the winding path, finds itinerant D'ing-ri religious engaged in merit-making work.



An invocation to water spirits embellishes the Tibetan kitchen. These designs are dabbled on mud walls every new Tibetan year.





Shel-kar Dzong, top right, and Shel-kar Monastery, centre, are embedded in the hillsides. The market is in the foreground. This panorama was photographed by Bruce in 1922. (Courtesy, *The Royal Geographical Society, London.*)

A monk official partaking of the *tsog* offering of consecrated *sho* (curd). It is distributed to every member of the community.







A black and white reproduction of the townscape of D'ing-ri Gang-gar (*see cover*). I met the elderly artist, P'an-t'an P'a-la, a former inhabitant of the town. When the painting neared completion, he pointed at the three white mountain peaks on top: "Those are the hills of Lang-kor where our T'sae-bai La-ma gave his teachings." He also indicated the houses whose former inhabitants he knew I would recognize. Each white block represents a particular residence which he distinguished and identified. The houses and windows are painted (*see cover*) in agreement with a Tibetan convention, i.e. in their colouring throughout—off-white for residences, and white and red for temples.



Na-dr'a La-ma made frequent visits to Nepal, where this photograph has been taken (c.1952). Formerly a monk at Dza-rong Monastery, he married a fellow religious and later established his own *gön-pa* in the northern part of D'ing-ri.

Tzib-ri Ch'ö-zang also had his own *gön-pa* in D'ing-ri. It was a branch of the larger Shel-kar Monastery. I was able to photograph this portrait on loan from the now deceased *la-ma's* custodians. The original was taken in Nepal before 1950.

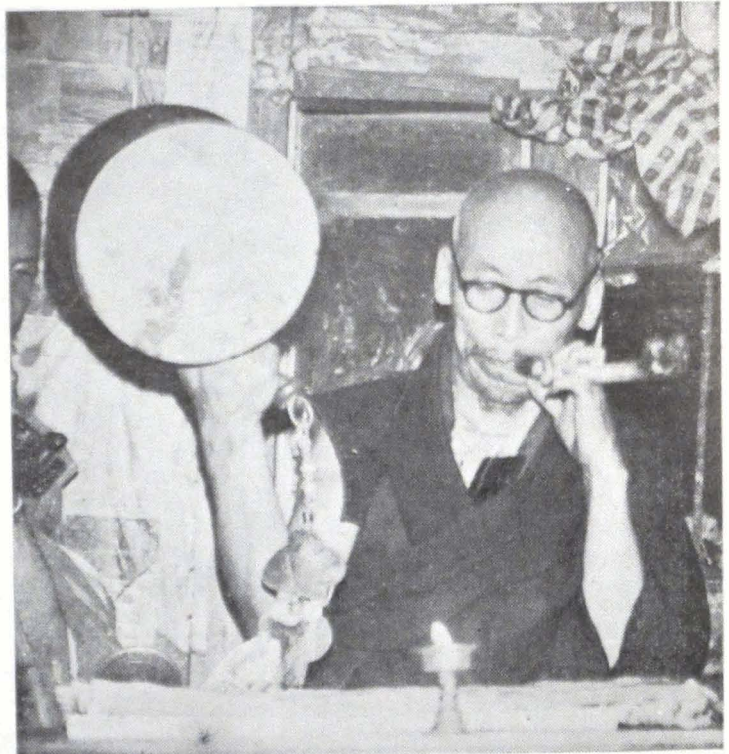






*Yogi Ni Ma-chig-lab-drön-ma*, right, in her tantric dance gesture. On her left is her teacher *P'a-d'am-pa Sang-gyā* surrounded by the *siddha* of the *chö* tradition. (Detail from a popular *t'ang-ka* painting. Courtesy, *Dag-mo Sö-nam, Darjeeling.*)

Zang-po, an itinerant *dr'a-pa*, is engaged in the *chö* at the auspicious time of the half-moon. D'ing-ri remains the centre of this widespread popular tradition. *zhi-j'e* and *chö* have numerous adepts belonging to major sects of Tibetan Buddhism.

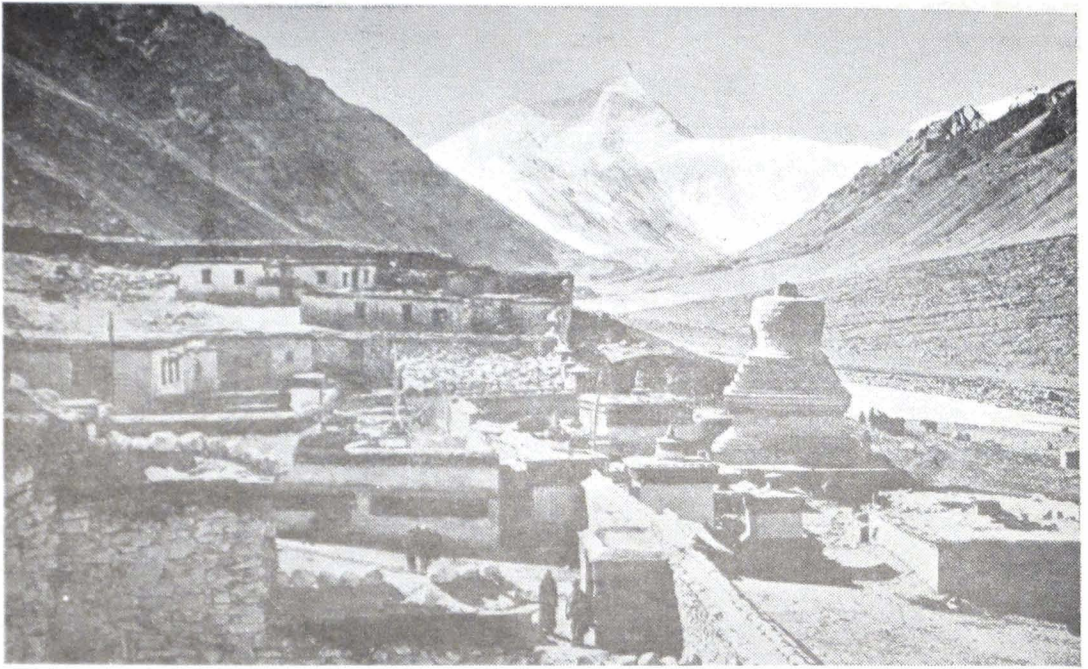




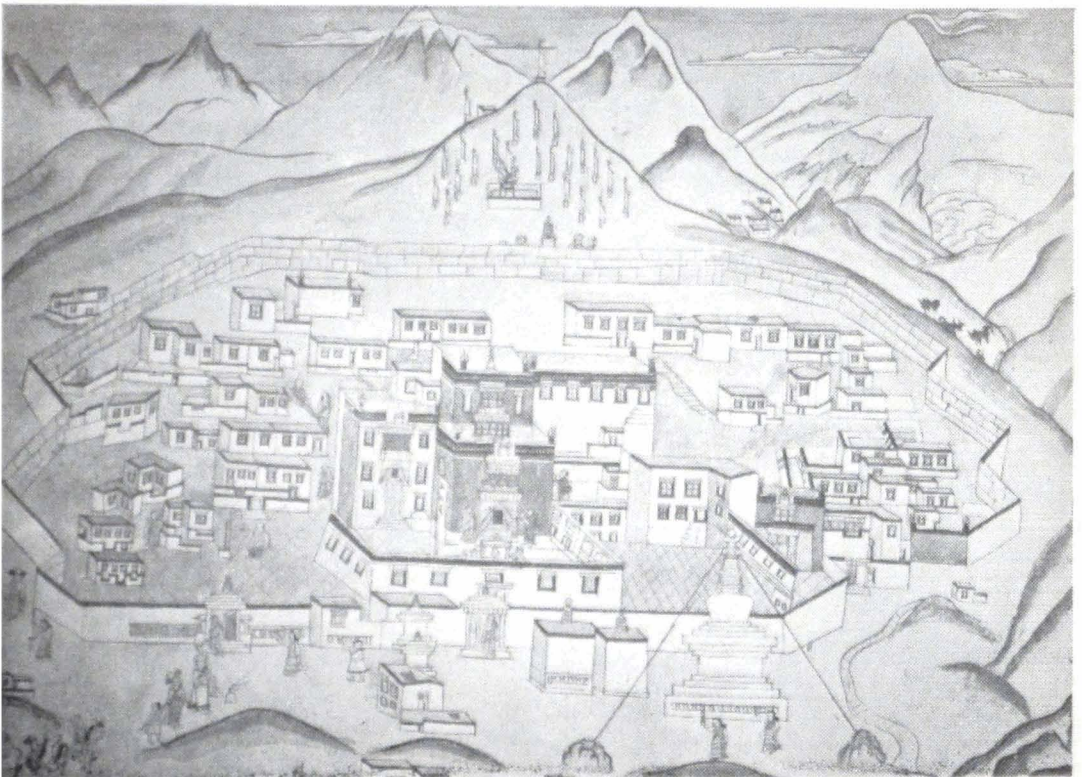


Having moved through all the ranks of the monastic order, U-dzâ, the chief celebrant of the Dza-rong Assembly leads the annual commemoration (*la-ma d'ü-ch'en*) of the Dza-rong patriarch. This devotee voluntarily joined his *la-ma* while his brother was conscripted to a government monastery outside D'ing-ri.





*Above*, Dza-rong under construction (Bruce, 1922). The centre was founded in 1902. But more funds were required to complete the *ch'ö-ten*. (Courtesy, *The Royal Geographical Society*.) *Below*, a recent painting (Gi-long Nor-bu, 1975) illustrates Dza-rong after the main structures were completed. Unfortunately, hundreds of nuns' huts beyond the wall are excluded, Mount Everest, *above*, is central, whereas viewed by the artist, *below*, it is set at the right. Pilgrims claim that the cloud emerging from the peak signifies the *la-ma* in residence. Note that the huge glacier on the mountain's face appears in both pictures.







Founder and chief *la-ma* of Dza-rong, Ngawang Tān-jin Nor-bu (1867-1940), when he met with Bruce in 1922. (Courtesy, *The Royal Geographical Society.*)

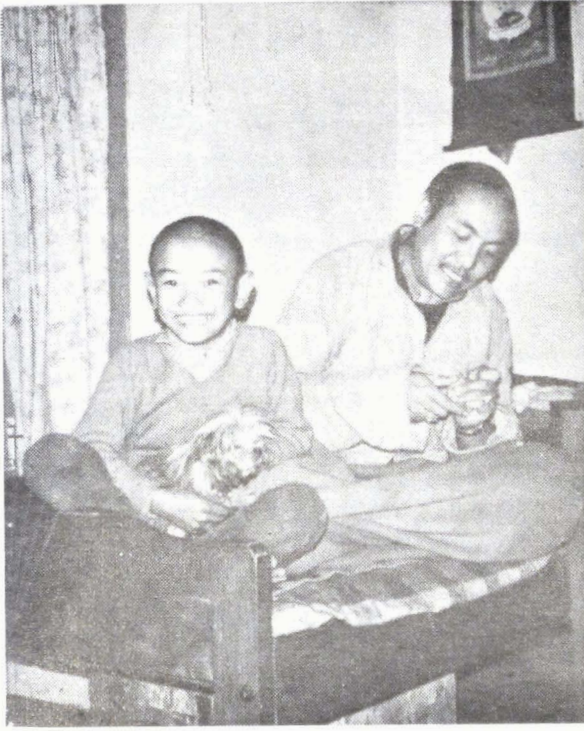


The successor to the Dza-rong leadership is Tr'ül-zhig Rin-po-ch'e. Photographed in his chambers at his new monastery in Nepal (1971) he poses with an offering of the *mandala*.

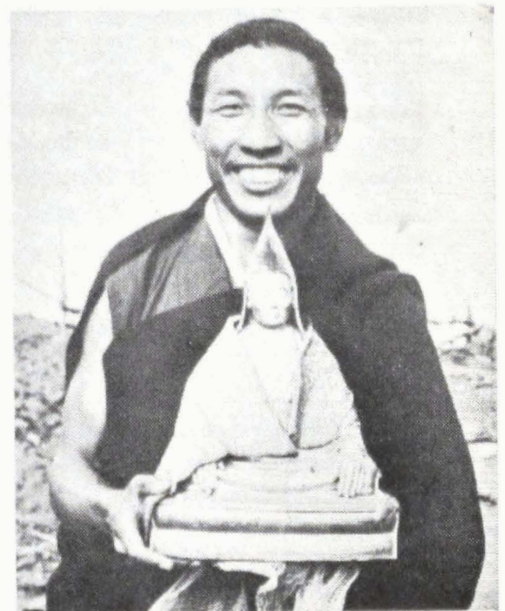


Tr'i-pön Pā-ma Ch'ö-gyäl (1876-1958). Although he came to D'ing-ri for solitude after an active scholarly life, the Renowned One was sought out by devotees from all over the Himalaya. By 1940 his *gön-pa* in Tzib-ri had become an important religious centre. (Courtesy, Ja-lung A-ni Sang-gyā.)



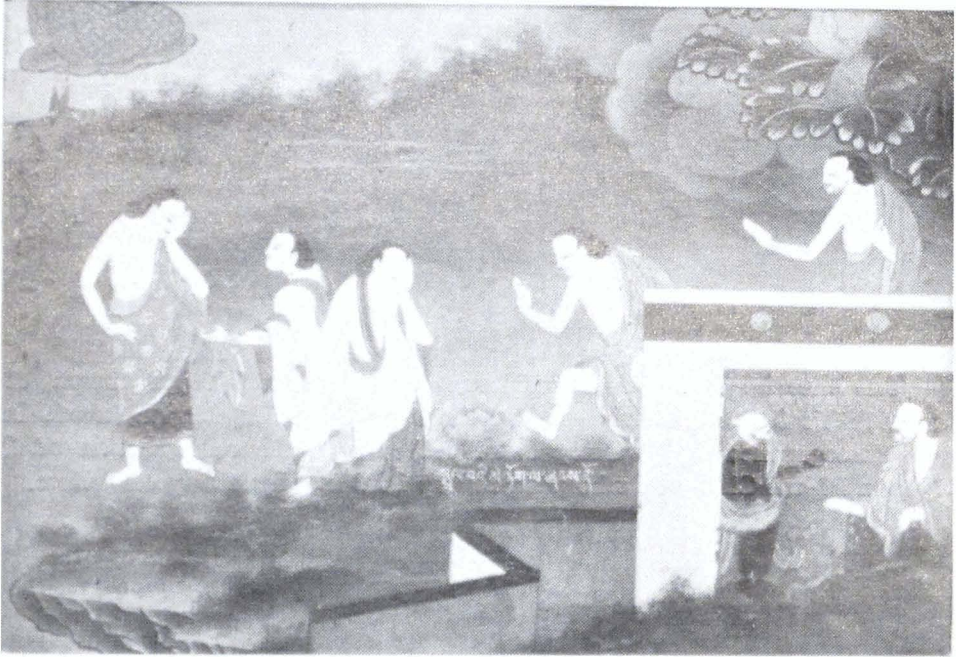


The cheerful Tr'i-pön Tulku (born in Ladakh, c. 1960) is shown, *above*, with his father, also a *la-ma*, in their new home in Manali, north India. (Photographed by J Campbell, 1970.) He is the reincarnation of Tr'i-pön Pā-ma Ch'ö-gyäl who passed away in D'ing-ri a few years before.



Sing-dr'ag Tulku holds the precious image of his teacher, La-ma Jam-j'ang, who passed away in Nepal in 1975. Both this young D'ing-ri *la-ma* and his teacher were devotees of the renowned Tr'i-pön Pā-ma Ch'ö-gyäl.





This is the part of the biography of Mi-la-rä-pa, the illustration of the confrontation between the famous Tibetan *yogin* and P'a-d'am-pa near D'ing-ri. Mi-la-rä-pa transforms his body into flowers set at the roadside. P'a-d'am-pa passes by without looking at them, but in full awareness. Turning around, he kicks the flowers, "Oh dear, the Mi-la-rä-pa's body is in these flowers." P'a-d'am-pa plucks them, singing, "Are you ready to die?" This provokes Mi-la to compose his famous adage, *The Six Readinesses to Die*. (Photographed from *The Cotton Clad Mi-la* series. Courtesy, Statens Etnografiska Museum, Stockholm.)

It was they who told another investigator about the D'ing-ri *dr'ä-kang*.<sup>2</sup> This is the term for a particular tax levied on the shipments of rice that reached their area by way of D'ing-ri. Local labour and animal transport were levied against the Sa-da people, five and a half days from Gang-gar, requiring them to mobilize themselves to help transport the rice from D'ing-ri to Lha-sa. It is further observed by the Sa-da people that on these trips, four "bosses" from D'ing-ri accompanied the goods.

Rice enters D'ing-ri from central Nepal via Nya-nang (north of Kodari on the Baribise road to Lha-sa). Corn and millet and chilli pepper are imported by this route as well. The Newar and their Kazara kinsmen always use the Nya-nang route to convey Indian cloth and jewels through the drab D'ing-ri plateau, and on to the shrines and *mahjong* tables of the nobility. There is nothing produced in Lha-sa for direct export back to Nepal. But the administrators and landlords who reside in cities arrange for produce to be shipped from their holdings throughout rural Tibet directly to Nepal. Thus consignments of wool, of salt and of goats, the three highland products from Tibet that interest the Nepalis most, come from nomadic areas around D'ing-ri, and from Pu-rang. Some produce comes from Kya-hrag (a small but rich nomadic community south of D'ing-ri, immediately adjacent to Khumbu in Nepal), but the most significant shipments come from the vast grassy plains of Pu-rang where thousands of nomadic people raise extensive herds.

The Pu-rang herders bring produce to the edge of D'ing-ri, to the north-west sector known as Zu-tzo where they are met by agriculturalists and merchants who barter grain for the highly valued meat, the indispensable salt and the savoury dairy goods.<sup>3</sup> This point of exchange is guided by agreements backed by certain contract rights that give each economic class a control of trade only in some areas. D'ing-ri people do not generally go into Pu-rang since they have no trading rights there. The nomads come to Zu-tzo, and here the merchants assert their position. They take over the nomad's loads, and what is not required for local tax and private consumption they divert directly to the Nepalese market. The demand for salt continues all year round in Nepal, but

<sup>2</sup>Cf M Goldstein, 1971.

<sup>3</sup>Cf Ekvall's *Fields on the Hoof*, an excellent portrayal of enterprising Tibetans, in this case the nomads. While the economy of these nomadic Tibetans is very different from D'ing-ri, many facets of their social organization are similar.

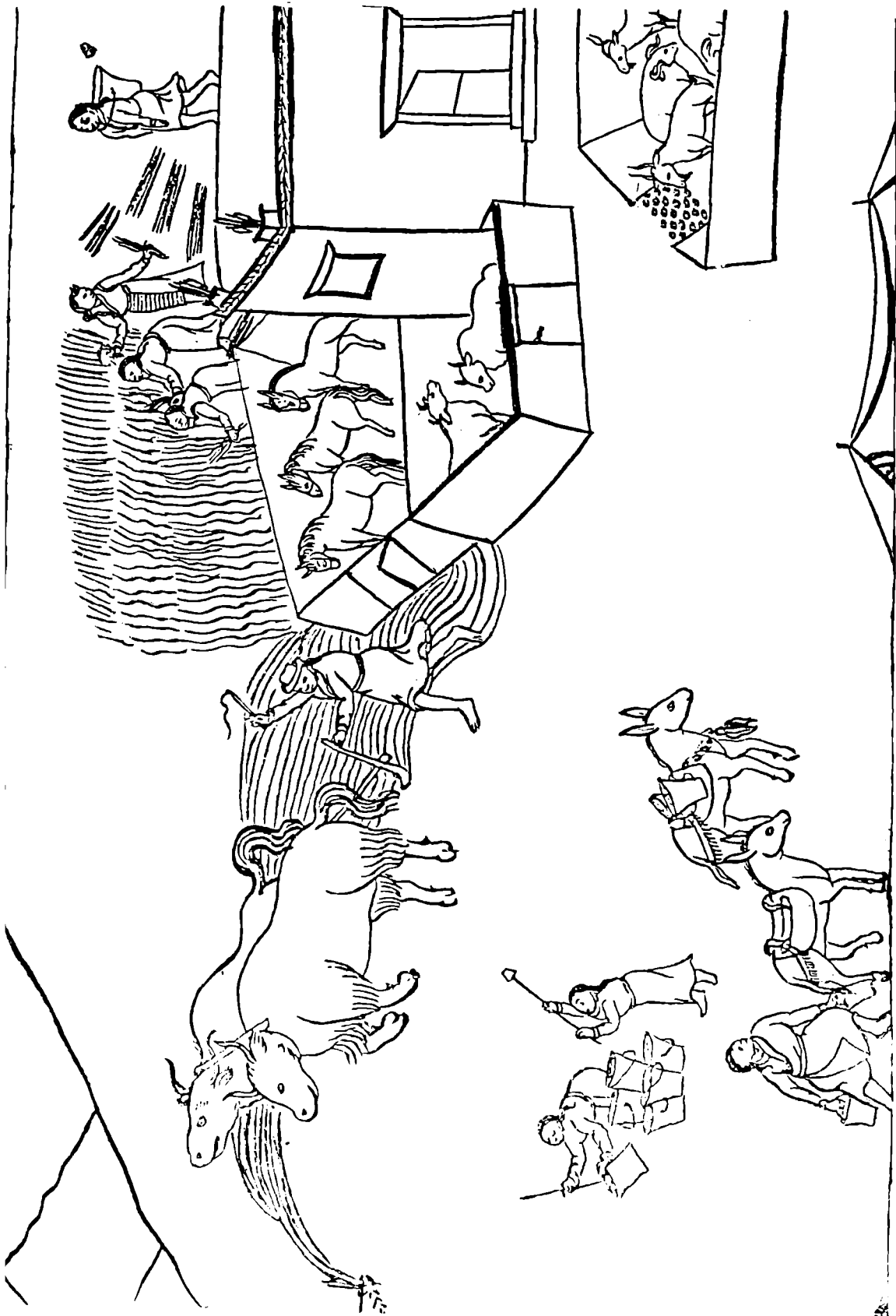
the goats are shipped there in large numbers only in autumn, just before the *diwali* festival.

D'ing-ri Gang-gar traders who control much of this long-distance trade are neither major consumers nor producers of the goods they move. Of the consignments they move on the Nya-nang route they act only as entrepreneurs. In the more local trade with Nepal through Khumbu, the D'ing-ri traders sometimes combine their roles as producers, users and entrepreneurs.

Khumbu lies directly south of D'ing-ri, over a short but dangerous trail. Although trade is far less on this route than via Nya-nang, the goods that pass between the Sherpa and Tibetans are significant enough to make the risks of transport worthwhile. Paper is one product the Sherpa of Solu and Khumbu produce and ship north to D'ing-ri. An equally important commodity in this trade is the *dzo*. Tibetans value the *dzo*, a tough, industrious ploughing animal which is a hybrid of the *yag* and ox and can only be bred in Nepal. Those imported to D'ing-ri are for local use, but many pass further into Tibet. This applies to the paper imports as well, which supply the monastic printing houses at Tzib-ri and Shel-kar, and many others beyond D'ing-ri. It is a few merchants in Gang-gar and a handful of Sherpa traders based in Nawoche (Namche Bazaar) who facilitate this commerce.

Balancing what they export, the Sherpa also import via D'ing-ri. Like the other highland population of Nepal the Solu-Khumbu people depend on supplies of wool and salt from Tibet. Some comes from the D'ing-ri Kya-hrag nomads nearby (the salt of course has to be brought in from the Pu-rang lakes by these people), and small quantities of medicinal herbs and turnip seeds are supplied by the D'ing-ri agriculturalists. But their provision of livestock is more important. Horses and *yag* leave D'ing-ri over the Nang-pa pass that links it to Khumbu.

The *yag* raised by Tibetans are sent for breeding purposes as mentioned. Horses, however, are bred in D'ing-ri, to be sold in Nepal. The Sherpa buy some for their own use, but most they import for resale in more distant markets. Horses find their way south by way of the famous Manebazaar horse and dog market, an annual, month-long winter fair on the edge of the Tarai. Being so far south—all the way down the Dudh Kosi, almost to its juncture with the main Sun Kosi Khola—D'ing-ri horse traders are no longer actively involved at that point. It is the Sherpa who monopolize the horse sales, and the only Tibetans to be found here are the young and curious, on their maiden visit to the



Hearing my tape-recordings of rural D'ing-ri songs, a Tibetan artist, D'ar-gyā, was moved to illustrate these familiar scenes. We see here the entire family busily engaged in harvest, surrounded by their prized livestock.

edge of the subcontinent. The Manebazaar is a cosmopolitan marketplace and the cursing Gang-gar gambler, who at home is fearless and sly, is cowed into muteness here and bedridden with digestive ailments. He would not dare come without a Sherpa companion, and he leaves in a few days for some pious circumambulations at the pilgrimage sites in Kathmandu, the customary route by which he will return to D'ing-ri, having come so far into Nepal.

The only D'ing-ri-wa I spoke to who have been to Manebazaar are Gang-gar-wa. None liked it there. And they admitted to their discomfort and disorientation. None returned to the Nepalese fair a second time.

Long-distance trade throughout the Himalayas is divided among different contractors so that each group—such as the Sherpa at Manebazaar—operates along a particular stretch. The several groups of merchants concerned with trade through D'ing-ri share the market according to that principle of division. Even the powerful Tibetan government and monastic agents who operate around D'ing-ri leave room for free enterprise commerce—by private merchants, by agriculturalists and by nomads. (The Nepalese, accorded trading rights by international agreements, are also permitted a place in the market.)

D'ing-ri *dr'ong-pa*, like most Tibetan agriculturalists, are eager to partake of the profits that commerce yields. Participation first depends on personnel, so they have to free one of their members from domestic economy. Only the largest rural households manage to do this, about 15 per cent, so that there are nearly two hundred *dr'ong-pa* representatives engaged in one stage or another of D'ing-ri commerce. Some facilitate the trade with the Pu-rang nomads directly. Others dispatch themselves to Nya-nang twice a year to engage more directly in a share of the Nepalese market. The richer tenant farmers who raise livestock and horses in Zu-tzo (north-west D'ing-ri) together with their Sherpa counterparts with whom they contract, monopolize the trade between Khumbu and D'ing-ri. The partners on either side work out a system of delivering and collecting their animals.

When agriculturalists go from D'ing-ri to the large commercial centres of Kathmandu, Zhi-ka-tze and Lha-sa, they do not do so with the same entrepreneurial force as the Gang-gar merchants. Their primary interest in such a venture is pilgrimage or litigation, and the small amount of produce they take for sale is only incidental. As it is, the Gang-gar-wa chide these rural traders for their amateur forays into

long-distance commerce. So confident are the full-time merchants that they do not even consider such attempts as competitive.

The cockiness of the Gang-gar professional is not based only on prejudice towards rural people. They actually do have an effective monopoly on trade through D'ing-ri to major commercial centres, where they enjoy long-established kinship ties and ongoing social and political connections. The largest profits from trade naturally accrue to these full-time professionals who will have a network stretching between Kathmandu and Lha-sa. Nya-nang is as much a home for them as Gang-gar. Those who stay in Nya-nang for months at a time can speak Nepali fluently, just as they speak the more urbane Lha-sa dialect learnt from their visits there.

Much of this exchange is facilitated through gambling. It continues night and day in market-towns such as Gang-gar. These involvements are not idle pastimes for the merchant, but extensions of his business whereby he can amass large amounts of capital for short periods, or bring another into his debt, or wipe out his own. Though still a mystery to me, the secrets of throwing dice are known to every serious Tibetan trader as part of his profession.

Gang-gar's relation to rural D'ing-ri is not that of a market-place in traditional peasant economy where the urban centre is an exchange market for local farm produce. The surplus produced by D'ing-ri agriculturalists finds its way to a number of markets, not all of them urban ones. There is direct exchange, for example, between local markets and the Pu-rang and Kya-hrag nomads. They exchange grain for meat, wool and salt. The farmers also send supplies of their butter and grain to local monastic centres. This is in exchange for religious service. It does not include the tax-in-kind by means of which officials in Gang-gar, in Shel-kar, in Sa-kya and at monasteries in Nya-nang extract agriproduce directly from farmers. This system of distribution may be partly explained by the limitations imposed by bartering. But it is also an outgrowth of the decentralized method of tax-collecting. It is a system which permits the chief landowner to sublease a subject village to a particular agency—usually a monastic one—which then comes to collect a share of the tax as the subleasing landlord.

The vagaries of the complex Tibetan taxation system also account for the role of Gang-gar town as a labour exchange. If villagers do not come here to buy and sell produce, they do come to pay that portion of their tax which must be in the form of service. There are numerous purposes for which the government is permitted to conscript labour

directly from the village, and since this is organized by Gang-gar-based officials, rural tax-payers find themselves necessarily coming to town. They don't like it, and say that if it were not for their duty they would never set foot in Gang-gar.

As for the free labourers, the artisans, there is no single exchange centre. Gang-gar *d'ü-ch'ung* who live in the town and have skills for sale find customers among other townsdwellers. They are not called upon by rural people, so there is no need for Gang-gar *d'ü-ch'ung* to venture out. In the villages live *d'ü-ch'ung*, who, like their urban counterparts, move from house to house in their own vicinity, selling labour. When a householder wants a finished product he calls a craftsman to his home and employs him for as long as is required to complete the order. The employer provides the materials and pays a small wage or ration to the worker, as well as arranges for his accommodation and food. Metal-workers, weavers, leather-workers, cultivators and even ritual specialists operate in this manner. It is a system which facilitates the role of the householder as a labour manager, while at the same time working against the role of the town as a labour market.

The growth of the two economic sectors appears to be simultaneous and is probably not dependent upon intricate cooperation between the two, although town and rural area owe their prosperity to the frontier peace, and the increased concern over development in the area by central Tibetan authorities. This examination of various class roles in commerce also illustrates how every sector of the population benefits from that prosperity.

#### LABOUR: THE SCARCE RESOURCE

It is labour and not limited natural resources that seems to be the critical factor in economic growth. Every economic transaction, from household organization to taxation, seems to reflect the constraints of labour shortage in the area.

The shortage seems most acute in rural D'ing-ri, where production modes and climate demand unusually intensive labour during peak periods. Animals are used both for ploughing and for transport, but the fertilizing methods, the irrigation schedules and the manual system of harvesting and threshing all place heavy demands on human labour.

Availability of labour is a constant concern of the farmers, as they endeavour to augment their help and to minimize all drains on that help.

When we find a family offering resistance to one of its members who plans to depart for a monastery, and when we hear complaints about conscripted work levies, it is the loss of labour that is resented. Families are in competition with the government for their own labour.

The demand for labour has been so unrelenting and so pervasive throughout the economy that certain social and economic mechanisms to conserve labour have been instituted by private households and government alike. Government measures seem particularly harsh in their inflexible laws with regard to land tenure. The laws state that persons who occupy land as tenant farmers (*dr'ong-pa*) are not free to leave the land at will, nor may they transfer their land by sale on debt.

Such laws, studied in theory but not in practice, have led other chroniclers of the society to conclude that no social mobility is possible in Tibet.<sup>4</sup> Indeed if one merely examines the rules and the ideals, one can also find evidence of the severity of the tenure system in conditions associated with the household.

In the farm hamlet, rights are shared and carried by all occupants of the household. They are held by male and female, by affines as well as by kindred. Anyone who becomes a member of a house is thereby required to fulfil the obligations obtaining there. Provisions have to be made for those who marry out; so such occasions are restricted. But successors cannot always be found to continue cultivation and tax payments, and it occasionally happens that a family is hard-pressed to find a successor.

Where a couple is childless, a second wife should be brought in and if a family has still no heir, it often feels obliged to adopt a child. Adoption is not so much a means of assuring an heir as it is the provision of a substitute to assume the obligations of a house. The Tibetan word for adoption is *tzab-j'e-pa*; it embodies the concept of substitution or representation, being applied to a government delegation also. Indeed, in the socio-economic context of Tibetan land tenure, adopted persons (both children and daughters' husbands, *mag-pa*) serve very much like deputies. The following case is an example of a family who are forced to adopt an heir. The householders were faced with the problem of their only child becoming a nun.

<sup>4</sup>Cf J Vidal, 1960 and M Goldstein, 1971; both of them take strong positions on the issue of mobility and human rights as they read their evidence that the villagers' rights were very limited.



*Case Seventeen*

The recalcitrant heir is Ch'ö-dzom, a woman who was from youth determined to be a religious adept. She was born at the turn of the century, the only child to a family of D'ing-ri agriculturalists. As such when the time came, marriage plans were begun by the parents to receive a husband (*mag-pa*) into the house and in this way fulfil its obligation as tenants. The girl, Ch'ö-dzom, foiled this plan with a series of calculated ruses which are not unknown to the independent-minded women of this society. First she requested the betrothal be delayed until after an approaching pilgrimage. She was allowed to go away on the journey. Unsuspected by her family, she had arranged her pilgrimage for the very purpose of entering into a religious life at once. She took a *la-ma* as her spiritual guide and somehow persuaded him to initiate her as a nun (*rab-j'ang*) there and then. Shaving her head and taking the vows of celibacy, Ch'ö-dzom pledged herself to strict religious observance and to the teachings of her *la-ma*. Thus committed, she returned to her village and appealed to the astonished and bewildered parents. They opposed the girl's position, but to no avail. Ch'ö-dzom remained firm on her decision. It was not simply a personal matter between the parents and their daughter, but a legal question of how the household would continue its obligations to the landowner. They sought to be excused but a personal appeal for a waiver was rejected by the landlord. When he insisted that a substitute be provided, the family went into litigation to seek the sympathy of higher authorities. When the court reaffirmed the landlord's rights the family intensified its attempts to find a substitute.

A distant kinsman was located, one willing to give up his own child, a girl. Therefore Ch'ö-dzom's parents had still to secure a *mag-pa* as son-in-law. This was arranged and the landlord satisfied. When the deputed heir arrived at the house, Ch'ö-dzom moved into a monastic community. Shortly afterwards the groom joined the unit, whereupon the ageing couple found themselves with two strangers assuming tenancy and management. They were grateful for the arrangement however, since it allowed them to leave the holding too. So a few years later they moved out and finished their life at the sanctuary their daughter had joined.

This case demonstrates the strict obligations and counter-balancing options for independent thought and action. Witness the position of *d'ü-ch'ung*. They represent the people who have not been deterred

from leaving their household. They exemplify the possibility of breaking away and existing in another setting. Sometimes this means attaching oneself to another household as a sharecropper or servant. In this respect the movement is a rather circular one: people run away from their natal residence, become *d'ü-ch'ung* and work for someone else in another region. Their natal family in the meantime has to let some of its land to a sharecropper. In an attempt to curb this the authorities try to limit sharecropping on the assumption that if itinerant labour were not so available, tenant farmers would feel more pressed to consolidate. But this has not been possible in this growing, highly mobile region. And much of the sharecropping continues unrecorded by the authorities who turn a blind eye to it so long as their own tax demands are met, and who admit that D'ing-ri's general prosperity does depend on an increase in labour supply and mobility.<sup>5</sup> Despite the apparent rigidity of the land tenure system in D'ing-ri, villagers together with leaders encouraged by the acquiescence of officials, devise ingenious ways of circumventing those laws, of shifting tenancy rights and of concealing facts. Living among the people of D'ing-ri one senses their competitiveness not among each other but with their government and their landlords.

More legitimate schemes have been initiated by the Tibetans in order to retain members within the all-important corporate group—the household. A strong ideal is the indivisibility of the plot of land attached to the household. Brothers must not separate, nor land be divided. Therefore when sons mature they remain in the natal house to which the land is attached, if they wish to retain their rightful share and status. All sons have an equal interest if they do so. When this rule is combined with the one that allows only one daughter-in-law (*na-ma*) per generation into the household, the result is fraternal polyandry, and as Tibetans see it, an increase in the household's labour force.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup>Headmen from various D'ing-ri villages tell me how they contrive with the *dr'ong-pa* and the *d'ü-ch'ung* to deceive tax-assessors and other officers on the officials' visits into the rural areas. In order to convince the official of their low production, they have to deny the employment of the *d'ü-ch'ung*. Small-smoke hide or leave the village during the official tour, since they might otherwise not have any land at all and may not be permitted to remain in the area.

<sup>6</sup>Even though the sharing of one wife results in fewer children born to a set of brothers, Tibetans insist that polyandry is a means of increasing the size of a family. They argue that by retaining men who are born here, the membership of the unit is expanded.

Fraternal polyandry involves no division, either of house or of land. Therefore, succeeding generations ideally carry on in the same apartment, around the same hearth and without any structural alterations in the house or in land-holdings. Every attempt is made to coerce brothers to adhere to this ideal. Where a family fails—and that happens not infrequently—they release a member with a feeling of regret and a certain amount of shame.

Whatever else this plural form of marriage may mean, it is seen by Tibetans themselves as primarily an economic arrangement. All persons believe that polyandry functions to increase the labour force available to the household—the taxable and productive unit. When a number of sons remain together the family is able to diversify its economic interests, and it is that diversification, more than intensive cultivation, that brings wealth to a household. Greater diversification is also facilitated by women who engage actively in productive economy, either cultivation or herding. With only one daughter-in-law permitted, a house sometimes keeps its own daughter back. Strictly speaking this is improper, and so to circumvent the rule such women are, in theory, religious-minded souls who are preparing to go to a sanctuary someday. Meanwhile, throughout their strongest and economically most productive years, girls so designated remain in their natal residence and add their labour to its development.<sup>7</sup> Families employing such tactics do not admit to doing so at the time. But years later, speaking about themselves or others, they say it is an effective economic policy. The informant in case fifteen acknowledges that this was the situation with the nuns in his wife's family.

Laypeople frequently discuss with regret the drain of human resources by D'ing-ri monasteries. The complaint is not a judgement on the novices' piety or on the general worth of religious commitment. It is the loss to the household's economic production that is resented. For this reason a family tries to dissuade its kin from entering into religious service and it is for this reason that a family searches for someone to substitute in the monk tax levied against it.

What the withdrawal of labour for religious pursuit amounts to in D'ing-ri is 7 per cent of the total population. This figure includes only celibate men and women in D'ing-ri who reside in nearby monasteries—about eight hundred and fifty individuals. The

<sup>7</sup>This pattern is exemplified in the case history of a D'ing-ri woman, A-ni Dröl-ma, in the final chapter.

number would double if one were to include the *ser-ky'im* practitioners who equal the monastics. (Cf Chapter Eleven.) The calculations of other observers place the male monastic population of Tibet at 10 per cent, somewhat higher than D'ing-ri where monks number close to 3 per cent of the total population. In any case this labour drain is significant in economic terms. And the loss of women is considered as unfortunate as the drain of men. The strain this creates for productive lay farmers is further exacerbated by the general demand on them by monastic communities for food and other supplies. How the reduced lay labour force in D'ing-ri manages to produce enough surplus for their religious population remains a mystery of their economics.

It is mainly the *dr'ong-pa* agriculturalists with their high demands for labour who feel these losses most acutely. The practices of polyandry and the occasional retention of a daughter cannot provide all the necessary labour, so it has become a practice in D'ing-ri to employ additional itinerant labourers to help in cultivation. This is where many *d'ü-ch'ung* find a place. They are engaged as share croppers at such a low rate of wages that the practice remains profitable for the *dr'ong-pa*, who are tenants themselves. Some D'ing-ri tenants exploit the situation more than others; the most extreme case is in Kong-tza village where two tenant farmers share twenty *d'ü-ch'ung* units between them. The ratio of *d'ü-ch'ung* to *dr'ong-pa* is far lower in other villages where on the average it is only 1.5 sharecropping units to each tenant. (See Table B, Chapter Seven, listing village composition according to these categories.) Whether or not they employ sharecroppers, D'ing-ri *dr'ong-pa* households usually find themselves paying wage labourers and joining cooperative schemes with other villagers during the busy agricultural seasons when they need additional labour.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, the social ideology affirms the concern about husbandry. More people in the house, D'ing-ri-wa claim, will bring it prosperity. Even the unambitious small-smoke invoke this ideal in their comments about society. They point to their neighbours who are large households and invariably rich. The wealthy units are called *mi-tsang-ch'e* (big house). The poor are referred to as *d'ü-ch'ung* (small-smoke) and *nyung-ch'ung* (tiny-small). With the occasional case of social mobility in D'ing-ri we have the opportunity to learn the people's explanation of and reaction to that kind of social change, and I collected comments

<sup>8</sup>Cf Chapter Nine on reciprocation in the villages of D'ing-ri.

on that. When a family's economic status increases, Tibetan observers say it is caused by the family's increased numbers. And when people observe the economic decline of a family they attribute it to the dwindling size of the house. This household ideology gives to each family unit its strong corporate nature in society.

### HOUSE AND VILLAGE: TWO CORPORATE GROUPS

In D'ing-ri the household is the primary economic unit. It is the unit of production, the unit of taxation, the land-holding unit and the unit for political representation. Cooperation within the household is therefore a primary factor in its productivity.

Work is distributed among the members of a house, with each adult managing a different task. There is only an occasional regard for sexual division of labour. For example, males in the village are assigned to one of the three main productive concerns: farming, herding or trading. Senior men attend to tax payments and represent the household in local councils, etc. The most senior person, man or woman, usually becomes custodian of the household shrine. If there are insufficient men in the unit, then women assume responsibility for the herds. Although this task requires a woman to live in the meadow annexe near the cattle, the herdesses do not find that a problem. Village women also undertake a large part of the cultivation. But I have never heard of their taking responsibility in matters of commerce and tax.

Commercial transactions, though they may be outside the sphere of village women, are very much the concern of those in Gang-gar town. The urban women of D'ing-ri are active participants in commerce and trade and they occasionally travel into Zhi-ka-tze and Lha-sa in the course of that work. It is usually senior women who do this, with the younger ones confined to domestic matters and minor local trade. The young women probably work under the supervision of their mother or mother-in-law until they are ready for more ambitious enterprises.

On the whole there is considerable overlapping between men and women as regards work. It is very important that a household diversify its economic interests, and labour is organized to that end. Individuals in the house therefore become specialists in one area or another. Each one's niche is determined according to personal temperament as well as to communal needs. No task is ever so exclusive that others cannot learn it, or that roles cannot change. That the sexes can interchange

so readily in various economic roles is a key to the economic success of the D'ing-ri household.

The corporate strength of the *dr'ong-pa* household, given its ties to the land through a strict inheritance and taxation system, is similar to that found in traditional China. The extended family there acts both as an organization for concentrating labour and as a bulwark against fragmentation. As in pre-communist China, so in D'ing-ri the rules of inheritance generally discourage the division of leased land attached to a single house. Ordinarily, sons must remain within the family land unit and contribute to the family economy. But unlike the practice in China, and in India where each son takes a wife and lives in a separate unit within the extended family, all sons in D'ing-ri remain ideally in the same household. Their sharing a wife precludes the establishment of separate units. When one demands a separate wife, he must effect a complete economic separation.

Fission in the D'ing-ri household is contrary to social and economic ideals and when it occurs, the subsequent arrangements continue the corporate strength of the household. A brother who decides to marry a woman of his own choice and live monogamously, may do so if he detaches himself from the patrilocal residence. If he sets up a household in the vicinity it must adhere to the rules of one residence and one land title. The resulting tax for the two units would be higher than for the original, which is one of the main arguments against such division. Nevertheless, despite the opposition families express on this matter, monogamous, neo-local marriages have occurred in every village throughout D'ing-ri. Apparently some independent-minded individuals do not acquiesce to the polyandric ideology, and they feel strong enough to handle the additional tax burden.

On the corporate nature of the D'ing-ri household, one can find several etymological examples of the rule of residence. The word *dr'ong-pa* itself signifies household status. It is the tenant household—a residence attached to land, a corporate unit existing beyond the life of any individual member. It is the unit against which tax obligations are assigned. Equally important to its definition is the bundle of reciprocal relations each residence has with other households.<sup>9</sup> The rights and obligations between households persist beyond the lifetime

<sup>9</sup>Both Chapter Nine and my article on *Reciprocation and Social Control in a Tibetan Community in Nepal* (Aziz, 1977) detail the many facets of their system of reciprocity.

of any individual. Persons who have officially left the house have no such obligations. But those who remain do.

The principle of household solidarity so manifest in the *dr'ong-pa*, is weaker among other commoners—the *d'ü-ch'ung* and the merchants. Members of these two classes do not reside in large residential units, nor are they concerned directly with the issue of labour conservation.

For *d'ü-ch'ung*, nucleation is the rule. Their family units lack cohesiveness and they have no corporate identity. The small-smoke have only a token tie to land. In D'ing-ri the rights and obligations these simple people have they exercise as individuals, not as members of a household unit. This allows them the freedom to move from one place to another. And it countenances the outflow of each succeeding generation.

The merchant families of D'ing-ri are not as fragile in their structure as the *d'ü-ch'ung*. But they do lack the sense of continuity and the strong residential solidarity of the agriculturalists. Since these urban families are wealthy on the whole, with considerable assets worth transferring to succeeding generations, their weaker corporate structure is unexpected. It is also incongruent with their ideology, which, like the others', proclaims the value of household solidarity, favours polyandry and disapproves of division of the household. They are far less inclined to follow this ideology than the *dr'ong-pa* households, however. Fraternal polyandry is not as common as among the merchants and officials, and sons split off with a share of the property to form new, independent households.

After the household the next larger socio-economic entity is the village. Here we note that each hamlet, both the lay and the *ser-ky'im*, constitutes a corporate unit. It is first apparent at the geographical level, best illustrated in the manuscript map of D'ing-ri by Nyi-ma Wö-zer (Map 3, Chapter Two). The illustrator's circling of names (written in Tibetan) of each village is a clear symbolic representation of the architectural plan of a D'ing-ri village. It denotes a tight composite of houses distinguishing themselves as a hamlet, an independent community surrounded by fields from others like it.

The corporate character of each village is further manifest in its economic and political structure. Each village (apart from three listed in Appendix IV) is a separate administrative unit. It is assigned to a single landlord or landlord designate towards which all taxes are directed. This relationship results in the variegated tax requirements for

D'ing-ri villages. The particular tax levied on each village derives from the unique rights of each landlord and from the compromises reached between the village and the landlord over the years. Villages in D'ing-ri are not taxed equally. Nor are they similarly administered. Some villages are levied monks' taxes; others bear a heavier levy of transport labour; some have to pay a military tax, some have not. (Cf Appendix IV, a selected list of D'ing-ri village tax schedules.)

These tax variations have emerged partly as a result of the varying rights of different landlords. But they are also reached after litigation between village and landlord. Cases brought by the tax-payer are almost all in the form of a petition, submitted to the government by the entire village against its landlord agency. Ra-ch'u is one hamlet which, after successful litigation in 1940, had no longer to comply with the monk levy of two men for the Dro-p'an-kar-ling Gön-pa near Nyanang.<sup>10</sup> Like others of this kind, the judgement was awarded to the village as a corporate unit.

Other variations in village taxes are effected by relationships among landlords themselves. When landlords dispute, entire villages may be lost by one and gained by another. This happened around 1940 at Tr'ag-tze hamlet when Tra-shi-lhun-po of Zhi-ka-tze was awarded landlord rights against Dza-rong Monastery. Shar-lung is another village whose taxes changed when it left the jurisdiction of Shel-kar Monastery as a government holding and was assigned to the Sa-kya principality instead. That was as late as 1950, and there are other cases still in litigation at the end of the decade.<sup>11</sup>

Where, as in the case of the monk tax, a specific family has to supply the individual, the tax is levied not against the household but on the village as a whole. Tax is a collective responsibility. The administrator or headman assembles the contribution of each member house. Payments in kind are combined into one payment on behalf of the village. Conscription of tax service is more complicated. Houses must decide among themselves who will contribute members for different

<sup>10</sup>In the list of villages and their administrating units (Appendix IV), Dro-p'an-kar-ling's holdings in D'ing-ri are included.

<sup>11</sup>One of the cases in litigation is being brought against the two *dr'ong-pa* households of Kong-tza village by the majority of twenty sharecropper houses in the hamlet, who are attempting to lessen the imbalance in their village. The power of the two established houses of Kong-tza is one of the few examples of economic exploitation in the area.



services. Sometimes the allocation is done on a strict rotational basis. But often one or two families monopolize a particular tax (the monk or military), repeatedly supplying their own members or surrogates.<sup>12</sup> The landlord does not seem overly concerned about how the village arrives at its quota—so long as it is met. The policy of non-interference in the internal administration of tax collection can be used by the headman to his own advantage. But villagers seem to accept this as the lesser evil, and there are indications that they consult together and do effect compromises. After all, the headman is one of them.

The very strong village ideology exhibited in rural D'ing-ri also derives from economic considerations. Co-villagers depend on cooperative schemes in several stages of agricultural production.

Cooperative labour on plots of land set aside for the landlord is obligatory.<sup>13</sup> It is a service tax levied against each household. On a similar basis, each household is called upon to provide transport and assistance to government officials travelling through from village to village. The organization of this labour is a complex task given to the headman of each village and coordinated by an office in D'ing-ri Gang-gar.

Mutual aid and rotation of duties within the village unit is common in many economic activities. It extends to herding, to defence and to cultivation. Whether it has developed to overcome inherent labour shortages or to accommodate a particular technology, teamwork is now an integral part of village life. It is manifest in property ownership, in behaviour and in ideology. (Cooperation as a cultural mechanism among Tibetans is discussed in Chapter Nine.) An interesting feature of village economy focuses around communally held property. Water mills, irrigation channels and grazing lands, all separate from government-designated plots, are jointly owned and worked by village members. Each household has certain rights with regard to these properties. Each must contribute to maintenance and operation services. These duties are assigned either on a rotational basis or by the community employment of a full-time attendant at the mill or

<sup>12</sup>The family who supplies the son is awarded some compensation in the form of an additional piece of land called *dr'a-kang* (when a monk is supplied) and *mug-kang* (for a soldier). There was always much competition for the rights to these plots. Cf Surkhang (1966) on the Tibetan taxation system.

<sup>13</sup>There are two types of plots that fall into this position: *ch'i-kang* (general plot) and *ch'ö-kang* (religious plot).

the pasture. Irrigation is usually managed on a carefully worked out rotational scheme, whereas milling and herding are best affected when individuals are hired by the village specifically for these duties.

Every village has one or more mills. The only exception is Gang-gar town which, because of its location on top of a small hill jutting out of a plain, has a poor water supply. The town's residents have therefore to take their grain to the mills at two nearby villages, Tr'ag-tze and Te-tung, with whom Gang-gar has a contract. The rate for Gang-gar households is higher, but throughout D'ing-ri the average rate of payment for use of the village mill is one measure in twenty. It constitutes the share of each house to the miller's salary.

Beyond the cultivated plots surrounding each village is the grazing land. Almost all *dr'ong-pa* families practice transhumance and therefore have an interest in the meadows. The land is held corporately by the village and only livestock owned by its members can graze there. Since the size of individual herds varies from one household to another, the contribution of each is different. And when a household herd exceeds a certain size, it cannot share the herder and must provide its own. The communal warden who shepherds the combined herd of smaller households is called the *p'ug-dzi*. His quasi-permanent dwelling is at the meadow and his food is collectively provided.

The herder's job, like that of the miller, is not assigned to itinerant labourers. It is a task which carries considerable responsibility with regard to the breeding and care of valuable animals, and extends to their defence against the constant threat which thieves and wolves pose. Cattle rustling, common throughout D'ing-ri, is one of those hazards that villagers seek to avoid by the use of cooperative schemes. Cooperation is a matter of survival. In the discussion of religious work (Chapters Four, Ten and Eleven) villagers are seen to collectively defend themselves against malevolent spirits; in the matter of tax they defend themselves against the landlord; and in confronting physical dangers Tibetans also find strength in teamwork.

Yet beyond the limits of the village, cooperation almost ceases to exist among D'ing-ri people. There is almost no economic cooperation between D'ing-ri villages. Even kinspeople, when they live in separate villages, do not cooperate with each other. Only the offerings of the *kor-k'ong* unit (cf Chapter Four) constitute a kind of inter-village exchange. But that ritual exchange is limited to consumption and therefore cannot be compared to the other production-oriented exchange schemes we have been discussing here.

## ECONOMIC HIERARCHY: A WORLD VIEW

By far the most dominant factor in the Tibetans' view of their world is the economic one. The categories into which individuals fall are essentially economic categories: private land-holders, tenant farmers, merchants, mendicants and nomads. Then there are the four primary ranks, each defined in economic terms: *ya-wa* may not own land; *mi-ser* may hold land but not own it; *ger-pa* and *ngag-pa* are both granted landowning rights with differing obligations to their tenants and the government.

Within the community of commoners (*mi-ser*), as I have already argued in Chapter Three, each group can be justifiably termed a "class" because of their distinguishing economic features. It is mainly in their economic rights and obligations that *dr'ong-pa*, *tsong-pa* and *d'ü-ch'ung* are distinguished from one another. Membership in one or another is usually acquired first by birth, but if one eventually loses his economic status he will find himself in one of the other social groups consistent with his new economic role. A *d'ü-ch'ung* loses that distinction when he becomes a full-time merchant, self-employed. Similarly a tenant farmer who leaves his household to work as a labourer for someone else is no longer thought of as *dr'ong-pa*. People also change their status when they marry into one group, having come from another. That change is concomitant with their having joined a new economic unit.

The people of D'ing-ri attach a great deal of importance to economic status. It is generally the first remark they make about a person when introducing him—or when gossiping. Wealth is important—no matter what rank it is associated with, the D'ing-ri-wa, like most Tibetans, keep that uppermost in their minds and in their social behaviour.

An agriculturalist, if he is like a *ger-pa* (noble) in prosperity, will be treated "just like a nobleman" by other commoners. If a tax-collector is like a private trader, he will be treated thus. If a monk is administering funds for his monastery he will be treated as an administrator, not as a master of liturgy. And a rich nomad, because of his wealth, earns as much respect as an equally prosperous merchant.

The only place where increased prosperity does not give a person more prestige and power is among the outcastes. Some of the D'ing-ri *ya-wa* who accumulate considerable resources from butchering cannot convert that into social influence. This is because their property is not considered as legitimate wealth. However they may have accumula-

ted their resources, outcastes are mistrusted by the rest of the society. People accuse them of banditry and claim that what *ya-wa* have must have been stolen from others. This is another rationalization for excluding them.

Widespread application of economic standards also expresses itself in the Tibetans' conceptualization of their society and of their State. So the propensity to frame behaviour in economic terms extends beyond interpersonal relations and applies to their considerations of themselves as a community. To a D'ing-ri-wa society *is* an economic entity; they cannot conceive of it otherwise. Therefore when they are invited to describe themselves, the resulting model is an economic structure: either a taxation schedule, or an economic administration, an establishment or an economic hierarchy of classes. All these are systems and to a D'ing-ri Tibetan systems or organizations are by nature economic. Even a monastic institution is described as an economic organization; its holdings are listed, its officers ranked, its daily consumption recorded and its reserves of wealth cited.

The Tibetans' propensity to express themselves in these narrow terms has greatly stunted sociological inquiries into their culture; it has greatly aided in creating the image the country has of an administrative monolith. Apart from the literature on Tibetan religion which has kept religion exclusive of society, the writings on Tibet are largely concerned with economic administration, and while these studies have been carried out by western scholars, they have relied heavily on the testimony of Tibetan persons. As such they suffer from the narrow constructs of these people.

I do not doubt the factual evidence D'ing-ri-wa and others supply. In the same way I accept that for most people in Tibet, the presence of the State is felt mainly through its economic policy, and a burdensome, unfavourable one at that. But there are other levels of social organization and there are other ways one can view the State. These are ignored by Tibetans, and leave most sociological accounts of their culture unfortunately biased and sadly inconsistent with our sense of the robust Tibetan character and religion. Cast in unimaginative Tibetan moulds, the social picture that emerges from the writings of recent scholars and early chroniclers alike is too static to explain the energetic Tibetan mentality, the social and cultural innovation, and above all the rich religious growth of these people.

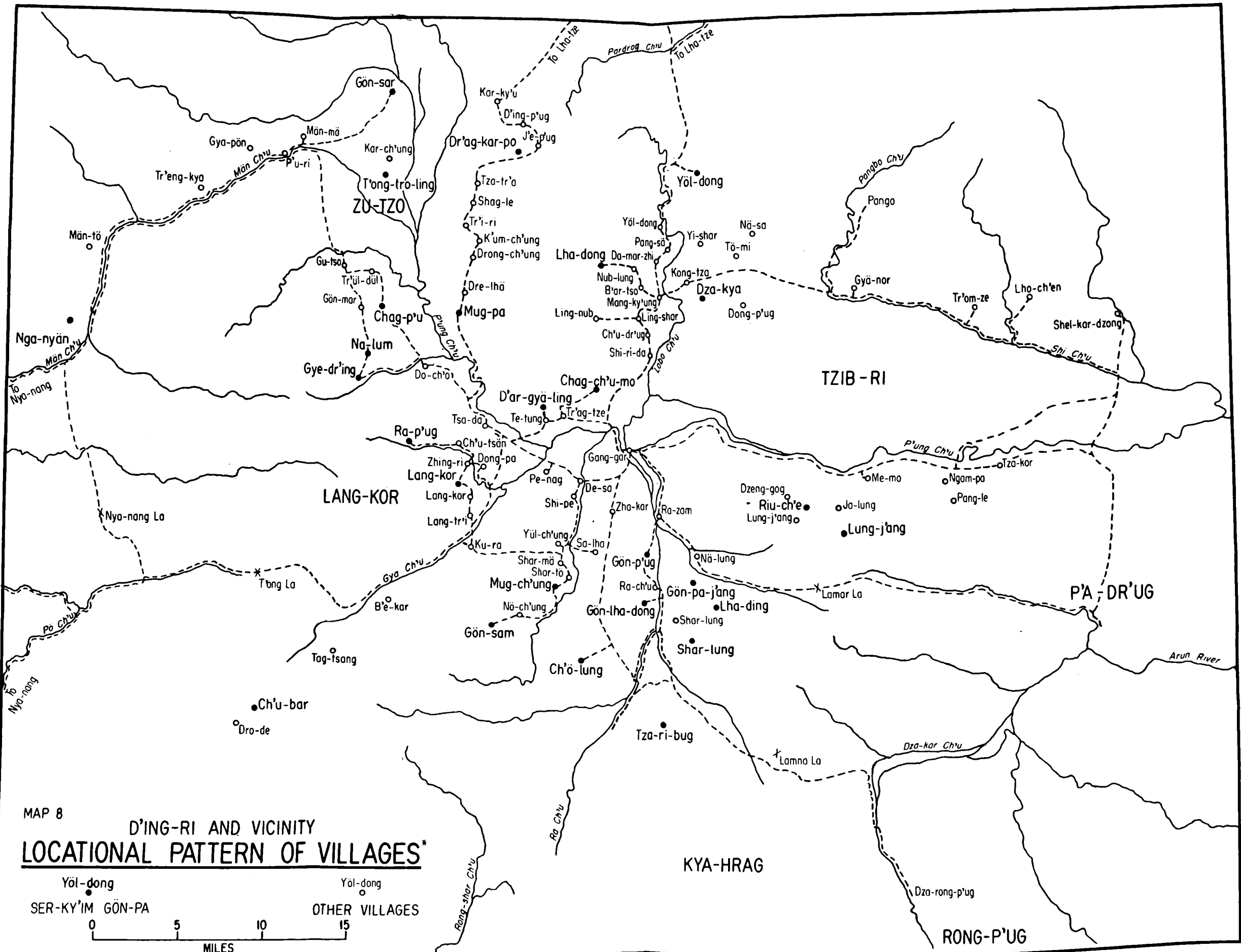
The only way to overcome these research limitations is through a more careful and rigorous observation of Tibetan social behaviour.

We have to jump over neatly packaged economic data so easily culled and engage in a deeper search of personal histories, of resources, of systems of exchange, and of change itself. The cases of D'ing-ri migrants and the genealogies of commoners highlight the individualistic spirit of these people, and compose piece by piece the framework of their society. As it stands now, and as it will develop through the following chapters, D'ing-ri appears to be unusual in its heterogeneity and change. This appears so because I have not accepted the rigid economic models in which these people generally cast themselves. When this is done in the research on other Tibetan populations the results will be parallel.

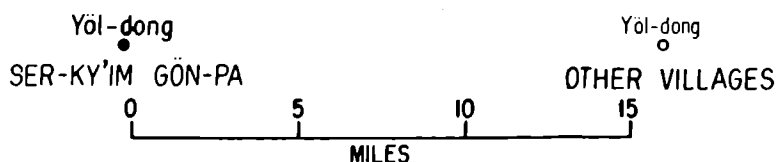
One of the major points brought out in this chapter has been the centrality of the D'ing-ri household, and this leads us to further considerations about principles of residence in the society. Household solidarity in D'ing-ri may function to more efficient economic ends in the view of D'ing-ri farmers, but it is nevertheless based on a deeper principle of residence. People's value of their residence can be detected in their application of names, in their definition of the family and in their recruitment to social groups. These are introduced in the next chapter, as we proceed with our investigation of D'ing-ri social structure.

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MAP 8  
**D'ING-RI AND VICINITY**  
**LOCATIONAL PATTERN OF VILLAGES\***



\* SEE APPENDICES I & II

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## Descent and Residence : A New Look at Kinship

This chapter explores two fundamental features of this Tibetan society: its system of descent and its pattern of residence.<sup>1</sup> To identify the peculiarities of a culture's principles of descent and residence is to give ourselves a key by which to decipher other aspects of the social structure. Marriage customs, jural relations, social stratification, family organization and a host of rules for recruitment of people into groups are based on these structural principles.

In our discussion of social stratification and economic organization in D'ing-ri we have seen that ideas of descent have not been a determining factor in these structures. It is not the idea of descent, but rather the concept of household which stands out as the keystone around which social relations are articulated. It is the residence principle which is central. Through an examination of the household in this way, we will begin to understand how such a large part of life in D'ing-ri and in other parts of Tibet is an expression of basic values that attach to one's household and to one's locality.

<sup>1</sup>The relationships and influences of Tibetan descent and residence were first raised by me in an earlier publication, *Some Notions of Descent and Residence in Tibetan Society* (1974). Those conclusions were based on data from D'ing-ri and are repeated here in their original context, where they constitute an integral part of the complete D'ing-ri social structure.



Yet before we engage in that investigation, let us inquire into the role descent plays in Tibetan society. More than one observer has written that descent in Tibet is patrilineal. Even the few anthropologists who have written analytically about Tibet define it as a society with clans and lineages formed by links through males.<sup>2</sup> Where detailed evidence of this was not available from Tibet itself, the well-documented social organization of neighbouring societies in parts of Nepal and along the northern regions of India—societies that are patrilineal in nature—has led them to conclude by induction that Tibet is undoubtedly patrilineal.<sup>3</sup>

Till now the descent principle attributed to Tibet by other authors had not been detailed by them. So the sizeable body of data concerning the Tibetan peoples lacks any discussion or description of its descent and lineage system. The absence of a substantive description of Tibetan patrilineality should have alerted us long ago to question our assumptions about the theory and the reality of lineal descent in Tibet. Instead we continued with the notion that the society had been correctly identified. I too, when I initiated my investigation of D'ing-ri's social structure, set out to collect substantive data to affirm the patrilineal ideal. Yet I found little evidence that people were organizing according to male descent. Examples of lineal descent I found are limited to very restricted areas of social life. They operate chiefly at the periphery of society, among the priestly *ngag-pa* and the nobles at the top, and among the lowly *ya-wa* at the lowest rank of society. I also found that descent is used as a guide when people have to calculate their exogamous group, the group of persons they cannot marry. But in this application of descent, it is not a unilineal principle but a bilateral one that is followed. That is, persons consider their kin through their father's side and their kin through their mother's side, giving equal weight to each.

Though we cannot therefore say that descent reckoning does not exist in this society, it is very limited in its application and is not simply patrilineal.

<sup>2</sup>Cf in particular Stein, 1962 and Prince Peter, 1963. But in 1966 Nakane rather quietly expressed her doubts about lineage and clan formation among the Bhotia peoples of Sikkim (1966, p 237).

<sup>3</sup>These were the conclusions about the Sherpa (Füerer-Haimendorf, 1964), the Lepcha (Gorer, 1967), the people of Tsarka (Ijima, 1964) and the Gurung (Pignède, 1966).

## NOTIONS OF DESCENT IN D'ING-RI SOCIETY

Patrilineal descent that takes its origin from an individual, an apical ancestor, and identifies its members as those persons who inherit certain qualities only through their fathers, is manifest in the Tibetan *ngag-pa*. All *ngag-pa* priests in this group are imbued with spiritual power by virtue of their paternal ancestry. They trace descent back through males to a founding *la-ma* who is remembered as the original in the line of successive *ngag-pa*.<sup>4</sup>

Only men may become *ngag-pa* and only the sons of a *ngag-pa* can ensure the transfer of the special qualities to successive generations. The child of a *ngag-pa* mother and of a father who is a commoner cannot make claim to the priestly status, but the descendant of a *ngag-pa* male and a common woman is ascribed the status. Such a case is only hypothetical however, since D'ing-ri-wa say that unions between *ngag-pa* men and *mi-ser* women are inauspicious and will not bear issue. They say that this is why the Na-lum La-ma, who married a local D'ing-ri woman, had no heir and thus caused the line to become extinct. When *ngag-pa* cannot find a member of their own rank as a marriage partner they tend to accept women of noble descent. So marriage between the daughter of a Tibetan aristocrat and a *ngag-pa* is not uncommon. Even so, daughters of such a union cannot claim priestly authority.

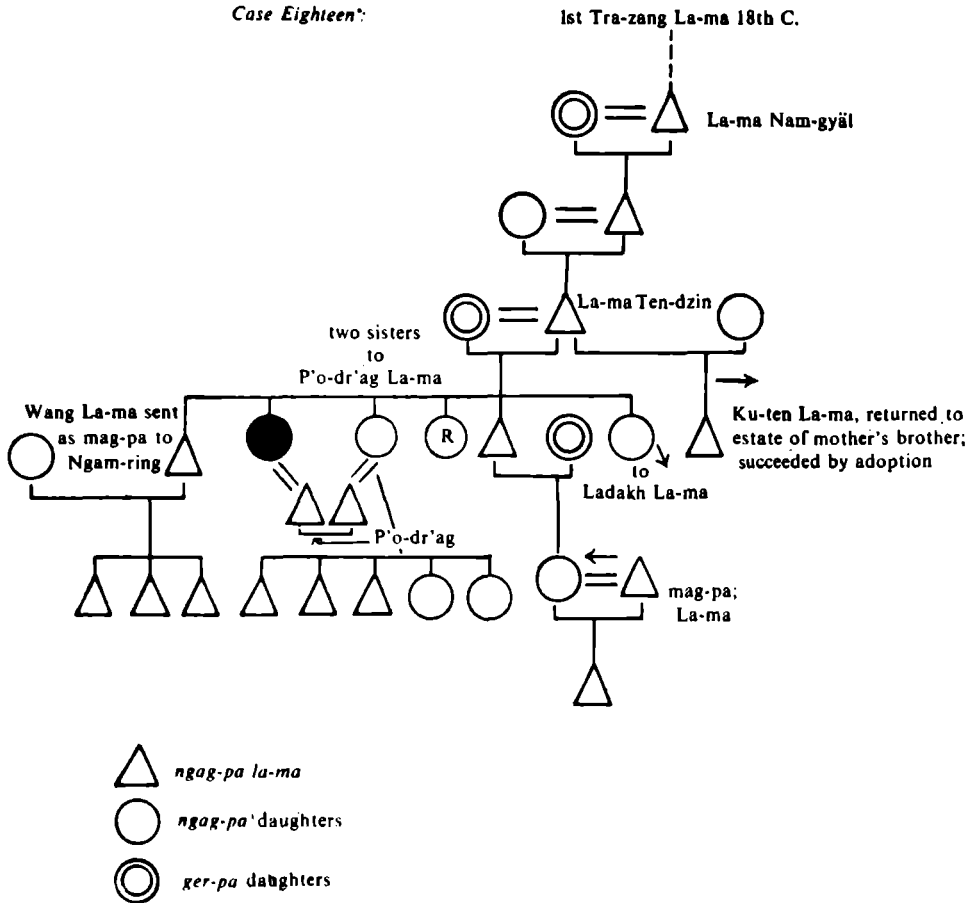
The following genealogy (p 122) is part of Tra-zang La-ma history. Although many details of this D'ing-ri *la-ma*'s lineage are not well known, what is reproduced here shows the tendency to group endogamy, with six out of eight recorded marriages being unions between members of this lineage and other *ngag-pa* units. (The other two marriages are between *ngag-pa* and the nobility.)

Like all Tibetans these hereditary *la-ma* must adhere to the rule of exogamy that forbids marriage between persons within a seven generation network of kindred.<sup>5</sup> This rule, combined with the low population of this class in the D'ing-ri region (five families) usually precludes their finding affines from among the neighbouring *ngag-pa* estates (*la-dr'ang*). Their search for affines then takes them far beyond D'ing-

<sup>4</sup>Cf Chapter Three on social stratification.

<sup>5</sup>Some Tibetans say these *la-ma* recognize nine generations of kindred before they reach the limit, but without written genealogies this practice cannot be adhered to or proven.

ri's boundaries, so that the Tra-zang lineage has ties in Ladakh, in Ngam-ring and in P'o-dr'ag.



All the D'ing-ri *ngag-pa* are relatively minor religious figures, obscure in the wider context of Tibetan history where some members of this eminent class have held the status and fame of kingly lineages. At least two famous *ngag-pa* families, the K'ön line of Sa-kya and the kings of Derge in east Tibet, have had their histories introduced into English literature. Part of the story of the K'ön line is contained in the oft-referred to Sa-kya study by Cassinelli and Ekvall (1969), and the history of the Derge priest kings is outlined in a translation by Kölmas (1968). And many more accounts of this elite sector of society can be gleaned from the genealogical records of the "noble priests," as one writer calls them. The following is a passage taken from the writings of one translator who includes these biographical passages for their historical facts,

but omits mention of the patrilineal principle they exhibit.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless his translation allows us to trace the descent of the Ya-nal La-ma and to observe the concern of the *la-ma* themselves with their patrilineal perpetuity (Snellgrove, 1967, pp 4, 5).

The *la-mas* of Samling like the *la-mas* of Klu-brag are a hereditary line of the Ya-nal family. . . . Some of them have been married men but some have been celibate. . . . Thus the line has passed from father to son, and sometimes from uncle to nephew.

He (the *La-ma* of Klu-brag) was the son of a renowned bonpo *la-ma* Tan-ston chen-po ses-rab rgyal-mtshan. Brief biographies are given in the *rnam thar* . . . of Ses-rab rgyal-mtshan, of two of his sons, Bum-rje and Klu-brag-pa, and of a grandson. . . . No dates . . . but we are told that Klu-brag-pa studied in gTsang. The eldest son of Klu-brag-pa was known as the 'tantric *la-ma*' (*blama sngag-pa*) and he was the first of a line to go to Bicher in Dolpo (or Byi-byer). . . . This tantric *la-ma* had three children: two sons and a daughter. The eldest son died young. The younger son became a monk. The daughter left and married elsewhere. Being anxious to establish a line of illustrious *la-mas* of Bi-cher, the tantric *la-ma* invited from sTag-rtse in upper gTsang a boy of eight who belonged to a parallel branch of the family. This boy was rGyal-mtsan . . . who founded Sam-ling Monastery near Bi-cher. He himself remained celibate, and the line of Samling *la-mas* descended from his younger brother.

At the opposite end of the D'ing-ri social spectrum, the outcaste *ya-wa* also exhibit patrilineal descent.<sup>7</sup> The defiled lowly status of these people, however, is inherited through either parent. A person born of two *ya-wa* parents is unequivocally of defiled status. But some ambivalence is attached to the child of a mixed marriage. Nevertheless, the predominance of the male line in carrying the polluting trait is apparent in the cases of marriage between *ya-wa* and *mi-ser* (cf cases ten and eleven in Chapter Three). Those whose father is the outcaste

<sup>6</sup>Snellgrove, who is another observer committed to the notion of patrilineal descent, draws heavily on the histories of noble priests and kings, which explains his conclusions with regard to descent.

<sup>7</sup>The outcaste class of D'ing-ri Tibetan society is discussed at some length in Chapter Three.

partner, when compared to the children whose mother is the *ya-wa* in a mixed marriage, are more tainted. The sense of the dominant influence of the father is an example of the reckoning by patrilineal descent.

D'ing-ri-wa—as all Tibetans—believe that it is through inheritance that they find themselves ascribed to one or other of the four basic groups of their society: the *ger-pa*, the *ngag-pa*, the *mi-ser* and the *ya-wa*. The *gyü-pa* of whichever group a person belongs to is passed through succeeding generations and carries certain traits that have been described in our discussion of social stratification. The influence of patriliney ends with the ascription to one of these groups. There is no ancestor cult, no clan land, no moiety marriage, no hereditary leadership and no lineage gatherings; all examples of social behaviour which would manifest itself where patriliney continued as an organizing principle are absent.

Where descent in general continues to be of concern is in defining the exogamous group—the group one cannot marry. This group, called the *pün* or kindred, is defined by bilateral descent. That includes all one's blood relatives, those on the mother's side to the same degree as those reckoned through the father. This reckoning is only the first step in defining sexual and marriage relations. Many other factors are recorded in the next chapter. It does not define how rights are held, how names are ascribed, how alliances are formed or how groups are delineated in the society. These and other patterns of D'ing-ri social behaviour are largely determined by principles of residence—what household one is born in and with whom one lives. It is nowhere more apparent than in the way housenames are assigned to individuals.

#### HOUSENAMES

The name by which one is known in one's own locality and in the wider D'ing-ri community is the name of one's natal or affinal house. Every house of a particular status is assigned a name in D'ing-ri, and it is the name of the house together with the village name that is ascribed to its occupants. Although the household unit is a kinship group as well as a residential one, the name is not a kinship name in the way that a clan or lineage name is. Those who share a common housename are co-residents in that house. They may or may not be kindred. And people who are kindred, for example brothers and cousins, if they reside in separate houses, have no way of recognizing one another by name. Those with a common descent do not share a com-

mon name; however, those of a common residence do.

The housename (*dr'ong-ming*) is more important than personal names. Personal names like Sö-nam (merit), Dröl-kar (white goddess) and Nyi-ma (sun) are of no social significance and are rarely used alone. Whereas the personal name is an individual's private concern, the housename, taken from the actual name of the dwelling, confers upon its occupants a particular social and economic status. The *dr'ong-ming* defines a person's status in the family, in the village and in the wider community.

The housename is arrived at by combining physical attributes of the dwelling with auspicious markers. Thus, Tra-rab (*tra-shi-rab*=auspicious, excellent); K'ang-kyi (house, happy); Tag-rab (flower, excellent); Cha-leg (part, good). In addition to these characteristically traditional names found among the rural *dr'ong-pa* of D'ing-ri, there are quasi-housenames. These are derived from the profession or rank of a household head where the family is in the process of upward mobility and integration into the established D'ing-ri community. Thus one finds houses called U-lag (master craftsman), Em-ch'e (physician), Ru-pön (colonel) or Tsong-pa (merchant) prefixed to a personal name or kinship title along with other markers of the housename.

Within the house the *dr'ong-ming* is not applied, of course, but outside it is invariably present, with the result that one hears persons referred to in the normal course of conversation by such terms as Tra-rab Sö-nam, U-lag Nyi-ma or Tsong-pa Na-ma (housename+personal name). When the whole family is being referred to, the housename is cited alone (Ru-pön-pa or Cha-leg-pa), or prefixed by the village where the house is located (Gang-gar Cha-leg, Ra-ch'u K'ang-kyi).

Everyone who resides in a household has the right to use its *dr'ong-ming*. This applies to affines as well as to blood kin, to children as well as to adults. In the house of U-la, the master carpenter, for example, the eight occupants are referred to as follows:

*Case Nineteen*

U-lag A-p'a	household head and father
U-lag A-k'u Lo-zang	father's brother
U-lag Bu Nor-bu	elder son
U-lag A-ma (or Ja-lung Dröl-kar)*	mother
U-lag D'ön-dr'ub	younger son
U-lag A-ni De-kyi	elder sister, a nun living at home

U-lag Na-ma (or Te-tung Bar-o Lha-mo)\* daughter-in-law

\*the two women who came into this house as brides are still known by their original housename, which is used concurrently with the U-lag identity.

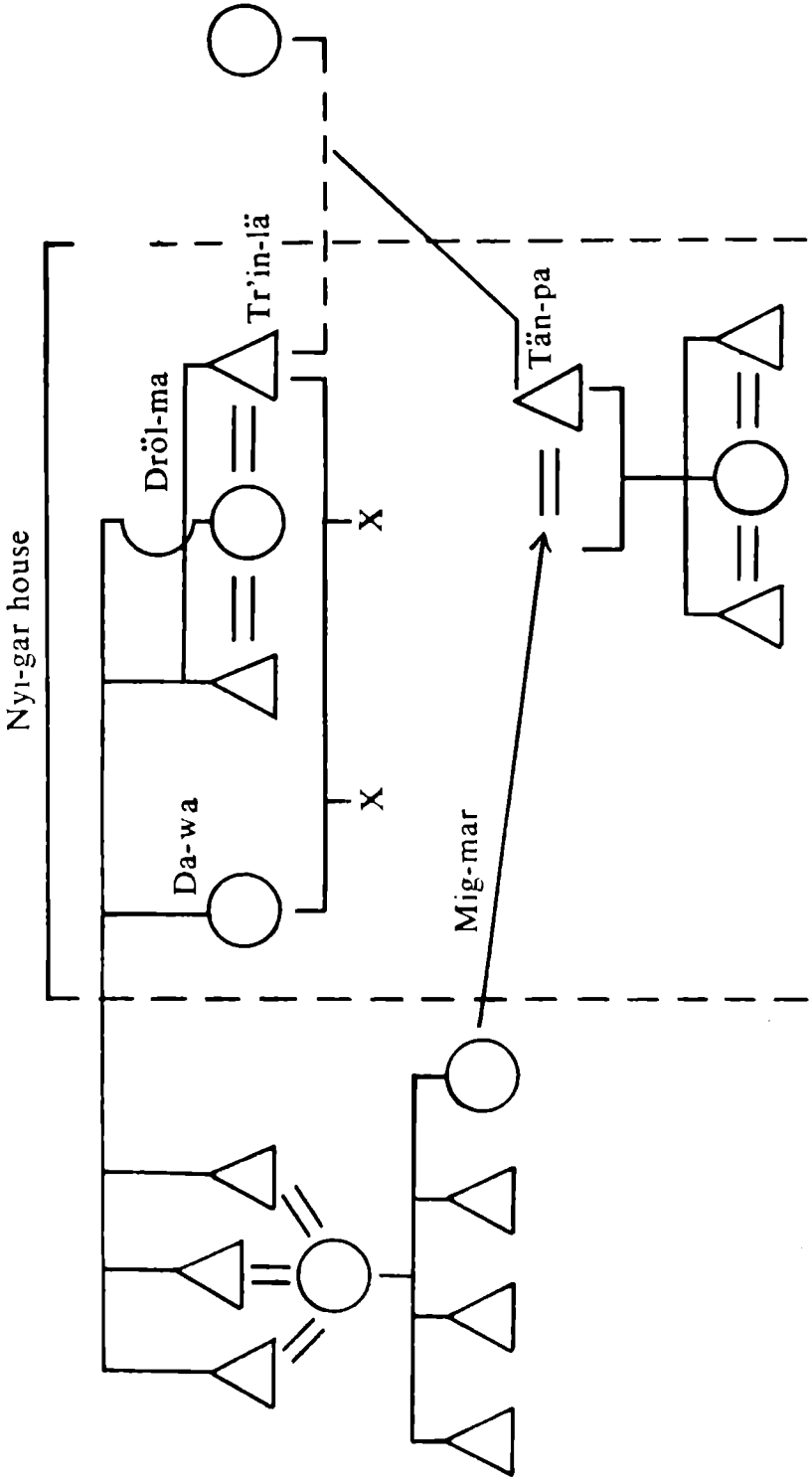
There is a third son, the eldest son of U-lag A-p'a, who does not live in this house because he was born out of wedlock to another woman in the village. That son, Tra-shi Nor-bu, has remained in his maternal house and although he enjoys close ties with his patrilateral kin, he has never been an occupant in the U-lag house and holds no rights there. It is unthinkable that he or anyone else would employ the housename U-lag in reference to Tra-shi Nor-bu, since that right does not come from paternity but from residence.

If Tra-shi Nor-bu had been adopted into his father's house, as in case twenty of Nyi-gar Tän-pa, only then would the U-lag housename be prefixed to his. The following case of Nyi-gar Tr'in-lä and his adopted son Nyi-gar Tän-pa does not typify behaviour towards illegitimate children, but it is a true case taken from current D'ing-ri society and is a clear illustration of the acquisition of rights revolving around the residence. Tän-pa, like Tra-shi Nor-bu, was an illegitimate child, but Tän-pa was adopted by his father since there was no legitimate heir in the Nyi-gar household (cf also p 127).

#### *Case Twenty*

Nyi-gar Tri'n-lä and his younger brother Päl-tän had first shared the *na-ma* Dröl-ma; they then brought her sister Da-wa as a second wife, but both women remained without issue. Meanwhile Tr'in-lä had impregnated another woman in a distant town, and she bore a son, Tän-pa. Since an heir was needed to continue the household it was proposed that Tän-pa be adopted, a suggestion which was agreeable to the two barren sisters as well as to the mother of the boy. So when Tän-pa was ten years old he left his mother's house to join the Nyi-gar household as a full member and heir. By the time his own sons were born, he was so completely integrated into the household that most people had forgotten about his origin.

Adoption in this society, when it occurs, completely absorbs the individual into the recipient house, whether that person is a kindred of the household head or not. Whereas a bride continues to use her





natal housename along with her new housename, an adopted girl does not usually retain her former housename. In the case above, Tän-pa made no reference to his original (maternal) housename and there was nothing to indicate his outside origins, until I learnt that his own wife Mig-mar was the niece of Da-wa and Dröl-ma. Because it seemed a gross violation of the rules of kin endogamy, I questioned it and only then learnt of Tän-pa's actual maternity and his later adoption into his father's house.

Men do not usually adopt their illegitimate children, since they already have children from their legal *na-ma*. An unmarried woman's child, if it is a girl, is tolerated in her maternal (natal) house until she can be farmed out to work or until a place can be found for her with a monastic kinswoman. Illegitimate sons like the monk Zang-po described in another article (Aziz, 1976) also find opportunities in religious quarters. But they tend to fare better than girls because a place is more easily made for them in their maternal residence, their mother's brother's house. If a mother's brother is without issue he prefers to adopt his own sister's son. And a married sister living elsewhere may release one of her sons to return to the maternal residence. This happened within the Tra-zang lineage described earlier (case eighteen) and in the case of Wang-dr'ag, set out in Chapter Seven.

The favouritism towards a sister's son continues even where a man has his own children. If his wife is willing, others are disposed to adopt any sister's son born and reared in the house.<sup>8</sup> The sister's son will therefore remain in the household; he will carry the household name, he will share the *na-ma* who is brought in marriage, and he will contribute as a full member to the household economy. This was the arrangement with the twins P'ün-tzog and D'ön-dr'üb in case fourteen (Chapter Three), and there are many other sister's sons in D'ing-ri who have won equality in their mother's brother's house.

Although the adoption of a sister's son is not uncommon, it does not derive from any legal right on the part of the child or the uncle. Each case is decided independently according to personal circumstances, but there is a predisposition among the members of a house towards all children who grow up there, and if they like a boy they will welcome his contribution and participation.

The *mag-pa* marriage (matrilocal) is another arrangement by which

<sup>8</sup>Cf Chapter Eleven regarding the rituals performed for accommodating a child into his *a-zhang* house (maternal unit).

males are absorbed into the household, a process which shows the priority of residence over paternity in defining the names people carry and perpetuate.

A *mag-pa* is the son-in-law who joins the wife's house where there has been no natural male issue. His succession to the headship of the house, his adoption of the housename and his general rights there are equal to that of a son, so that his recruitment is a kind of adoption. Like the adopted, the *mag-pa* drops his natal housename and uses the affinal house more exclusively, more than a *na-ma* when she marries into her husband's house. The children of a *mag-pa* marriage know that they must go beyond their residence to trace patrilineal descent, but for other purposes they use their maternal housename which is not seen as a matrilineal residence but as their natal one.

Adopted persons and *mag-pa* husbands are so completely absorbed into their new residence that the original housename is used only for calculating the kindred, the exogamous group. But when a woman joins a new house as a bride she is never so exclusively associated with the affinal house. The retention of her natal housename is an expression of the ties and status she retains with the first house.

For some families the continued use of the donor housename is a matter of status. To invoke the *na-ma*'s natal housename is often to use a more prestigious name, since in a society like D'ing-ri the practice of hypogamy feeds higher status women into families of lower rank. Houses on the receiving end are proud of having managed this and it is to increase their own prestige that they make repeated reference to the higher (donor) house.

The mother's housename is also cited more frequently because it is the main clue for tracing matrilineal descent. One hears it referred to more often than the father's because the paternal kin usually share the same house generation after generation as they follow the rule of patrilocality and fraternal polyandry. Succeeding generations of men tend to remain in one house while women almost always have to change their residence upon marriage. Where there were several sisters from one house who were given out as *na-ma* to houses all over D'ing-ri, the descendants of each woman find it easy to cite their kinship by relating back to the original house of the several sisters. "We are kindred," one woman told me, pointing to an eminent D'ing-ri man. She could not tell me the precise kinship tie, but she knew that one of his grandmothers had come from the well-known house of Tag-rab in Gang-gar town, which is where her own mother had been born.

People tend to invoke the names of houses that are the most prestigious, and to point to kindred who illustrate their tie with an illustrious household.

Housename often conveys status of the family, and within the D'ing-ri community most people know the status of all the houses in their locality. They know that the mere possession of a housename signifies *dr'ong-pa* status. And they recognize a quasi-housename as belonging to a new settler or to a townsperson. Then there are the *d'ü-ch'ung*, the itinerants who can readily be identified since they have no housename at all.

When an outsider wants more information regarding an individual's social status, he is not informed in terms of ancestry or personal characteristics. He is given more details about the house through terms like *mi-tsang-ch'en* or *mi-tsang ch'ug-po* ( a big family, a wealthy family). *mi-tsang* literally translated is "people-nest," an ideal metaphor which confirms our own arguments regarding the correspondence between the residence and the meaningful social unit. Co-residence is essential to the D'ing-ri-wa concept of a family unit. The use of the term *mi-tsang* by Tibetans suggests that it is equated with family. But it is confined to co-residents since even the closest kin are not included in the *mi-tsang* if they do not share the same residence. There is no kinship unit larger than the *mi-tsang*. People in the unit share the same house; those outside it belong to that general pool of *pün*, the non-corporate kindred.

#### KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY AND HOUSERANKS

There are two naming systems common in D'ing-ri; one is the bilateral system<sup>9</sup> that gives equal weight to kin on the mother's side and on the father's side. The other terminology is a set of houseranks, positions marking people within their household.

The more basic bilateral system first distinguishes one's kindred, persons related consanguineally, as *pün*. *pün* is the kindred; it includes all one's mother's kin as well as one's father's. In the absence of more specific terms to discern the two sides of this bilateral system, Tibetans refer to the matrilateral as simply *a-mäi-pün*, and to

<sup>9</sup>For the relevant parts of the extensive anthropological discussion on bilateral systems the reader is referred to Fox's book, *Kinship and Marriage* (1967, pp 146-174, 258, 259) and Pehrson's paper, *Bilateral Kinship Groupings* (1964).

the patrilateral as *p'a-päi-pün*. Descriptive terms are also employed to differentiate full siblings from those who are not. *ṭün p'a-chig*, *ma-chig* (kin of the same father and the same mother) are full siblings; *a-ma-chig*, *p'a-ma-chig* (same mother, different father) and *a-mäi-pün-kyi bu-go* (children of women who are sisters) are commonly used to describe other sibling relations. Beyond this the degree of consanguinity is of little concern and the general contrast is reflected in the two phrases *pün-nye-po* (close kin) and *pün-ma-nye* (kin, not close).

The chart of kinship terminology (Appendix III) derived from the D'ing-ri community complies to the general terminology classified some time ago as Tibetan. What other authors have failed to point out, however, is the basically bilateral structure of this system. More seriously, they had forgotten that that terminology is a key to the underlying social structure and they therefore did not question their prior notion of patrilineality.<sup>10</sup> If one re-examines the terminology now one will see that it is a view of kin which derives from ego.

In such a system as the Tibetan where the lineal ties are weak, the corporate notion of *pün* is defined primarily by the individual. This we call the ego-focused kindred, and because both sides (mother's and father's) are included, it is bilateral. It is a simple system, with terms on the matrilateral side having their parallels on the patrilateral side. Distinctions are made according to the sex of the kin, according to the relative generation and according to their age in relation to ego.

The head of the household of each generation has the rank of *a-p'a* (father), *po-lag* (father's father) and *yang-po* (father's father's father). Complementing this, *a-ma*, *mo-lag* and *yang-mo* are reserved for the senior women in each generation. Father's brother and other junior men of each generation are called *a-k'u* and father's sisters *a-mi*.

The mother's side follows the same pattern. Here, all classificatory mother's brothers in the ascending generations are *a-zhang*, and one's mother's sisters are *a-sru* (or *sru-mo*).

These kinship terms are employed when the speaker is younger than the addressee. When someone addresses a junior kinsperson

<sup>10</sup>The classification of social systems is a general problem in the analysis and identification of a wide range of cultures, and anthropologists have already addressed themselves to this. Pertinent to the Tibetan problem are Harris' *Unilineal Fact or Fiction* (1969), and Lepervanche's *Descent, Residence and Leadership in the New Guinea Highlands* (1968).

she employs only the personal name or the diminutive *bu* for boys and *bu-mo* for girls. Whether one uses *a-k'u/a-ni* or *a-zhang/sru-mo*, the name is determined not by line but by side. For example, a woman is addressed *a-ni* by her brother's children, but she is called *sru-mo* by her brother's daughter's children. Derived from the point of view of the speaker, these terms are an expression of the ego-centered system.<sup>11</sup>

The people of D'ing-ri usually adhere to these rules. They understand its simplicity and describe it with care and full awareness of its logical pattern. However, in the common everyday forms of address D'ing-ri employ among each other, this system exhibits several variations and in some cases there appear to be complete contradictions. For example, persons are often called *a-k'u* and *a-ni* although they bear no kin relation to the speaker. The same terms *a-k'u* and *a-ni* are also applied matrilaterally. And in some families, children call both their pater and genitor *a-k'u*—father's brother. The initial impression of inconsistency in the use of kinship terms disappears when one understands the position of nuns, monks and married priests (including the *ser-ky'im*) whose titles, as it happens, coincide with the patrilateral kinship terms *a-ni* (father's sister) and *a-k'u* (father's brother). These are titles of respect which prevail over kinship terms so that a man, when he becomes a religious practitioner, whatever his kin relation to ego, must be addressed as *a-k'u*. A female ascetic should be addressed as *a-ni* under all circumstances.

Since the religious people of D'ing-ri do not exclude themselves from their families or from regular involvement in the community the use of these terms is common. It often happens that an ascetic leaves the monastic life. He should technically not thereafter be addressed by the religious title, but people become accustomed to the term and they continue to call the apostate *a-k'u* or *a-ni*. While the persistence of these terms allows me to spot apostates who would not have otherwise been apparent in my investigation, it does confuse the casual observer about the use of kinship terms and the seriousness of religious titles. But such flexibility of terminology is commonplace everywhere and it does not reflect any actual weakness of perception or classification.

<sup>11</sup>This anthropologists call the "Eskimo" system because it is the standard pattern employed among these North American inhabitants, but it is also the one that western industrial societies follow. Cf Fox, 1967.

*a-k'u* seems to be a particularly tenacious title. It is continued for a father's brother even after he has succeeded as the household head and becomes the undisputed genitor of the children. If earlier children and others in the community called him *a-k'u* for some years, he will remain *a-k'u* even when he is a grandfather. (Again the persistence of the term is an advantage to the researcher since it points to a formerly polyandric unit in which the elder brother has died.)

Certain titles are due to persons of rank, and regardless of their kinship tie everyone employs these titles in normal social life. *p'a* for example is reserved for senior men, who besides being the household heads are outstanding members of the village and become known as *p'a-lag* by everyone. Conversely there are others, who by virtue of their religious status and the ideal of celibacy associated with that, cannot be called *p'a* even when they marry and father children. The *ngag-pa* priest is called *la-ma* by kin and non-kindred, but his children, who are excused from addressing him by a religious title, must call him *a-k'u*. Likewise, children of *ser-ky'im* call their fathers *a-k'u*.

The household ranking system that Tibetans employ expresses the values they attach to status within the household. Some of the seeming inconsistencies in terminology are due to such expression, woven into the bilateral reckoning; it is a variation applied to members of high status households, and not an alternative system. When one learns to read them, they can reveal many facts about the persons to whom they apply.

Within each household individuals are ranked according to their age, their sex and their influence in that unit. There is only one of each rank per household. Therefore, when one hears it associated with a particular house, one can identify the individual and at the same time gain a social picture of the entire family unit. The terms are applied to members of established households in D'ing-ri and are therefore prefixed by a housename (*dr'ong-ming*) under normal circumstances. (They appear below without the housename.)

*D'ing-ri Kinship-household Terminology*

father's father	<i>po-lag</i>
father's father's elder brother	<i>a-k'u-ch'en</i>
father's father's younger brother	<i>a-k'u-gän</i>
father's mother	<i>mo-lag</i> or <i>a-ma-gän</i>
father	<i>p'a-lag</i>
father's brother	<i>a-k'u-lag</i>

father's junior brother	<i>a-k'u</i> + name
mother	<i>a-ma</i>
mother's sister (if co-resident wife)	<i>a-ma-ch'ung</i> or <i>a-ma</i> + name
elder brother	<i>j'o-lag</i> or <i>j'o-j'o</i>
elder brother's wife (the daughter-in-law who is the wife of all patrilocal brothers)	<i>na-ma</i>
junior wife	<i>chün-ma</i>
junior brother	personal name, or <i>a-k'u</i>
elder sister	<i>a-ch'e</i> or <i>ch'e-j'e</i>
junior sister	<i>a-ni</i> (if a nun) or name
son	<i>bu</i>
daughter	<i>bu-mo</i>

These terms are usually employed among members of a household. Other members of the village, including those who are kindred, employ the terms as well. Some of them will be recognized as kinship terms included in the bilateral system, but others are peculiar houseranks of which there can be only one per residence. The naming system distinguishes each person in a house; there is but one *a-p'a*, one *a-ma*, one *j'o-lag* and one *na-ma*, even where one has plural marriage and plural parentage.

Taking the *na-ma* as an example we note that this term is reserved for the bride who enters the household in each generation residing patrilocally. If she is barren, or if she dies while still young, a second wife (often her sister) is introduced into the unit with the title and status of *chün-ma*. Each are a particular status of wifeness, and their titles reflect that status within the household context.

The *na-ma* has exclusive rights to that title as long as her son and her sister's son remain unmarried. As soon as they receive their bride, the newly recruited woman acquires the title of *na-ma*, and the senior woman becomes *a-ma* to everyone.

The same rules apply to the *j'o-lag* rank. It is acquired by the eldest brother when he receives the *na-ma* brought to him and his brothers, and is only relinquished to his own eldest son when the next bride is recruited. Apart from his own parents who always call him *bu* and his children who must call him *a-p'a*, a senior brother in a worthy house is addressed as *j'o-lag* by all villagers, his wife, his brother, distant kin and non-kindred.

In D'ing-ri, houseranks like *j'o-lag* and *na-ma* are reserved for the

sons and wives of higher status households in the community. The term *j'o-lag* for example is inextricably bound with the unity and social status of that household, and it is a subtle matter just when the status of a house is high enough to employ the rank. I once heard a teenage girl reprimanded by her co-villagers for addressing her older brother as *j'o-lag*. That term, it was pointed out, should only be used in higher status households, and her own house, they said, had not yet earned that position. Villagers say that they use these titles to sanction a household's newly acknowledged status through a general consensus of opinion. This is further evidence of the terms being an effective ranking system.



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## Marriage in Tibetan Society

### RULES OF MARRIAGE

Tibet probably exhibits a greater variety of marriage types than any other society. This diversity is partly a reflection of the people's social ideals, partly an expression of their flexibility of thought and action and partly an outgrowth of a continual social mobility—all of which allow people to make choices from a wide range of possibilities.

While interclass marriages discussed in the latter part of this chapter can be seen as facilitating the flow of individuals through society, another marriage pattern here may be seen as restricting the mobility of persons. These are the plural marriages, various manifestations of polyandry and polygyny which are so well known. Although in D'ing-ri over 70 per cent of marriages contracted are monogamous, plural marriage is widespread and if its rate is not as high as might be expected, the preference for polyandry and polygyny is very strongly expressed in the people's ideology.

Reasons for the prevalence of polygamy throughout Tibet have never been convincingly expressed.<sup>1</sup> However, by examining its distribution

<sup>1</sup>The most notable account of Himalayan polyandry is a book by Prince Peter (1963); other contributors to the study of polyandry in this part of the world are Fürer-Haimendorf, 1964; Goldstein, 1971c; Gorer, 1967 and Parmar, 1975. In my presentation of D'ing-ri polygamy I do not address myself to several of the worthy arguments Leach (1961, pp 105-113) puts forward on the exclusion of adelphic polyandry from general questions of polygamy. This is intended for a later paper. While I adopt the same position as Prince

in the D'ing-ri context and by noting its subtle variations we can begin to suggest some of the co-variables that may be at work. Our understanding of the strength of the household as an economic unit contributes to this. So does the Tibetans' own economic calculations. Another structural factor that is of some significance here is the definition of the exogamous group: the group within which one may not marry.

Marital eligibility and availability in this society are defined by certain marriage restrictions. Many D'ing-ri-wa who have over the generations contracted a number of marriages within the area, find themselves related bilaterally to a large number of local people. This is their *pün*, which also constitutes their exogamous group. For the average D'ing-ri-wa I spoke to, about 65 per cent of her co-villagers are consanguineally related and therefore cannot be considered as marriage or sexual partners. Most of the *dr'ong-pa* find they have to go to another village, sometimes on the other side of D'ing-ri, to find prospective marriage partners—individuals with whom they cannot trace a common descent.

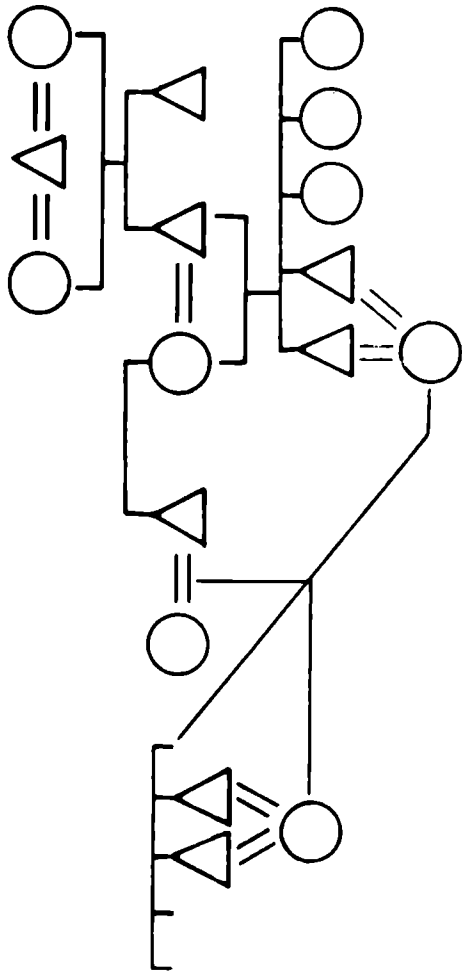
When a marriage is contracted the houses of the two persons become allied. Everyone concerned would like to reinforce that alliance with a series of successive marriages between the two houses. But since one's offspring would count the members in each as consanguineal kin (*pün*) this Tibetan rule of exogamy precludes successive marriages of that kind. There are a few cases of two successive marriages occurring between the same *pün* of households, but where they do, as in the examples given below, something else has happened and the rule of exogamy remains intact.

In case twenty-one (next page, on the left), two brothers from D'ing-ri Gu-tso village received as their bride a woman from the same house that their wife's brother's daughter married into. Since there is an affinal (marital) link separating the households there is no danger of incest here.

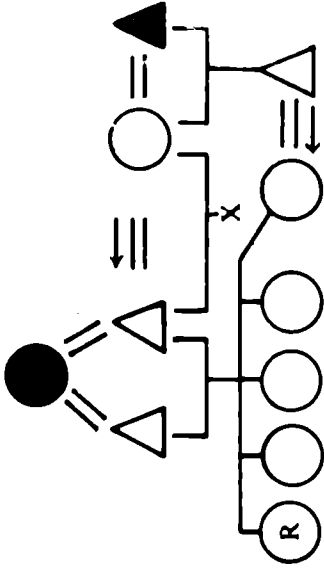
In case twenty-two on the right the marriage is between two step-siblings, who although their parents are married, are each progeny of earlier marriages and have therefore no blood tie. The two brothers had five daughters by a first wife. And their second wife brought to their household her son by a previous marriage. They shared the same

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Peter in viewing adelphic polyandry within the framework of polygamy, my disclosure of the non-patrilineal nature of Tibetan kinship would raise serious doubts about his explanation of polyandry in Tibet in terms of patriliney (cf Prince Peter, 1955).



Case Twenty-one



Case Twenty-two

household for some years but since the five girls and the boy had no kinship tie whatsoever, it seemed perfectly in order that they marry when the time came, and the woman's son was officially accepted as a *mag-pa* husband in a regular wedding ceremony.

Moving now to polygamous unions, we note that among the D'ing-ri-wa when there are co-wives or co-husbands sharing a spouse, those co-wives or co-husbands are usually related to each other. This has to do with the rules of exogamy that declare anyone who is a kin ineligible as a marriage or sexual partner, and anyone who is not a kin a potential mate. Numerous cases show a striking contrast as regards kin and non-kin. Whereas people express abhorrence at the idea that they might have sexual relations with a kinsperson, they delight in the idea of having access to the spouse of a kinsperson. So when it is said that all of one's affines are potential partners, they mean it rather literally and include in their reckoning even those persons already married to one's kindred. The following case recalls an encounter I had with a D'ing-ri family (in Nepal) where this reasoning was dramatically illustrated for me.

#### *Case Twenty-three*

Through my regular visits to the neighbouring Tra-rab house, I became acquainted with the woman Lha-drön. Another frequent visitor there was a young man, nineteen years old, from another part of the village. Supposing him to be a kinsman, I eventually asked him directly, "Are you Lha-drön's kin?" His reaction was dramatic and revealing. The young man's initial response of horror and amazement quickly changed to amusement, and he replied, "No, I am a kin of J'o-lag (the woman's husband); therefore I may sleep with Lha-drön if I wish."

Lha-drön and her husband who were both present at the time echoed the reaction of the youth, amusement following alarm. What had alarmed them was my suggestion that the young man and Lha-drön are kindred. As he explained, he is a kinsman of the husband and as such an affine to the women, which makes them theoretical sexual partners. I do not know if he exercises those rights but they are so prominent in his mind that my suggestion of a kinship tie carried implications of incest. This is what had initially upset him; when he sensed my own naivete, he explained the matter with an aggressive statement of his own rights.

(No one was concerned that the youth was twenty years the woman's junior, or that her husband might not approve.)

This case is a good illustration of the awareness of D'ing-ri-wa about the potential sexual status of their affines. It is both natural and desirable, as far as these people are concerned, to share a marriage partner with one's kin—a cousin, an aunt or uncle, a sister or brother.

Many of the extra-marital sexual relations among D'ing-ri-wa are casual sexual unions between a woman and her husband's visiting kinsmen (or between a husband and his wife's visiting kinswomen). Such liaisons apparently arouse no jealousy (as they would if the visitor were unrelated) and they may even be condoned by an accommodating spouse. Permitting one's kin to share the spouse simultaneously and in the same residential unit constitutes the first step towards polygamous marriage. Of the six types of polygamy I identified in D'ing-ri, the four which include by far the majority of cases (a hundred and twelve out of a hundred and twenty-two)<sup>2</sup> are cohabitations of kinspersons who share a common spouse.

The hundred and twenty-two polygamous marriages recorded in my D'ing-ri study constitute 28 per cent of the four hundred and thirty marriages collected altogether. This may seem a low percentage in a society where polygamy is so well publicized and idealized, but it is still a significant practice and worthy of close attention.

The most frequent form of plural marriage in D'ing-ri is fraternal polyandry, brothers or half-brothers sharing a wife (eighty recorded cases in the sample of one hundred and twenty-two). The next most common form is sororal polygamy, with fourteen cases. Where kinswomen share a husband they are almost always sisters, but when we find kinsmen sharing a wife they may also be half-brothers or cousins. Sometimes there are as many as five husbands with one woman, but the norm is two, which is usually the ratio of wives to a husband in sororal polygyny.

Six varieties of plural marriage can be distinguished; they are listed below according to their qualitative distribution in the total of one hundred and twenty-two plural marriages, in the total sample of four

<sup>2</sup>The hundred and twenty-two polygamic marriages in D'ing-ri are but a sample of what one might find in the society. They are taken from the numerous personal genealogies and case histories of my informants. They are separate from the more general quantification of polygamy in the list of twenty-four D'ing-ri villages (Table B). But it is significant that the 28 per cent polygamy represented by the sample of a hundred and twenty-two cases is so close to the 27 per cent mean for the incidence of polygamy in the twenty-four villages.

hundred and thirty D'ing-ri marriages taken from individual genealogies.

fraternal polyandry	80
sororal polygamy	14
unrelated males	2
unrelated females	8
father and son sharing a wife	8
mother and daughter sharing a husband	10
	<hr/>
total	122

The first two types listed above are largely confined to the established rural households of D'ing-ri (*dr'ong* and upper *dr'ong*). Each village has an average of 28 per cent of its households engaged in polyandry at any given time. And almost all of these occur in the wealthiest households of a village; they are almost absent among the lower *d'ü-ch'ung* rural population. (Cf Table B, p 140, listing twenty-four D'ing-ri villages where the number of polygamous houses in the 1959 census is recorded for each.)

All forms of polygamy are referred to in D'ing-ri as *za-sum-ba*, meaning three partners, and there are no separate terms which distinguish among the six varieties. *chum-ma-dung* (rafter across a beam) is another metaphorical term by which Tibetans describe polygamous relationships.<sup>3</sup> While their meanings are understood, these terms are not in common use among the D'ing-ri rural people who do not, of course, see polygamous varieties as typologies. To them these unions of three or more people are primarily residential arrangements and as such are referred to in common phrases such as "to two (three, four) boys, one *na-ma* was received," or "he came as a *mag-pa* (husband) to the two women." In the D'ing-ri mind all these phrases are prefaced with the qualifying thought, "in the household." It is a household arrangement which is being described, not a marriage system.

Polygamous ideals are fostered by underlying ideals concerning residence: brothers should remain together; a father and son should not separate and co-residents should work for and share the common prosperity of the unit. In addition to these values, D'ing-ri agri-

<sup>3</sup>A few D'ing-ri informants employ the term *nyen-da* in reference to polygamous unions of a mother and daughter with one husband, but it may have been their own application of a term that is more usually used to denote a spouse (cf Buck, 1969, p 202).

TABLE B  
DISTRIBUTION OF POLYGAMY IN SOME D'ING-RI VILLAGES IN  
1959

<i>Village Name</i>	<i>Number of dr'ong-pa Houses</i>	<i>Number of d'ü-ch'ung Houses</i>	<i>Polygamous dr'ong-pa Households</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
Män-tö	30	20	3	16
Treng-ky'a	9	6	3	20
Gön-mar	21	5	8	30
Do-ch'ö	11	7	5	27
Tsa-da	13	9	4	30
Döng-pa	30		9	30
Zhing-ri	40		11	27
Shi-pe	10	5	4	27
Sa-lha	11	3	3	21
Te-tung	7	3	4	40
Tr'ag-tze	30		4	13
Kong-tza	1	20	3	14
Yöl-dong-gön	18		(2 are d'ü-ch'ung) 3	15
Yol-dong	27		8	30
B'ar-tso	20	12	6	18
Nub-lung	20	10	5	17
Lha-dong-gön	12		3	25
Gong-p'ug-gön	21		7	33
Bum-g'ang	13		4	30
Ra-ch'u	22		(2 are d'ü-ch'ung) 6	27
Kar-ky'u	7	5	4	33
Lha-ch'ung	13		4	25
Shar-lung	10	4	4	28
Na-lum-gön	2	7	1	11

culturalists keep the economic benefits of polygamy in the forefront of their thought. They believe that when household membership diminishes, prosperity will also decline. *ch'ug-po dr'ong chig, mon d'oi dr'ong nyi, zer* (prosperity in one house, poverty in two) they say.

Among the D'ing-ri-wa, economic and therefore social success is attributed to well-managed polygamous partnerships. The following are two of the many case histories of polyandry where D'ing-ri commentators focused on the economic implications of the choices towards polyandry.

*Case Twenty-four : the Prodigal Son of Do-ch'ö*

Ri-sum household in Do-ch'ö village is now one of the wealthiest in the hamlet. It acquired this status only during the last generation, after a *na-ma* from a house of higher standing was brought in as the wife of their three nubile sons. The youngest of the three men is now the household head, since the middle brother became an ascetic and moved to a sanctuary a few years ago. It was a sudden shift in the household's organization since his departure followed the death of the eldest brother and former household head.

Many villagers anticipated an economic decline for this family but now they are particularly pleased to see the junior husband taking full responsibility and successfully managing the household's economic affairs. This enterprise they do not attribute to his ability, however. They credit the success of the family to the *na-ma* who, now as in the past, has skilfully managed its affairs and coordinated the work of the three brothers. Everyone remembers how the youngest man spent his youth; he was a flirtatious and wasteful dilettante whom most wives would have abandoned out of shame. This woman, Käl-zang, did not let him go. Instead, through the skilful means and patience these women know well, Käl-zang kept the man tied to the household and eventually trained him to be a productive and responsible contributor. He also became very devoted to her. Sometimes the mother of a set of boys will be responsible for their success, but in D'ing-ri society it is most often the common wife who has this role. There are many others like Käl-zang who take a central role in the household.

*Case Twenty-five—Remarriage, Reunion and Revitalization in Zur-rab*

The history of the Zur-rab house in Tr'ag-tze village is somewhat different than the one recalled above. Zur-rab had been a large house with twelve members some two generations earlier, but around 1940 it found itself with only five after the father's brother left D'ing-ri to serve in the army elsewhere and the eldest son married independently and set up his own house in another village. This greatly upset those who were left and they agreed to take active steps to expand.

The widowed father remarried and before his new wife became pregnant, in his anxiety to ensure an heir, he brought a second wife as *chün-ma*. This second wife is the sister of the first and was thus readily accepted in the household. Eventually both these





Fig. 2. Also by the artist D'ar-gyā, this simple drawing captures the drama of marriage. Led by her brothers and girlfriend, a weeping bride is pressed on to her first encounter with an unseen husband. The mother often remains behind. But both her parents are shown sadly watching their daughter depart.

women produced issue and between them, thirteen children were born in the house.

Meanwhile, the brother who had become a soldier finished his service and returned to Tr'ag-tze to assume his household responsibilities and to join his brother in polyandry. With his contribution added to that of the two wives and the children who could work, the productivity of the household lands increased and they have enjoyed a renewed prosperity. They were eventually able to acquire new lands in the vicinity of the village and have made that new property productive.

Within less than a generation this household thus regained their former socio-economic status, a change which they and other villagers directly attribute to the father's decision to marry and to the reunion of the brothers.

The unity of brothers in polyandry seems to be a factor in the household's economic status, since in the rural areas of D'ing-ri only the wealthiest tenant households live in polygamy. But there are important exceptions to this pattern; for example, wealthy traders in the town have very different marital arrangements.

There are also cases of polygamy among the poor, who nevertheless remain impoverished. Even though D'ing-ri-wa cite polygamy as being responsible for their success it is possible that it may follow good fortune or that it may motivate people more strongly towards it. Polygamy is a powerful social ideology. It both motivates and sanctions.

Polygamy, particularly fraternal polyandry in D'ing-ri, symbolizes for the D'ing-ri-wa a host of qualities which Tibetans strive for. It is always thought of in positive terms. For example it signifies sharing, a highly valued quality in itself. Polygamy involves the accommodation and compromise of individuals towards a common good. It suggests that innate jealousies and normal tendencies to disruption among family members have been overcome. On this final point it should be noted that there is no claim and no evidence that polygamy is an easily arranged phenomenon. Although an ideal among 100 per cent of the population, polygamy is effected by only 30 per cent. So that when they cite polygamous marriages, Tibetans do so as a recognition of success. They praise the partners for not being jealous; they credit the *na-ma* for her coordinating skills and they commend a parent who yields to the priorities of the next maturing generation.

Even though the Tibetans do not classify their various polygamic

arrangements, it would help us to do so in order to recognize the common features and the conditions under which they tend to develop. I therefore devote a large part of this chapter to a discussion of different forms of plural marriage in D'ing-ri.

#### FRATERNAL POLYANDRY AND OTHER TYPES OF PLURAL MARRIAGE

This is the most common type of plural marriage in D'ing-ri, where two to five or even six brothers share a wife. As many brothers who reside within their natal unit share the *na-ma* who is received to their house. The dictum that brothers share a wife, is secondary to the absolutely firm rule that only one *na-ma* be received in a household. A second wife (unless she is a sister of the first) is not permitted, and any brother who insists on having his own spouse is required to leave the household altogether. Occasionally a young brother is permitted to split away, or a marriage outside is happily arranged for him, but usually any early inclinations to self-sufficiency are quelled. A youth's brothers and their wife discreetly coerce and caress him into a partnership with them. One after another, as each brother matures, he is brought into the fold and once he has become an active sexual and economic partner, it is difficult for him to leave. He treats any children born in the house as his and he has an equal share of the property and of the wife. For a while he may even become the favoured husband.

Just as each brother of a partnership enjoys equal rights in the marriage, so the *na-ma* has certain rights over her husbands. They may not have serious sexual liaisons with other women, and if they do it would be cause for divorce or their expulsion from the household without any property rights. That prospect curbs the adventures of most Tibetan husbands.

The following four cases are some of the polyandrous histories I examined in detail in D'ing-ri. Each outline focuses on how members of the household accommodate themselves in polyandry.

##### *Case Twenty-six*

The man Pā-ma is the eldest of five brothers in a Lung-j'ung village in south D'ing-ri. He and the next three of his brothers share a *na-ma*, but the youngest of them, who is a full fifteen years junior to the woman, has never joined her as a husband. This was his choice, reached when he was old enough to consider the matter; when he

explained to the family that she was simply too old for him, they easily accepted his decision and helped him choose a wife of his own. He was required, however, to leave the natal household and set up another independently, but since there was no breach of contract he was able to take a share of the family property, as was his right.

*Case Twenty-seven*

In another case, similar to the one above, the youngest of six brothers is fourteen years junior to the *na-ma* of his brothers. He did not decline to join as decisively as the young man in the above case, but when he was twenty years of age he was sent as a *mag-pa* husband to a high status household in north D'ing-ri. Both before and after his own marriage, he never had intercourse with his brothers' wife.

*Case Twenty-eight*

In Me-mo village, a wealthy *ar'ong-pa* family has two sons. The youngest, Tob-gyäl, was only sixteen when the first *na-ma* arrived. She died within three years, before he had entered into sexual union with her. So his elder brother had been the only effective husband at the time.

Two years later when the sister of the deceased *na-ma* (the sororate wife) was received into this house, Tob-gyäl and his elder brother were equal partners with her from the start. Within six years Tob-gyäl has become the favoured of the two, and there arises the question whether the elder is able to contain his jealousy and how he might resolve the imbalance.

*Case Twenty-nine*

Wö-zer is the younger of two brothers who have always shared their *na-ma*. Usually the elder brother takes the role as household head, but in this family Wö-zer has always taken major responsibility for the household's domestic and economic matters. His elder sibling occasionally visits the house, but most of the time he wanders around D'ing-ri engaged in religious exercises. He is a mendicant and shows little interest in secular matters; but he has not become a celibate monk, and when he visits his home the *na-ma* treats him like a husband and Wö-zer gives his brother due respect.

Each polyandric partnership is slightly different, and as these cases illustrate, there seems to be a certain degree of flexibility with regard

to the role of each brother. Their status as husbands changes from one stage in their life to another, and also as younger brothers are accommodated. People seem aware of the subtle shifts in the sexual and political relations of the group, and both husbands and the wife must decide what to do when these shifts occur. An elder brother is expected to contain his jealousy; a *na-ma* must give equal attention to all although her affection is less unequivocally distributed; the *na-ma* must also curb her jealousy when the husbands she may be neglecting seek extra-marital friendships.

As keen observers of family sexual relations, the D'ing-ri Tibetans anticipate these difficulties in their choice of a *na-ma*. I have already mentioned how they seek a wife from an upper status household, a girl who will use her superior status to assert herself into a central role among several men. Care is also taken to find a woman of an age who can accommodate both elder and junior brothers. Out of the eighty cases of fraternal polyandry, we collected data on the ages of twenty-two partnerships. Their distribution is listed in Table C<sup>4</sup> with the position and the age of the *na-ma* indicated by the figures in bold type.

Most polygamous unions are among brothers sharing a wife. Polygynous marriages where sisters share a husband are far fewer, which means that they do not balance out the 2:1 sex ratio created by the other. If we take the twenty-two cases listed above as a sample, there are fifty-two males and only twenty-three wives. Translated into other terms, nineteen women with marriage potential are "surplus." And it is natural to ask where and how society accommodates this.

It is a mistake to assume that this surplus is absorbed by any particular social department, such as the religious. Although monasteries and nunneries are plentiful in D'ing-ri, they cannot be seen as reservoirs for unmarried women. Religious recruits come from all classes, whereas the surplus of women is created in the rural upper class where polyandry is common.

Besides, the population of female ascetics is matched by that of the monks. Moreover, the nuns and monks of this society are

<sup>4</sup>Marriages listed in this table tend to be those of senior persons. There are two reasons for this: one is that most persons in my sample entered polyandric unions in D'ing-ri long before 1959 and the figures given are their ages in 1970 when research was undertaken. New polyandric marriages among younger D'ing-ri-wa in Nepal still occur (a few are included in the sample) but the percentage is far less than earlier in D'ing-ri, although polyandry remains a strong ideal among the migrant population in Nepal.

TABLE C

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40	37	<b>28</b>		
57	52	49		
30	<b>28</b>	27	22	
<b>40</b>	37	32	<b>30</b>	
<b>47</b>	44	43	41	
56	<b>48</b>	33		
35	29	<b>28</b>	19	
58	<b>54</b>	50		
63	<b>61</b>	58		
68	<b>65</b>	57		
56	48	48	<b>40</b>	
36	<b>35</b>	34	31	
63	<b>52</b>	45		
<b>48</b>	<b>43</b>	43		
20	<b>20</b>	18	16	
<b>36</b>	35	29		
48	43	<b>35</b>		
62	60	<b>56</b>	53	52
76	67	<b>66</b>		
<b>48</b>	46	33		
35	<b>30</b>	26		
65	<b>63</b>	58		

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not an unmarriageable group; many present celibates have previously been married, and others—men as well as women—who take their vows early, later become apostates and marry.

Among the regular laity there is frequent remarriage and, like the entry and exit of people into religion, this is a process which picks up some of the imbalance in the sex ratio caused by conditions of polyandry. And in D'ing-ri this process is supplemented by another that circulates women from high status houses to lower status ones. This process of draining women from higher households is of course a direct result of the practices of polyandry.

The movement of women through the social structure is consistent with the remarkably independent nature of Tibetan women. Western observers have long been impressed by the manner of Tibetan women

and by their readiness to move into new social and economic roles. It is possible that the imbalance caused by polyandry in the top stratum (30 per cent) of the population is large enough to force women to become resourceful and dynamic. Women's roles in marriage and the family will reappear in a later discussion here and in the next chapter, but I now want to return to the social mechanisms of polyandry, with the description of how men and women are recruited into the partnerships.

Co-residence and common descent are the bases on which men share a wife. Most polyandrous partners are full siblings, brothers born in the same residence. But 15 per cent of the marriages listed as fraternal polyandry are unions of more distant kinsmen with one wife: unions of parallel cousins, of cross-cousins and of step-brothers. Cross-cousins do not normally reside together in the same house and therefore do not normally share a *na-ma*. But when a woman has a son out of wedlock, that boy frequently grows up in the house of his mother's brother. When this occurs he remains as a kind of adopted son, until he takes the role of husband along with his mother's brother's sons. Parallel cousins find themselves sharing a *na-ma* when they grow up together as the sons of two sisters sharing residence and a husband. Such men feel as close as full brothers, as do men whose fathers are brothers sharing a wife. The case of Kar-ky'u (case fifteen) in Chapter Four is an example of matrilateral parallel cousin partnership.

Step-brothers find themselves joining in polyandry only when they share the same residence. With the frequency of remarriage as high as it is in D'ing-ri, there are a few instances here of widows (or widowers) with children, remarrying and begetting sons from their second marriage. The sons from later unions may be given status equal to that of elder half-brothers, in which case they are entitled to share the *na-ma* received by the house. If the latter offspring are an issue of a levirate or sororate marriage they will be related matrilaterally as well as patrilaterally to their siblings, which would make their accommodation in polygamy even more natural.

There is nothing illegal or objectionable about unrelated men joining in polyandry, and informants tell me it is done, but in Di'ng-ri it is unusual. In two cases I know of this type, the persons concerned claim that there is a kinship tie between the two husbands. For this reason I refer to them as people practising fictional fraternal polyandry.

#### *Fictional Fraternal Polyandry*

This section chronicles the histories of two unusual cases, both in

families with whom I am personally familiar. Though not typical, their stories are worth our interest since they convey many more facts about the wider economic and social contexts of marriage.

The two women whose histories are sketched below have much in common. Each is from a wealthy, prestigious house. One is from rural D'ing-ri; the other is a Gang-gar merchant. Both women are now in their mid-fifties, widowed from their first husbands, and now legally cohabiting with a second husband. One is fifteen years his senior; the other is twenty-six years older than her husband.

### *Case Thirty*

Ch'ö-kyi and her husband Nam-dr'ag are traders in Gang-gar town. The elder husband, now deceased, had been the chief administrator in the town and brought Ch'ö-kyi with him from Lha-sa. They were childless and Ch'ö-kyi, who had been in business in the big city, found in D'ing-ri's growing commerce many opportunities to apply her entrepreneurial talents. The childless couple engaged Nam-dr'ag in their Gang-gar house when he was just a boy, and although he was their servant he joined the household as an intimate partner. Later, Ch'ö-kyi trained him in commerce and he became a major asset to the house.

So when the senior man died, there was every reason for the woman to keep Nam-dr'ag with her. It is suggested that she had anticipated this need and had already initiated a sexual relationship with the young man. After the husband's death it was only a matter of public recognition to constitute a seal of propriety.

The couple continues to live together as husband and wife. They appear to be extremely devoted to each other and although Nam-dr'ag is now the more active entrepreneur of the team, he still takes his lead from Ch'ö-kyi who has never lost her commercial interests and astuteness.

In our frequent conversations Ch'ö-kyi always referred to Nam-dr'ag as her husband and whenever the subject of her former spouse came up, although I expressed no doubts, she insisted on pointing out how Nam-dr'ag and he were kinsmen, and how fond the elder man had been of the younger. Meanwhile, other villagers who have known Ch'ö-kyi for years, maintain that the men were unrelated.

### *Case Thirty-one*

Ö-kor P'ur-bu is the daughter of a noble family outside D'ing-ri who



was sent here to marry into a lower ranking house, but still a leading one in the region. She had three sons, one of whom was levied as a monk to Shel-kar Monastery. The other two took a common wife in polyandry.

After her husband's death, P'ur-bu remained with her sons and since they were grown and had taken a *na-ma*, it would not have been possible for the woman to receive a husband of her own in their house.

But the major social disruption of the post-1959 movement altered the family's residence arrangement. In Nepal the family resettled, but on a different residential basis, with the sons and their *na-ma* occupying one house and P'ur-bu in another, with a young man who had been a monk earlier and was now employed as her servant.

How long it would be before she re-established her residence with her sons was no longer a matter of speculation when she became pregnant. Her newborn son was the child of the apostate young servant and there was nothing to do but to acknowledge that relationship and put it on a permanent basis. Part of that process was the announcement that the young man was a kinsman of P'ur-bu's first husband.

### *Sororal Polygyny*

The sharing of a husband by sisters or other kinswomen is the second most common form of polygamy in D'ing-ri. Like fraternal polygamy this type also derives from a residential arrangement where sisters who remain, together in a house receive one husband, whom they share.

This usually occurs when a *mag-pa* son-in-law is brought in a house without male issue. Most often all daughters but one are married out to other households, leaving one to a monogamous arrangement. Sororal polygamy only results when two sisters decide to stay together. Three women may do so (three out of fourteen cases have three sisters sharing a husband), but two is more common.

A standard way in which two sisters divide their labour has one taking charge of the herds and thus living much of the time in the pasture annexe, with the other supervising domestic matters and cultivation from her place in the main house. The husband therefore moves between the two units, visiting each wife in turn. If he does not, the woman in the hut pays regular visits to the main residence. Whatever arrangement is worked out, it is one that considers the personality of the individuals involved and the division of labour necessary to foster the eco-

mony. Some people in D'ing-ri say that women sharing a husband are likely to quarrel even if they are sisters and that separation is advisable to minimize that friction.

According to my observations and inquiries of specific cases of sororal polygyny, sisters get along rather well, better than brothers living together. Many of the sister partnerships do have the two women in the same house sharing a single hearth and raising their children together. Both women are called *a-ma* by all the children, who themselves enjoy equal rights in the household. The social interaction and emotional exchange among them is such that one can often not distinguish between the children of one sister and those of the other. The D'ing-ri-wa claim that women (including sisters) are more jealous of one another and less likely to succeed in plural marriages is not borne out by the cases of polygyny I observed. Unlike brothers who occasionally split off and leave the polyandrous group, sisters in polygyny do not part. Furthermore there is no sign of sexual jealousy and favouritism among sisters and their husband, whereas polyandrous marriages experience much tension as emotional or sexual relationships shift within it.

Sororal polygyny sometimes develops from monogamy and sometimes from polyandry. Eight of the fourteen cases are eventuations of this kind. Called sororate marriage by some, they usually arise when a *na-ma* is barren or unagreeable to stay in her husband's house. Her family, reluctant to withdraw her or allow a stranger to eclipse her, therefore provide another daughter, usually the younger sister of the *na-ma*, as the *chiün-ma* (junior wife). It is also believed that when a junior wife is the kinswoman of the other, there will be no jealousy or tension between the women. The reader should turn to case forty-three (Chapter Eleven) for details about the family who successfully seconded the younger sister of a *na-ma* from her monastic role to that of a mother.

The arrival of a junior wife to ensure offspring does not generally threaten the position of the *na-ma* who, even though she is childless, has certain rights that can never be taken from her. Rather than be routed from her position or shamed by barrenness, a *na-ma* will accept her sister's children as her own and develop a matronly attitude towards her sister, who she will make her own ward. A barren *na-ma* may even accept her husband's illegitimate child (born to a mistress or servant girl, as in case twenty, Chapter Six). This is the only condition under which unrelated women share one husband.

*Unrelated Females in Polygyny*

While unrelated males hardly ever share a spouse, there are a few more cases of unrelated women doing so. In the sample of one hundred and twenty-two plural unions, all eight unions of unrelated women are accommodations on the part of a barren *na-ma* to ensure progeny for the household.<sup>5</sup> In the absence of a junior sister she allows a servant girl or a local sharecropper's daughter to remain as the junior wife. It is invariably a woman of status lower than herself.

However, the children of a *chiün-ma* are children of the house, and as such their full socio-jural rights there are assured. Even if their mother leaves, as in the following case, the children's membership in the household is not jeopardized.

*Case Thirty-two*

Pa-sang, the daughter of a Lha-sa merchant, came with her husband, Tse-ring, to live in D'ing-ri Gang-gar. They had had one child who died in infancy, so when they came here they were childless. As so often happens among the Gang-gar merchant community, Tse-ring impregnated their servant girl. The young mother and child were not cast aside, however, but were drawn more closely into Pa-sang's household. The woman became a regular polygamous partner, and Pa-sang grew affectionate towards both the woman and her child. When Tse-ring died the young wife left the household to become an ascetic at a nearby D'ing-ri monastery, leaving her daughter with Pa-sang, who has raised the child as her own, and the two women now say they are as mother and daughter.

One of the most interesting facts to emerge from these observations of polygyny is the equality of all the children in a house whose mothers are not necessarily equal. This is quite the opposite from polygyny reported in other parts of the world where there is greater equality among the wives but not necessarily among their children. The equality accorded to children of different mothers in a D'ing-ri household may well be a result of the strength of household identity over factors of age and maternity.

<sup>5</sup>A second wife is not the only means by which a household attempts to provide an heir, since adoption is not uncommon in this society. An adopted child must be a kinsperson and it is sometimes difficult to arrange that, more difficult than obtaining a sororate bride. The choice largely depends on the influence of the *na-ma*'s natal house.

*Father and Son Sharing a Wife*

Although this is a slight variation of fraternal polyandry, it is nevertheless unusual and is extant only in certain parts of the Himalayas. Even among the D'ing-ri people this is an irregular union and although there is no impropriety or incest involved it is not sanctioned by formal betrothals, marriage celebrations or gift exchanges. It generally evolves after a widower, who has a son from his first wife, remarries.<sup>6</sup> He brings in the new wife for himself but the woman gradually takes the mature son as her lover and husband. Of course this can happen only in strict accordance with the rule of exogamy, so if there is any kinship tie between the second and the first wife, it precludes any possibility of sexual association with the boy.

A young widower is expected to remarry. But the introduction of his new wife poses certain problems, as D'ing-ri-wa see it. A woman who is not the mother of the boy, will not be compatible with the *na-ma* he is expected to receive, and it is to avoid such conflict that a man offers his wife to the younger son. If successful, there will be no need to bring in a *na-ma*, and the threat of a son leaving the house to find a mate will also be avoided. This arrangement is yet another accommodation to two major principles to which people here give paramount importance: one is the solidarity of the household, the other is the rule of one wife per generation.

A man will sometimes wait until his son is nubile before making any polyandrous union involving the boy. The father in his role as household head arranges for a legitimate bride for his son, selecting a girl who will also suit his own needs. Then, after the *na-ma* marries his son, the father also gains acceptance as a (junior) husband. Sons rarely oppose such an arrangement but it is not the son whose cooperation has to be won; it is that of the *na-ma*. If she is unyielding the plan cannot be realized. In the case outlined below the *na-ma* resisted both her family and her father-in-law.

*Case Thirty-three—the End of Jam-päl's Married Life*

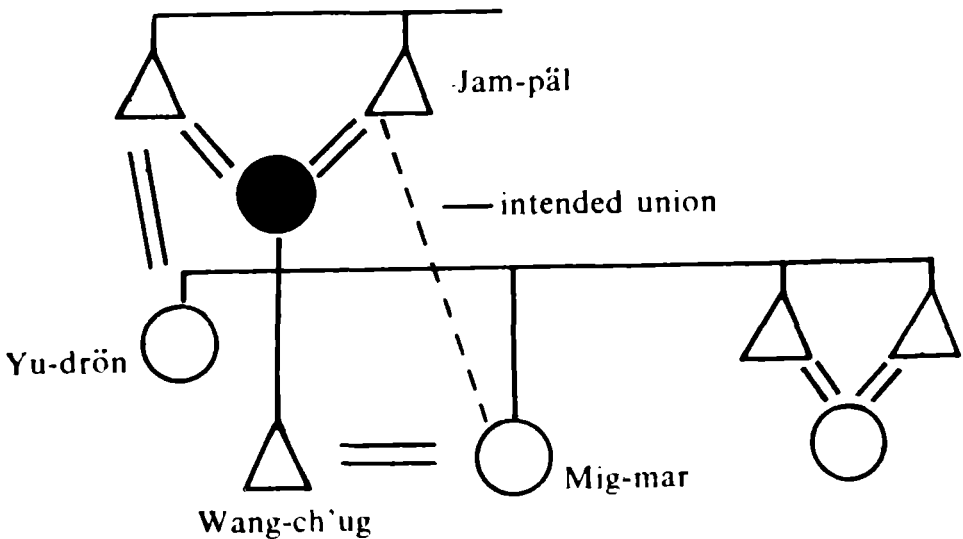
This concerns the house of Jam-päl in P'u-ri village. Jam-päl and his brother had originally received a *na-ma* from another high-ranking agriculturalist family, but she died shortly after giving birth to a son.

<sup>6</sup>This arrangement is not possible if there is another child, a daughter, in the house. This marriage type seems only to suit a household where a widower is left with a son or a widow with a daughter.

This boy Wang-ch'ug (twenty-three years old when I met him in 1971) lived in P'u-ri with his father and father's brother until the latter brought a new wife to the household, a lower class *d'ü-ch'ung* woman he had met on a trading trip to Sa-kya. The rest of her family was in the process of migrating from Sa-kya to D'ing-ri Ganggar and were therefore in the same vicinity. This woman, Yu-drön, lived as the *chün-ma* of Jam-päl and his brother while Wang-ch'ug was growing up. She had no other children.

In 1960 all moved from P'u-ri to Nepal, but after a few years Yu-drön and the younger brother returned to settle in Tibet, leaving Jam-päl alone with the boy Wang-ch'ug. Years passed and they did not return as they had promised. Wang-ch'ug reached twenty and needed a wife, so Jam-päl initiated a plan which seemed ideal. He went to the household of Yu-drön. This family now resided nearby in Nepal and had another daughter, Mig-mar, a younger sister to Yu-drön, whom they agreed to give as a second wife. They foresaw a time when Yu-drön and the other brother would return, so this younger sister would become the junior wife in a reunion of the two brothers and two sisters.

It was also understood that the girl, Mig-mar, would be the wife of Wang-ch'ug since they were close in age. When she first arrived at Jam-päl's house in a semi-formal marriage ceremony she understood



that she was to be Wang-ch'ug's wife. But when it was conveyed to her that Jam-päl intended to share her she broke down and wept profusely and protested. She did not run away as she threatened to,

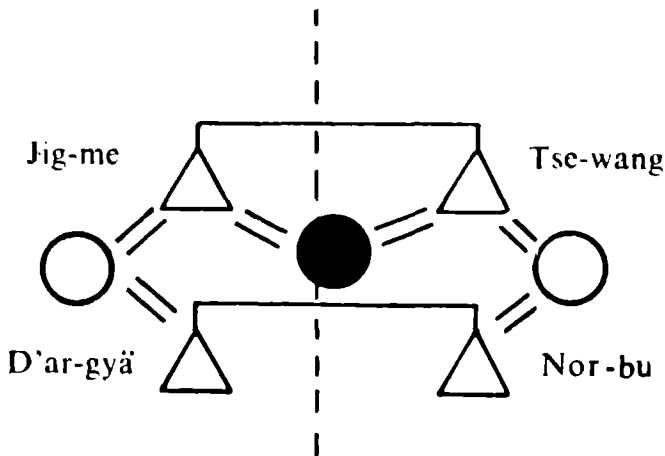
but she persisted in her rejection of the boy's father until bitterness grew between them.

Jam-päl tells me he did not press the matter at first. His son had no objection to a partnership and he believed Mig-mar would acquiesce. But time passed and she did not, and the bitterness that grew between Jam-päl and the girl became public. Neighbours and kindred of the girl tried to persuade her to accede, arguing that her elder sister would soon return from Tibet to join them (thereby taking Jam-päl off her hands). But Yu-drön did not return and Mig-mar held firm. Jam-päl felt he could not live with his daughter-in-law and that there was no alternative but to leave his house. I met him about the time he took his vows to become a monk; he visits his son occasionally but resides at a monastery some miles away from him now. He expresses his regret at the rejection he has experienced and recounted his domestic problems with emotion and with continuing resentment towards Mig-mar.

The next case is another example of fathers sharing wives with their sons. It is taken from the case history of a *ser-ky'im* family in Lha-dong village in south D'ing-ri.

#### Case Thirty-four

My informant is Nor-bu, thirty-eight years old (in 1970) when I met him in Nepal, living with his father (seventy years old) and their common wife, aged fifty-seven. They have lived together for many years, since shortly after Nor-bu's mother died. Originally Nor-bu and his father had lived with his father's brothers. Tse-wang and Jig-me



had been fraternal partners in polyandry and their wife gave birth to Nor-bu and another son, D'ar-gyä. After this woman's death Tse-wang and Jig-me fought and separated; D'ar-gyä went with Jig-me and the father and son eventually shared a new wife, while Nor-bu joined his father Tse-wang in a similar form of polyandry. The history is described graphically on page 155.

A father and son joining to share a wife is not confined to any single social class in D'ing-ri. The eight cases of this occurring in the sample of one hundred and twenty-two polygamous unions are drawn from all sectors of D'ing-ri society.

Its parallel form, a mother and daughter sharing a husband, is just as frequent (ten cases in the total sample) but is largely confined to the lower *d'ü-ch'ung* people. This sharing between a mother and daughter is not a favoured arrangement, but like many other polygamous unions in this society, it is enjoined as an expedient method of holding a daughter in a unit which she might otherwise leave, and it reflects an adherence to the rule that only one spouse can be accommodated. Like the type described above, it evolves in conditions of widowhood where a woman left with a daughter wants to remarry without jeopardizing her tie to her daughter. She therefore chooses a husband usually much younger than herself who will simultaneously suit the younger woman. Such a choice must lie within the limits defined by the rule of exogamy, and as long as the common husband has no kinship tie with either the woman or the girl, such unions are not considered incestuous.

D'ing-ri-wa consider these unions rather irregular and find some amusement in speculating on the intimacy and sexual life of such a group. But even though this type of polygamy is the source of some amusement, it is condoned. And people do not fail to see its practical advantages.

They also admire the elder woman whose role it is to supervise the arrangement and they recognize that such partnerships are extremely stable. None of the ten cases I recorded experience any friction or fission.

#### POLYGAMY AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Each of the various social classes in D'ing-ri exhibits a marriage pattern slightly different from the next. This is an extension of their different economy, their diverse ideologies and their disparate origins.

But there are no regular co-variables—one type of economy manifesting one type of marriage—which would suggest an inter-dependency. For example sibling polygamy, an ideal held by all classes, is practiced only among a few. And patrilocality, which seems to be concerned with the transfer of property rights, is practiced among the wealthy agriculturalists, but not by the merchant class. These and other variations are set out in Table D against each of the eight distinct social classes in D'ing-ri.

The distribution of sibling polygamy is particularly interesting. The pattern is well quantified by data on polygamy in 1959 in twenty-four D'ing-ri villages (Table B).

Noting the incidence of polygamy in each village and whether the cases occur in the *dr'ong-pa* or the *d'ü-ch'ung* class, we find that it is overwhelmingly in the former. In the twenty-four villages in the sample only two hamlets cite cases of polygamy (two cases each) among its *d'ü-ch'ung*. The rate of polygamous households for each village varies from 11 to 40 per cent, with the mean at 27 per cent.<sup>7</sup>

When we turn to the urban population of Gang-gar, the situation regarding polyandry and other marriage patterns is quite different.

TABLE D

<i>Class</i>	<i>Economy</i>	<i>Marriage Pattern</i>
1 upper <i>dr'ong-pa</i>	wealthy agriculturalists; trade, farm, herd; two or three per village constitute top 15 per cent of village; longest residents in D'ing-ri; housenames; arranged marriage	patrilocality; fraternal polyandry; hypogamy; sororal levirate retain daughter as nun

<sup>7</sup>The D'ing-ri pattern seems almost to be paralleled in a region near Gyäl-tze called Sa-da, where Goldstein (1971c) has collected data on polyandry and social stratification. His data from Sa-da (or Samada) shows that the incidence of polygamy varies according to the socio-economic status of the households with what he calls the *trewa* (analogous to *dr'ong-pa*) showing a high incidence, and the *d'ü-ch'ung* population exhibiting almost none.



2 <i>dr'ong-pa</i>	<p>agriculturalists; farm, trade, herd; very conservative; housenames; arranged marriages; heavy tax burden</p>	<p>patrilocality; fraternal polyandry; hypogamy successive polyandry; second marriage with low class;</p>
3 <i>tsong-pa</i>	<p>businessmen in D'ing-ri town; recent migrants; former bureaucrats or military; wealthy, prestigious; arranged marriage</p>	<p>adoption neo-locality for all but eldest son; monogamy; hypogamy from other commercials and cities; adoption</p>
4 <i>d'ü-ch'ung</i>	<p>servants and artisans in town and village; newly settled; no arranged marriages; no housenames; little property, no land; no tax; transient, shifting; marriage by personal arrangement</p>	<p>neo-locality; monogamy; father/son polyandry and mother/daughter polygy- ny for second marriage; hypergamy</p>
5 <i>ser-ky'im</i>	<p>religious specialists in villages, farmers; all sons become <i>ser- ky'im</i>; modest wealth, between <i>dr'ong-pa</i> and <i>d'ü-ch'- ung</i>; arranged marriages; no housenames</p>	<p>patrilocality; about 30 per cent fraternal polyandry or father/son polyandry and mother/daughter polygyny; prefer marriage with other <i>ser-ky'im</i></p>
6 & 7 <i>ger-pa</i> and <i>ngag-pa</i>	<p>private ownership of land; administrators, priests; none in D'ing-ri except five <i>ngag-pa</i> families; use lineage or house- name</p>	<p>patriliney; patrilocality; fraternal polyandry; exchange women between them</p>
8 <i>ya-wa</i>	<p>outcasts, beggars, butchers, leather- workers; itinerants; no regular household; only 10 per cent of population</p>	<p>patriliney; neo-locality; monogamy; perhaps break incest rule</p>

Polygamy is far less common here with only 6.5 per cent of the sixty-one houses sampled practising this form of cohabitation in 1959.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, what little polygamy occurs in Gang-gar is not of the ideal sibling type but more often the irregular arrangements between a parent and child that one normally finds among the rural *d'ü-ch'ung*.

The town-rural contrast is strikingly illustrated in the single genealogy reproduced below which I obtained from a man known as Wang-dr'ag in Ja-lung village, D'ing-ri. Since Wang-dr'ag was born in Gang-gar town, he retains his patrilineal kinship ties there, but he moved to Ja-lung as a child when he was adopted to his mother's brother's house. Wang-dr'ag's mother's family are long-settled residents in the village and it is from her side that we draw the details of marriage there. It is a convenient case because within one genealogy we can examine a portion of Wang-dr'ag's kindred who reside in the town (lower half of the chart, p 160, against those who live in Ja-lung village (spread out over the upper part of the diagram).

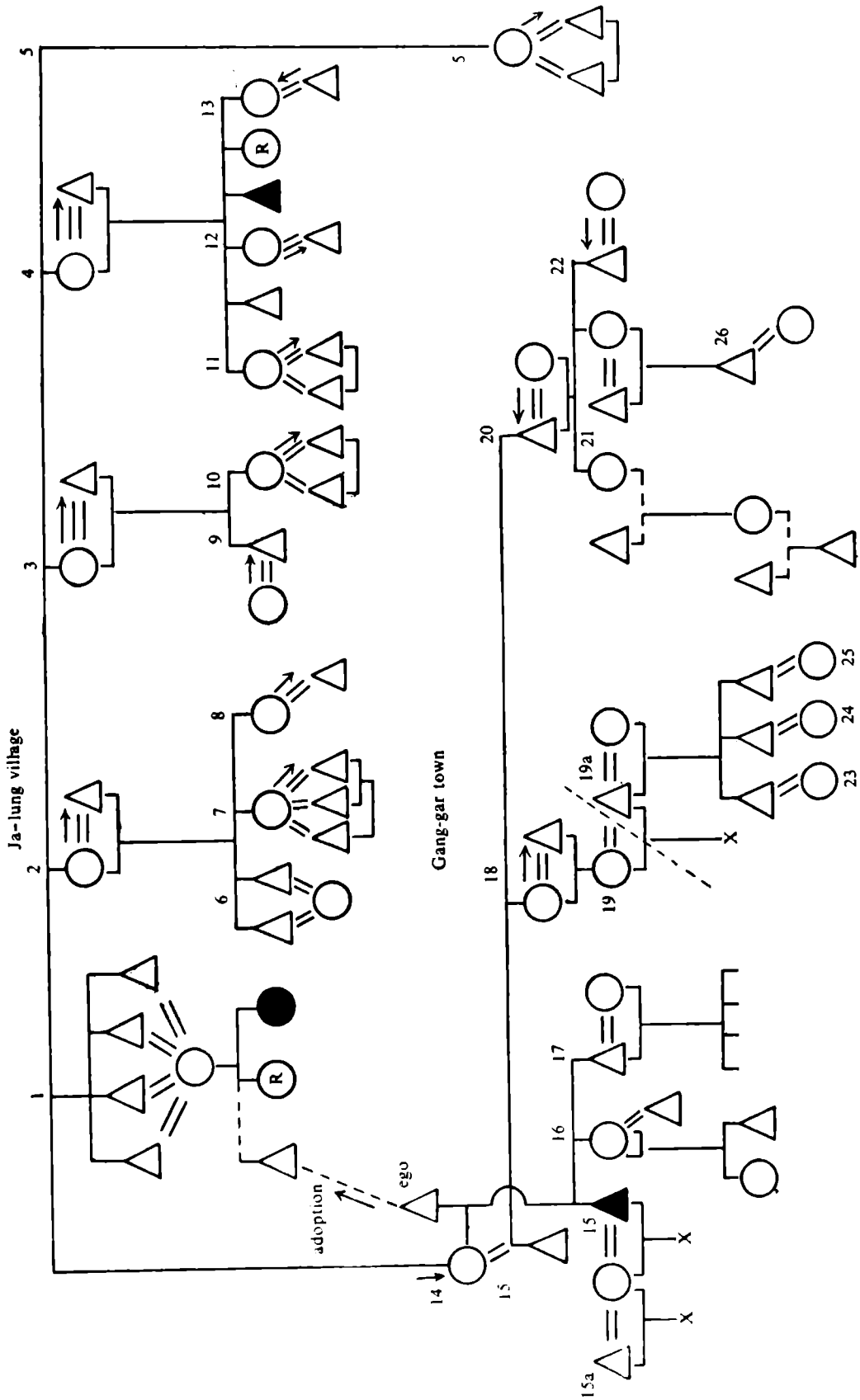
There are twenty-six marriages in the genealogy (p 160), and as it happens exactly half of them are in the patrilateral part of the family in Gang-gar, while the other thirteen are among the matrilateral branch in Ja-lung village. The six unions labelled 1, 5, 6, 7, 10 and 11 are all polyandric. Five of these six we find in the rural branch of the family living in Ja-lung. Only one union in the Gang-gar marriages is polyandric and it is in one of the old established *dr'ong-pa* households of the town, not in a merchant family.

The thirteen cases of monogamy in the Gang-gar branch are exemplary of the town's social pattern; the merchants and administrators rarely contract formal polygamous unions. Unlike the rural agriculturalists who keep their sons together, the sons of urban families each establish a new household when they marry, leaving only the eldest son in the father's house.

Examining the chart the reader will also note two remarriages in the town where none appear in the rural section. Whereas a rural household will add or absorb second spouses, the Gang-gar families will not. And

<sup>8</sup>In the 1971c article Goldstein tries to show the dependence of polyandry on land distribution by comparing the incidence of polyandry in Sa-da in Tibet with its occurrence among the newly-settled Sa-da people in south India. This difference is not corroborated by comparable material for the D'ing-ri-wa with their move into Nepal, where they too have no land. Polygamous unions are fewer in Nepal but they are nevertheless continuing and are highly preferred.

Case Thirty-five



if there are no children from one marriage, that union is terminated and another one established. This occurred in unions 15 and 15a and in 19 and 19a in case thirty-five.

#### HYPOGAMY AND HYPERGAMY: THE PATTERN OF INTERCLASS MARRIAGE

Marriages between persons of differing classes or economic ranks are frequent in D'ing-ri. They develop partly from the migration and economic mobility that affect marriage choices. But they also result from policies and ideals designed to link households of differing status.

Hypogamy is a widely held ideal. However, most marriages are between persons (households) of equal rank, and only a minority are able to effect the ideal of hypogamy.<sup>9</sup> The *ger-pa* and *ngag-pa* are high, equally ranked classes who most frequently marry endogamously, that is within their own group. Occasionally they intermarry, and sometimes they give a daughter to a lower *dr'ong-pa* household in rural D'ing-ri. High-ranking women are scarce and there is much competition among established D'ing-ri agriculturalists to win a daughter-in-law from that stock. Only about 15 per cent of them are successful. Therefore this proportion of marriages among the upper strata of D'ing-ri *dr'ong-pa* are hypogamous.

The exit of women from *ger-pa* and *ngag-pa* initiates a flow of women which is perpetuated by the release of upper *dr'ong-pa* women into inferior tenant households, where it then seems to stop. There is no hypogamy into the *ser-ky'im* or the *d'ü-ch'ung* classes.

Hypogamous marriage is manifest in the rights and the abilities exercised by a woman, but it is also reflected in the kinship terminology. One can easily identify a bride from a higher ranking family by the title assigned to her in her married household. And from a range of titles it is possible to further distinguish the particular rank of each woman's natal household. The differences are listed below:

<i>Woman's Title</i>	<i>Her Donor (natal) Class</i>
<i>dag-mo; dag-ku-zhab</i>	<i>ngag-pa</i>
<i>cham-ku-zhab</i>	<i>ger-pa</i> or other Lha-sa officer
<i>cham-ch'ung</i>	lower ranking <i>ger-pa</i> or officer
<i>pe-sa; pe-sa dr'ung-lag</i>	upper <i>dr'ong-pa</i> or rich merchant
<i>na-ma (bag-ma); personal name</i>	<i>dr'ong-pa</i>
<i>a-j'e</i>	ordinary merchant

<sup>9</sup>In the majority of D'ing-ri marriages, possibly as many as 60 per cent of the exchanging households are of equal rank.

Any woman in D'ing-ri who is addressed *dag-mo* is either the wife of a *ngag-pa* or a *ngag-pa* daughter.<sup>10</sup> If she resides in a tenant household it is a certain indication she was received from a *ngag-pa* house. Likewise *cham-ku-zhab* singles out women of noble origin; Ch'ö-kyi, the subject of case thirty, is still called *cham-ku-zhab* by many who remember her husband, the former Lha-sa official. And Lha-drön (case twenty-three) whose natal house is of higher rank than her husband's, is known locally as *cham-ch'ung*.<sup>11</sup>

These terms, used throughout Tibet, are applied on a local scale in D'ing-ri and do not necessarily meet with the approval of Lha-sa people who maintain that these terms are only reserved for ranks within their own society, ranks far superior to the status of D'ing-ri wives.

Arrogant urban Tibetans refer to all D'ing-ri women alike as *a-j'e*, and reserve the prestigious titles for their own community. But the D'ing-ri-wa don't care about this; they use the terms to distinguish relative status differences, which in their context are real.

The hypogamy we have been discussing is part of a wider process of interclass marriage in the region through which women move from one rank to another, and from one community to another. There is one hypogamous network that brings women from higher class households outside D'ing-ri into the rural society; and a separate network carries women from the large commercial centres of Tibet to the town of Gang-gar. They are quite independent avenues for mobility and they are kept distinct within D'ing-ri.

There is almost no exchange through marriage between the rural population and the merchant class in Gang-gar. Women born in Gang-gar remain within the urban community; either they marry merchants and officers there or they find husbands in Nya-nang, Kyi-rong, Shel-kar or other commercial centres of Tibet.<sup>12</sup> There are few cases like that of Wang-dr'ag's mother (case

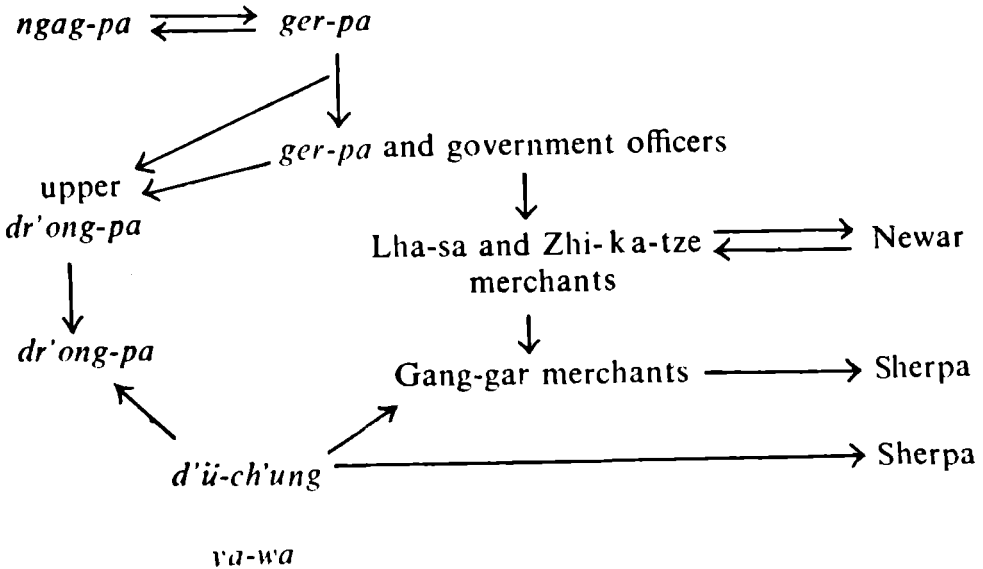
<sup>10</sup>A *ngag-pa* wife is also referred to as *sang-yum-ku-zhab*.

<sup>11</sup>The application of these terms is qualified by the changing status of a woman within her own household. *dag-mo* and *pe-sa* for example are dropped after a woman's own children marry, at which time her daughter-in-law takes the title and becomes *a-ma* or *yum*.

<sup>12</sup>I have frequently heard of D'ing-ri women marrying and settling in Nya-nang and Kyi-rong, west of D'ing-ri, but there is almost no migration into

thirty-five), who was sent as a *na-ma* from her Gang-gar home into a rural house in Ja-lung.

The pattern of interclass marriage is graphically illustrated in the flow-chart below. As the reader can see there are several streams, which although they originate with a common noble class at the top and a single itinerant class at the lower end, expand and diversify to accommodate the various socio-economic ranks within D'ing-ri. The reader should remember that these patterns do not represent all marriages in D'ing-ri, or even the majority. Most marriages occur within the same rank uniting equals, and those described by these charts are effected in only 15 to 20 per cent of D'ing-ri households.



Hypogamy has social and psychological as well as political and economic implications for the receiving household. The titles by which those brides are designated are reminiscent of the way D'ing-ri-wa invoke the housenames of their high status kinswomen. The status of the bride is kept in the forefront of interpersonal relations, which is

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D'ing-ri from those areas. The only case I know of is the Kazara wife of the well-loved Na-dr'a La-ma discussed in Chapter Ten.

manifest in their expectations of such women. They often become the wife of two or more brothers and as such must take a central role in managing sibling social and economic relations. It is also generally agreed that successful polyandry relies on certain skills and aggressiveness which a high-ranking *na-ma* is more likely to effect. Some of this lies in the personality of the woman, but much is carried by the prestige of her house, called the mother's brother's (*a-zhang*) house.<sup>13</sup> It is the prestige of the *a-zhang* house which undoubtedly enables it to exert an influence over the sister and her children. This is particularly apparent where a woman is barren; if a *chün-ma* is accepted, it is her younger sister. If the *a-zhang* house is without issue, it prefers to adopt his sister's son or daughter. Children are also given to the superior *a-zhang* house when a member of the latter retreats to a sanctuary and wants to take a youngster as her apprentice and companion. Many of the younger persons we find residing with kindred in D'ing-ri monasteries are accompanying someone from their *a-zhang* house.

The movement of women from lower to higher status is called hypergamy and involves a very different social process in D'ing-ri. As the flow-figure (p 163) shows, it occurs at the lower ranks of the social structure. There, lower class men and women move from *d'ü-ch'ung* to *dr'ong-pa* status in the rural community, and from *d'ü-ch'ung* to the rank of *tsong-pa* (trader) in the town. Among the *dr'ong-pa* and the *tsong-pa*, 10 to 15 per cent of marriages are of this kind. They regularly absorb that proportion of their new members from the lower ranks of society.

Hypergamy is only favoured for second marriages. In their first marriage the higher ranks prefer to obtain a wife from among their peers or from households higher than themselves. But when widows and widowers remarry, they seek a spouse from below. Sixty-one per cent of remarriages noted in our sample are of this nature. Jam-päl and his brother (case thirty-three) took a humble Sa-kya girl as their second wife; both Ch'ö-kyi (case thirty) and P'ur-bu (case thirty-one) now have husbands of far inferior rank than their original husbands, and

<sup>13</sup>The provision of a sororate wife and adoption of a mother's brother's child are also expressions of the influence of the *a-zhang* house. It is not clear from our data, however, whether that influence is part of a bundle of matrilineal rights, or if it is a development of indebtedness the receiving house may incur through incomplete bridewealth payments, or if it is an expression of the superior economic status of the donor *a-zhang* household.

the widow who married the two brothers from P'u-ri in case twenty-two is of low status.

We have complete data for twenty-three remarriages in recent D'ing-ri history, and they divide into the following categories:

hypergamous	14	61 per cent
equal rank	7	30 per cent
hypogamous	2	9 per cent

The overwhelming preference to draw one's second spouse from a lower rank also finds expression in the people's ideology, and they explain their strategy without equivocation. First, they say that they need a spouse who will not compete with the children already born in the household and destined to head it.

In a second marriage the household is not looking for prestige—they already obtained that with their first wife. Now they want practical benefits, and *d'ü-ch'ung* are known for their working skills. As humble people the *d'ü-ch'ung* do not pose a threat to the political balance of the original members of the household. Often a servant or sharecropper who is made spouse has already been a concubine or lover of the household head and the marriage is simply a matter of formalizing that. It is a simple arrangement and does not require betrothal or exchange of property.

Remarriage, which is a frequent, common pattern in D'ing-ri society, occurs in the majority of cases where middle-aged and young people are widowed or divorced.<sup>14</sup> The twenty-three cases of remarriage we examined are out of a total sample of thirty-three terminated marriages in these age groups. Five of those who did not remarry stayed with their children until old age, and only five sought solitude in a religious community. Rather than retreat into religion when they lose their spouse, people are urged to remarry. This keeps them in the economy; it keeps the household expansive and it meets normal social needs.

Because remarriage is so common in this society, it ought to be carefully examined and counted in our documentation of regular social life. Many of the households one encounters in the course of research

<sup>14</sup>Here I am including as terminated marriages only those where a person is widowed unexpectedly early. And I do not count those where a spouse had a natural death late in life, leaving behind someone who is not expected to remarry.



are in a stage of second union and do not follow the normal marriage rules. But these irregularities may still conform to the rules of remarriage.

Concluding our discussion of marriage patterns here, we must not overlook the Nepali members of D'ing-ri society. The Nepali are represented here by the Solu-Khumbu Sherpa and by the Kazara, a class of Newar originating from Kathmandu. The Newar who immigrate to Tibet do so directly to Lha-sa and from there, through intermarriage with Tibetan women, they form the ethnic group known as Kazara who trade in the large Tibetan cities.<sup>15</sup> Those Kazara residing in D'ing-ri are almost exclusively migrants from the Zhi-ka-tze merchant class. Although they are wealthy these traders are of ambiguous social rank. Other Newar consider them inferior, so they cannot rejoin the Newar community. On the other hand Gang-gar merchants rank the Kazara above themselves and compete for their women. In contrast to this, the rural D'ing-ri reject the Kazara just as they reject the Tibetan merchants in Gang-gar town, and one will find no Kazara brides in rural D'ing-ri.

The same discrimination applies to the Sherpa Nepali, and we therefore find none of them residing in the agricultural regions of D'ing-ri. Sherpa are confined to Gang-gar town. But they do not enjoy the prestige or wealth of the Kazara Nepali; they come from the lower ranks of Sherpa society, and when they marry D'ing-ri-wa it is generally with persons of their own socio-economic status. The same happens when D'ing-ri-wa migrate to Solu and Khumbu. Marriage between the well-to-do Sherpa and the Gang-gar merchant class is confined to a handful of cases.<sup>16</sup>

The marriage patterns reviewed here are the result of general rules regarding residence, descent and class interaction. Choices are gene-

<sup>15</sup>There is a small Newar population living in Solu and Khumbu in Nepal (cf Fürer-Haimendorf, 1964, p 37; Oppitz, 1968, pp 105, 107), but there is no mention of Kazara people residing in these areas or of Kazara in D'ing-ri having come from that part of Nepal immediately south. This again points to the Newar-Tibetan interrelations as a neglected area that demands new research.

<sup>16</sup>The Sherpa do not hold the same rank as the Kazara Nepalese in relation to the D'ing-ri merchant class, and there is no alignment between the rural D'ing-ri-wa and the Sherpa agriculturalists on the one hand and the merchant peoples of Khumbu and Gang-gar on the other. Intermarriage between Sherpa and D'ing-ri-wa seems a seepage through the lower ranks and does not coincide with the marriage pattern within D'ing-ri.

rally made in accordance with these rules and the pattern is therefore readily discernible. Most unions can be accounted for in this way, even the seemingly irregular plural marriage arrangements. We have seen how rules themselves permit and even encourage a degree of mobility within society and how they allow for individuality as well as for change.

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## Marriage and Family Life

Having examined the general rules and forms that marriage takes in this society, I now want to turn our attention to interpersonal relations within marriage. At the point where all the prerequisite rules have been worked out, connubial life may proceed. But it remains guided by other formulae: the exchange of property, wedding rites, rights of the husband and the wife in a growing partnership, or equity in case of termination of the marriage.

The sections into which this chapter is divided deal with each of these subjects in turn, starting with a discussion of bridewealth and dowry. Throughout this chapter, in contrast to the preceding ones, I do not distinguish the behaviour and norms or the different classes of D'ing-ri society with respect to marriage. There are differences but they are largely quantitative. The behaviour I am describing here is the norm among all classes, but one class may follow it more closely than another according to its wealth and the value it attaches to household unity. The *d'ü-ch'ung* for example divorce relatively easily, since their marriages have not involved the exchange of property and do not entail the degree of honour that the agriculturalists experience.

Everyone has a marriage celebration; those with less money and fewer kin and *ga-nye* networks keep the affair modest, whereas those with status and wealth stretch it out for six days and collect significant amounts of property from reciprocating friends and from bridewealth.

Marriage in D'ing-ri is not a religious affair, but it is nevertheless a highly formalized event, preceded by elaborate negotiations and culminating in a deeply symbolic song-drama known as the *mo-lha*. The

description of the D'ing-ri *mo-lha* which is not unlike its production in other parts of Tibet, is provided in some detail here because it is otherwise unavailable. Much more analysis remains to be carried out on the *mo-lha* but its inclusion here invites readers to relate it to what has been said about the paramountcy of the household. The song is replete with symbols of the house.

Frequent reference has already been made to the power and managerial position held by women in this society. This too is elaborated in the section on husband and wife interrelations that follows. The power which a Tibetan woman enjoys is usually something that develops after she is married; earlier attitudes towards her seem to indicate quite a different character, that of a compliant, innocent girl whose life is largely designed by others. Often a woman is betrothed in complete ignorance of the plan; she is led away from her home on the pretext of a pilgrimage and is introduced to her husband at the gate to his house.

Many D'ing-ri ladies recalled how they had been duped, and they described the anguish they experienced at the time of their marriage. They claim that they knew nothing, but there are cases of negotiations curtailed and of girls who ran away, to indicate otherwise. A number of women still living as nuns spoke candidly about their objections to marriage and their escape to a religious community as the only possible alternative at the time. Their choice was not a common one but it has happened often enough to suggest that the nobler religious life of a Tibetan ascetic is often motivated by oppression and lack of choices in normal social life. This condition, which is manifest at the time of betrothal and again following a divorce is taken up in the context of a later discussion (Chapter Eleven) of religion as it serves the society. But let us begin by looking at what happens when the norm is followed.

#### BRIDEWEALTH AND DOWRY

Exchange of property between two parties is an important aspect of marriage contracts among the D'ing-ri-wa, just as it is in many other societies. A series of meetings take place between the negotiating parties, and at first only such symbolic items as beer and scarves are exchanged.

As the contract approaches completion the binding exchanges of bridewealth and dowry are pledged. These agreements, in fact, amount to a betrothal. Bridewealth is given first, usually before the nuptial

rituals, with the reciprocal dowry being brought with the bride at the time of the wedding. Bridewealth usually consists of livestock and cash.<sup>1</sup> All may not be given at once since it is considerable and many families cannot manage it except over a stretch of years. The dowry, less in value and quantity, is presented with the bride and accompanies her in the marriage procession. The illustration on the following page shows some of the things. There are a number of items of dress, but the jewellery is the major part of the dowry, having both monetary and symbolic value. The presentation of the dowry is an ostentatious business—an opportunity for the girl's family to accumulate prestige. Sometimes sheep are included. But in no case does land ever form a part of the property exchanged, at least not among D'ing-ri-wa.

After presentation of the dowry early in the wedding ceremony, at the rite called *ten-drel* (lit. hold portent), further presentations are made in which all assembled guests participate. The household members of the boy and the girl comprise the receiving party while all others—kinsmen, *ga-nye* and neighbours—constitute the donors. Each guest in turn makes a gift, first to the boy and girl, and then to each of their household members. Symbolic foods of salt, wheat, meat and beer, as well as small articles of clothing are given to the couple, while cash is distributed among the other members of the wedding party.

Presentations made directly to the couple are carefully noted. A list called *ming-t'o*<sup>2</sup> is compiled and kept by the boy's house; it serves as a guide for later reciprocation when this family makes similar presentations back to their friends. This set of reciprocal relationships is part of a household's property and is inherited by a couple when it assumes responsibility for the household.

The most valued part of the dowry itself is an item of jewellery—a necklace called *gül-gyän* (lit. neck ornament) valued between Rs 1,000

<sup>1</sup>With the custom of hypogamy encouraging agriculturalists and traders to win wives from families wealthier than their own, those who commit themselves to this may find they are deeply in debt, unable to meet the bridewealth payment they pledged. Although I have no direct evidence of this, it is quite possible that hypogamy, combined with debts from bridewealth, became a means through which powerful families bring others under their sphere of influence.

<sup>2</sup>Each household maintains three name lists (*ming-t'o*); one for donors at birth celebrations, one for those who give gifts at the house's funerals and one noting the donors of marriage gifts. They are used as a guide for reciprocal payments.

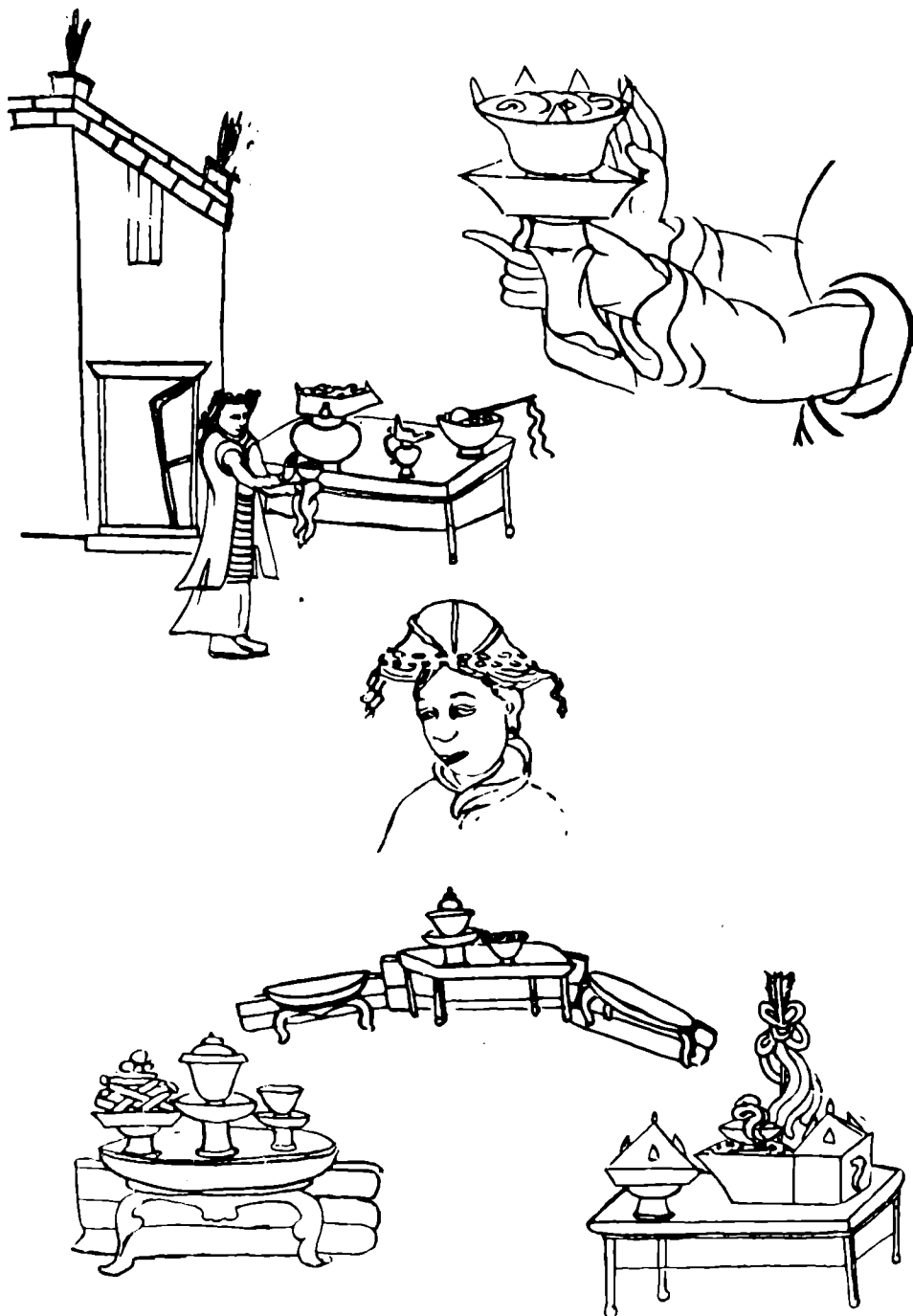


Fig. 3. Sketches From a Wedding

It was the poetry of the *mo-lha* nuptials (*top*) that evoked these images. D'argyā illustrates a groom's mother with arms outstretched to offer the symbolic buttermilk, embellished by tiny flakes of butter, to the *na-ma*. This is followed by *ch'ang* (barley wine) offerings to the bride's party. Brimming vessels are ready on the table at the entrance to the groom's house. A quiescent bride (*centre*) wears her traditional head ornaments; (*below*) numerous auspicious foods which will in turn be proffered to the celebrating party inside the grooms's house.

and Rs 6,000.<sup>3</sup> As with the clothing she receives, the *na-ma* owns this and other jewellery provided by her household. It is not handed over to the groom at any time, but remains with the *na-ma* throughout her married life. Furthermore, it is not an heirloom passed through a lineage or household.

A necklace is provided for each daughter at the time of her wedding. Dowries for several daughters must involve considerable expense for a household but I have never heard of a family going into debt in order to meet these obligations or assigning a daughter to an ascetic life to avoid them.

The *gül-gyän* necklace symbolizes the bond of marriage and the status of a girl as *na-ma*. It is not provided for those who cohabit or marry without undergoing formal exchange, that is to say, without being given and received as a *na-ma*. Neither is it provided for a junior wife (*chün-ma*) or for women received in a second marriage. The symbolic association of the *gül-gyän* becomes most apparent when the marriage is dissolved by divorce or by the death of a woman. At these times questions arise as to rights and obligations associated with the necklace. In case of death, the *gül-gyän* (along with other items of her jewellery and wardrobe) is used to meet a woman's funerary expenses. Either it is sold for cash or it is offered directly to a *la-ma* and monastery in exchange for ritual services performed for the deceased. Additional money may be provided to meet a family's expenses when the *na-ma* dies, but her own property which she has brought and kept with her as a *na-ma* constitutes a major portion of the funerary fund.<sup>4</sup>

Disputes that arise when a divorce ensues are often centered on the ownership of the *gül-gyän*. Even though the *na-ma* retains it as long as she is married, when she leaves the house, continuing ownership rights are subject to certain conditions. If she leaves of her own volition, without good cause, she has to forfeit her rights to the jewellery. This is discouraged since it makes it almost impossible for her to be remarried.

Her own family will not accept her back at her former status, nor can it provide another dowry, so she is often forced to accept a sub-

<sup>3</sup>The equivalent of 1,000 Nepalese rupees represents a considerable investment by any local standard. It exceeds the value of any other single item, except perhaps the finest horse.

<sup>4</sup>This offering, called *ngo-ten*, is essential. The use of a woman's own property suggests that in this society funerary expenses are not assumed by the husband's household and that the woman's own (*a-zhang*) house maintains certain jural responsibilities for her throughout her life.

servient role to her brother's wife or to become an itinerant or nun.<sup>5</sup> However, if the *na-ma* is forced out by a displeased husband, then he is obliged to return the dowry intact. But this rarely happens. If a *na-ma* is unacceptable the husband and his family intimidate her in such a manner that she leaves of her own volition. The *na-ma*, we should not forget, is alone among strangers, whose first loyalties are to each other, not to her.

Another noteworthy exchange within the wedding ceremony is the presentation of the *yu* (turquoise) to the bride.<sup>6</sup> The *yu* is ceremoniously placed on the back of the bride's head by a member of the boy's household or by the officiant, the *mo-lha-wa*. The *yu* is a simple chain of stones, most prominent of which is the turquoise. Itself, the *yu* is of little monetary value, but it symbolizes the married status of a girl. She wears it braided into her hair throughout her married life.

#### NUPTIAL RITUALS

Whether or not it is embellished by elaborate preliminary negotiations and property exchange, the marriage is marked with ritual and festivities by D'ing-ri people of all classes. At its simplest it is a drinking party attended by the friends and a few kinsmen of the couple. Even here, at the very least, a few modest gifts are presented to the couple—salt, beer, wheat, and a few other articles.

Preferably the marriage is an elaborate cultural and community occasion.<sup>7</sup> The ideal procedure involves a procession by the girl and her party, her formal acceptance at the entrance to the groom's house, presentations of symbolic foods, employment of a ritual specialist to sing the *mo-lha* wedding song, recitation of texts by a monk and presentation of gifts by assembled friends in strict accordance with the rules of reciprocation—all spread over five to seven days of drinking,

<sup>5</sup>Sympathetic details of these problems appear in an autobiographical sketch I have written about a D'ing-ri friend called *A-mi Ch'ö-drön* (Aziz, 1976).

<sup>6</sup>The *yu* is worn only by women in rural D'ing-ri. The *ser-ky'im* women and the urban wives do not decorate themselves with it.

<sup>7</sup>Like the Gurung people (Pignéde, 1966, p 236) and other ethnic groups living in the Himalayas, the wedding ceremony is not a religious matter. The *mo-lha* text, which I am in the process of translating for later publication, contains explicit references to spirits, and may have been more religious an event in the past than it is today.



feasting and dancing. Most D'ing-ri weddings above the *d'ü-ch'ung* rank include all these elements.

The *mo-lha* wedding poem, sung throughout the nuptial event, introduces the marriage and concludes it in such a manner that it provides a ritual framework for the entire proceedings.<sup>8</sup> Since I am preparing a detailed translation and analysis of the *mo-lha* song for separate publication, I will only summarize it here.

Following, then, is the outline, stanza by stanza, with a guide to the proceedings. One interesting aspect of the tradition is the performer himself, a man known as the *mo-lha-wa* or *mo-pön*. In almost every D'ing-ri locality there is someone (he is usually from among the higher ranks of the village population) with a special facility and experience of singing the *mo-lha*. He customarily learns it from his father, but he may be self-taught. At a wedding, in the absence of any other ritual functionary, it is the *mo-pön* who plays the role we might expect of a priest. However, he is not a religious adept and he has no other ritual role. People explain that he is simply a man who knows the tradition.<sup>9</sup> Of the four *mo-pön* I met, three are laymen and one is *ser-ky'im*.

*The mo-lha Song*

- ta-shä* Eulogy to the bridling of the horse carrying the bride.
- ko-shä* This stanza marks the crossing of the threshold: the main entrance of the groom's house by the bride. Official acceptance of the bride is declared.

*The Wedding Ceremonies*

- The bride arrives, weeping, on a horse led by her brother or another male kin, and comforted by her girlfriend, called *bag-yog*; parents follow with dowry. Girl dismounts and is received by members of the groom's party. A woman offers her ritual buttermilk.

<sup>8</sup>The *mo-lha* wedding song is known in other parts of Tibet, but it is not practiced everywhere in the country. In Sa-kya, where it is widespread, it is called the *ka-shä* (pillar song).

<sup>9</sup>This should not be taken as conclusive since there is much evidence still under research which suggests that the *mo-pön* figure was once somebody with wider ritual roles and interests. His dress, his dramatic style of performance and his hereditary involvement, all suggest vestigial elements, which were earlier part of a religious tradition.

- kä-shä* Enumeration of the symbolism of the stairway leading to the main chamber of the house. The party ascends to the main part of the house. The bride is offered a delicacy, a sweet root called *dr'o-ma*. All guests of both parties take their places. Groom and bride are together.
- yu-shä* Presentation of the turquoise stone by the *mo-pön*, or a member of the boy's family. This set of stones is placed on the girl's head.
- cha-shä* Placing of the jeweled pin on the girl's head by the *mo-pön* who enacts it in song.

*Second Day of the Wedding*

- d'ar-shä* Presentation of scarves, first to the couple, then to all their close kinsmen, each in turn. The white scarf is presented in the process of the song to the members of the wedding party. Each is yoked by a scarf.
- Following the *mo-pön*, each of the guests in turn yoke the wedding party with a scarf and make their presentations.
- ka-shä* Eulogy to the central beam of the house, decorated for the occasion. The central pillar of the house holds many meanings for the people and this part of the poem elaborates on them.
- dän-shä* The mats on which wedding party and guests are arranged, each become a subject for metaphor and oration. The mats are said to be of various materials and colours embodying animal qualities.

A great deal of beer is consumed; guests interject with their own stories and songs. Then begins another elaborate eulogy by the *mo-pön*.

*ch'ang-shä* The decorated beer vessel is introduced and the poem proceeds to discussions of drinking.

*da-d'ar-shä* This is a symbolic arrow decorated and held by the *mo-pön*. He sings about its significance for the bride.

*zeng-shä* This stanza marks the rising of the wedding party and guests.

There is a kind of drama accompanying this. A pretence is made of dragging the girl by the arrow from her chamber to her central place among the guests.

Some parts of the *mo-lha* develop into lusty dialogue between the *mo-pön* (representing the groom's party) and the girl's kinsmen and friends. The guests pose rhetorical questions to the *mo-pön* who replies in the oratorical style of the *mo-lha* song. As far as I know the guests improvise their part, but the *mo-pön's* retort largely accords to form.

(The *mo-lha* seems to be an entertaining part of the wedding as well as an essential element of the ceremony. My informants take much delight in singing part of it and demonstrating its various procedures and elaborations.)

The nuptials are officially ended when everyone assembles outdoors to make invocations and offerings of *tzam-pa* and incense to the gods. It may be a religious ceremony but it is not officiated and it is as formal as one might expect from a band of very happy, very drunk and very tired villagers.

The bride's party finally departs; her *bag-yog* may stay on a few days longer to provide moral support in that initial emotional period. The shift is not an easy adjustment for a village girl and society's understanding is expressed in a number of concessions it makes to the bride in the first several weeks of marriage, until after her return from a visit to her natal house.

The visit occurs about a month after the nuptials and marks the completion of marriage formalities. It is focused around a particular ceremony called the *lha-dro* which has to do with sanction by the

deities in the bride's natal house (*a-zhang* house).<sup>10</sup> Although the *lha-dro* is an essential part of a marriage contract—as necessary as the early negotiations and betrothal—it is a more sober and private affair and has therefore not received the same attention as other parts of the marriage procedures.

The object of the *lha-dro* ceremony is a *lha* (household deity) which resides in the bride's house. It is in order to secure the deity's final approval for a girl's departure that all congregate in the natal house, members of the household plus the groom who has accompanied his wife to her home village. A spirit medium is hired to invoke the deity,<sup>11</sup> and after the ceremony local villagers join the family for a feast. When this is concluded the girl and her husband depart for their home to begin married life.

#### HUSBAND AND WIFE

The relationship that develops between a man and woman from the beginning of their marriage goes through a number of characteristic stages. Therefore, one cannot describe a conjugal bond without reference to the particular stage. The intimacy and fondness between a husband and his wife strengthens as they both mature, but the marital bond is unstable and weak during the first few years of marriage before children are born. During that time, the *na-ma* is adjusting to the household. She remains under the guidance of her husband's mother, who demands obedience and industry from the girl.

The early months and years of a marriage can be difficult and restricting for a bride. She is subjected to confinements and hardships while her young husband, whom she hardly sees, may continue his pre-marital sexual liaisons with other girlfriends. While his frivolous behaviour does not pose a threat to their marriage bond, it does present a challenge for the young bride, since it is her job to arrest that misbehaviour and bring the young man within her tempering influences. And if she is unable to do this, criticism is levelled not against him, but at her.

<sup>10</sup>The *mo-lha* and the *lha-dro* apply to the *mag-pa* husband as well. When a man marries into the woman's house, the *mo-lha* is performed there by a member of her family, and for the *lha-dro* his wife accompanies him back to his natal house to secure the approval of his *p'o-lha* (household deity). A male who wishes to leave the household appeals to a deity different from a woman's.

<sup>11</sup>Cf Chapter Eleven for further elaboration on this matter.

Learning these jobs is a prerequisite for a stable marriage. They also assure the *na-ma* the respect and power that are waiting for her in the household. All D'ing-ri classes hold the norm and the expectation that a *na-ma* gradually consolidates her authority around her household and her husband. Once a marriage is contracted, regardless of the relative ranks of the husband and the wife, the *na-ma* should assume more power as the years progress.

In polyandry, a *na-ma* sharing several brothers has to exert great adroitness, diplomacy and self-control to maintain the unit of siblings around her. She has sexual as well as economic control to effect over each brother, who at different stages in his development will have differing needs. As the younger brother matures, the *na-ma* initiates him sexually and then accommodates him with the others.

Both privately and publicly, D'ing-ri-wa constantly gossip about the domestic affairs of others, volunteering criticisms as to their behaviour. Comments and opinions about the *na-ma* seem most common. Even when gossip concerns a man, the matter is discussed not in terms of his personality, but in terms of his *na-ma*. Whether a man is a successful trader, a gambler, a drunkard, a layabout, or a charlatan, his life style is very often attributed to the influence of his *na-ma*.

During the first few years of her marriage when a *na-ma* sees little of her husband, she spends a lot of time with his mother. Theirs are not opposed roles competing for power in the household; more usually a bond of affection and cooperation develops between the two women. It is indeed rare for a dispute to emerge between a *na-ma* and her husband's mother. They are, rather, in close and intimate contact; the elder woman is concerned with preparing the younger to assume control of the household.

The sooner the *na-ma* can take over, the earlier the older woman can withdraw and spend her time in religious deeds and thought. In the course of her retirement the senior woman turns her attention to her grandchildren, who will have inevitably arrived by then.

The birth of children usually marks a new stage in the relation between a husband and wife. They become closer, since it is with motherhood that the position of the *na-ma* is assured. The birth of children for the household secures her own position and gives her husband a greater investment in her. Furthermore, a man participates in the rearing and discipline of his children, which necessarily draws him closer into the household unit. Not only jural relations effect this. The act of

birth itself creates a new bond, with the widespread custom in D'ing-ri for a man to deliver his own children. (Sometimes the senior woman in the household acts as midwife for her daughter-in-law, but many Tibetan men I know have delivered some or all their children, considering it a natural expedient. They acknowledge, moreover, that through this experience a special bond is created between them and their wives.)

After the birth of one or two children, a man leads a quieter life, developing a greater intimacy with his wife, which continues through the rest of their marriage. The fragile initial period has passed, and it is now expected that the domestic unit is stabilized. It is delightful to observe a Tibetan couple at this stage in their marriage; cooperation and intimacy reach a high level. The couple flirt with one another; they tease, and they share a great number of domestic chores. Their almost romantic partnership is manifest in the pet names they apply to each other. The most endearing is *da-mo* (wife) and *da-o* (husband) from the word *da-wa* (moon), a common metaphor for "partner" since the moon is always understood as the essential partner of the sun. Other pet names used between spouses in D'ing-ri are *da-rog* (helper), *tän-dr'og* (stay friend), *da-dr'og* (friend), *za-da* (mate moon)<sup>12</sup> and *tse-dr'og* (life friend).

Although during the early years of her married life a *na-ma* is confined to the house with the challenge of establishing her authority and bringing her young husband to heel, after her children are a little older she is in a position to enjoy some extra-marital relations. These must of course remain clandestine, but it is generally understood that mature women should enjoy such liberties, and I have never heard serious criticism levelled at a woman suspected of having a few lovers. The feeling is "if she does it, she needs it," and "she is old enough to handle the matter and to deal with her husband." Such tolerance applies as long as she behaves discreetly.

The attributes of discretion and moderation are for the Tibetan of greater value than fidelity. The practical and cautious way the D'ing-ri-wa view this matter was aptly summed up in the following statement of a D'ing-ri friend as he explained his policy to me. "I never sleep with (single) girls, they boast too much," he argues, "and soon whatever you have done becomes public. It's dangerous." Then he added, "But

<sup>12</sup>*za-tsang-nyi* or "mate-nest-two" is a frequently used term for a married couple in D'ing-ri.

married women are alright; they are prudent and mindful of their husband as I am of my wife, so they can't talk too much."

One feature that has always struck western observers of Tibetan social life is the egalitarian relationship characteristic of a Tibetan wife and husband. A *na-ma*'s position, although initially weak, gradually strengthens and she earns what might appear to some a dominant place in the household. In the presence of her husband or without him, a D'ing-ri woman is neither timid nor obsequious. Especially after the age of forty, she becomes surprisingly assertive and it is not at all unusual to hear about a man being beaten or locked out by his wife. At such times a woman does not spare the man's honour; she angrily shouts accusations and threats at him which all the neighbours can hear.

The dominance and social status a woman can obtain must be in accordance with other rules of behaviour which demand passivity and compliance at certain times. For example a woman must possess sociability and demeanour. More than a man, a woman has to be mindful of rules and protocol, and of the need to remain composed in public. Whatever her feelings she has to present a good face to outsiders and she must always appear gracious. It would therefore seem that she can take the most liberties only with her husband.

It is interesting that in general social situations much more is expected of a woman than of a man. Complementing this, women, when they are badly behaved, are subject to severe criticism—far more than a man. The male in this society may be thought to be more like an animal, easily pardoned for carelessness, for ignorance and for harsh ways. While men may lose control and be forgiven, women are not given this licence.

### DIVORCE

In D'ing-ri, divorce is not at all uncommon.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, it cannot be said that divorce is either frequent or that it is condoned. When it occurs it usually causes disruption, shame, and sometimes hostility. Reaction varies according to the conditions of the divorce and the rank of the parties concerned. Among the conservative *dr'ong-pa*, villagers and established *tsong-pa* of Gang-gar, every effort is

<sup>13</sup>Tibetan translations of divorce express more general concepts of separation and division (*go-sha-gyab-pa* or *k'a-drül-wa*).

made to avoid a divorce. This is partly to protect the property interests and to uphold the prestige of the families involved. (A divorce, especially if it involves a dispute, implies disharmony and poor leadership in the household unit—two situations which diminish one's prestige.)

Among the *d'ü-ch'ung* and other transient or poor people of D'ing-ri, the situation is different. Marriages are terminated with greater ease and without much disruption or shame. Others simply say—"these are their customs; they are not a stable people; they are not ashamed." Still, all those people I spoke with express regret when a marriage is terminated. It is clearly not a happy occurrence.

It was only with some sense of regret or reluctance that anyone told me about their own experiences of divorce. Even a polyandric unit with four brothers which splits into two groups, each with a separate household and *na-ma*, is a regrettable fission. Divorce here is as serious as it is in monogamy.

There are two critical periods in the development of a marriage during which divorce is most likely to occur.<sup>14</sup> In each period the pattern of divorce is different. The first stage of instability occurs in the early years of marriage before children are born. The second, which usually attacks polyandric units, develops when the roles of brothers sharing a *na-ma* change, with the senior enjoying less prestige and the junior assuming more importance and confidence in the household.

The first kind is not well documented because informants often dismiss these brief early marriages as unimportant, and they go unrecorded in the genealogy. Those who enter later into successful, fruitful marriages focus on these and ignore the first as of no consequence. However, from the accounts of a few informants, it is possible to identify this early crisis period and some of its features. Time and the arrival of children normally bring increased confidence and skill to the *na-ma*. If that does not occur, however, her position can become threatened.

Barrenness in itself is certainly no grounds for divorce; other arrangements can be made, some of which have already been discussed. But it denies a young woman one of the chief means by which she can secure her position and assume a certain power and character. There are other reasons for which a *na-ma* might become unacceptable; there may be some basic incompatibility; the husband may have a mistress

<sup>14</sup>Compare the D'ing-ri pattern with what Murdock (1950, pp 195-200) lists



whom he refuses to give up; the *na-ma* may simply be lonely and incapacitated by her separation from her family; or another woman in the house—her husband's sister for example—may overpower her.

If a *na-ma* manages to expand her position in the house, helped of course by producing children for the unit, and if she is assertive, her status is unshakeable. So much so that a husband, heir to the household but unable to remove his wife, yet determined to end the marriage, must himself leave his own house, forfeiting his property rights and losing both status and prestige. Four cases I recorded of this rather extreme development occurred in polyandric units. There the elder brother (senior husband) resorted to this method of divorce since it was impossible to eject the wife or obtain the support of his younger brother. When an elder brother leaves, the younger assumes the leadership of the household with the wife, retaining a major portion of ancestral land. It may even transpire that a man in desperation leaves his wife alone in his own house, in which case she is free to bring in a new husband of her own choice. The following case from Sa-lha village illustrates still another way in which the connubial unit may divide.

#### *Case Thirty-six*

Sa-lha B'ar-o, a farm in west D'ing-ri, was once the wealthiest of twelve households in Sa-lha village. Some years ago a dispute developed between the two brothers of the house who shared their wife in polyandry; as a result the *na-ma* and the elder brother moved out. Then the younger of the brothers and his widowed father, who remained in the house, took another wife into the unit and shared her in their new polyandric union.

The *na-ma* and elder brother meanwhile demanded a share of the property and it was granted to them. A portion of the land attached to B'ar-o house was marked off and assigned to the couple, who built a new house nearby. This was designated a separate, independent tax unit and marked the emergence of a new household in the village.

This case also involves the kind of strain that develops in the second critical stage of marriage. The crisis seems to arise during a shift in sexual and economic roles among brothers in polyandry. At the point when the younger man starts taking more responsibility, the wife may favour him and in doing so may neglect the elder husband. Such impropriety often results in jealousy, competition, and lack of cooperation among the men. It is understandably difficult for a rejected man

to admit his eclipse. It is even more difficult for him to redress the balance, so that if he cannot resign himself to his new status, or if the *na-ma* does not restore the balance, he may quit the household altogether. Our records of divorce in polyandric units in D'ing-ri show that there are almost as many instances of the elder brother splitting off as there are those in which a younger partner leaves the marriage. Usually the *na-ma's* position is the most unshakeable. She always ends up with somebody.

With regard to settlements in divorces of this kind, the departing spouse has some rights to the property which he has shared. If he has not brought dishonour on the house (as P'ün-tsog and D'ön-dr'ub did in case fourteen), and if he has not committed a crime, he is awarded a share of the land and other property. Since he cannot sell or transfer the land, in order to use it he has to remain in the village. Therefore brothers (younger or older) who split off usually construct a new house near their original one. It is said that such fissure and division of land among separating brothers has been so common throughout D'ing-ri that it is a main cause of the increasing household numbers exhibited in almost every village.

A brother who splits away and sets up a new household locally, usually remains in close touch with the mother household. His children who are there will want to visit him. And the children old enough to choose may want to leave their natal unit and move in with their father. For the duration of his life a unit of this kind will be referred to by the name of the original household. But it will take a new name and eventually be known independently, since economically and jurally the new unit is independent. It is not a satellite of the original, but constitutes a separate entity in accordance with rules of the household laid out in Chapter Five.

Among the D'ing-ri-wa there is a high incidence of extra-marital sex, but this adultery does not invariably pose a threat to connubial stability. Much is made of adultery only when it exceeds a tolerable level; even then it does not necessarily end in divorce. The threats that are made seem to be effective in checking unacceptable behaviour and in restoring good relations. Furthermore, most of the hostility is not directed at the offending spouse, but at his or her lover. They may be attacked verbally or physically by the cuckold spouse, and in extreme cases they may be killed. Homicides of this kind are generally accepted as justifiable self-help, and the authorities, in support of public opinion, will often take no action against a suspected spouse.

The normal procedure is for the spouse to make his suspicions public and to threaten the safety of the exposed lover. That is sufficient to motivate the kindred and *ga-nye* into action designed to extract a public apology from the third party, and to reconcile the aggrieved husband with his now submissive spouse. The lover must publicly apologize and allow himself to be humiliated by the aggrieved husband. Beer and scarves are offered to him as a symbol of goodwill, but sometimes additional compensation in cash or kind must be paid.

No one in this society condones a divorce—it is felt that there has been bad will, and failure to reconcile. As one fellow researcher summed up, “It is not adultery that is bad; what is disliked is the fighting and disharmony associated with it.” So that when a couple are not reconciled, as in the case outlined below, there is bad feeling among the community.

*Case Thirty-seven: Pā-ma, now Known as the Chilli-pepper a-ni*

Everyone remembers Pā-ma’s divorce because of its sadly dramatic course. Now she is a somewhat humbled figure, alone and residing in a nunnery, but when Pā-ma first came to D’ing-ri from a wealthy Zhi-ka-tze family, she enjoyed prestige and pride. She came here as a *na-ma* to the man Gya-tso and they were happily married for more than ten years. Household stability was quickly broken, however, when Pā-ma found her husband had a mistress. Originally she acted in accordance with social etiquette by publicly rebuking her husband and threatening the mistress, Pa-sang. She should have let her *ga-nye* friends do the rest, but Pā-ma was so angry that she did not wait for the conciliatory moves; she invoked the principle of self-help to publicly attack the mistress. She beat the pitiful, alarmed girl and threw chilli-powder in her face. That was Pā-ma’s compensation and there could be no apology afterwards.

This unusual action deeply humiliated the passive husband, but he offered to reconcile with Pā-ma and to resume normal married life with her. She refused, however, and demanded a complete separation. Even her own sister with whom she was residing at the time of the dispute could not persuade the irate woman to compromise. Other friends who tried were also unsuccessful. Pā-ma knew that public opinion was against her, and in her determination to oppose everyone, she sought refuge in a local monastery. She took one of her children with her and intended that they both be initiated into the order. When the *la-ma* advised Pā-ma to wait some time, she

did, but a year did not change her intent. Friends and kinspersons again tried to persuade her to return home, and her husband continued to invite her back. After the year ended Pā-ma undertook the ordination as *rab-j'ang a-ni*, and she has continued to live in the monastery since that time. She is still firm that the stubborn action she took was right, but others in the community maintain that she was wrong; that is why they continue to label her as the chilli-pepper *a-ni*.

This case reminds us of the many roles religion can play in a society like this. It signifies that despite the variety of marriage types, and beyond the influential roles that a woman or man may enjoy in the lay community, individuals sometimes need more. However much mobility exists in a village and however much power people can exert, for some domestic life can remain a very limiting experience. The final two chapters are concerned with 7 per cent of D'ing-ri's population who decide to lead part of or all their lives in a religious setting and think about a state of existence other than what we have been writing in these pages. We will turn to that side of D'ing-ri social history after the following chapter, which explores the village as a social and administrative entity. Living together in D'ing-ri is not just a family affair.

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## Living Together: Cooperation and Administration

Operating in every D'ing-ri locality—nomadic, rural and town—there are values and needs that unite people on some lines and divide them on others. The household into which one is born or married provides for most social and economic needs. And it is in this unit that one's most intensive relationships are bound. However, for economic, social and political purposes each household, and within that each individual, must reach out to others in the locality and beyond. The network of each is multiplex but within the grid there are "sets" (among households or individuals) which have certain characteristics and functions different from each other.

This chapter attends to the wider network of social and economic relations in which people are bound. Starting at the most personal level, I shall describe the informal associations of friendship and neighbourhood that are for the most part operating in the village. Then attention will turn to the formalized associations of village and intervillage relationships that extend into a wider administrative and cultural system. The final part of this chapter will deal only briefly with the formal politico-administrative system of D'ing-ri.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Administration of D'ing-ri largely conforms to the policy of the central Tibetan government, and as such can be understood in terms of other writers' handling of general Tibetan politics: readers should consult Carrasco, 1959; Cassinelli and Ekvall, 1969 and Shakabpa, 1967.

FRIENDSHIPS: *dr'og* AND *ga-nye*

Important friendships develop in youth, emerging either out of individual free choice, as a member of a neighbourhood of children or out of obligation as a member of a household. The first, *dr'og*, is a friend recruited by an individual from among his early playmates. Usually, they are his neighbours, which implies that they may also be members of his kindred. They are unisexual, that is the girls make *dr'og* only with other girls and boys with other youths. The former are called *dr'og-mo*, and the latter, *dr'og-po*.

These friendships are formed about the time of puberty, when one begins to go beyond the household and the sibling group, and when there is a strong tendency for companionship with people of one's own age and inclination. Recruitment of one's *dr'og*-group is open, in that members may be recruited from any economic level, religious sect, or occupational group. However, because of the relative homogeneity of a D'ing-ri village where one is confined in youth, most people are of the same status. Membership in the *dr'og* is confined to four or five individuals and once membership is fixed by common consent, no others are admitted. It becomes a *dr'og-tsog*:<sup>2</sup> a party of permanent friends.

Even though members move away, change their social status (from lay to religious) or die, the group does not accept new members. Older informants recall with great delight and warmth the antics of their *dr'og*-group; adventures of childhood, early sexual encounters, initial trading trips and celebrations are usually first experienced by a man or woman with members of his *dr'og-tsog*.

The tenacity of the *dr'og* bond and the nature of the activities of the *tsog* are a function of its intimacy and special moral system. It is a group that shares secrets, and offers support and defence against any outside pressures. Intimacy and mutual trust are basic features of the friendship and a base on which it operates.

It is in this group that D'ing-ri youths (both boys and girls) acquire much of their early sexual experience. Members provide advice and act to cover and to liaise for each other, since

<sup>2</sup>*tsog* is a general term applying to any permanent group or assembly where all members share a common interest or ideology. The *tse-ch'u tsog* is the assembly of ritual specialists and other devotees who meet on the half moon of each month, which corresponds to the 10th day of the lunar calendar. The communal identity expressed in *tsog* is symbolically represented by the *tsog* offering.

according to Tibetan custom direct invitations or encounters are improper. Whereas a boy may not approach a girl himself, he can send a representative, first to ascertain whether conditions are favourable and then to act as a go-between. The role of spokesperson is taken by the *dr'og*.

I have no knowledge of *dr'og-tzog* being corporate in an economic sense of owning property such as cattle or other chattels. But within each group there is a strong notion of reciprocation and sharing of common property. A common activity of a group of *dr'og* is feasting on ceremonial occasions. At the *p'ang-tsang* summer festival in D'ing-ri, and at the mid-winter celebrations for the new year<sup>3</sup> when villagers gather to eat, to sing and to play, members of a group join together in celebration. They find a private room or tent, and stay there for two or three days cooking, eating and playing together. Sleeping away from home for a night and cooking with friends in a separate place is always a very special treat and it marks one's growing independence from the household unit.

Such gatherings of the *tsog* also provide occasions on which the limits of the group are clearly defined—for outsiders as well as for members. Before a festive occasion members of each group meet to sanction their membership.

Marriage is another occasion in which one's *dr'og* figures prominently. First, the *dr'og* plays a role in the arrangements preceding the wedding, since betrothal and consultation involve a number of one's associates. The advice of a *dr'og* may be solicited in one's decision to accept or reject a partner, and if it is appropriate the *dr'og* may act as initial go-between in a marriage arrangement as well as assist in the wedding ceremony.

Later, as one matures and assumes responsibilities of the household, the role of *dr'og* changes. Women, because they often move to a new village upon marriage, lose the proximity with other members of their *dr'og-tzog*. Still later they become more restricted in their movements by the arrival and demands of children. For men, however, the *dr'og* relationships continue to be viable for much longer. A man needs companions when travelling on business trips to other regions.

<sup>3</sup>The rural Tibetan new year, called *so-nam-pa* (farmer) *lo-sar* (new year), is held on the final days (29th and 30th of the lunar month) of the 11th month throughout D'ing-ri, preceding the national Tibetan new year (*gyäl-po lo-sar*) by a full month.

He needs friends with whom he can collaborate and consult in matters of investment. Sometimes one, two, or the entire membership of *dr'og-po* will combine assets to invest in the purchase of livestock or jewellery.

While the *dr'og* may have further economic and political functions, it is primarily a response to a universal need among members of one sex for intimate and trusted cohorts. As indicated in the preceding chapter, there are a number of social problems that can develop within a tightly bound Tibetan household. And outside the household, there is a lot of hostility and competition. Thus an individual must have some social unit, a supporting group, as an alternative to the household, to explore the wider community. This might account for the importance the D'ing-ri people attach to their *dr'og-tzog*.

The *ga-nye* is also a friendship association in which every member of D'ing-ri society is involved. But it contrasts with the *dr'og* in that *ga-nye* ties are expressed through households bound together into sets which extend into the neighbourhood and village to other communities. They cross age groups and generations.

The Tibetan *ga-nye* was first introduced into the literature on Tibet in a note about mutual-aid societies (B Miller, 1956)<sup>4</sup> but there has been no further research on the subject. As Miller suggests, the *ga-nye* is an institution found throughout Tibet, recognized by the people themselves as being of central importance in their daily life. The *ga-nye* in D'ing-ri is a major social institution. Although informal and sometimes latent, it is active here as (a) an action and a moral system, (b) a system of recruitment and (c) a reciprocation system. It is discussed below in terms of these three features.

#### (a) *The ga-nye as an Action and Moral System*

The *ga-nye* is an emotional bond between two individuals, as well as the name by which the relationship is referred. Both emotional and social aspects are related to a particular moral system prominent in Tibetan society. It is separate from the religious system. Tibetans and other Himalayan Buddhist people regularly refer to behaviour as being desirable or undesirable, shameful or prestigious, without any reference to a Buddhist ethic.<sup>5</sup> There is a moral system operating among a group of *ga-nye* that is different also from what applies in the

<sup>4</sup>Cf B Miller, 1956, pp 157-170.

<sup>5</sup>As described by their chief biographer, C. von Fürer-Haimendorf (1964),



family among members of a household, or in a group of *dr'og*. This morality applies, in particular situations, to other members of one's *ga-nye* set.

Because *ga-nye* are concerned with the application of this moral system among their members in a community, and with the disputes arising out of infringements of that moral code, I call it the *ga-nye* moral system.

Our understanding of the *ga-nye* bond and its operation begins with its etymology. *ga-nye* is a contraction of the two words *ga-po* and *nye-po*—meaning fond and close, respectively.<sup>6</sup> A *ga-nye* then is an associate—not a kinsman—who is near and dear. The relationship is marked by a feeling of mutual respect and a limited and defined intimacy. People explain that the feeling between *ga-nye* is one of whiteness: “We make our hearts white” as one D'ing-ri woman expresses it. It signifies a cleansing, a removal of impurities, and it embodies an idea of justice.

Sharing and exchange of information is a feature of the relationship, but intimacy is not as intense among *ga-nye* as it is in the family or among *dr'og*. Whereas in the latter groups, information and trust is shared within the group and kept from outsiders in the wider community, the information exchanged among *ga-nye* is presented to the outside community. The *ga-nye* is the medium through which a person channels information passing along it; the *ga-nye* bond is specifically concerned with a man or a woman's position in the wider community. (At the same time, of course, those who express this concern define the parameters of the moral-social community.)

The *ga-nye* set acts at times of crisis when a person's position in the community is important. The community recognizes some matters more than others as being of concern to it as a whole. These are the times of crisis in life (*rites de passage*) when a person takes a new status in the community and has the attention of the community focused on her. Besides birth, marriage and death I include (serious) disputes

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the Sherpa people of Nepal subscribe to another moral code in addition to their Buddhist merit system. It should not be thought that Buddhist ideology is so pervasive and complete that other values might not grow and apply along with it.

<sup>6</sup>Some informants claim *ga* derives from *ga-po* (fondness), while others say it comes from *kar-po* (white). Since both these attributes are carried in the *ga-nye* relationship there is no basic contradiction created by the two interpretations.

among the crises in life since disputes also alter a person's social status and prestige.

At the life-crisis times, a man's *ga-nye* are most closely involved with him. Gathering around a member at such a time is a sign of *ga-nye* support for him; that support signifies his social esteem. Life-crisis gatherings are the only occasions when a person and the entire village community can witness the strength of an individual's *ga-nye*, and note is taken of that.

However, *ga-nye* do not just emerge at times of crisis. It is an ongoing relationship of a special nature, and it is the private, intimate exchange of everyday life in a community that gives it a basis on which to emerge and act at times of crisis. *ga-nye* are involved in the intimate and regular exchanges that make a family part of a wider community. They also share minor private crises among each other.

At another level are the legal code, political ideology, religious behaviour, parental, social and economic values that have to be transmitted from the wider community down to the individual household. The *ga-nye* is an important agent in this process. This role is facilitated by the nature of the *ga-nye* moral system. It is first necessary to understand that a *ga-nye* does not act for himself out of love or desire for prestige and power. His actions are part of his moral-social duty as a *ga-nye*. It is based on the assumption that whatever a man's behaviour, it is ultimately the concern of his community and conversely, whatever the values of the community, they must ultimately be passed down to the individual. It is the *ga-nye* who are especially concerned with this transfer between the two spheres, feeding outside responses into a *ga-nye* and suggesting what he should do, or what impression he has given to others. For example if a man insults another, incurring the latter's disfavour, it is his *ga-nye* who will tell him so and suggest how he should behave. Or, if one's *ga-nye* has been maligned in public, it is one's duty to report the matter to him in order that he may take appropriate action.

*ga-nye* are equally important in sanctioning positive behaviour. If the community generally agrees that a person has acted correctly, her *ga-nye* convey this to her even when it is already apparent to the woman from other sources. Or, if a person deserves approval for a particularly pious act—for example the donation of a large sum of money for religious purposes—which she herself cannot announce, *ga-nye* inform the community on her behalf.

A Tibetan person must avoid any public confrontation or emotional

display. Modesty, discretion, face-saving, are all important, highly valued personal and cultural qualities among the D'ing-ri-wa also. Therefore, a person must not boast about herself or her kin; she should not announce plans—where she may have to travel, to celebrate, etc. However, since she has to keep the community informed, she can arrange this by discreetly informing her *ga-nye*, knowing they will convey it to the wider community. She will tell a *ga-nye*, for example, precisely how much she donated to a religious institution or whether or not she approves of a fellow villager's business transaction, or her marriage partner.

This kind of information is not announced at gatherings of *ga-nye* but it is carefully disclosed at the regular and private visits that characterize the ongoing *ga-nye* relationship. Very private matters are kept in the family or within the *dr'og* unit. Others that concern a person's position in the community form part of the reciprocation of information that *ga-nye* engage in. People know what kind of information affects their public image, and it is with this in mind that *ga-nye* discuss their affairs. *ga-nye* are careful not to judge one another overtly. They do not urge or threaten each other, but direct one another's behaviour through discreet suggestion. For example, rather than saying "I think your son should not be courting the daughter of a poor *d'ü-ch'ung*," a *ga-nye* would simply remark: "People say it is a shame your son cannot find a girlfriend of equal standing to the family." Or "people say you did not make an adequate memorial rite for your father," or "so-and-so called you a man of false words." These kinds of statements in effect inform a person of what action to take.

There are certain subjects which, together with a particular style of conversation, are recognized as "*ga-nye* talk." Information reaching a community through *ga-nye* is neither slander nor gossip, but has an element of authority. "*ga-nye* talk" is of a particular quality and contains a sense of purpose or direction that villagers recognize and respect. It derives from a *ga-nye* obligation to "talk" and discover the true facts of a situation. As a result of their pointed inquiries, *ga-nye* are well-informed and their opinions have immediate credibility in the community at such times as they are needed.

When problems arising in a D'ing-ri family cannot be resolved within the household unit or among the kindred, *ga-nye* are notified. First, they are carefully informed of the issue by the disputants, and then they confer with the kinsmen of those concerned to effect in a settlement. They can only do this after making inquiries

and obtaining information about the matter. *ga-nye* discuss the problem with each party of disputants and then decide together on the best course of action.

Disputes most often arise between members of a single household, that is between brothers, between father and son, or between wife and husband. Since the *ga-nye* network extends to all members of a household, disputants have the same *ga-nye*. This cross-cutting nature facilitates the effectiveness of the process of dispute settlement by the *ga-nye*.

The ultimate aim of any arbitration by *ga-nye* is for reconciliation and a minimum of disruption. *ga-nye* therefore press disputants to reconcile.<sup>7</sup> The *ga-nye* proceed by requesting whosoever is considered the errant in a dispute, to apologize and reconcile. They try to talk both parties into a compromise, not only on the basis of what may be reasonable or justifiable, but also according to a principle of honour and shame that dominates the Tibetan moral system. Disputants are reminded of the standing of their household, of what is considered honourable behaviour for people of their age, status, economic class, and so on. Such appeals act to defuse hostility and restore normal relations between people. It is this principle of honour and shame in the community that makes the *ga-nye* set a more effective settlement group than either the kindred or the household.

#### (b) *Rules and Process of Recruitment*

Much of the effectiveness of the *ga-nye* as a community moral system lies in the way it recruits and links its members. First, *ga-nye* are members of one's social community. The social network of a D'ing-ri person is composed of kinsmen, affines, *dr'og*, business associates, administrators and co-villagers. All those one counts as *ga-nye* form a set—it is ego-centered, that is to say any set of *ga-nye* exists as a group only in relation to the individual.<sup>8</sup> Each person has a different set. More correctly speaking, each household has a different set, with each person in a household sharing the same set.

*ga-nye* are acquired by virtue of one's membership in a household. Those rights do not extend to other members of one's kindred or lineage who are not cohabitants. For example, if two brothers do not

<sup>7</sup>Many more details along with cases of *ga-nye* activity in the context of dispute settlement are in my article on social control and reciprocity (Aziz, 1977).

<sup>8</sup>On the sociology of sets and networks, cf Barnes, 1954 and Mayer, 1966.

share the same residence, they will, therefore, not share their *ga-nye* set. Or, if you become a *ga-nye* of one man and his household members, you will not become the *ga-nye* of his brother or father or sister etc., if they are not in the same household. But when you form a bond with one member of a house the tie extends to all members of his house, including his children, his parents and his wife. In this way, *ga-nye* bonds extend across groups and between the sexes.

Usually most of a person's *ga-nye* know each other; they are co-villagers of approximately similar socio-economic status, or business associates in other centres where they have worked. One's set tends to be concentrated in one's place of residence, because that is where the members of the household are interacting most intensively and continuously.

The character of a *ga-nye* bond is rather special. It is not a relative relationship which can vary from one time to another or one *ga-nye* to another. It cannot be strong in some cases and weak in others. There is no concept of a good relationship as opposed to a bad one, and the tie between two adults is not any stronger than one between a youth and an adult. The *ga-nye* must transcend generational difference in order to operate between households the way they do.

While children belong to the *ga-nye* set of their parents, they do not become actively involved in the exchange system of the *ga-nye* until they are adults. About the time when they marry, when D'ing-ri men and women tend to assume more responsibilities in their household, they participate more intensely with *ga-nye* as a general result of sharing the rights and obligations for their household. They exchange information, they point their opinions, they ask for advice and they represent the family at ceremonial presentations.<sup>9</sup>

"Every house has to have a set of these friends," maintain the D'ing-ri-wa. They cannot conceive of an individual or a house being without these essential social ties, since a person without *ga-nye* is alone, without help, without support, and cannot survive. And they point around them to the prosperous, long-settled families who have extensive ties of this kind into the community, contrasting them with the *d'ü-ch'ung* and outcaste who are socially more isolated. Large *ga-nye* sets and economic success seem to go hand-in-hand in D'ing-ri, but no one will say whether one is the cause of the other.

<sup>9</sup>These exchanges are classed as *nga-lag* obligatory payments made at the life-crises ceremonies of Tibetans. For further details cf Aziz, 1977.

These moralistic friendship associations exist in commercial centres as well as in villages, and in both their functions and character seem to be of little difference. Those people who live in one locality and go to another to trade or administer, have *ga-nye* in both. Some of the Gang-gar merchants count their *ga-nye* in Nepal and in the Tibetan cities as indispensable to their economic interests, saying that they cannot dare go to a strange town where they have no *ga-nye*. Although the *ga-nye* can be of valued assistance to a stranger, they do not operate as a substitute for the household when the latter is lacking.<sup>10</sup> So that Tibetans do not form wider, stronger networks in a place away from their home, the bonds are probably more extensive and active within a person's home locale. And it is certainly so for members of large kin groups. That is to say the larger the household, the larger the *ga-nye* set; there is no evidence to suggest that *ga-nye* are a substitute for the household.

(c) *The ga-nye as a Reciprocity System*

Reciprocity is a fundamental feature of the *ga-nye* system. The moral, communicative and presentation aspects make the *ga-nye* work as a moral and action system. The reciprocation is not specific to the *ga-nye* but is a feature of Tibetan society (as observed in D'ing-ri) that pervades so much of their life and their view of the world.

Tibetan root words signifying repayment indicate that reciprocation is a concept and aspect of spiritual relations as well as economic and social ones. As a supernatural phenomenon "return" is expressed by the words *lä* and *län*. As a socio-economic relationship return is expressed as *nga-lag*.

The *karmic* law of Buddhism is itself a principle of reciprocation. Essentially, it is a belief that what accrues to a person materially, physically and mentally, is a return for what he had achieved before. Tibetans, as other Buddhists, believe that a man's retribution is requital for what he himself has expended in this or another lifetime. The term D'ing-ri people commonly use to signify this is *lä*; it may be translated as fate (Buck, 1969, p 667), or simply as return. As I observed its use in various contexts, *lä* is conceived by D'ing-ri-wa as a kind of return payment, something that is received rather than given; it may either be

<sup>10</sup>On this aspect of *ga-nye* relations the D'ing-ri study does not support Miller's (1956) suggestion that *ga-nye* groups are more likely to form in urban areas in the absence of kinship ties.

favourable or unfavourable. An action is not complete until there has been a reaction or a return. This is probably why Tibetans are reluctant to judge people whom they know to harbour ill-will, malice or lustful nature. Bad actions and intentions—even bad attitudes—are believed to evoke an appropriate requital, later if not sooner. *lä* and *nga-lag* both apply to the receipt of something previously set in action. The difference, informants explain, is that *nga-lag* is an economic and social act under man's control while *lä* is directed to the supernatural spheres and can only be approached through a ritual medium.

*nga-lag* is a common feature of many Tibetan relationships. It operates between *dr'og*, between kinspersons and between co-villagers. It is therefore not confined to *ga-nye* relations. However, its place in the *ga-nye* system is central and D'ing-ri-wa usually describe *ga-nye* relationships in terms of carefully balanced reciprocity.<sup>11</sup> On one occasion when I asked a man to identify the guests at his wedding in Yöl-dong, he replied in an imprecise manner, listing a few kinspersons and *dr'og* known to me. When I then asked him whether or not his *ga-nye* had been present, he retorted with some surprise, "Of course, they are *nga-lag*, aren't they?"

*ga-nye* reciprocity is carefully controlled by rules specifying when and how it must be made. For example *nga-lag* from *ga-nye* cannot go into arrears, nor can it be made in a form other than how it was received. To make *nga-lag* is to return a specific favour or item. If you offer *nga-lag* in my harvest, I must assist you in the same manner at your harvest. Like any balanced reciprocity, *nga-lag* has an ongoing character so that even though assistance is equalized by a return payment, the relationship cannot be cancelled.<sup>12</sup>

When a man dies, his reciprocal obligations to his *ga-nye* must be taken over and continued by his widow or children. The transfer of reciprocal rights and obligations to the next generation bind *ga-nye* households over long periods of time, sometimes several generations.

The rules of reciprocity also define the relative size of payments, occasions of transfer and their inheritance. Birth, marriage and death are major occasions in any household and those on which reciprocal

<sup>11</sup>With its carefully balanced reciprocity the *ga-nye* is not the same as other exchange relationships in the D'ing-ri household, in the village and among friends, where reciprocity goes on according to different criteria.

<sup>12</sup>This is the universal principle of reciprocity first elucidated by Mauss, 1966.

exchanges are made. *ga-nye* are obliged to attend the ceremonies associated with these life-crises events, and it is then that they make their *nga-lag* presentation. At all three types of ceremonial gatherings, the payments made are in cash as well as in kind. Some cash is obligatory, but the presentation of beer, tea or grain, and sometimes clothing, is customary. Together the gifts contribute to the cost of the feast, but they are chiefly an expression of goodwill and sharing.

### COOPERATION

No individual or household can survive independently of others in D'ing-ri; thus, cooperation among households is a characteristic feature of social, political and economic life. The term D'ing-ri people use to describe the daily informal cooperation in which they are customarily engaged, is *rog-pa-j'äd-pa*: to help or assist.

First, within each residential unit, occupants form a cooperative. Also within each village, all members (each household constitutes a single member) cooperate together as a unit. Much of the motive for this collaboration is economic.<sup>13</sup> With the agricultural system of rural D'ing-ri demanding concentrated labour over a limited period of time, the only way this labour can be mobilized is on an organized exchange basis among member households.

For ploughing, sowing, fertilizing and harvesting, all those living in a locality pool their labour resources and assist one another on a reciprocal basis. One individual from each household takes part in this pool, working on the fields of a member until it is complete. Then the work gang moves one on to the next member's plots, and so on. After a person has contributed twelve days of labour on other fields, the party may reach his own plot, and then the twelve who he has assisted now work on his land. This kind of labour pool follows the principle of reciprocity which Tibetans call *nga-lag*.

Labour *nga-lag* is calculated on a man-day basis; food for that day is provided for the labourers by the hosting household; everyone begins and stops work together, and they apply themselves as a team. Some villages are highly organized during the peak agricultural season, with everyone operating on a formally structured communal basis, beginning work at the call of an awakening bell, eating at a communal meal and quitting together, with all these breaks signalled by a village bell.

<sup>13</sup>Cf Chapter Five where I have discussed labour shortage in D'ing-ri.



In addition to sharing human labour, members of a single village also share their animals and equipment: *dzo* for ploughing, and baskets and mules for transporting fertilizer. Not every household owns *dzo* and there may be only one set of mules in a hamlet, so these animals are hired out to each household in turn to plough and to carry fertilizer.

The institution of *nga-lag* is thoroughly embedded in the life of these people and everything they do has some element of *nga-lag* in it. As the basis of continuity for so many social relationships, reciprocity is a guiding factor in the social structure. As a labour-organizing technique it is effective and as an ideology it is praiseworthy. "We are not rich families, we cannot employ servants," D'ing-ri villagers explain as they ask me to consider their customs.<sup>14</sup>

#### THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY: ADMINISTRATION AND COOPERATION

The single most important factor defining and guiding the operation of the village as a cooperative unit is its administrative structure—imposed on it by a well-organized bureaucracy centered in Lha-sa and Zhi-ka-tze. The central government divides the territory not into increasingly small administrative units set into one another, but into atoms of villages dispersed in a random fashion all over Tibet. Those households constituting a cluster surrounded by land are a fixed administrative unit, and assigned to a particular landlord designate. It bears no administrative relationship to a neighbouring village which is independently administered.

When people settle in a locality as *dr'ong-pa* they occupy a house attached to a given plot of land which further constitutes a taxable unit. Every *dr'ong-pa* household is a member of a village and as such must contribute additional tax, its share of the village tax. The monk tax, military tax, transport tax and several other labour or service taxes are levied against the village as a unit, and it is left up to its members to decide how to distribute these. Where the compensation is advantageous, such as in the military tax, one household usually secures a monopoly, supplying a soldier from its house generation after generation, thereby retaining the use of the tax-free plot that accrues to the supplier.

<sup>14</sup>An expression of their economic priorities, here a reference to the labour shortage in D'ing-ri.

For their service taxes, wealthier houses send *d'ü-ch'ung* surrogates whom they pay, but the houses who cannot do this have to send one of their members on a rotational basis. The organization of the numerous tax services is an administrative task that is left to the village headman, and he deals directly with the taxing authority, so that the latter has virtually no contact with individual household units.

Theoretically the headmanship of a hamlet rotates among village members, or is assigned according to a popular vote of members. It is not hereditary and there must be a consensus of agreement for an incumbent to retain office. In most villages, however, the same person remains in office for several years consecutively. Or, the headmanship may be shared by general agreement between two or three chief houses in the villages and thereby moves from one to another almost automatically.

Because he is responsible for the tax assessment and payment a headman liaises directly with the outside administrator and can often make certain compromises to his own advantage, or withhold some of his own house-tax.<sup>15</sup> But he is always a member of the hamlet and is answerable to his fellow villagers who can ascertain whether the headman is taking more than he deserves, or if he might be more lenient with them. The villagers hold the power to remove and replace their headman and they have more than once exercised this. (Cf Chapter Five, fn 11.)

There are three types of headmanship in D'ing-ri, so that they vary from one village to another. Several villagers have what is called a *gän-po*; others name a less powerful leader they call a *nä-tän*; and still other villages have more minor officers. A *ser-ky'im gōn-pa* has no headman, but assigns the chief celebrant, called *u-dzä*, on a three-year rotation basis to collect and assign tax payments.

Some *gän-po*, such as those in Kong-tza and Kar-ky'u<sup>16</sup> administer several villages, small units in addition to their own, which are too small to warrant an individual headman, or because the chief administrator does not want a headman. That most villages today have their own *gän-po* is a more democratic system than that which existed some time in the past (19th century), when only five *gän-po* in all of D'ing-ri—each

<sup>15</sup>In addition to his taxable holding, a *gän-po* has access to additional land with no tax obligation during his tenure in office.

<sup>16</sup>Villages under management by Kong-tza *Gän-po* are Nub-lung, Yöl-dong, Ling-shar, Ling-nub, B'ar-tso and Yi-shar, all in the same vicinity. Under Kar-ky'u *Gän-po* come the hamlets of K'um-ch'ung, Drong-ch'ung, Shag-le, J'e-p'ug, Tr'i-ri and D'ing-p'ug, all on the east side of the P'ung river in Zu-tzo.

one with several villages under him—exercised considerably more authority. Of the five original *gän-po* (Kong-tza, Sha-lung, Shi-pe, Ra-ch'u and Yul-ch'ung) only Kong-tza Gän-po continues to hold an unusual amount of authority, and even he has been stripped of some of his former powers in the last ten years.<sup>17</sup> Now about half of D'ing-ri's villages have their own local *gän-po*, each subject to his co-villagers' sanction.

In the same way that each village is internally administered as a single unit, it is also subject to the authority of a specific landlord agency. The D'ing-ri villages do not form segments in a hierarchy of power, but rather, each remains independently administered, each by a different authority which holds rights over it. Apart from the three villages of Tza-kor,<sup>18</sup> (77), Sa-lha (63) and Ra-ch'u (70), which have subjects of two different categories, each is administered by independent agencies. Every other D'ing-ri village constitutes a whole administrative unit, belonging to a landlord authority. Since this pattern is so irregular, the reader is asked to consult the tax table (Appendix IV) which lists twenty-seven D'ing-ri villages, each with its ownership, its administering authority and some particulars of its tax responsibilities.

There are several villages, which while they are designated as government property (as distinct from the holding of a nobleman or that of a religious),<sup>19</sup> do not pay their tax directly to the Lha-sa administration. These taxes are due to a sublease of the government, a government agency such as a monastery, which is authorized to collect the tax instead of receiving it indirectly from the government. It may be a system devised by the government to shortcut the lengthy collection and redistribution system.

For example, the village Te-tung which is government property, is responsible to the government-designated institution of Lo-säl-ling, part of Drä-pung Monastery in Lha-sa. Te-tung Nä-tän (headman) therefore pays the tax to the monastic officers of Lo-säl-ling who come

<sup>17</sup>Kong-tza village lost much of its power after 1950 when the villages won an appeal against its oppression.

<sup>18</sup>The village of Tza-kor for example, has sixty households, ten of which are government-owned while the rest belong to a private estate. Sa-lha and Ra-ch'u villages have each a single household in the group which is the property of a separate authority from the rest; the household in Ra-ch'u is assigned to the Tibetan monarch and the one in Sa-lha to another private lord.

<sup>19</sup>Cf Appendix IV.

here once a year to collect it. As a government subject Te-tung village has also to provide one man as a soldier, and it has to keep one of its members in another monastery, Päl-ding, at D'ing-ri.<sup>20</sup> Te-tung is the only government-owned village sub-leased to Lo-säl-ling; each of the other government hamlets in the area are assigned to others and pay their tax according to particular arrangements made with each. For example, Gön-pa J'ang is subleased to Shel-kar La-dr'ang, nearby Shel-kar, and pays taxes there; Yöl-dong village is subleased to P'el-gyä-ling Monastery (near Nya-nang) which is a branch of the Lha-sa monastic complex of Se-ra. As a government estate, Yöl-dong must supply five men as soldiers to the central government so that in the end it is submitting its tax to several different places. But this is not unusual in D'ing-ri. The government officer living in Gang-gar whose duty it is to collect government taxes and to see that obligations are met by all subjects in the area, actually collects only a small proportion of tax from government subjects. Much more of the produce that subjects submit goes directly into the hands of representatives from the various monastic agents who come to D'ing-ri Gang-gar for that purpose.

It may seem to be an advantage for the D'ing-ri people that they have only to bring their produce to the collector. But in the end the people have still to pay heavy transport duties. They are continually called upon by the Gang-gar governor to report for transport duties. They may not be transporting their own produce to the receiving estate, but they have to transport the produce of others when it passes through this region.

The D'ing-ri people seem to have little feeling towards their taxing authorities. They tolerate the visiting officials and they do what they must, hoping that contact can be kept minimal. We have already pointed out how they cooperate with the help of their headman to minimize the gains of the landlord, and how they perceive the government as a competitor. Without having precise quantitative data on production, income, consumption and tax, it is impossible to ascertain in qualitative terms how much the administrative system encouraged or burdened the development of D'ing-ri. By their own testimony it would seem to have been most unfavourable. Yet, as widely evidenced, D'ing-ri people manage to effect considerable social and economic mobility and all admit that as a whole the area has experienced considerable prosperity.

<sup>20</sup>This is Päl-ding Gön-pa in D'ing-ri; cf Chapter Ten.

How they manage to meet the administrative demands is even more astonishing when we review the development of D'ing-ri's religious system in the following two chapters, which shows that in addition to the monastic units which claim tax from D'ing-ri, there are over fifty local *gōn-pa* voluntarily supported by the D'ing-ri population. Half of these independent *gōn-pa* are *ser-ky'im* which are partially engaged in agricultural production, but the rest are almost totally dependent on voluntary contributions.

Another major issue concerning the administration of D'ing-ri is the absence of direct involvement by the theocratic elements of the society. While it is true that a number of monasteries, as designated by the government, receive tax derived from the D'ing-ri population, this is all that they are. The administrator monks who come to the area to assess and to collect the tax are men who are concerned only with these economic matters. They rarely stay in the rural area and once their economic task is complete, they leave D'ing-ri. Even nearby Shel-kar with many of its monks drawn from D'ing-ri families, has very little direct contact with the rural population and none of the religious functions here at all. Taxes are passed to the Shel-kar administrator monks who stay in Gang-gar town<sup>21</sup> trading, or the tax-payer takes his produce directly to the monastic massif of Shel-kar-ch'ö-de looming over the eastern edge of the D'ing-ri plain.

If the D'ing-ri tax-payers go to that fort-like monastery to deliver their dues, this is the only reason they visit the centre because it too has no religious significance for them. None of the monasteries which are authorized to extract tax from D'ing-ri figure in the religious beliefs and activities of the people. Neither do those institutions play a role in their leadership. That role is filled by the ten D'ing-ri *la-ma*, independent, individualistic priests who share among them the faith and the surplus produce of these 12,000 or more Tibetans and who give D'ing-ri its effective religious character. That is distinct from local administration and cooperative schemes which, for whoever they serve, remain essentially secular in nature.

<sup>21</sup>Cf the discussion of merchants' commercial activities in Chapter Five.

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## D'ing-ri Religious Leadership

What follows is a descriptive treatment of D'ing-ri's religious system. It is not meant to be an inquiry into the substance and meaning of religion. That is a separate inquiry begun long ago by travellers and classical scholars and one to which I have contributed elsewhere. I want in this chapter and the next to complete the overview of D'ing-ri social organization. The discussion here seeks to place religious behaviour in relation to other social systems: the economy, family life, and the history of D'ing-ri. It will show how closely they are intertwined and how the monastic community (the *gōn-pa*) remains largely inseparable from the village.

Religion in D'ing-ri is an outgrowth of the society described in the preceding chapters, a society changing and growing in character, wealth and population. The religious system here is not something imposed from outside by a theocracy or by a god-king. Therefore, as in trade and marriage, the D'ing-ri Tibetan has at his disposal a religious system that offers him a range of life styles and traditions and teachers. There is also room for the individual to build something new and to expand even further.

Certain anthropological models, like the great-little tradition (Tambiah, 1970) and the nibbanic-khammic division (Spiro, 1970)<sup>1</sup> have been proposed by other writers on Buddhist monastic culture. No doubt the

<sup>1</sup>This term was used by Spiro, nibbanic meaning "towards the ideal of enlightenment" and khammic meaning "towards the ideal of merit."

styles and cultural forms we find in D'ing-ri's religious system might be partially explained in either or both of these models. There are enough similarities in this D'ing-ri material to base a study which could compare Tibetan systems with the other Buddhist forms. But it is best not to put D'ing-ri culture into a comparative mould at this point. My aim here is to uncover new facts and open up new dimensions of Buddhist life in D'ing-ri.

While showing the social patterns and economic forces of the system, I intend to throw light on those features of the society which suggest its basically energetic and individualistic nature. If we approach the society with an aim towards appreciating that growth and individualism, we begin to reveal a culture hitherto overlooked. In the case of D'ing-ri (for example) we begin to understand the role of the *tza-wäi la-ma* (or guru), the osmotic nature of the monastery wall and the independent spirit of religious people.

Following the introductory purview, we begin the discussion with histories of the major *gön-pa* in D'ing-ri. These histories are presented in terms of the *la-ma* leaders of each centre. The biographical accounts are then followed by a lengthy discussion of the D'ing-ri *la-ma* as they exemplify the important *tza-wäi la-ma* principle. This will lead us to a brief description of how people are recruited into a religious community.

#### THE PURVIEW

Given a character whose most prominent features are growth, diversity and choice, D'ing-ri's religious system almost precludes any succinct description. The multifarious and flexible system is full of *gön-pa*, religious communities representing the major and minor schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

A colourful assembly of D'ing-ri holy men guide their devoted followers through a number of popular, obscure, new and ancient traditions. There are diviners in D'ing-ri who look like patriarch *la-ma*; others appear to be beggars; some are hardly more than astrologers and even laymen occasionally make successful divinations.

The *yogin* meditating in caves and mountain huts above D'ing-ri include both confirmed ascetics and the pious traders who have left their family and business for a few months to concentrate on their spiritual development. The population of *ch'ö pa* (religious ones) includes many elderly ascetics who have joined the community only after retiring from family and village affairs. They are at first glance barely

distinguishable from the ascetics who, as youths, entered the celibate tradition. Some religious people practice esoteric rituals that have been learnt as a special art from a master.

Both highly specialized and simple practices are taught here. There are libraries and woodblock collections containing texts that range from the most common to the unique. And D'ing-ri geography embraces both the paramount reliquaries of the Buddhist tradition and the locally significant shrines known only among D'ing-ri people.

If we include the twenty-seven *ser-ky'im* communities, the total *gön-pa* (monastery or sanctuary) in D'ing-ri number no less than fifty-four.<sup>2</sup> The twenty-seven centres outside the *ser-ky'im* are almost all celibate in contrast to the village ritual communities. Some of these twenty-seven are specifically *a-nii-gön-pa* (nunnery);<sup>3</sup> others house only celibate men; there are a few with both male and female members.

Two of these celibate centres are very large, with official memberships of three hundred and five hundred respectively. The rest range in size from forty down to only five inhabitants. Because the D'ing-ri *gön-pa* is often headed by a teacher—a *la-ma*—it draws visitors from the countryside throughout the year. The visitors are part of his following, and they vary from one man to another according to his reputation. There are ten such *la-ma*, all men, who emerge as D'ing-ri's 20th century religious leaders.

The *gön-pa* develops around the residence of a great teacher when the most devout of his followers come to live near him. The population of all those devotees combined is considerable—about nine hundred men and women by the middle of this century. These people, like the *ser-ky'im*, are called *ch'ö-pa*, or “the religious ones.” To complete our estimate of the total number of *ch'ö-pa* in D'ing-ri we should add the other eight hundred and fifty persons who practice religion in the *ser-ky'im gön-pa*.<sup>4</sup> These include both men and women. Men, whether or not they are celibate, are known as *dr'a-pa*, the women as *a-ni*.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup>A list of their names appears in Appendix V. Exactly half are *ser-ky'im*; the other half are what one might normally think as monastic.

<sup>3</sup>*a-nii-gön-pa* are also called *mo-gö'i-pa*, such as Chag-ch'u-mo-gön, but not all women's centres are so designated.

<sup>4</sup>This figure of eight hundred and fifty represents about a third of the total *gön-pa* population, since it does not include the non-religious spouse or children.

<sup>5</sup>*dr'a-pa* and *a-ni* are commonly translated as monk and nun respectively, but I avoid these western terms because of their exclusively celibate connota-



In addition to the *gōn-pa* there are a number of significant holy places here which are sites of great religious activity. Lang-kor and Tzib-ri are the two famous places in D'ing-ri. The former is a mountain in west D'ing-ri; the other is a small mountain range on its north-east perimeter. Each of these attracts visitors from throughout the Tibetan Buddhist world and provides the foci for festivals, pilgrimages and offerings. It is from these locales that many D'ing-ri stories, songs and myths, as well as substantial local pride are derived.

The diversity and spread of D'ing-ri's religious system is illustrated in Map 9. Note the distribution of *gōn-pa* in relation to the position of hamlets and the town where the lay population is concentrated. They are away from the hub and on the periphery of the valleys.

But the *gōn-pa* are not far away. Except for Dza-rong Gōn-pa in the far south-east corner, all *gōn-pa* remain close to the inhabited valleys, usually only a one- to two-hour walk. This is important in the interaction that characterizes the role of a *gōn-pa* in society. (This is true for Thai, Burmese and Sinhalese monasteries as well, according to Bunnag, Spiro and Evers.) While it is partly patronized by people from outside the area, the D'ing-ri system is nevertheless a local one, reflecting the needs of its population. Most D'ing-ri-wa are aligned with one or other of these ten D'ing-ri *la-ma*, join one of the twenty-seven celibate *gōn-pa* if they become novices, and employ *ser-ky'im* from the twenty-seven *ser-ky'im gōn-pa* to perform their ritual needs. By far the majority of the over 1,700 *ch'ō-pa* (celibate and *ser-ky'im*) are D'ing-ri people; either they were born here or they came as permanent migrants. D'ing-ri's illustrious *la-ma* meanwhile extended themselves well beyond this geographical unit. Indeed, as we shall see, they have links with other parts of Tibet, with Bhutan and Ladakh, and with parts of Nepal, including Kathmandu.

Fifty-four *gōn-pa*—the largest with a population of five hundred—employing a total of more than 1,700 religious persons, is by any standard a highly developed system. It is particularly significant that this system is relatively new. Most of this proliferation I have outlined and will later detail, is a recent phenomenon. It has burgeoned along with the general socio-economy of D'ing-ri during the 20th century,

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tions. In D'ing-ri *dr'a-pa* applies to all male religious, and *a-ni* to all females. There are specific terms like *ge-long*, *ge-tsiil* and *rab-j'ung* for males, and *rab-j'ung* for females denoting levels of ordination; *ch'ō-mo* for celibate *a-ni*, and *p'ān-tsiin* for the *ser-ky'im* women are frequently heard.

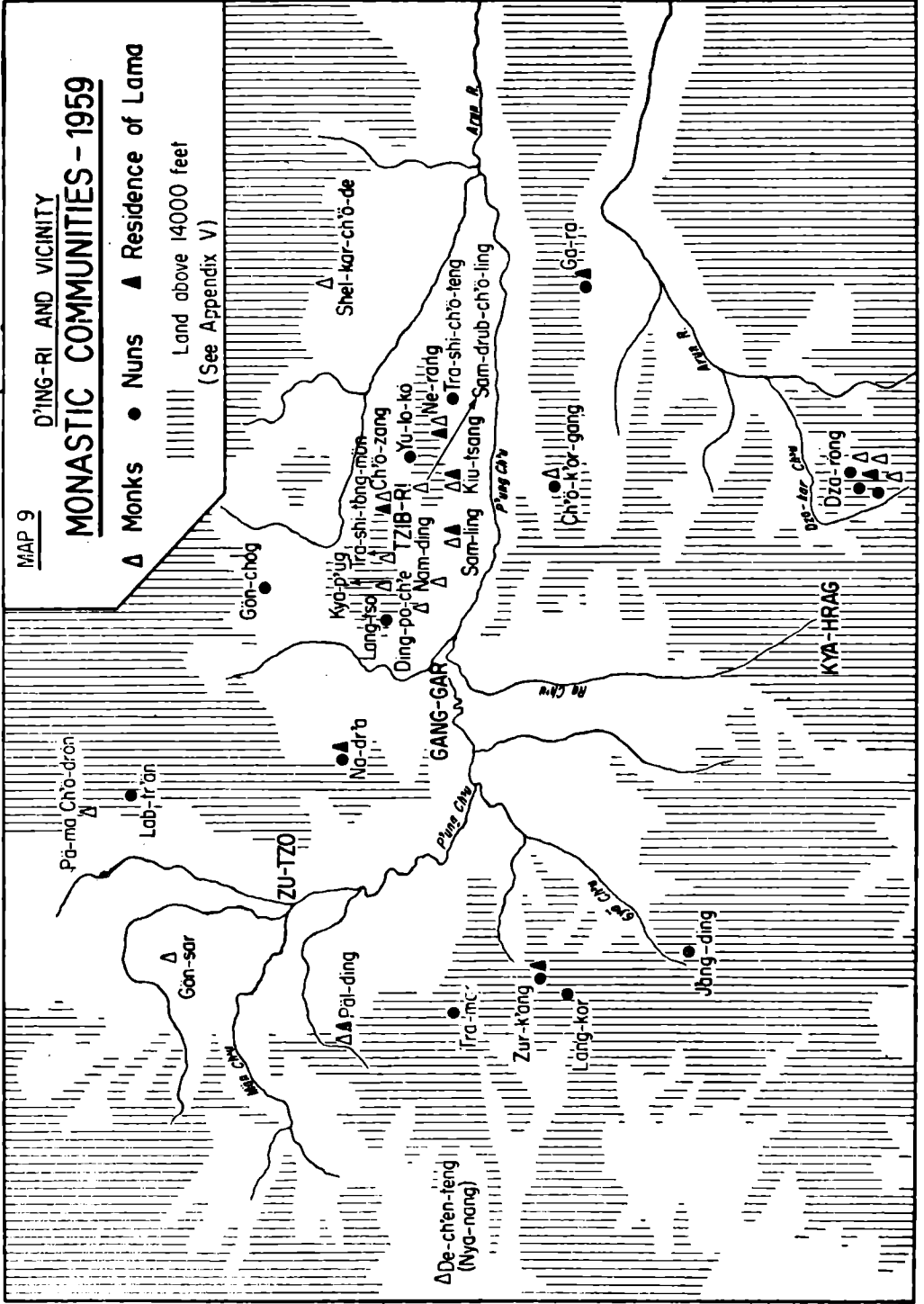
MAP 9

D'ING-RI AND VICINITY

# MONASTIC COMMUNITIES - 1959

▲ Monks ● Nuns ▲ Residence of Lama

||||| Land above 14000 feet  
(See Appendix V)



picking up, after a hiatus of many hundreds of years, only at the end of the last century.

Religious development in recent D'ing-ri history probably owes much of its inspiration and orientation to the earlier period. That goes back to the 11th century, to the time of P'a-d'am-pa Sang-gyā and his partner Ma-chig-lab-kyi-drön-ma, the first among his great disciples. P'a-d'am-pa made D'ing-ri known as the home of the *zhi-j'e* tradition. *chö* tantric practice became even better known and had the effect of heightening D'ing-ri's image as a place of great religious enterprise.<sup>6</sup> It was begun by P'a-d'am-pa and Ma-chig together. Following them come the teacher Gö-tsang-pa and his famous D'ing-ri student Yang-gön-pa who was born at Lha-dong in northern D'ing-ri.<sup>7</sup> It is said that during Yang-gön-pa's lifetime scores of small *gön-pa* grew up around Lha-dong, and Tzib-ri became an active religious centre of Drug-pa Ka-gyü adepts following the lead of Yang-gön-pa. This postdates the emergence of Lang-kor as a focus of religious activity.

Lang-kor became a centre of pilgrimage and meditation during P'a-d'am-pa's life. With the installation there of the Lang-kor-nang-ten relics and the association of P'a-d'am-pa and Mi-la-rä-pa at the nearby G'ung-t'ang, To-la and Ch'u-bar caves, Lang-kor continued through the centuries to draw devotees from all over the Himalayas. We do not know when the Lang-kor temples were built, but neither that site nor those associated with Mi-la-rä-pa have ever been marked as *gön-pa*. They have remained isolated caves, reliquaries and *ch'ö-ten* from that time till the present.<sup>8</sup>

Many more details of that early period will become available when the newly printed Yang-gön-pa biography (cf Tibetan bibliography) is translated. But we have no leads as to the hiatus starting after his death in 1258 and continuing till the end of the last century. The names most prominent in recent history are absent from those early accounts. Today's D'ing-ri people are aware that the contemporary system represents a major change coming after a long period of silence. They know

<sup>6</sup>The widespread *chö* practice began in D'ing-ri and was developed by Ma-chig-drön-ma working together with P'a-d'am-pa. There are numerous *chö* texts; two recently brought to my attention are included in the Tibetan bibliography.

<sup>7</sup>A new printing of the Yang-gön-pa biography found in Bhutan is now available. Cf Tibetan bibliography.

<sup>8</sup>The two large *ch'ö-ten* at Lang-kor are called J'ang-ch'en and J'ang-ch'ung; there is another at Gön-sar in north Zu-tzo and the Mi-la-rä-pa *ch'ö-ten* at Ch'u-bar.

the histories of Yang-gön-pa and P'a-d'am-pa and seem quite certain that the recent developments throughout their valley are separate phenomenon emerging out of modern conditions, and only indirectly related to the achievements of early masters.

The four *ser-ky'im gön-pa* of Lang-kor, Chag-ch'u-mo, Lha-dong and Gön-p'ug, it is agreed, are the oldest in the areas, having survived into the present from the time of Yang-gön-pa. Most people concur that Lang-kor is the oldest because of its association with P'a-d'am-pa Sang-gyä. The rest of the twenty-seven *ser-ky'im* communities are said to be more than a hundred years old. The larger celibate *gön-pa*, with the exception of Sing-dr'ag and Shel-kar, are products of the modern period. Shel-kar was reportedly founded in the 17th century rule of the fifth Dalai La-ma. Even so it doubled in size in the 19th century, part of the new burst of activity that characterizes this modern period. The most dramatic growth is seen in the rise of Dza-rong, which by 1959 counts five hundred members. A brief review of Dza-rong's history explains the stages of that growth and introduces a new section which outlines the emergence of the D'ing-ri *gön-pa* around specific religious teachers.

#### TEN LA-MA AND THE NEW D'ING-RI MONASTERIES

##### *Dza-rong: Nga-wang-ten-dzin-nor-bu and Tr'ül-zhig*

The construction in 1902 of Dza-rong Monastery in D'ing-ri marks the beginning of the modern period of religious history. It is the finest example of institutional growth and the force of independent enterprise. It is also a reflection of the general economic expansion the area has been experiencing.

The isolated rock-strewn slopes where D'ing-ri ends and where the Rong-p'ug glacier of Everest begins to loom high, is the site of this *gön-pa*. There had been—we don't know for how long—a cluster of meditation huts at the Dza-rong site, occupied originally by a community of *a-ni*. Offering the most rigorous conditions for determined ascetics, it was an ideal sanctuary. It is possible that the site had once been near the north-south trade route around the eastern side of Everest. (Many D'ing-ri people report that until a hundred and fifty years ago when a great avalanche blocked the eastern route, this avenue had seen much trade passing between D'ing-ri and Khumbu in Nepal).

Dza-rong, meaning rocky slope, was converted from that unfriendly

retreat into a centre of religious activity by the efforts of one man, Nga-wang-ten-dzin-nor-bu. This *la-ma* was only thirty-six years old when he founded Dza-rong Gön-pa. With exceptional energy the *la-ma* proceeded to expand his personal lodge (*la-dr'ang*) and to construct a temple and houses for an expanding coterie of students, both *dr'a-pa* and *a-ni*. And by 1920 Dza-rong resembled the photograph taken by the explorer Bruce on his stop-over there.<sup>9</sup> At that time it was already composed of the *la-ma's* building and six residential units, three for *dr'a-pa* and three for *a-ni*. (The women's quarters are slightly separate and do not appear in the photograph or the drawing,<sup>10</sup> both reproduced earlier in the book.)

A great *yogin* and one of Dza-rong La-ma's teachers, Tr'ül-zhig visited the *gön-pa* and spent some years there. Before he departed for interior Tibet, it is said the *yogin* promised to return here in his next life. So when the *la-ma* heard of the death of his teacher he anticipated his reincarnation with special interest. Eventually he learnt about the auspicious birth of a child south of Lha-sa and dispatched a message that the boy be brought to Dza-rong. It was soon established that this was the new Tr'ül-zhig.

The Tr'ül-zhig La-ma child who would eventually take over Dza-rong, arrived in D'ing-ri in 1926, at the age of five. His mother, also a disciple of the deceased *yogin*, was a pious woman from a wealthy family. Forty years old and still unmarried, Jam-jang-wang-mo carried the boy, journeying six days from her village to their new home in Dza-rong. Other D'ing-ri *a-ni* who remember that reception recall today the dramatic arrival of the young reincarnate and his mother at the gates of Dza-rong.

Since its establishment, Dza-rong has been an independent monastery enjoying autonomy from outside authority. The growth of its power and influence was the outcome of hard work and good leadership—the efforts of Nga-wang-ten-dzin. It was he who secured the patronage of wealthy D'ing-ri agriculturalists and traders. He also brought Nepali traders, Sherpa from Khumbu and Newar from Kathmandu under his aegis. It is said the industrious *la-ma* made several visits to Khumbu in

<sup>9</sup>This photograph is reproduced in the book by permission of The Royal Geographical Society, London. It first appeared in *The Assault on Mount Everest*, a book that describes Bruce's expedition.

<sup>10</sup>The three *a-nii-gön-pa* included in Dza-rong do not appear in this drawing; they are located outside the walls, to the north (right side of the drawing).

Nepal and established there, as extensions of Dza-rong, the still existing *gön-pa* of Thame, Tengboche, Takshingdu and Chiwong.<sup>11</sup> Leaders like Tsül-tr'im of Takshingdu had become disciples of the Dza-rong-La-ma and they came here for annual *zhab-tän* and for courses of instruction.

Dza-rong has some land in west D'ing-ri, and as a land-holder the *gön-pa* collects taxes from the occupants of hamlets there. But it has no right to recruit *dr'a-pa* by the monk levy permitted to other *gön-pa*. However, Dza-rong receives subsidies that pay the salaries of its twenty-eight monk officers. These payments originate in Lha-sa and are paid by the government through the local Shel-kar administrative office. By all accounts this financial agreement remains minimal and does not constitute a structural bond tying this *gön-pa* into the government monastic structure.

Nga-wang-ten-dzin-nor-bu's main support lay in the allegiance of D'ing-ri people, and in his personal charisma during the forty years he led the *gön-pa*. (Details of that leadership are recorded in his own autobiography.)<sup>12</sup> By the time of his death in 1940 the Dza-rong La-ma enjoyed the patronage of virtually all D'ing-ri's rural population, as well as that of leading Sherpa families in the adjacent regions. In addition to the seven units within the main *gön-pa* at Dza-rong, it includes four Sherpa *gön-pa* in Nepal and five *a-nii-gön-pa* in other parts of D'ing-ri.

Nga-wang-ten-dzin-nor-bu died in D'ing-ri at the age of seventy-four. Before his death he proposed to the government that he retire from the leadership and allow the centre to decline. (*la-ma* often do this as they approach death, when they see their followers have become too dependent on them.) Not unexpectedly, the government did not want to see the community disband or lapse. Dza-rong is on the border of Tibet and Nepal, and earlier scuffles there with Gorkha intruders had warned Lha-sa politicians to secure their positions wherever possible. This is why they subsidized Dza-rong and proposed that a new leader be decided before the *la-ma* retired.

It was agreed that the *la-ma*'s protégé, young Tr'ül-zhig, only nineteen at the time, be the new head, and they appointed him *k'än-po*. It was a smooth and happy takeover without much change in the form or content of the *gön-pa*. Tr'ül-zhig had received his early training here and as a devoted and industrious scholar he had quickly become the chief disciple

<sup>11</sup>Details of the current state of these *gön-pa* are in my report, *Social Change in Two Buddhist Communities of Nepal*, 1972.

<sup>12</sup>See Tibetan bibliography.

of the *la-ma*. By the time of his incumbancy he was already known and well thought of by the D'ing-ri populace. Since his own father had come from nearby P'a-dr'ug, east of D'ing-ri, Tr'ül-zhig enjoyed a kinship tie with the area and even today proudly traces his kinship to the famous Sherpa Ten-dzin who conquered Everest. With him in the *gön-pa* Tr'ül-zhig kept both parents. His mother and grandmother had come here with him. His father too, who had been a *ser-ky'im dr'a-pa*, was ordained by the Dza-rong La-ma (as Tr'ül-zhig's mother had) and moved to the *gön-pa*.

Tr'ül-zhig's own biography is a revealing piece of social history. It follows in some detail, as being the only documentation of his life thus far, and it is also important for its illustration of the ties existing between this *gön-pa* and the rest of society. By tracing the life of this man we see how the *ser-ky'im*, the *a-nii-gön-pa*, the Kathmandu patrons, the Dza-rong officers and the patriarchs in central Tibet are bound into a single culture. The *la-ma* is the pivotal point for their interaction.

Tr'ül-zhig's life is one of single intent and individuality, but it is rich with the diversity of religious experience, beginning with his own parents. His mother, Yum-wang-mo, had always been pious and for that reason shied from marriage as a young woman. She had had no experience with D'ing-ri and Dza-rong before her arrival here, but she had been a devotee of the Tr'ül-zhig *yogin*. It was a *ser-ky'im dr'a-pa* from Par-zhing-ch'ö-lung-tze *gön-pa* east of D'ing-ri, whom she met while he was on pilgrimage through her village. This man was later to become the father of her child reincarnate.

Shortly after he came to Dza-rong, Tr'ül-zhig began his formal education. This was with a lay scion from Gyäl-tze city, studying at that time with the Dza-rong La-ma. At the age of eight the boy was ordained as a *rab-j'ung* and began his study of the liturgy. Just before the *la-ma's* death Tr'ül-zhig was empowered as interim leader and appointed *k'än-po* of Dza-rong by the government. He was hardly nineteen when he assumed the leadership. Shortly thereafter, accompanied by his parents, Tr'ül-zhig went into Tibet as far as Lha-sa.

It was to be a memorable first visit for them all. They received a personal blessing from the infant Dalai La-ma and made offerings at the great J'o-k'ang and some of the holiest Buddhist shrines. The humble Dza-rong party stayed during this visit at the private home of a D'ing-ri-Zhi-ka-tze patron, who had earlier been a benefactor of the Tr'ül-zhig *yogin*. Throughout the visit Tr'ül-zhig continued his studies with

his grammar teacher who had accompanied him from Dza-rong. The young *la-ma* also went to study at Min-dr'öl-ling, a *gön-pa* outside Lha-sa and the seat of the chief Nying-ma patriarch. Tr'ül-zhig loved the place and stayed there for more than a year to prepare for his *ge-long* ordination. From Min-dr'öl-ling Tr'ül-zhig visited his birthplace and from there returned to Lha-sa. When he rejoined the Dza-rong party they all departed for D'ing-ri.

By this time Tr'ül-zhig was twenty-two years old and he felt obliged to assume *de facto* leadership of the *gön-pa*. He also felt more confident to teach now, and despite his youth he managed the community with ease. Both his mother and the growing coterie of elders volunteered advice and guidance the new leader needed. And they soon joined the body of new initiates to become a solid base of devotees. This is important; one's following does not come automatically with the office of leader. Indeed, some observers had expected Dza-rong's popularity to decline with the death of the founder, judging that the young successor would be unable to provide a leadership equal to that of the more experienced man.

In addition to possessing charm, good management sense and wide liturgical knowledge, Tr'ül-zhig was dedicated and energetic. He travelled all over D'ing-ri in response to calls from new patrons. In return for his work and service, they gave him their confidence and it was not long before Tr'ül-zhig's status in D'ing-ri was one of contract and not of inheritance. And Dza-rong continued to grow.

Since it is the laity of D'ing-ri who are the main source of Dza-rong's economic security and new religious recruits, Tr'ül-zhig maintains close contact with them. Moving through D'ing-ri by horse, passing from one village to the next and visiting all the *ser-ky'im gön-pa*, his contact with his constituency is personal and up-to-date. Between teaching and giving initiations at Dza-rong the *la-ma* has also to receive visitors and make divinations. He visits the holy sites of Lang-kor and Tzib-ri as does any other pilgrim, since he too derives strength from the vitality of the tradition. After his father died Tr'ül-zhig made a pilgrimage to Nepal past Lang-kor and Ch'u-bar, arriving in Kathmandu by way of the holy circuit through Kyi-rong, north of Raswa on the Nepal-Tibet border. The *la-ma* and his party stayed in the Nepal valley for three months paying homage at various Buddhist sanctuaries. It was here that he began teaching Newar and other Nepali Buddhists.

When he was twenty-five Tr'ül-zhig returned to Dza-rong and resumed teaching his *ch'ö-pa* there, as well as continued his visits to the



hamlets and branch *gön-pa* through the D'ing-ri valleys. He did not visit the Solu-Khumbu *gön-pa* as had his predecessor, but the Sherpa readily extended their devotion to him and have continued to come to Dza-rong. As in D'ing-ri the Sherpa religious system includes both *ser-ky'im* and celibate *gön-pa*. So the *ch'ö-pa* of both those traditions come to Dza-rong. They are joined by wealthy lay Sherpa who praise Tr'ül-zhig as their *tza-wäi la-ma*.

Tr'ül-zhig has concentrated on maintaining the standard of the Dza-rong complex in D'ing-ri and Solu-Khumbu, rather than on expanding the system. He has also had to manage the Chung-ri-wo-ch'e retreat<sup>13</sup> and the Ch'ö-j'o-ch'ö-ten. His major responsibilities are in teaching and there are constant demands from both laymen and *ch'ö-pa* for spiritual guidance. My recent (1976) article on the nature and function of the reincarnate *la-ma* lists some of the numerous tasks he is called upon to perform. This applies to his work in D'ing-ri as well.

The *la-ma* is assisted by the network of *ser-ky'im* practitioners and does not function independently. Most of them have studied at Dza-rong and then returned to the village ready to attend those who need religious work done. The *la-ma* effects their employment here by prescribing for a client the recitation of a text or the performance of a specific ritual. These are sometimes done in his *gön-pa* but usually the client returns home and calls upon his local *ser-ky'im*. Coordinating these rituals is the *la-ma's* work. As he became more involved in the D'ing-ri scene, Tr'ül-zhig has spent more time here. He has returned to Lha-sa and Min-dr'öl-ling only once, but he stayed at Sam-yä to study for three years.<sup>14</sup>

Till 1959, every year Tr'ül-zhig regularly ordained forty to fifty new *ch'ö-pa*. Most new Sherpa novices return to their country; D'ing-ri ordinands either live with their families for a few more years or they move into one of the Dza-rong *gön-pa*. And those who come here from Sa-kya, J'ang and Zhi-ka-tze are found a place in the Dza-rong complex.

The ascendancy and growth of Dza-rong under Tr'ül-zhig has been

<sup>13</sup>This is a famous pilgrimage site for all Tibetans. It is some distance north of D'ing-ri on the other side of the Tzang-po river. Later, Dza-rong was to lose its hold here.

<sup>14</sup>At Min-dr'öl-ling, Tr'ül-zhig studied with his *tza-wäi la-ma* Dü-jom Rin-po-ch'e and with a man called Drä-pung Ge-she; at Sam-yä his teacher was Rin-ch'en-ter-dzo.

marred by one event—the loss of Chung-ri-wo-ch'e. During the fifties an unpleasant dispute arose over the Ri-wo-ch'e retreat which seems to have left the *gön-pa*'s officers bitter. This has precipitated a cleavage in D'ing-ri society, with the Dza-rong supporters on one side and a group of Zhi-ka-tze-tied people forming the other faction. The dispute focused around the legacy of Ri-wo-ch'e Gön-pa, a famous holy place far north of D'ing-ri on the other side of the Tzang-po river.

Ri-wo-ch'e, an especially sacred site in the Nying-ma tradition, had been the ward of Dza-rong. This had been decreed by a government act many years earlier, but recently Tr'a-shi-lhün-po La-dr'ang, a powerful ecclesiastical estate in Zhi-ka-tze, challenged Dza-rong's right over Ri-wo-ch'e. Dza-rong lost the legal battle that ensued and in 1957 Ri-wo-ch'e became independently administered. Perhaps as a gesture of goodwill or as compensation, Dza-rong thereafter has received additional tax benefits from the central Tibetan government. Monks, recruited by tax through Shel-kar-dzong are now passed on to Dza-rong. Till this time there had been no *dr'a-pa* levied here. The setback over Ri-wo-ch'e was also met by continuing pledges from wealthy local supporters. Even when it was abandoned in the spring of 1959 a new unit was under construction. This is the annexe some 1,500 feet below the main *gön-pa* built to house the most elderly *ch'ö-pa*. Called Zhi-tr'o Lha-k'ang, it is located and arranged so that the most senior *dr'a-pa* might have some relief from the harsh Dza-rong winters. Among the photographs in this book is the reproduction of a sketch which shows what the main *gön-pa* looked like by 1959, according to the Dza-rong artist who drew it for me.

### *Tzib-ri Tr'i-pön La-ma*

Paralleling Dza-rong in extent and reputation is a complex of *gön-pa* at Tzib-ri mountain. These are associated with the great teacher known as Tr'i-pön Pä-ma Ch'ö-gyäl. His biography takes a different path from those above, but it remains consistent with the dynamism and youth of D'ing-ri's religious history.<sup>15</sup> It is also the story of a great modern Tibetan master whose inspiration sustains the Buddhist tradition

<sup>15</sup>This biography was only recently commissioned. It is in the Tibetan language, and although written is not yet (as of 1975) printed. In a recent meeting with its author I obtained many details of the text, some of which are included in the present description.

beyond Tibet and into Bhutan, Nepal, Ladakh and other parts of India. Tr'i-pön had studied in central Tibet and it was only after he earned a national reputation that he came to D'ing-ri.

The Tr'i-pön's association with D'ing-ri began only in 1934, after he arrived here. It was not with an evangelical aim that he came, or in reply to a royal invitation. He came here seeking solitude—to escape from the illusion of his fame, to shy from the demands of attached students. So for the first few years here Tr'i-pön remained in seclusion. In lonely caves and mountain retreats he sustained himself on the barest requirements. And he meditated on the teachings of P'a-d'am-pa and Yang-gön-pa. Venturing from his mountain retreats Tr'i-pön pilgrimaged west to Za-p'u-lung and La-ch'i, Ch'u-bar and Kyi-rong, along the shimmering belt of peaks where the great masters before him had meditated. Eventually Tr'i-pön acknowledged his determined students who had pursued him to all these retreats. He gave up his self-imposed exile and returned to Tzib-ri in D'ing-ri to build a teaching centre. That happened in about 1940.

In his determination to minimize management and exclude all but the most devout, Tr'i-pön carefully designed a decentralized network of sanctuaries over the Tzib-ri range and demanded his carefully selected followers to lead a simple, ascetic life—after his own. Although he could have drawn unlimited funds from his urban devotees in the Tibetan cities to construct the most elegant *gön-pa* and shrines, Tr'i-pön declined and kept his retreats austere and modest. He constructed eleven centres in all; eight for *dr'a-pa* and three for his female devotees. None has more than thirteen members.<sup>16</sup> By the end of the nineteen fifties, his *gön-pa* population numbered a hundred and nineteen. It could have been much higher but the *la-ma* permitted only the most dedicated and disciplined of his followers to remain near him. Many more of his initiates returned from Tzib-ri to their homes in other parts of Tibet.

We do not know the size of his lay following, but it is said to exceed

<sup>16</sup>The eight units for monks are:

Kya-p'ug	Nya-nang-de-ch'en-tg (possibly located in Nya-nang region)
Tra-shi-t'ong-mön	Kiu-tsang (Tr'i-pön's place)
Ding-po-ch'e	Sam-ling (Sing-dr'ag's place)
Sam-drub-ch'ö-ling	Ne-rang

The three *a-mii-gön-pa* are Yu-lo-kö, Tra-shi-ch'ö-teng and Lang-tso. Tsurpu is another unit at Tzib-ri, which may be part of this complex.

that of Dza-rong La-ma. Tr'i-pön had already many students before he came to D'ing-ri, and after he moved here many D'ing-ri people became his students—they were mainly from Gang-gar town. Since Tr'i-pön became the teacher of other *la-ma*, each with his own following, his devotees multiplied as those *la-ma*'s disciples joined.

It was while he was at Tzib-ri that Tr'i-pön's reputation spread to Nepal—to Kathmandu—as well as among the Sherpa of Solu and Khumbu. It was at the invitation of his Newar pupils that he visited Kathmandu, and the single photograph we have of Tr'i-pön was taken there.

The only extravagance Pā-ma Ch'ö-gyäl of Tzib-ri allowed himself was a fine library. It was for this that he solicited and welcomed gifts from patrons. The library he built, called Ne-rang Bar-k'ang, is valuable and unique. It houses woodblocks of a set of selected texts for an anthology of Buddhism which Tr'i-pön himself compiled.<sup>17</sup> It is said there are over 10,000 blocks in the collection; some have been carved at D'ing-ri but many were brought from central Tibet. Prints of texts in this collection were produced for distribution throughout the country. In selecting his anthology, Tr'i-pön drew from a wide area and brought rare manuscripts from Bhutan, Sikkim, Ladakh and other parts of Tibet, for carving and printing.

When Tr'i-pön Pā-ma died in 1958 at his own retreat, Kiu-tsang Tzib-ri, he was eighty-one and it is said he passed on in a state of bliss. His chief disciple Jam-jang-dr'ag-pa became the new teacher at Tzib-ri *gön-pa*, continuing the ascetic principles of his master.<sup>18</sup>

### *Tzib-ri Sing-dr'ag La-ma*

Even before Tr'i-pön and his followers arrived at Tzib-ri, the mountain had already become the home of a new generation of D'ing-ri spiritual leaders. Emerging from a hiatus of abandon and quiet, Tzib-ri

<sup>17</sup>I learnt about this through personal communication with E G Smith who is reassembling that anthology. The collection is called Trib-ri Par-ma.

<sup>18</sup>In 1960 when many D'ing-ri people moved to Nepal, the devotees of Tr'i-pön La-ma from Tzib-ri gathered around Jam-jang-dr'ag-pa at a new *gön-pa* in Solu. When this teacher died in 1975 the disciples found themselves leaderless once more. Many dispersed over Nepal but a group has joined the present Sing-dr'ag La-ma, a former student of Tr'i-pön. Meanwhile Tr'i-pön himself has reincarnated, in Ladakh in 1961, a child of Tibetan parentage. Since he is still a boy he is not yet teaching, but is undergoing training with one of his mother's kinsmen and with his father, a *ngag-pa la-ma*.

once again became a source of inspiration for teachers as well as for devotees. One of the first of these was the man known as Sing-dr'ag La-ma.

The first Sing-dr'ag had come here from K'am in the middle of the last century. Building his *gön-pa* near the Tzib-ri caves, he began to teach the D'ing-ri people. A-ni Ch'ö-dron (Aziz, 1976) recalls that her father had been an artist employed to paint this *gön-pa* interior, thus enabling us to date the founding at around 1870. But the new *gön-pa* was not completed before Sing-dr'ag left D'ing-ri for a visit to Kyi-rong in the western border region beyond Nya-nang. Invited by wealthy patrons there, the *la-ma* intended his visit to be brief, but he stayed on for some years and eventually died there. A short time later he was reincarnated in D'ing-ri according to his own prophesy.

It is said that an augury was made upon his departure from D'ing-ri for Kyi-rong at the place called Lha-dong. He had stopped at the house of benefactors and on taking leave to proceed west, the *la-ma* reportedly forgot his horse lash and came back to pick it up saying, "Oh, I must return to this place."

The second Sing-dr'ag La-ma is one of the few religious leaders born here. He is the son of a B'ar-tso woman and a man who had been a *ser-ky'im* in Lha-dong.

He had long hair like a *yogin* and an unusually tall stature which people still recall today. Although a worthy meditation master, this *la-ma* is remembered more for the eloquent public lectures he frequently delivered on the slopes of Tzib-ri. D'ing-ri villagers were joined by visiting pilgrims outside Sing-dr'ag Gön-pa in Tzib-ri, to hear those lectures and to receive *wang* (empowerment) from the teacher. But these assemblies were short-lived, for the *la-ma* died in D'ing-ri in 1949 before he reached the age of forty-four. Before passing on to be reincarnated once again, this teacher went on pilgrimage to Kathmandu. The journey is recalled with sadness because, although the *la-ma* completed the pilgrimage and returned to Tzib-ri, five out of his party of twelve from D'ing-ri died in Nepal from a mysterious disease.<sup>19</sup>

The present Sing-dr'ag, third in the line, was also born in D'ing-ri and he is matrilaterally related to his immediate predecessor.

<sup>19</sup>The biography of this Sing-dr'ag La-ma was written in 1975 and may soon be available in print. I am told an earlier, more comprehensive one written in Tibet was lost there.

During the interregnum that invariably follows the death of a *la-ma*, his followers join another. This exchange took place between Sing-dr'ag devotees who became students of the Tr'i-pön. A similar shift occurred after the death of the Dza-rong La-ma.

*Na-dr'a La-ma of Zu-tzo*

Na-dr'a La-ma is another D'ing-ri teacher. He shares some of the experience of the others and yet his story is also one of individual growth and achievement. Like others he came to D'ing-ri from outside, from distant K'am. In his case it was the Dza-rong La-ma who attracted him to D'ing-ri and he came directly to Dza-rong to study with his teacher. While at the *gön-pa* he became a celibate *ge-long*, but was soon to fall in love with an *a-ni* there, a woman from Nya-nang who had also come to study with the great *la-ma*. They decided to marry and had to therefore leave the *gön-pa*. But Na-dr'a's devotion and religious zeal did not wane as it sometimes does with apostates. From a small group of devotees who invited him to come to their village to teach, the young preceptor developed a solid following in western D'ing-ri.

After a period of meditation at Lang-kor and Ten-dzin-p'ug cave, he returned the devotion of his patrons and began teaching them more earnestly. He first went to the hamlet of Tsa-da and from there, responding to another invitation, he visited Tr'ag-tze village. His wife remained with him and by now a group of *a-ni* had gathered around him. So he built a *gön-pa* for them above the village. Its name is Chag-ch'u-mo. It was during his four years at this small *gön-pa* that Na-dr'a became recognized as a teacher of exceptional ability and he became popular in the populated region of D'ing-ri Zu-tzo. In 1943 he responded to this by moving deeper north into Zu-tzo and eventually built his new *gön-pa* at the place known as Na-dr'a. Even though his reputation continued to grow, Na-dr'a *Gön-pa* has remained modest, with only fifteen *a-ni*.<sup>20</sup> It is significant that this *la-ma* became popular after 1940, following the death of the Dza-rong La-ma. Na-dr'a, like other modern teachers, took up the slack caused by the great *la-ma*'s absence.

Na-dr'a La-ma, as he is known, now made several visits to Nepal,

<sup>20</sup>A score or so of Na-dr'a disciples live separately at a small *gön-pa* north of Zu-tzo. It is called Pā-ma Ch'ö-drön *Gön-pa* and is marked on Map 9 at an approximate location. Na-dr'a La-ma was sixty-three when he died in 1958.

particularly to Kathmandu. It was his wife who introduced him into that community. As a Kazara, the daughter of a Newar trader in Nya-nang and a Tibetan mother, she was part of the trading community of Buddhists. It was really her brother, a man known as Ge-long Katanga, who worked closely with the *la-ma* and greatly facilitated his Nepal connection. The Nepali *ge-long* had earlier been a successful trader in Kathmandu and Nya-nang. He left that to study religion more seriously and to work with Na-dr'a La-ma as his interpreter. Katanga introduced Na-dr'a to many Newar and Tamang who accepted him as their *la-ma*.

By a consensus of opinion the five *la-ma* outlined above are considered major religious leaders in this century. Each heads a *gön-pa* and constituency of followers within D'ing-ri. That constituency includes ordinands who often live in the *gön-pa* with him or in a branch *gön-pa*, and his lay devotees who come for advice and instruction. Below is a brief account of five other D'ing-ri *la-ma*, each with a small constituency. There is general agreement that they are minor figures compared to the other *la-ma*, but they nevertheless constitute part of the total system.

#### *Na-lum, Pal-ding, Zur-k'ang, Ch'ö-zang and Ga-ra La-ma*

Na-lum, Päl-ding and Zur-k'ang are all three *ngag-pa la-ma*. They are married, and through their *dung-gyü* (male descent) transfer spiritual power which they are believed to have inherited. Each is engaged in religious teaching in D'ing-ri and is listed by some members of the population as a wise counsellor. The Na-lum and Zur-k'ang La-ma both head a *gön-pa*. Around Na-lum is a small community of *ser-ky'im* operating much like any other *ser-ky'im*. They work independent of the *la-ma*, who receives visitors and dispenses advice from a separate residence. The Zur-k'ang La-ma also works independently, although he too lives in the midst of a community of *ch'ö-pa*.

The place known as Zur-k'ang Gön-pa has about twenty *a-ni* residing in community. They are not ordinands of Zur-k'ang, but of Dza-rong La-ma, and their community is considered a branch of the big monastery. Informants skip over the present Zur-k'ang incumbent when discussing the lineage to recall the first Zur-k'ang, who, they say, was one of the original disciples of P'a-d' am-pa Sang-gyä at Lang-kor. It is because of that original tie that the present *la-ma* is chief custodian of the Lang-kor relics.

These two *la-ma* and Päl-ding all live in that very populated part of

D'ing-ri between Gang-gar and Lang-kor on the way to Zu-tzo. It is probably because of their proximity that local people frequently consult them, but they are said to do so on minor issues when there is some urgency. Few people name any of them as their heart *la-ma*, but they are nevertheless respected and frequently consulted.

Of the last three incumbents of each of these lineages, Päl-ding is most often remembered. He is described as a compassionate man, well-trained and with outstanding liturgical knowledge. People frequently express regret that the *la-ma*'s promising son did not exhibit the same qualities. This reminds us of the individuality of each *la-ma*, even those who inherit their role. Among *ngag-pa* and other *la-ma* each generation must make its own way through training, experience, personal achievement and concern. The constituency of one does not automatically shift to his successor. Each leader in turn must prove his ability as a teacher. This is a feature of the *tza-wüi la-ma* principle, a central feature to be explored in detail, later in the chapter.

Ch'ö-zang and Ga-ra La-ma are both linked to the large *gön-pa* east of D'ing-ri—Shel-kar Ch'ö. Ga-ra La-ma is the most recent D'ing-ri *la-ma* to emerge. His history is unusual in that he is a local person whose constituency is largely composed of his own kindred and neighbours. His home and Ga-ra Gön-pa are not in D'ing-ri proper but in nearby P'a-dr'ug. A brief account of his life is included here because he is well known in D'ing-ri and embraces some Gang-gar traders as his devotees.

The son of a trader east of D'ing-ri, this man was sent to Shel-kar Gön-pa and remained there, studying most of his life. When he was about fifty, he left the *gön-pa* to live in a quiet retreat near his home. By this time, he had become known locally as a sincere and accomplished scholar, a man admired for his personal example of the *dharma*. People thus approached him for instruction, to share with them his insight and learning. At first he reluctantly gave some instruction; gradually huts were built around his home. This cluster of students, many his own kinswomen, became Ga-ra Gön-pa, and by 1959 it numbered twenty members.<sup>21</sup>

As far as we know, this *gön-pa* is unattached to Shel-kar. Although

<sup>21</sup>The Ga-ra La-ma re-established his *gön-pa* in Nepal in 1963 with the students who had left D'ing-ri with him. Many new students, Sherpa and Tibetan migrants in Nepal joined him. He died in 1969, and his reincarnation, which appeared shortly thereafter, is described in *Reincarnation Reconsidered* (Aziz, 1976).



the *la-ma* had trained in the Ge-lug tradition that is exclusive to Shel-kar, people hesitate to assign to Ga-ra La-ma and his *gön-pa* any particular sectarian label. It is also most certain that Ga-ra and Shel-kar were economically and structurally quite separate. This autonomy at Ga-ra is not shared by Ch'ö-zang La-ma and his *gön-pa*. Their relation to Shel-kar is far closer.

Ch'ö-zang Gön-pa was built by Shel-kar Monastery as a private residence for one of its leaders who was recognized as a reincarnation of a revered Shel-kar monk. The *la-ma*, known as Tzib-ri Ch'ö-zang, lives at the modest sanctuary on the north side of Tzib-ri hill with his tutors and servants. The *gön-pa* stands across a wide river valley directly opposite the parent *gön-pa*, which sits upon another peak like a forbidding fort. The *la-ma* and coterie, composed by some of his own kinsmen, have little to do with D'ing-ri people but have regular contact with their fellow Shel-kar monks. Ch'ö-zang La-ma's main sphere of influence was neither in Shel-kar's administrative ranks nor among D'ing-ri laymen. Oddly enough, he seems to have made his strongest impression some distance outside D'ing-ri, west, in a Tibetan-speaking region of Nepal. Ch'ö-zang of Tzib-ri left D'ing-ri to visit and to teach in Nepal on the invitation of two wealthy families from the region of Nubri and Tsum. D'ing-ri informants say that when his reputation here grew slightly, it was more as a result of his work in Nepal, than a local achievement. It may well be Ch'ö-zang La-ma who is remembered in an eye-opening account of Nubri and Tsum that has appeared only recently (Aris, 1975).

The Ch'ö-zang La-ma did not stay in Nepal, but returned to Tzib-ri and died there in 1957 or 1958. His photograph, reproduced in another part of this book, was taken during a visit he made to Nepal.

The *la-ma* biographies described in the preceding section are personal illustrations of the individualistic growth of D'ing-ri religion over the last century. They are important as biographies, and in their illustrations of individual pursuit. They show the possibilities for individuality and variation in the religious system. The growth of these teachers indicates the ability of the economy to accommodate them and their followers. It also signifies their charismatic powers to lead and attract certain people, each one drawing a following of his own, and each man establishing a centre very much an extension of himself.

These *la-ma* are the focus of much religious belief and practice in the region. Their centrality is embodied in the philosophy of the *Bodhi-sattva*, and in a principle of bonding devotee with teacher. This *tza-*

*wäi*) *la-ma* bond is a basic manifestation of the *Bodhisattva* ideal, and is the subject of the next section.

*The tza-wäi La-ma*

“Root *la-ma*” is the usual translation of this phrase. But it lacks the personal devotional feeling I observed it to have for each D'ing-ri woman and man. I therefore suggest the term “heart *la-ma*,” carrying a sense of endearment that is so important to the relationship.

Every pious D'ing-ri adult has a heart *la-ma*. This is not particular to D'ing-ri or to Buddhism, but stems from much earlier Hindu origins where it is referred to as the *guru-chela* bond. The following passage, written by a keen first-hand observer of Tibetan culture, M Pallis (1939, p 274), holds much relevance for our discussion.

Although reverence for the person of the teacher runs through the web of tradition like a thread, it is not expected of the pupil that he shall blind himself to the fact of human deficiencies in his master's life. His private faults are not supposed to impair the authority of his teaching for the disciple, or to diminish the latter's obedience and devotion to the master. It is however bad form for the latter to speak disparagingly of his master to others. Whatever he may notice he must continue to treat him with the respect due to an inspired guide. In this matter the wording of the book is emphatic and allows no loophole.

The master-pupil relationship in a regular tradition is something far transcending the actual personalities concerned. The chain is more important than the single link. If some of the links are made of baser metal, it matters little provided that they hold. It must not be forgotten that the teaching is not presented in the guise of a dogma to be accepted on faith as might occur in a doctrine taking on the special 'religious' form; here the actual realization of the doctrine by the pupil is, for him, the ultimate authority. A doctrine is handed down through the personal teacher, the Root-lama, as he is called: but Knowledge springs into being within the pupil himself.

Pallis' observations are extremely pertinent to our understanding of Tibetan Buddhism in general and of D'ing-ri religious culture in particular. The attitude of most D'ing-ri people to their *tza-wäi la-ma* is very much as Pallis describes. Their devotion to their *la-ma*

is frequently exhibited in their conversation, in work, in deed, and through rituals. An adherent expresses his religious awareness in the degree of interaction with a *la-ma*. First one must have a *la-ma* to receive teachings, then one proceeds to develop one's spiritual attributes under the *la-ma*'s guidance.

Praise of one's teacher itself constitutes a major part of religious expression, and the commitment and enthusiasm of D'ing-ri devotees to their *la-ma* is one of the reasons why we have been able to gather so much biographical data on religious leaders. Each disciple's account is usually in personal terms and always glowing with praise. If he sees deficiencies in his *la-ma*, then the basis for the transfer of teachings is dissolved, so that a student must show faith and accept the personal idiosyncracies in whoever he chooses as his guide. Once a devotee gets to know his *la-ma*, he seems to take much personal delight in recounting intimate details of the master's life. (The stereotyped, revealing and humorous results of this for the anthropologist are detailed in a fieldwork article, *Views From The Monastery Kitchen*, Aziz, 1976.)

Homage to the *tza-wäi la-ma* is a cultural idiom which finds elaborate expression in the autobiography and biography, so common a form of religious literature in Tibet. Many of the major translated sources for our studies in Tibetan religion and culture are biographies of *la-ma*: Mi-la-rä-pa, Gom-po-pa, four La-ma of Dolpo, Buston and Tzong-k'a-pa.

On the D'ing-ri *la-ma*, three major works, one on Nga-wang-ten-dzin-nor-bu of Dza-rong, one on Yang-gön-pa and one on the famous woodcarver are now available in Tibetan (cf Tibetan bibliography). Two new D'ing-ri biographies, one of Tr'i-pön and the other of Sing-dr'ag, recently commissioned, are now in preparation. It is considered meritorious for a devotee to commission the biography of his *tza-wäi la-ma*, to pay for its transfer to woodblocks, or to arrange its reproduction in book form.

Eulogy of the *la-ma* finds further expression in liturgical idioms. The *la-ma zhab-tän* and the *d'ü-ch'en* are two common rituals performed for a *la-ma* by his devotees. A *zhab-tän* is a prayer for the good health and long life of any individual but is frequently done for a *la-ma*. The *d'ü-ch'en* is a homage exclusively for the *la-ma*, in the form of a memorial rite once a year. Each *d'ü-ch'en* has its own text and date of performance. I observed one where only a dozen *ch'ö-pa* were present. The man who had died had five years earlier been a *dr'a-pa* with a modest following, and it was they who now gathered to

perform the *d'ü-ch'en*.

One of the most thrilling and unusual gatherings I ever witnessed among the Tibetans is the Tr'ül-zhig La-ma *zhäb-tän* held annually at Dza-rong after the K'än-po's succession there. It is a grand affair in which the incumbent is ceremoniously reinstalled. He receives offerings from his ordinands, who come from all over D'ing-ri once a year to join in the day-long prayer and feast. I personally found the last part, called the *tsog-lu*, the most interesting because of its utterly humorous content. At this time the *lha-k'ang*, crowded with the feasted assembly and presided over by the *la-ma*, becomes a theatre stage for the vocal offerings of the *tsog-lu*. Here individual *dr'a-pa* and *a-ni* recite clever and often hilarious parodies, offerings to the *la-ma* they have composed themselves. These skits test the wit and inventiveness of their performers and set the assembly into fits of laughter. Some of the funniest presentations are by *ga-ch'ö*, initiates who bring to the *gön-pa* a wide range of experience and knowledge of lay culture. They base their compositions on well-known lay songs and dances, substituting the original words with new sacred texts appropriate to this occasion. The combination of the sacred and profane, if cleverly done, is often hilarious, and everyone including the *la-ma* look forward to see what new turn religious expression will take with each year's compositions.

The Tr'ül-zhig *zhäb-tän* is now combined with the Dza-rong *d'ü-ch'en*, the memorial for Nga-wang-ten-dzin-nor-bu, in the first month of the Tibetan year. When the Great La-ma was living, his *zhäb-tän* marked the few occasions when almost the entire membership of Dza-rong is assembled here. *dr'a-pa* and *a-ni* from the branch *gön-pa* around Ding-ri come to the centre and they are joined by the *la-ma*'s initiates from the Solu and Khumbu monasteries.

Every *la-ma* has a *d'ü-ch'en* sponsored for him by his chief devotee and successor in the lineage. The Dza-rong La-ma sponsored the Tr'ül-zhig *yogin d'ü-ch'en* and now Tr'ül-zhig sponsors the Dza-rong La-ma *d'ü-ch'en*. In cases where there is no direct, personal link (Shel-kar and P'a-d'am-pa), the *d'ü-ch'en* becomes an annual community festival. At Shel-kar there is the Shel-kar Dzong *d'ü-ch'en* held at the end of the twelfth (final) month. P'a-d'am-pa Sang-gyä *d'ü-ch'en* takes place at Lang-kor every fifteenth (full moon) of the sixth month. It is performed by many D'ing-ri *ch'ö-pa* who are joined by lay pilgrims during the two- to three-day celebration. Other *d'ü-ch'en* celebrated throughout Tibet in honour of national religious heroes are several for the Buddha Sakyamuni: *ch'ö-d'ü* is at the full moon of the first

month, *sa-ga-da-wa* is celebrated on the full moon of the fourth month and *lha-b'ab-d'ü-ch'en* is on the twenty-second day of the ninth lunar month.

How does one get a *tza-wäi la-ma*? Well, one has first to adopt the attitudes Pallis writes about; and that comes after a personal and independent desire for a religious teacher. This happens when one reaches a degree of religious desire or consciousness.

Within the framework of class differences towards religion, motivation depends very much on personal temperament and experience. It often comes after one is struck with grief and fear about one's own death. Some people decide after a personal encounter with a *la-ma* whom they found profoundly inspiring. There are others who keep moving, taking teachings from several *la-ma*. Some people go through a long period of philosophical inquiry and experience with many *la-ma* before they come across one whose temperament is right for them. Many D'ing-ri people adopt the *la-ma* of their parents without much forethought. In each case it is a serious step and involves a major commitment. A few people are able to make this decision when young, but most do so as adults after they have been able to consider the possibilities. The choice is always considered a personal one and its efficacy lies in personal devotion to the dedicated guide. It is enjoined slowly and with care, for it must not be broken.

I always like to listen to D'ing-ri friends talk about their heart *la-ma*. Often I have listened to a devotee without knowing anything about the *la-ma* prior to this, and I am invariably moved to believe that it is an omnipotent king who is being described. It is impossible to gauge from a disciple's account the relative status of a *la-ma*, since his description is always in the most laudatory and superlative terms. It was only after I talked to hundreds of devotees and knew the history of each *la-ma* that I was able to arrive at a consensus of the relative strength of each *la-ma* in D'ing-ri. But I have never tried to rank them hierarchically.

#### RECRUITING THE DISCIPLES

It is impossible—for the reasons Pallis suggests—for a devotee to recognize any personal deficiencies in the *la-ma* or to speak disparagingly of his teacher. However, the disciple of one *la-ma* can and frequently does criticize other *la-ma*. A certain recognition of personal traits, good and bad, is necessary in effecting one's choice of *la-ma*. As we see there

are ten major religious figures in D'ing-ri from whom to choose. Each *la-ma* has a different character and style. Surrounding each are stories of his past achievements and present powers which are all taken into account when a prospective disciple is making his choice.

Of all the numerous factors that affect a person's choice of teacher, sect is certainly not one. It has never been mentioned by informants in discussing their decision about a *la-ma*. Most people do not know the theoretical differences between one *la-ma*'s teachings and that of another, and these are not issues used by teachers either in recruiting their disciples or in dispensing spiritual guidance. When a person joins a *gön-pa* it is as an adherent of the *la-ma*, and his membership is based on his status as a student of the latter. It is this orientation that results in the non-sectarian nature of D'ing-ri society.

I am aware that other writers on Tibetan religion have tended to stress the role of its sectarian differences. Their accounts give the picture of a religious culture that greatly contrasts with what I have found in D'ing-ri. Of course, those historians have studied Tibetan culture on a much larger scale than D'ing-ri. That, combined with their use of different kinds of documentation, may account for some of the differences. Nevertheless the role of sectarian differences in this culture has probably been overemphasized, thereby obscuring more subtle but central principles like the *tza-wäi la-ma* bond.

Perhaps Waddel's characterization of this religion as "lamaism" was not so inappropriate. I am reminded of the Tibetan maxim, "For every *la-ma* there is a tradition." Each *la-ma*, it is explained, is a guide along a single path, and it is for no one to say which is the truest, not even the *la-ma*. *la-ma* do not restrict themselves to one tradition in their own education. For example one finds each studying with teachers not in the same lineage as himself and consulting with specialists in other fields. When they mature they tend to favour the teachings of one master but what they teach is often an amalgam of their favourite writings. Each knows and uses texts from several major schools and in any given *gön-pa* library, one is likely to come across Ge-lug texts alongside those of the Sa-kya and Nying-ma traditions.

Generally speaking the different theologies here do not define for its teachers any particular life style. Therefore in D'ing-ri the different life styles of the *la-ma* are personal rather than doctrinal in origin. Each *la-ma* here is distinctive in his dress and *gön-pa* organization, just as he is in his teaching. Some D'ing-ri *la-ma* are *ge-long* and lead rigorous celibate lives. Tr'i-pön never married but became a *tog-dän yogin*. Some

*la-ma* have wives (called *sa-jang*) and others work as teachers after leaving their families behind. Some are gregarious and others seek solitude. Some actively seek new disciples while others like Tr'i-pön flee from teaching responsibilities. The Dza-rong La-ma has always welcomed students and patrons and he built a magnificent structure with the offerings his devotees lavished on him. Ga-ra and Sing-dr'ag were among those who refused gifts and kept their centres humble and austere.

The scholastic and technical ability of each *la-ma* is variable too. There are those who, although they never learnt their grammar as youths, still became great meditation masters. Such men usually make poor administrators and thus leave those duties for their *gön-pa* officers.

It is only later in his life that a *la-ma* becomes known as a specialist, after he has spent his long training moving from one interest and one style to another. Both Tr'i-pön's and Tr'ül-zhig's careers found them pursuing their religious work in very different circumstances. And just as the course of each *la-ma's* career is varied and different from the next, so it is with the ordinary *ch'ö-pa*.

Paralleling the range of life styles exhibited by their *la-ma*, D'ing-ri novices make a choice as to how they will proceed. The religious life is one that symbolizes free choice and so there is no one to dictate a religious style to the new initiate. Each therefore begins life as a *ch'ö-pa* according to individual circumstances. An *a-ni* may remain with her family for many years (if she gets on well with her brother's *na-ma*); or immediately after her ordination she may go on a major pilgrimage to parts beyond D'ing-ri where she had never been before. She may opt to live with a kinswoman in a *gön-pa* or she may become an itinerant and avoid any permanent home for years. Such a range of possibilities is also open to the new *dr'a-pa*. And after following any one for a time, it is not unusual for the devotee to shift to another style.

If one stays in a *gön-pa* for some time there are a host of possibilities to be found there. Some have been observed from *The Monastery Kitchen* (Aziz, 1976). Others come to life in the following case history—three brothers from Lang-kor, each of whom has spent most of his life connected with Dza-rong.

*Case Thirty-eight: the Religion of Three Brothers*

(a) Nga-wang, now seventy-three, was the first to join Dza-rong. He did so voluntarily, when still a youth. He pursued his studies

in religion and liturgy with great diligence and after showing a special aptitude in text and liturgy he was assigned an office in the assembly of monks (*tsog*). So that he could apply himself wholeheartedly to work, Nga-wang was exempted from the usual training each officer must spend in economic administration for the *gön-pa*. It was Nga-wang who accompanied the young Trül-zhig La-ma to Lha-sa and who tutored the young leader while they were on tour throughout Tibet.

(b) The eldest of the three brothers is Gom-k'än, the *yogin*. He is seen in the inhabited parts of D'ing-ri only a few months of each year—at harvest time when he forages through the busy fields yellow and ripe with barley, to collect grain for his long, lonely winter. During the larger part of the year, for over half a century, Gom-k'än broods over the problem of existence in lonely caves and meditation huts all over the Nepal Himalaya. He has been to all the holy places of Tibet and Nepal and has meditated in caves visited centuries ago by Padmasambhava, by Mi-la-rä-pa and by P'a-d'am-pa.

(c) Ch'ö-zang is the last in the family to join Dza-rong; this happened when he was only twenty, but had seen his three other lay brothers die, one by one. Ch'ö-zang began his life at the grand monastery by helping his *a-k'u*, the custodian of the Dza-rong giant prayer-wheel (*ma-ni-lha-k'ang*); when his uncle died, Ch'ö-zang inherited both his hut and his job. He never learnt to read well, or to write, and his knowledge of the liturgy remains minimal. But he has become a good printer and he knows better than anyone here about making a fine and even print on a prayer flag or on a page of text. When he became a personal servant of the *la-ma*, he was given special training in a Lha-sa noble's kitchen in order to produce the finest Tibetan cuisine for the *la-ma*. He spends most of his time in the monastery kitchen or in the *la-ma* chamber, but when his brother Gom-k'än is visiting the centre, they print books together to sell to other coenobites and to D'ing-ri laypeople.

Brief as they are, these three sketches show the variety of relationships devotees may have with their monastery, but more particularly with their *la-ma*; one is his tutor, another his meditation student and the third his servant. Still, their responsibilities to their *la-ma* have not confined the personal development of each man.



By its nature the *tza-wäi la-ma* bond includes personal contact between a disciple and his spiritual guide. Each D'ing-ri *la-ma* has a personal following. Tr'ül-zhig for example could never have won over the Dza-rong complex had he not settled in the area and developed contacts throughout the population. Likewise, Ga-ra La-ma would be without devotees if he were to remain at Shel-kar. Except for Tr'i-pön who attracted many of his earlier followers from central Tibet when he moved here, all D'ing-ri *la-ma* rely on regular contact and support from their local devotees. And before his death the Tr'i-pön La-ma won many new followers in this locale, so that he—like the other *la-ma*—is, correctly speaking, the *tza-wäi la-ma* of D'ing-ri. If one needs more evidence of this, one has to simply ask D'ing-ri-wa to name their *la-ma*. Without exception, they will proudly respond by citing one of these ten leaders.

The *tza-wäi la-ma* bond is a principle of religious belief by which teaching centres grow up and communities of adepts live together. The *la-ma gōn-pa* scattered around D'ing-ri account for only a part of the pattern of religious life here, however. And rituals concerning them constitute only a portion of the religious activity that goes on here. To put this leadership and the monastic tradition in its proper perspective we have therefore to examine the structure of other sanctuaries in the vicinity, and the nature of other religious services. The next chapter will explore these areas.

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## The Pattern of Religious Life: Monasteries and Religious Service

### GÖN-PA WITHOUT LA-MA

The *la-ma* biographies described in the preceding section are personal illustrations of the individualistic growth of D'ing-ri religion in the last century. They exemplify possibilities for the individual pursuit of religious activities, new opportunities in the economic structure, and the tendency for communities to form around charismatic personalities. The *la-ma* are the focus for most religious belief and practice. However, their networks do not include all *gön-pa* in the D'ing-ri religious organization. And in order to understand the total context in which *la-ma* operate, and the still greater diversity of the D'ing-ri religious system, we have to examine the *ser-ky'im* and the government *gön-pa*.

We already know something about the *ser-ky'im* as part of the economic and residence system of rural D'ing-ri. One in each *kor-k'ong*, the *ser-ky'im* number twenty-seven, and are spread throughout D'ing-ri in such an integrated fashion that they are hardly distinguishable from the regular rural settlement. (This may be the reason why *ser-ky'im* have so successfully escaped western observers.) The *ser-ky'im*, called *dr'a-pa* and *a-ni* just like the celibate *ch'ö-pa*, also resemble their ascetic parallels with their shaven heads and purple garments. When performing a service in a house or *gön-pa* the *ser-ky'im* wear a white shawl over one shoulder; otherwise they are hardly distinguishable from celibate *ch'ö-pa*.

The *ser-ky'im gön-pa* is quite different from other ones. First, because

it is acephalous. *ser-ky'im gön-pa* have officers who rotate but there are no *la-ma*. Only Na-lum Gön-pa with its Na-lum La-ma is so arranged and even here the *la-ma*'s presence makes little difference to the *ser-ky'im*.

Each *ser-ky'im* community contains a *lha-k'ang* for occasional group assemblies but it is inconspicuous and locked most of the time. The *gön-pa* has nothing to attract visitors and those who do come are merely messengers from a neighbouring lay house arranging for a *ser-ky'im* to go there to work. It is a quieter community than most, since the *dr'a-pa* or *a-ni* are performing services at the home of their patrons. If one passes through a *ser-ky'im gön-pa*, one is likely to find its residents in the fields or working in their courtyards. Unlike a *la-ma gön-pa* there is no religious atmosphere perpetuated by the constant murmur of *mantra*, the clang of cymbals and the echo of bells.

On the tenth and twenty-fifth days of every month and the monthly *lha-söl*, *ser-ky'im* members assemble in their *lha-k'ang* for obligatory offerings to the chief patron, Padmasambhava. The *lha-söl*, a rite for the prosperity of the entire *kor-k'ong*, must be attended by a representative from each household, but on the other two occasions only *ch'ö-pa* not otherwise employed are present.

*ser-ky'im* religious people are not ascetics and they are not concerned with individual enlightenment in the same way as the devotees who cluster around their *la-ma*. The *ser-ky'im* have a *la-ma* also; most of those in D'ing-ri are students of the Dza-rong La-ma and as such go to his *gön-pa* for regular initiations. The *ser-ky'im* live in the midst of the lay population because that is where their work lies as agriculturalists and as ritual specialists. Individual *ser-ky'im* or small parties of two to five set out each day for the houses of their patrons who have been advised to sponsor a ritual.

Ascetic *ch'ö-pa* remain in their segregated huts near their *la-ma* except for the three-month autumn period when they are obliged to roam across the D'ing-ri plain, begging from hamlet to hamlet. At that time householders employ them to read, but otherwise this is the job of *ser-ky'im dra-pa* and *a-ni*. The *ser-ky'im* are not as concerned with their personal *nirvana* as are the ascetics. They are seen as helpers, specifically intended to serve the laity. Acting entirely on the prescription of the *la-ma*, the *ser-ky'im ch'ö-pa* is a secondary or auxiliary figure and he never pretends to possess independent powers. There are no examples of *ser-ky'im* becoming *la-ma* and none of the *la-ma* mentioned have ever been *ser-ky'im*. "Anyone can be a *ser-ky'im*. All you have to do is read the texts and learn the ritual formats." This was a frequent explanation

I got from *la-ma* and laymen during my attempts to understand the religious role of the *ser-ky'im*. Their relatively low economic status and their casual treatment are reminders that the *ser-ky'im* members are hardly more than craftsmen.

It is in its historical position that the *ser-ky'im* tradition poses some interesting questions, since these *gön-pa* antecede the *la-ma gön-pa* of the area. Of those places named as the oldest habitations in D'ing-ri, the *ser-ky'im gön-pa* of Lang-kor, Lha-dong, Chag-ch'u-mo and Gön-p'ug are listed first. Unfortunately no one can say precisely how far back each dates, and there is no agreement on which of the four is the oldest. Informants who know the *tso-go* folk song cite that as evidence of Chag-ch'u-mo's age. Others, unsure of the date of Yang-gön-pa, but who know Lha-dong Gön-pa was his home, say that it is very old. Likewise, because many know P'a-d'am-pa's association with Lang-kor, and since D'ing-ri's history dates back to P'a-d'am-pa, they argue that Lang-kor must be the original *gön-pa*.

No one can remember or imagine D'ing-ri without the *ser-ky'im gön-pa*. Unlike the other centres which are associated with particular *la-ma* of recent history, the *ser-ky'im gön-pa* are not so linked and dated. If the origin of the *ser-ky'im* cannot be determined, at least their relation to the other *gön-pa* and their persistence can be understood. Their early dating, in contrast to the *la-ma gön-pa*, suggests an evolutionary relation, that is the *la-ma gön-pa* may be a later development, gradually replacing the former. It is difficult to understand how this busy but modest place, however prosperous a trade centre, can support new *gön-pa* and *la-ma* in addition to these older ones. It seems natural to expect that as these new *gön-pa* grew, the support necessary to sustain them must have depleted another sector of the religious system. Was it the *ser-ky'im*? Was it a matter of a big tradition gobbling up a little one?

Somehow, in D'ing-ri, no one lost. There are now more *gön-pa* than ever before, with the *ser-ky'im* system expanding even as the *la-ma* establish more communities. As far as can be remembered no *ser-ky'im gön-pa* have been abandoned. By all accounts the number of households and the population of these *gön-pa* have been growing parallel to the general population growth in the region.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, by an odd

<sup>1</sup>There is only one *gön-pa*, Riu-ch'e (not to be confused with Chung-ri-b'o-ch'e), south of Tzib-ri which had been a *ser-ky'im* and then changed. It was only in 1950 that this happened. It is one of the few cases of a religious adept converting to another sect and drawing the entire community with him; in this

sociological twist, the celibate *gön-pa* effect population shifts that have a catalytic effect on the *ser-ky'im* growth. Many *ser-ky'im* recruits are apostate *a-ni* and *dr'a-pa* who first joined an ascetic community, then found it unsuitable. They sought to resettle among the laity, but wanted to continue their religious work. The ideal place for them is a *ser-ky'im gön-pa*.

By the time Dza-rong Gön-pa had grown into its influential position in modern D'ing-ri, almost all *ser-ky'im* had become linked to it. The *ser-ky'im* tradition here is said to be Nying-ma and since Dza-rong is the centre of the Nying-ma teachings in this part of Tibet, the *ser-ky'im* novices are obliged to go there. Like celibates the *ser-ky'im* have a period of training before being empowered to perform certain religious exercises. After their initiation they return to their village and wait for work. *ser-ky'im* perform services for the laity; it does not matter which *la-ma* has advised the services. Therefore, even though the *ser-ky'im* have a special tie with Dza-rong, their work is not so exclusive. They depend on all D'ing-ri *la-ma* since it is a *la-ma* who first prescribes the ritual. A problem still to be sorted out by historians of religion and social change is the matter of how the *ser-ky'im* operated before these *la-ma* arrived. The *la-ma* and the *ser-ky'im* traditions appear to be interdependent in D'ing-ri, but this may not always have been so.

#### GOVERNMENT GÖN-PA

These are the institutions most written about in other books on Tibetan monasticism. In some parts of the lamaist world these *gön-pa* may dominate the culture, but in D'ing-ri they are peripheral. In comparison to the other fifty-three *gön-pa* and the extent of their influence, the single government *gön-pa* of Shel-kar Ch'ö-de is a minor element in this religious system. Besides Shel-kar, two other government *gön-pa* which, as part of the government system, affect life in D'ing-ri, are P'el-gyä-ling and Dro-p'än-kar-ling. But since they lie beyond D'ing-ri in the area of Nya-nang, they are not included in the total of fifty-four D'ing-ri *gön-pa*.

That it is difficult to learn much about these *gön-pa* from D'ing-ri people is in itself the first indication of their relationship to the population. All lie outside a D'ing-ri-wa's personal experience; they are dis-

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case it was to the Ge-lug, and the *gön-pa* thus became one of celibate men. No *la-ma* leader was ever mentioned in connection with the new *gön-pa*.

tant and unfamiliar, and they serve no religious function. Their reason for being here at all is found in their economic structure. A *gōn-pa* like Shel-kar Ch'ö-de, designated as a state institution, receives financial support from the central government. Much of this is administered at the local level through land rights held by Shel-kar over certain D'ing-ri villages. The *gōn-pa* is given the right to tax those villages leased to it, some of that income coming in service, some in produce.

Shel-kar Ch'ö-de seems particularly well endowed with virtual landlord rights over Gön-pa J'ang, Gön-p'ug, Tza-kor, Ch'ö-lung-gön, Tr'ag-tze, Kong-tza and Gön-mar. P'el-gyä-ling Gön-pa, much further away, also levies tax on a number of D'ing-ri villages—Lha-dong, Yöl-dong, B'ar-tso, Ling-shar, Yi-shar, Tsa-da, Sa-lha and Gön-lha-dong. In the case of Dro-p'än-kar-ling Gön-pa, only Ra-ch'u and Tr'ag-tze are taxable.

Since Shel-kar is nearby D'ing-ri, subject householders take their produce tax directly to the *gōn-pa*. Those brisk but polite visits constitute the full extent of the D'ing-ri-wa's personal contact with that forboding centre. Because the other two *gōn-pa* are located at some distance, they send their own *dr'a-pa* administrators twice annually to assess the D'ing-ri tax and to arrange for its transport.

Each of these *gōn-pa* applies a monk levy, Shel-kar the most. And here is naturally the most important source of personal contact. About a third of the permanent population of Shel-kar's three hundred *dr'a-pa* are D'ing-ri men recruited through this monk levy. Villagers respond differently to the pressure of this tax. For everyone, losing a member of the household means losing a labourer, and the benefit or loss of a son to the *gōn-pa* is calculated in economic terms. A family has to decide—if it has a choice—what is of advantage to the household. The monk levy is not like the army tax, where in compensation to the family, the government allocates a piece of tax-free land in addition to the salary it will give the soldier. When a son is to be sent to the *gōn-pa*, no immediate benefit comes to his household. Wealthy families who value their sons as partners in trade and commerce are reluctant to release the man; instead they send one of their sharecropper's sons as substitute and pay the sharecropper a fee. *d'ü-ch'ung* are glad of this, knowing that education and contacts afforded in such large *gōn-pa* are effective means of social mobility for their children. In addition to the monks levied by tax there are D'ing-ri youths who voluntarily enter Shel-kar. Training as a scholar or administrator is best obtained there and, since those who enter voluntarily can leave just as easily, it is an appealing prospect

for some families.

One of the few details D'ing-ri people know about these *gön-pa* is their affiliation with the Ge-lug sect, the school of Tibetan Buddhism most favoured by the present government. My friends point out this character of the government *gön-pa* but can say nothing further, either about the Ge-lug religion promoted at Shel-kar or the religion of their own *gön-pa*. The Ge-lug is like the government: it is felt to be something alien and not in the interest of D'ing-ri individuals.

It is difficult to explain popular hostility towards Shel-kar except on economic grounds. The economic tie is the only one D'ing-ri-wa appear to be aware of. They invariably fall into a lamentation of their tax obligations and the business acumen of the Shel-kar *dr'a-pa* who stay in Gang-gar town to keep an eye on the *gön-pa*'s business interests there.

There is no religious experience shared by these *gön-pa* and the local people. On those occasions when the P'el-gyä-ling administrators visit D'ing-ri, the subject *ser-ky'im* gather for a *zhab-tän*, using Ge-lug texts out of respect for their visitors, but otherwise there is no contact on religious matters. D'ing-ri people never attend ceremonies at Shel-kar and no one I spoke to has ever been inside the main *lha-k'ang* there. There is no *la-ma* for them to consult either.

The religious activities within Shel-kar proceed in their own way with a minimum of involvement from the D'ing-ri people. The fortress-like *gön-pa* houses an alien community of *ch'ö-pa*, and even if a family has a son, a brother or an uncle there, the *gön-pa* does not lose its adverse reputation. Here kinship ties are no reason for religious bonds to develop, and the public continues to perceive the *gön-pa* in primarily economic terms.

This psychological distance reflects something deeper, namely the sectarian detachment a family maintains with these *gön-pa*. There is no suggestion that because a member is recruited into a government *gön-pa* the others in his household have any religious ties there. Contrary to what might be expected, it seems easy for a household to have several ties, according to the personal alliances of its members. It can have a son at Shel-kar, a niece and grandfather at Dza-rong, a daughter married to a *ser-ky'im*, and so on. This pattern is consistent with the general disinterest in sectarian affiliation throughout the area.

Shel-kar's history is not parallel to that of D'ing-ri, but like the whole area it was indirectly affected by the Gorkha invasion and subsequent economic growth. The Nepalis had easily pushed across D'ing-ri and

had proceeded towards Shel-kar Ch'ö-de on the sharp cliffs above the Shel-kar market-town. The *gön-pa* is a solid structure set high upon steep cliffs, looking very much like a fortress. Whether or not the Nepalis thought it to be a fort, they were undaunted and attacked it, laying siege for some days. The *gön-pa* proved to be a fort and its monks resourceful defenders; so the invaders eventually withdrew and marched on towards Zhi-ka-tze, where they were eventually repulsed. It may have been to ensure further resistance on this front that the Tibetan government later gave considerably more attention to Shel-kar than it had prior to the Gorkha attacks. The *gön-pa* allowances for officers were increased and the monk levy extended, raising the population from two hundred to three hundred in the matter of a few years. Three hundred is cited as the official population of Shel-kar in the nineteen fifties.

Shel-kar's origin is reportedly a humble one. From oral sources we learn that this place originated as a cluster of meditation huts representing a number of religious schools—like the sanctuary at Dza-rong. But this settlement was converted to a *gön-pa* much earlier than Dza-rong. Under the sweeping imperial powers of the fifth Dalai La-ma, Shel-kar Monastery emerged in the early eighteenth century as an institution designed to promote the Ge-lug traditions and to carry out a centrally designed policy. It was assigned land, and monk members were recruited by force. Since the Gorkha withdrawal Shel-kar has become the most important government *gön-pa* on the Tibet-Nepal frontier.

In addition to its military role, Shel-kar enjoys a reputation as a printing centre. Over the recent years it has accumulated a woodblock library of all the hundred and eight volumes of the Tibetan canon. Prints of these books that now appear in libraries of *gön-pa* throughout Tibet and Nepal were stamped at Shel-kar. It may have been chosen for this role because the necessary printing paper can be easily obtained from Khumbu across the border in Nepal.

Local D'ing-ri people in their characteristic way of discounting Shel-kar did not tell me about that famous library and printing unit. This information I gathered much later from central Tibetans who knew Shel-kar only because of this. Only by chance did a D'ing-ri man mention the big annual festival held at Shel-kar Gön-pa. There is a *ch'am* (sacred dance) dramatically enacted during the time of the year when the market is set up. Here we find many D'ing-ri villagers near the *gön-pa* but I am assured that they come only for the market.



## COMMENTS ON THE MONASTIC SYSTEM

The coexistence of these contrasting *gön-pa*, exemplified by Shel-kar on the one hand and Dza-rong on the other, is fortunate for analytical purposes. It is fortunate because it affords an ideal situation in which to consider the varieties of monastic culture as it is moulded by a combination of historical events by charismatic leaders, and by economic choices. There is Dza-rong, founded and developed by one man working from a reciprocity of dedication and service with a solid lay base. Dza-rong continued to be strong under his successor, only because the latter also won trust and applied his skills with energy and sincerity.

Shel-kar is unlike Dza-rong. Though located closer to central D'ing-ri than Dza-rong, Shel-kar remains outside the people's realm of religious experience. It is never visited for a spiritual purpose and it does not make any attempt to provide the local population with religious services. In this respect, as in its internal organization, Shel-kar has no need for distinctive leadership. It is part of a larger administrative system and as such it gets its support and its policy from an outside authority. Shel-kar survives on its tax rights as a part of that structure and there is no need for it to appeal to a popular base.

The different functions of the two *gön-pa* reflect their contrasting economic base as well. Dza-rong members work to allay the individual's fears, to train his mind, to bring him merit; Shel-kar can offer good administrative training and it provides prints of the canon to *gön-pa* throughout Tibet. That the two *gön-pa* serve such different ends is probably one of the main reasons why there is no socio-political cleavage in D'ing-ri society relating to the different sects. If the two *gön-pa* were competing for popular support within D'ing-ri then we might find it factionalized, with one group Ge-lug and the other Nying-ma. At the local level, D'ing-ri people say politics and religion are separate issues. This may be difficult to believe, given the differing accounts of other historians of Tibet. But it is borne out in the absence of sectarianism here and the multilateral ties a given village or a particular family can maintain with several *gön-pa*. Below are four cases illustrating these multiplexities.

*Case Thirty-nine—Yöl-dong, a Village with Ties to Several gön-pa*  
Yöl-dong is a government property leased to Se-ra Monastery in Lhasa, which in turn subleases to P'el-gyä-ling. The *dr'a-pa* from P'el-gyä-ling make the five-day trip to Yöl-dong twice annually to collect its tax. There is an additional military tax which must be paid in

service. For this village it is rather high—five men. Till 1925 when the monk tax on Yöl-dong was withdrawn, the village had also to keep five of its men as monks at P'el-gyä-ling.

*Case Forty*

Lha-dong-gön is also leased by P'el-gyä-ling but because it is a *ser-ky'im* community (between them, Shel-kar and P'el-gyä-ling administer four *ser-ky'im* villages), no monk or military tax is levied here. There is one *gön-pa* under the aegis of another; yet in religious matters and in personnel they remain entirely separate. Everyone at Lha-dong has been taught and empowered by the Dza-rong La-ma earning their living practicing *ser-ky'im* rituals.

Among the following two households, the diverse religious ties seem even more dramatic.

*Case Forty-one—From Gön-mar Rong-so*

The father of this house, before he received a *na-ma*, was a *dr'a-pa* in a small *gön-pa* outside D'ing-ri called Pä-ma Ch'ö-drön. He worked there for three years as a *nyer-pa* and then returned home to be married in a polyandrous union with his brother. He remained a farmer and trader until his own children married and took charge of the household. Then he joined Dza-rong as a *ga-ch'ö* and died at the *gön-pa*.

In the present generation there are three sons. When the youngest was four years old he insisted on going to Dza-rong. The family consulted both the Dza-rong and Na-dr'a La-ma about this and after obtaining their sanction they allowed the child to go. He lived at the *gön-pa* with his uncle and in return for helping him run the *lha-k'ang* the older man taught the boy to read and write. The family by now firmly believed this child a reincarnate of his great-grandfather, Nor-zang, who had been a government administrator for most of his life but had retired at Dza-rong as a *ga-ch'ö*.

Nor-zang's sister Lha-mo, it is recalled, was another *ch'ö-pa*. She never married, but from childhood, had been religiously inclined and had stayed most of her life in an *a-nü-gön-pa* north of Tzib-ri.

This house is a *dr'ong-pa* under government administration; as such it is required to send a son in every generation to Shel-kar. Rather than lose its men this wealthy house has always arranged that a *d'ü-ch'ung* household from the same village send a surrogate and is glad

to pay a fair compensation for that.

For household rituals this household calls *dr'a-pa* from both Na-lum and Kyi-dr'ing *ser-ky'im gön-pa*.

*Case Forty-two—Kar-ky'u Gän-po, a Zu-tzo House*

Two brothers in the present generation are *dr'a-pa*. One is a *ge-long* at Na-dr'a Gön. He went there as a boy. The other brother is a *ser-ky'im dr'a-pa* at Dr'ag-kar-po Gön-pa north of here, recruited as is the custom described in Chapter Four.

The third brother, my informant, was married to a girl from Shel-kar and she has a brother at Tr'i-pön's *gön-pa* and a sister at Dza-rong. The wife died and when this man planned to remarry, fearing his new *na-ma* and his daughter might be incompatible, he sent the daughter to live with her mother's brother at Tzib-ri. This was on the suggestion of the *a-zhang*, and for a while the child stayed at Tzib-ri. But she eventually returned home after it was clear she was unhappy and unsuited to that.

This man's own mother, when she was about sixty, left the family and went to live nearby at Lab-tr'än *a-ni-gön*. Her *la-ma* is the Dza-rong patriarch and she took initiation from him to become an *a-ni*. Lab-tr'än is a branch of Dza-rong and she chose to live here rather than there because of the little *gön-pa*'s proximity to her home and the company of her younger sister, Me-tog. Me-tog has been an *a-ni* since childhood and has spent many years at Dza-rong. Now, because she is old, it is easier for her at Lab-tr'än Gön-pa.

The *ser-ky'im dr'a-pa* at Dr'ag-kar-po Gön and sometimes the *a-ni* from Lab-tr'än Gön come down to this house and others in the *kor-k'ong* for rituals and readings.

These illustrations also serve as evidence of the weak correspondence between a *gön-pa* and an economic class. Each *gön-pa* draws from a number of villages and a variety of households. Class differences do have a role to play, however. The most apparent feature in the recruitment of devotees is the total absence of *ya-wa* from the religious system. Neither these outcastes nor the half-*ya-wa* ever become *ch'ö-pa*, celibate or *ser-ky'im*. (*ya-wa* people consult *la-ma* on occasion and call *ser-ky'im* to their houses since they, like others, are besieged by illness and misfortune.)

*d'ü-ch'ung* often become *ser-ky'im* and they also enter government *gön-pa* as surrogates of the rich. Some of those who succeed in the government system leave D'ing-ri to take better positions in far away *gön-*

*pa*. Occasionally one finds, in a celibate *gön-pa*, a *ch'ö-pa* who was a *d'ü-ch'ung*; this is usually one who had first become a *ser-ky'im* and only afterwards joined a *gön-pa*. Few *d'ü-ch'ung* join a celibate *gön-pa* directly and this is to be explained by their weak ideals concerning a *tza-wäi la-ma*. These people do not seek after religious guidance. Without that ambition there is no motive to enter a *gön-pa*.

I know of no *dr'ong-pa* house which voluntarily sends a member to Shel-kar or to another government centre. The *dr'ong-pa* are among the major supporters of the *la-ma* in D'ing-ri and it is they who are most often found in the *la-ma gön-pa*. This class is by its own admission the most pious in the society. It is largely the voluntary contributions of *dr'ong-pa* that support the D'ing-ri *la-ma* and have built the new *gön-pa* here. People are concerned most with acquiring merit, with ensuring good rebirth, with winning the prestige of their fellows. This is the society, together with the traders, where prosperity and goodness can be converted into compassion through generosity. And generosity is effected through religious deeds. This is that conservative element of society which dutifully performs its religious observances; those who do so are praised and those who do not are criticized. Comments on a fellow villager's expenses for merit (*p'an-yön*) are a large part of local gossip. For an individual to boast of his own contributions is an impropriety. However, there are methods by which this and other kinds of prestige-related facts can become public knowledge (Aziz, 1977).

The *d'ü-ch'ung* by habit are not so concerned with these matters. The *dr'ong-pa* in their disdain for *d'ü-ch'ung*, say that lower class people are not pious because they are less concerned about rebirth. It is explained that their lack of interest in religion is itself an example of their inferiority.

The difference in attitude between *d'ü-ch'ung* and others is most apparent in their attitude towards a *la-ma*, one of the most unambiguous of religious statements a person can make. Whereas every *dr'ong-pa* works towards having a teacher and then proudly and unequivocally announces his *tza-wäi la-ma* name, the *d'ü-ch'ung* do not have personal *la-ma*. They equivocate when asked to name their *la-ma*, and when the time comes to engage one (there are many occasions where the *d'ü-ch'ung*, like the *ya-wa*, must have a religious medium) they call on whoever is most convenient at the moment.

The agriculturalists' religious ideal is shared by traders and administrators in Gang-gar. Because the urban people are more closely linked with the wider system of government and business, they are concerned

with obtaining an education for their sons. As a result of this, Shel-kar has the additional function of serving as a training centre for the growing bureaucracy and entrepreneurial class from Shel-kar, west to Nya-nang. No spiritual guidance for a pious or a troubled layman is available here. There is no *la-ma* to give spiritual guidance or to receive homage. And since pious urban dwellers also require a *la-ma*, they look outside Shel-kar, to the half score of D'ing-ri *la-ma*.

A large proportion of Gang-gar people are devotees of Tr'i-pön. We do not know why this community in general has such weak ties with Dza-rong, but the preference for the Tzib-ri *la-ma* is strong, and manifests itself among lay adepts as well as clerics. If there is any cleavage in D'ing-ri society on a religious basis, it is here in the predisposition of townspeople for Tr'i-pön on the one hand, and of rural people for Dza-rong on the other.

This disjunction in religious alliance may have been exacerbated by the dispute over Ri-wo-ch'e in central Tibet, in which Dza-rong and an urban-supported agency in Zhi-ka-tze were at odds with one another. During the several years that the dispute continued, hostility grew between Dza-rong and Zhi-ka-tze society in general which probably extended to Gang-gar as well. I cannot think why the Gang-gar people feel distant from Dza-rong except in response to the *gön-pa*'s own coolness. It may also be the Gang-gar-wa way of expressing their feeling of superiority over the rural D'ing-ri people by choosing a *la-ma*, Tr'i-pön, with a national status and adherents in Lha-sa and distant parts of the Buddhist world.

There is little evidence that the preference for one *la-ma* over another is based on sectarian ideology. The Tr'i-pön and the Dza-rong *La-ma* each promote a different religious tradition, it is true, but they do not attract followers for that reason. D'ing-ri people think of Shel-kar as the centre for a particular sect, but they do not think of the other *gön-pa* in these terms. Most people I have questioned cannot tell me the general sect of either Tr'i-pön or Dza-rong, let alone the philosophical differences. And when the scholars I asked ventured to identify the former as Ka-gyü and the other as Nying-ma they qualified their remarks, adding that each *la-ma* teaches his own combination of several traditions. They point out that all D'ing-ri teachers promote the P'a-d'am-pa and Ma-chig traditions which are not identified with any particular sect.

If people are not inclined to be specific about their sect, they are still very definite about other religious motivations and there is no hesi-

tation or doubt when they point to their *la-ma*, in specifying their religious affiliation. Devotees join a *gön-pa* by first joining a *la-ma* and it is in their choice of a *la-ma* teacher that the direction of their religious life is set.

### THE INVOLVEMENT WITH RELIGION

#### *To Serve the "Religious Ones"*

Spiro writes of Burmese monasticism, that it subsumes two activities; (a) it serves the needs of the monks and (b) it serves the needs of the laity. This is also how I would describe the function of religion in D'ing-ri. Starting with the needs of the religious ones, it is necessary to stress at the outset that there are individual social needs as well as spiritual ones that are served.

A peculiarity of this system is its ability to develop the individual rather than simply mould him into a member of a rigid community. I have been surprised to find that the *gön-pa* does not subsume the needs of the individual. Here more than in the hamlet one finds men and women leading rich, individualistic lives. If one has the opportunity to meet and talk with *ch'ö-pa* one quickly realizes that each is a different person who interprets his religion in a particular way and expects of it something unique. Just as the devotee sees the *la-ma* as a special person, the *la-ma* treats his disciple as an individual and accommodates him to the *gön-pa* with individual needs in mind. For most people the transfer into the religious life from a secular one is a slow process in which the *la-ma* works with the novice's friends and family in order to help him find his niche.

To ease the difficulty of leaving one's home and kindred and to adjust to monastic living, new *a-ni* and *dr'a-pa* often live for only a month or two in a year at their *la-ma's gön-pa*. The rest of the time they remain at home or they live with other *ch'ö-pa* in a retreat near their village. Sometimes a person finds himself adjusted to monastic life without ever having intended it so. These are people who in their youth came to live with favourite kin who were *ch'ö-pa*, and after years as observers find that they are so accustomed to the routine of the community, to the murmuring of *mantra* and clanging of cymbals, that they prefer to stay on here than return home.

Many recruits to the *gön-pa* come here seeking refuge from a harsh domestic life. These are men and women who see no alternatives to a life set by social rules and economic demands. Girls about to be betrothed against their wishes see the *gön-pa* as an alternative to the un-

happiness of an unlucky marriage. The *gön-pa* generally accepts them, but only as visitors, until it is decided how intent they are. Initiations and ordinations for full membership would not be given immediately in any case.

The escape from the hamlet to the *gön-pa* is usually the beginning of a new life for the refugee in one form or another. Those who realize they cannot remain in the *gön-pa* launch into an itinerant life from which they may never emerge. D'ing-ri is full of itinerants like A-ni Ch'ö-drön and her son Zang-po. The son, now over fifty, only joined A-ni Ch'ö-drön wandering around D'ing-ri after he broke his vow of celibacy and had to leave Dza-rong. Of the mother, here is a section from a biographical essay on her (Aziz, 1976, p 45):

Chodon's pursuit began with the decisions she had to make after a poorly contracted marriage. 'My family arranged it. They sent me far away to a house and village where I knew no one, not even my husband. And alone I had to bear the beatings his sister inflicted on my body. Because a baby started to grow inside my stomach, I stayed on to wait for this little companion. But two weeks after its arrival, the baby died,' Chodon abruptly concluded, 'and I went back to D'ing-ri.'

She described the first few years of her wanderings around D'ing-ri. Months were spent in the company of a band of itinerants—men and women who studied the texts and prayed together in abandoned retreats and moved through the mountains from one holy site to another. She confided that it only happened once that she lay with one of her companions. After that she returned home to the family of her brother, for she was pregnant with Zangpo. Until he was born Chodon lived on with her relatives. As soon as the boy was old enough to travel, the young mother took him with her back to the hermitages and pilgrims' paths.

Both Zang-po's father and his *a-k'u* had been itinerants, his father and mother having met during their pilgrimages near Tzib-ri. The *a-k'u* was a mendicant of another style who might well be blamed for introducing Zang-po to the good life of the road while he had the boy accompany him as a *ma-ni-pa* from one D'ing-ri hamlet to another. *ma-ni-pa* (also called *u-ch'en*) are bards who sing epic poems, illustrating them with the richly coloured *t'ang-ka* paintings. They move from house to house living on the contributions of their patrons who call

them to sing. In the years they were together Zang-po and his *a-k'u* earned a good living. But the boy was removed to Dza-rong by his conservative mother's brother who felt that sort of pastime unsuitable for a son of his household.

In *Views From The Monastery Kitchen* (1976) I make a point of illustrating the open, accommodating and flexible atmosphere of the Tibetan *gön-pa*. One meets here several individuals, lay and cleric, men and women, each of whom is a distinctive personality with a role in the community suited to them. There are few *ch'ö-pa* who live in a silent retreat meditating, reading and writing for months and years on end.

Most *ch'ö-pa* I have met are not so inspired, or so disciplined, or so economically independent. They begin their religious training learning simple vocal and bodily exercises, performing simple rituals and reading. For many this is the extent of their religious education. The few inclined to scholarship, debate and liturgy are brought into the inner circle of *gön-pa* offices and given the most rigorous training. The rest keep employed in numerous menial tasks around the *gön-pa* kitchen performing those minimal but useful religious exercises. Many small *gön-pa* around D'ing-ri are *a-nii-gön-pa*, annexes of the Tr'i-pön and Dza-rong systems. Here we find *a-ni* who prefer to remain near their home village and in touch with their kin. These local retreats also serve the aged members of the hamlets when they retire from domestic life and are too old to undergo any systematic training (cf case forty-three). A-ni Dröl-ma's history below is another example of how one family's needs weave into the monastic and other religious life styles.

### *Case Forty-three*

Dröl-ma had never wanted to marry, so before her approaching betrothal she had insisted on visiting Dza-rong and beginning her religious studies. Since her father's sister, Nam-dröl, was already living at Dza-rong, this was easy to arrange. So Dröl-ma, at the age of nineteen, went to live with her vestal aunt. She stayed at Dza-rong for a year until taking her own vestal vows to become what is known as a *rab-j'ang-a-ni*. A-ni Dröl-ma thereupon left Dza-rong to return to Ku-ra village. For the next ten years she passed her time alternating between her home and the nearby sanctuary of J'ang-ding, an *an-nii-gön-pa* annexe of Dza-rong. Dröl-ma says she had liked living with her brothers and their *na-ma*. She had also felt welcome there, and had not minded helping with domestic chores. The time came, however, when she found the growing children irri-



tating, and Dröl-ma left the house in preference for the quiet of the small *gön-pa*. It was a major move even though the retreat was not more than forty-five minutes away.

Dröl-ma took her youngest sister, then seventeen, with her to J'ang-ding. The two women were fond of one another and the younger had expressed an interest in becoming a religious adept. Dröl-ma became the girl's mentor. She was convinced of her sincerity, so some months later they journeyed together to Dza-rong in order that the younger woman be ordained. So it was now two vowed nuns who returned to J'ang-ding to live. They continued for two years, until the younger nun became pregnant. This had happened when the girl was in Gang-gar visiting a married sister there. It was her sister's husband who had impregnated her—a stroke of luck for the family since the married sister had proved to be barren. That infertility was a greater shame than the young nun's apostacy. Therefore, as soon as the pregnant girl had made her amends to her *la-ma* and her other sister, she was welcomed as the junior wife in the Gang-gar house. She now became the companion to her secular sister.

Meanwhile Dröl-ma stayed on at J'ang-ding but it was not long before she built a hut at Dza-rong, making it her permanent home, and only returning to J'ang-ding during the unpleasant winters.

It should be pointed out if it is not already apparent, that the *gön-pa* is not a place where a household gets rid of its recalcitrant or lazy members. Nor is it a dumping place for extra women. In most of the cases I have heard about, the individual's move out of his household meets considerable resistance from kindred. *ch'ö-pa* often enter upon a religious career against their family's wishes. It is not because of any impiety, for we see how conscientious the *dr'ong-pa* are about their religion. It is because the household needs every labourer it produces and the loss of a member to the *gön-pa* is the loss of a worker. The constant need for labour in the agricultural unit is why we frequently find *ch'ö-pa* like A-ni Dröl-ma spending so many years at home after she became a *rab-j'ang*.

To discuss only why and how one becomes a religious is to leave the subject of monastic recruitment half complete. The other half concerns leaving the *gön-pa*, the opposite flow which is almost as common an occurrence.

The frequency of apostacy has been implied by reference to "fallen"

monks and nuns in the numerous case histories already outlined. My rough estimate puts the rate of apostacy in mid-twentieth century D'ing-ri at 1: 6. Many cases I came across, I had learnt about indirectly. Undoubtedly there are many more still unexposed, and almost impossible to unearth because of the success with which these people slide back into the secular community to become a part of it.

To calculate the rate is therefore not an easy matter. Even if we obtain figures of all who enter and leave, we simply cannot subtract one from the other to arrive at the rate. We would first have to exclude all *ga-ch'ö*, the old people who join a monastic community after their family is grown and they retire from family life. None of them backslide. We would also have to separate out those youths who come to live in a *gön-pa* to help their senior kinsfolk while they take some lessons. They never intend to take vows and to remain religious. Exact quantification is not possible, but a rough estimate can be based on other reliable data. There are cases of apostacy in the numerous genealogies and personal stories I came across. Added to these are rough estimates from *la-ma* and monastic officials based on their observations over the years.

The same records yield other interesting data. One pattern is the regularity of apostacy among women and among men. The numbers are the same for each sex. Furthermore, backsliding seems to be just as common among older coenobites and monastic officials as it is among young novices. Tibetans have a special term for apostates—*dr'a-log* and *a-ni-log*—monk fallen and nun fallen. They are not titles but descriptive terms, for they carry neither shame nor denigration.

Backsliding or "falling" is not a consequence of any ideological shift or reassessment of values. In D'ing-ri it is almost always precipitated by a sexual encounter which is therefore an unequivocal abuse of the vow of celibacy. This may cause some personal shame and considerable readjustment initially, but there are minimal adverse repercussions on the long run. Acquaintances naturally gossip, especially if the apostate person had been in religion for many years, and details are exchanged about the circumstances around which the malingering occurred. However, after the obligatory apology to his *la-ma* and assembly, the apostate can hardly concern himself with what has passed. He is quickly caught up in new pragmatic issues about how he is to earn a living, what he is to do about his partner (who may or may not be a fellow apostate), and where to live. If possible he will try to put his religious skills to work for him in the secular community, for he can still practice religion, and what he has learnt from that experience cannot be taken from

him. Most *ch'ö-pa* who studied in a *gön-pa* for a few years are literate; they therefore have a skill that is a major asset at any time.

Three of the most prestigious leaders in the middle of the century here are apostates. They are Na-dr'a La-ma, Em-ch'e Ch'ö-pün (the chief secretary of Dza-rong) and the D'ing-ri magistrate. The last had been the chief secretary of Shel-kar Monastery. Both he and Em-ch'e Ch'ö-pün are said to have been extremely powerful figures in their respective communities, and both had been *ge-long* monks previously. So had Na-dr'a La-ma, whose biography is outlined in Chapter Ten.

There is no agreement among D'ing-ri-wa as to whether or not people send their sons to a *gön-pa* simply in order to arrange their education. Some say the wealthiest people do this, but there are many of that class who arrange tutors in their homes. Others claim that if a boy is sent to a *gön-pa* there is no assurance that he will want to return to help his parents. Opportunities abound in the ecclesiastic system, and an ambitious young man may see more possibilities for himself there than in the domestic economy. All *ch'ö-pa* I have met, whatever they have eventually done with their religious training, clearly retain a fondness for "religion." They like to read and to pray with their peers, and they are accustomed to the atmosphere of a religious community that contrasts sharply with the ordinary, secular life style. Parents sometimes admit that they have to entice their children back to the house.

The young sister of Dröl-ma cited in case forty-three, for example, may have been encouraged by her family to malingering at her sister's house. In this instance the elder sibling had not yet borne any children, so the family was doubtless concerned with arranging a second wife to provide issue.

In another family I know, the younger brother, A-k'u Nor-bu, was asked to return home after his brother's death. It was his father who begged him to leave Tr'i-pön's sanctuary at Tzib-ri where Nor-bu had been a *ge-long* for ten years. It was chiefly to assume care of the family's commercial interests, but the father also felt his widowed daughter-in-law too young to be alone. (She had had one son who was eventually to become a monk himself.) A-k'u Nor-bu agreed to assume his responsibilities for the business and the widow. He first did so unhappily, but within five years he seemed to have adapted well to the new situation, and had three more children.

Although apostate *dr'a-pa* in this part of Tibet seem to do well in the secular realms, it should not be thought that their time in the monas-

tery is viewed as it is for Thai Buddhists. In Thailand, half the adult male population has spent some time in the monastery and these men have made important contacts there. That and the skills learned are of calculated value to the Thai adults when they join the country's military and bureaucratic institutions (Bunnag, 1973). The links between the *gön-pa* and the Tibetan bureaucracy in a large government centre like Lha-sa may be similar to the Thai system. But no analogy is possible until we have quantification from the large Tibetan centres. As for D'ing-ri, it simply lacks a bureaucracy that would absorb former clerics, and instead we find apostates merging back into society through a variety of institutions—the *ser-ky'im* communities, the lay households and the sprawling itinerant population of mendicants.

### *To Serve the Laity*

Serving the growing and prospering lay population of D'ing-ri is both the concern and the livelihood of the ten *la-ma* and their 1,700 *ch'ö-pa*.<sup>2</sup> All *ch'ö-pa* but a few *yogin* ensconced in their solitary retreats are engaged in performing religious service within the society. The range of religious activity one can find here is limitless—*zhab-tän* are being recited; *mantra* flow over hundreds of lips, and they turn by the thousands inside wheels and blow endlessly off prayer flags. Houses are being purified; gods have to be appeased and cared for; there are numerous malevolent spirits to be exorcized and guardians to be invoked. Regular homage is due to the teacher, and merit to oneself and one's parents and so on. Only the finest *la-ma* knows all the elements in the cosmos and can say by which means and on what days each is to be handled.

The *la-ma* performs some of the rituals needed, but on the whole his powers are effected primarily in the more specialized tasks of identifying the problems and devising the treatment. It is the larger body of adepts who actually perform many of the rituals. Like the *la-ma*, *ch'ö-pa* are essentially concerned with serving the laity, but they operate at a lower, more mechanical (but still necessary) level. They are people called upon for the individualized rituals prescribed for a particular situation of a specific person. These are the same function-

<sup>2</sup>Of course only a very small percentage of the monastic population meditates in seclusion and isolation. And those who do are involved in nibbanic philosophy rather than one of serving others.

Since the Shel-kar monks do no religious work relating to the people of D'ing-ri, they are excluded from this discussion.

aries who perform the calendrical rites and the regular domestic ceremonies.

The following outline will familiarize readers with the main religious events that occur regularly throughout D'ing-ri. They also suggest the extent of ritual activity sponsored by the laity.

The tenth day of each month, *tse-chu* is the most important day throughout D'ing-ri. This is the time of the half moon when offerings should be made to ensure continued prosperity. At each *gön-pa* members gather for the day in their *lha-k'ang*. Most *ser-ky'im* are called to read the *tse-chu* at homes of laymen; those who are not so engaged assemble together in their community shrine. The *tse-chu* rite often begins with a *zhab-tän* reading for the *tza-wäi la-ma* and follows with an offering using P'a-d'am-pa Sang-gyä texts.

The biggest *tse-chu* is the first month, ten days into the Tibetan new year. At this time the largest (*dr'ong-pa*) households in each hamlet vie to be the grandest benefactor. Each invites *ser-ky'im* to perform at their home for anywhere from two to five days. It depends on how much the house can afford, since there is considerable expense involved in feeding the *dr'a-pa* and supplying the *tsog*. After the *tsog* is offered, it is divided and distributed to each household in the village. (It is because of the *tsog* calculations that everyone in D'ing-ri knows the number of houses and people in his village.) If the benefactor is very generous, enough *tsog* will be made so everyone in the *kor-k'ong* receives a share. When it is time to distribute the offering, one can hear the call ringing across the hill—"tsog-len-par-shog, tsog-len-par-shog" (come and get the *tsog*, come and get it!)

For some villagers the *tse-chu* of the preceding month, the twelfth Tibetan month, is also important—so we find similar gatherings arranged.

Every village must celebrate a *tse-chu* known as *sa-jang*. The date of the *sa-jang* festival varies from village to village; for some it is the fifth month; others celebrate it in the tenth month. It is an occasion for the entire *kor-k'ong* to gather at their local *ser-ky'im gön-pa*. The day's event climaxes with the distribution of the *tsog*. In this case every household has already contributed a share to the offering. Each makes a customary offering to their *tza-wäi la-ma* on the occasion of the *sa-jang*; it is usually done before the gathering since after the ritual is complete a feast begins with dancing, drinking, singing and gambling, keeping everyone active until well into the next day.

There are four other holy festival days observed throughout D'ing-ri

and in most parts of Tibet. *lha-b'ab-d'ü-ch'en* is one whose date changes from year to year; the second is *sa-ga-da-wa* on the full moon (fifteenth day) of the fourth Tibetan month; *dr'ug-pa-tse-zhi*, the fourth of the sixth month, is the great celebration for Padmasambhava; the big new year celebration in D'ing-ri is the *so-nam-pa lo-sar* held a month before the national (king's) new year.

On the night before *so-nam-pa lo-sar*, individual families gather all over D'ing-ri in their own households to celebrate the *lü-dzong*. No *ch'ö-pa* are called here, and the simple recitation involved is done by the *a-k'u* of the house. It is not a religious event but I nevertheless observed a *tor-ma* effigy being expelled from the house and locked out. There is much gaiety and joking and a soup called *gu-t'ug* (the broth with nine special ingredients) is served out in abundant quantities.

Numerous household rites are performed for the regular protection of the D'ing-ri household, for the good health of its members and for its general prosperity. Every morning a senior member of the house offers *sang*, incense accompanied by an invocation. And in the evening the offerings of *kar-sur* and *mar-sur* are made to the household gods.

These simple rites can be done by a member of the house but most call for specialists. Usually it is a *ser-ky'im* from the local *ser-ky'im gön-pa*. There are likely to be two or three times in a month when rituals are required to expel from the house, bad spirits that have been causing one or other of its occupants illness. Even minor illnesses will be regarded as signs of the intrusion of malevolent spirits and they must be removed. In addition to random occurrences of this kind there are the occasional events of birth and death which, because they bring a state of pollution of the household, call for purification rituals.

Birth in D'ing-ri brings impurity to the entire household, and all members are confined to the house for several days. No one may enter or leave, neither to deliver the baby nor to announce the birth. It is not the pollution that is so excluding but the presence of dangerous *nö-pa* spirits who threaten the safety of the infant and its mother. There are dangers that can cause a male child to change into a female in the critical few days after birth, therefore care is taken to conceal the sex of the child.<sup>3</sup> A *dr'a-pa* is called to the house a week or so later to

<sup>3</sup>The birth is finally announced with the placing of a rock at the entrance to the household, white for a boy and a black one if the newly born is a girl.

perform a brief purification rite called *tr'ül-söl*, and his departure is the sign to neighbours and *ga-nye* that they may now come and extend warm wishes and their *nga-lag* gift.<sup>4</sup> At this time, or a month later depending on their health, the mother and infant host a party. Called *p'ang-sang*; this raucous celebration is well attended by kin and friends in the village who bring buckets of beer, but it largely ignores the infirmed mother and child.

If a child is illegitimately born in the crucial three-month period of spring after the fields have been sown, more elaborate rituals than usual must be performed. This is a time when the fertility of the land is threatened and it is believed such a birth is inauspicious.<sup>5</sup> The mother must be moved beyond the village limits and her child born there in a hut built for them. Only when the last day of the spring period ends, and only after completing the necessary purification rite are the mother and child permitted to return. Their house has then to sponsor a feast for the entire village, making the matter similar to the serious Lepcha rules for illegitimate births (Gorer, 1967, p 172).

On no account may a child be born in its maternal house, called its *a-zhang* house. This question most frequently arises when the mother is unmarried and still at her parents' (brothers') house. About the time of delivery the girl is removed to a shed at the corner of their property and there her baby is delivered. After the purification rite they both return to the main house. No one can tell me why these birth observances are so important, apart from explaining that the arrival of a new member in the house threatens to disturb the equilibrium of the household gods. Given the importance of the Tibetan household in social organization, it is not surprising that so many rituals are done in the house and concern the household gods. This is an area of religion calling for further research.

Marriage, like birth, involves some degree of religious sanction. As far as it involves the employment of *ch'ö-pa*, only *dr'a-pa* are called to read texts in a corner room of the festive house. Much of the actual ceremony of the marriage takes place around the singing of the *mo-lha* (see Chapter Eight) chanted by a colourful *mo-pön*, a layman who acts very much like a priest here. (An analysis of the content and form

<sup>4</sup>Some cash, beer and cloth are given, sometimes with the ceremonial scarf, but also without it. Cf my discussion of reciprocity among Tibetans for the wider implications of these *nga-lag* gifts (Aziz, 1977).

<sup>5</sup>Among the *ser-ky'im* women of D'ing-ri, any birth that occurs in this three-month period is similarly treated, except that there is no feast for the villagers.

of the *mo-lha* is in progress and a full treatment of its religious significance will appear in that publication.) A third ceremony which should be considered part of the marriage rites is the *lha-dro* and involves a spirit medium, a *lha-k'a*. I draw attention to it here because it is another of those household rites calling for more research. Why something so universally Tibetan and central to the marriage has been so ignored in the literature on religion I do not know.

The *lha-dro* is not secret, although it is a private household affair attended by the *na-ma* and her husband, as well as members of the girl's house. It is held in the maternal house (it is the paternal house if it is a *mag-pa* marriage), so the *na-ma* and her groom return here for the occasion. The officiant is usually a woman, called a *lha-k'a*, who has been invited here and employed for the day.<sup>6</sup> She is in charge of the ritual, performed in front of the assembled family, and begins by invoking the *lha* and assuming its identity. The spirit must be soothed and pleased before the family make their appeal that it allow the girl's departure from the house to proceed and that no displeasure be marked on this house. After the god accedes there are offerings in gratitude and the *lha-k'a* lets the god return.

The girl's visit to her home is the only opportunity many of her neighbours and some of her family get to celebrate the marriage. (Usually marriage is inter-village and the primary festival has taken place in the groom's village.) So a party follows with lots of barley beer and dancing that will keep the entire village delighted well into the next day. A few days later, laden with more *nga-lag* gifts and good wishes, the couple depart for their home and the marriage is formally complete. Now the natal home carries no further responsibility. Children born to the girl are the responsibility of the other house and the *na-ma*'s funerary rites are hereafter borne by her marriage house.

Funerary rituals and subsequent memorial rites are the most elaborate of all, requiring employment of many *dr'a-pa*, consultations with astrologers, offerings to the *la-ma*, and presentations of *t'ang-ka* and prayer flags. When someone in the house dies, *dr'a-pa* from the local *ser-ky'im* are immediately called to begin reading the *b'ar-d'o*, the standard Bud-

<sup>6</sup>There are only four *lha-k'a* or *p'a-bo* in D'ing-ri, all of them women. Two live in the *ser-ky'im* Gön Lha-dong and another lives in Zu-tzo. All are *d'ü-ch'ung* and relatively poor, although they are kept busy travelling all over D'ing-ri for these *lha-dro* and other spirit medium rites. Details of a related form of Tibetan spirit-mediumship are now available in a newly published account by Per-Arne (1976) who has been working in Nepal.



dhist text read to accompany the deceased's spirit through the hazardous route between death and rebirth.<sup>7</sup> Even before a message reaches the *tza-wäi la-ma*, the *ser-ky'im dr'a-pa* will have arrived, prepared the corpse and begun the reading. When death occurs a state of pollution is on the house and its members are not permitted to come and go. Even a neighbour who is called in to help cook for the chanting *dr'a-pa* should not leave the premises until the corpse is removed and the house purified.<sup>8</sup>

At a time determined through astrological calculations (by *ser-ky'im* or *la-ma*) the *b'ar-d'o* ends and the corpse is taken to Lang-kor or Tzib-ri for disposal.<sup>9</sup> As soon as the funerary procession with the accompanying *ser-ky'im* leaves, another *dr'a-pa* comes into the house to purify it. His departure announces to the consoling friends that they may enter the house and make their *sem-so* offerings of sympathy.

The household provides a feast to which all villagers, *ga-nyc* and beggars are welcome. Additional coins and food are given to mendicants as a merit-making deed. This completed, the main householder must then make the *p'o-a* and *ngo-ten* offering to the *tza-wäi la-ma* of the deceased. This involves his journeying to the *la-ma's gön-pa* and offering *tsog* in the *gön-pa lha-k'ang*. In some houses *ser-ky'im* return to the sponsor's house to read for another week after the funeral, and again seven weeks later. After a year and on successive memorials according to their means, the household of the deceased again calls *dr'a-pa* for readings and *tsog* offerings. These are all planned on auspicious times established by the *la-ma*.

Memorials (*ngo-ten*) are done for one's parents, the generation immediately preceding. I have never heard of a grandparent being so recalled, or any earlier ancestor. And I am assured by D'ing-ri informants that there is nothing in their culture which could be interpreted as an ancestor ritual. There is no exclusive gathering either of agnates or other kin at any

<sup>7</sup>In addition to the now classic Evans-Wentz' *Tibetan Book of The Dead*, there is now an improved new translation of the *b'ar-d'o* by Fremantle and Trungpa (1975).

<sup>8</sup>In Gang-gar town and a few adjacent villages the purification ceremony is done as soon as the corpse has been wrapped and the reading begun. Therefore visitors arrive with condolences during these days while the *b'ar-d'o* is being read. This is also the custom among the Solu and Khumbu Sherpa.

<sup>9</sup>*d'ur-ir'ö* (funerary ground) is located at the top of both these holy sites. There are two at Tzib-ri and one on Lang-kor hill. Unlike Tzib-ri the Lang-kor site does not house clutches of vultures who consume the body, but when there is a funeral party at Lang-kor the Tzib-ri vultures fly over there for the meal.

time, and death memorials are only done by the kin and children of the deceased who remain in the house. On these occasions, as at the feast following the funeral, food is distributed to everyone in the village or, if the house is wealthy, to each member of the *kor-k'ong*.

There is no ritual in D'ing-ri formalizing change from child to adulthood but people gather for a celebration when someone leaves the secular life to become a religious. When the *ser-ky'im* and celibate *ch'ö-pa* are officially ordained their hair is cut, they wear a distinctive robe and they receive a new name. The ordination is a ceremony—usually several novices pass through it together—officiated by a *la-ma* and sanctioned by friends who present gifts and good wishes. For the *ser-ky'im* novices a special version of the wedding *mo-lha* is sung by a senior member of the *gön-pa* and like a marriage this *rite de passage* is accompanied by dancing and drinking throughout the *gön-pa*. The ordination of a *rab-j'ung*, *ge-tsül*, or *ge-long* is a more sober affair but is still an occasion for food and enjoyment. *dr'ug-pa-tse-zhi* (the fourth of the sixth month) is the favoured day for these rites.

This concludes the list of more formal rituals which involve the *ch'ö-pa* in an active calendar of events. They do not occur with any regularity among the laity, but we would find each house involved in sponsoring an average of two of these per month. But as many again and probably more rituals are done for other reasons. These are (a) to bring merit to the sponsoring individual and (b) to rid her house of malevolent forces, and to keep away marauding spirits.

Desire to increase one's merit (*p'an-yön*) is responsible for much religious activity. Throughout D'ing-ri, as in other Buddhist societies, laypeople conscious of the accumulation of piles of unfavourable *karma*, believe there is a way to reduce that and gain favour for a better rebirth—through promoting religious deeds that make merit. This largely involves the employment of *ch'ö-pa* in his home or in the *gön-pa*. Fearful laypersons (it seems the wealthier they are the more fearful) give coins and food to beggars and mendicants. (Every beggar knows a simple *mantra* that will make him a mendicant.) Villagers are deluged by *a-mi* and *dr'a-pa* during the two-month period when they wander through here for the purpose of gathering donations.

The *zhab-tän* they sponsor for their *la-ma*, the gifts of butter provided for *gön-pa* lamps, the pilgrimages to Lha-sa and Kathmandu are all undertaken by the individual to win more merit. *tse-chu* on the half moon is the preferred time for the sponsoring of merit-making rituals, but they are done throughout the month and all year round. Often people choose

to sponsor something they particularly like, such as a *ma-ni-pa* singing his poems in the courtyard, or they provide food for an individual *ch'ö-pa* meditating for three years. It is also customary to give a large gift directly to a *la-ma* who will utilize that money or grain in a variety of ways involving the employment of *a-ni* and *dr'a-pa* at his *gön-pa* in additional religious activities. I describe some of these in the course of my observations on the Tibetan and Sherpa monastery kitchens in Nepal (Aziz, 1976).

The preparation of texts, the constant turning of the giant *ma-ni* wheel, the distribution of *tsog*, the recitation of 100,000 *mantra* and more are all according to the *la-ma's* order, and work arranged and overseen by him and his officers is paid for from his general funds. The summer retreat of *jar-nä* when all *gön-pa* members must remain in their quarters, is partly funded by the individual *ch'ö-pa* and partly by the *la-ma*, again using the contributions of his sponsors to employ the cloistered *a-ni* and *dr'a-pa* in religious deeds.

*ch'ö-pa* who do not live at a *la-ma gön-pa*, secure work directly from merit-seeking laypeople and even solicit funds by reminding a person that generosity will bring her merit. A lucky ascetic may find a rich sponsor to look after him during an extended meditation, or, if he is not the *yogin* type, he may be hired to attend the private shrine and turn the *ma-ni* wheel. A *ch'ö-pa* can attach himself to a household for many years in this way. Even where a *dr'a-pa* or *a-ni* draws support directly from their household, merit will accrue to those relatives who take that responsibility.

In those activities specifically designed and promoted towards the accumulation of merit, it is easy to see the simple economic exchange going on. Both western observers and D'ing-ri people comment on this in discussions of Buddhist behaviour. It is particularly easy to see it in economic terms because merit-making often involves only the sponsor and the religious adept. The *ch'ö-pa* is performing a religious service and the sponsor is paying him or her for it. The service often takes the form of a highly skilled art so that the adept is often a specialist, like the poet *ma-ni-pa*, the scroll painter and the *ma-ni* stone carver. These three *ch'ö-pa* are particularly good examples of the religious artisan, and one might easily understand why each should be paid, since what they produce is an art, in form as well as in conception. There is a visible product involved.

But *mantra* and meditation and the relief of suffering are also commodities in a religion such as this. And people who can promote

that, including simple, barely literate *ch'ö-pa*, can also produce merit. They too deserve to be paid, therefore. It is the *a-ni* (the women generally do not become skilled) and the older, *ga-ch'ö* who are usually found engaged in the simpler activities. The very support one offers a *ch'ö-pa* is itself a meritorious act, since to enable someone to be a religious is to release another individual from the lay world of illusion and suffering. Therefore the benefactor has merit generated by this in addition to the merit produced by the prayer.

That every religious service has a fixed fee attests to the seriousness and consciousness of the economic exchange involved here. A hundred thousand *mantra* cost so much; a flag-printing is a fixed amount; a daily rate and food have to be paid for each day a *dr'a-pa* works at your house; a *tsog* must have specified ingredients and be large enough to supply each member of the *gön-pa* or the village and so on. These rates are known by everyone and the benefactor who fails to pay the accepted fee soon finds it difficult to get anyone but an illiterate mendicant to work for him. But one cannot pay more for a highly skilled religious. Benefits to a popular *dr'a-pa* come in the quality of food he is served and the freedom to select the other *dr'a-pa* who will accompany him. The sponsor knows what kind of service to expect, just as the *ch'ö-pa* knows what fee he should receive.

An experienced layperson knows the difference between an intent, skilled *ch'ö-pa* and a lazy one. He can also make out if a ritual is sloppily performed. People talk with other villagers about these things, so that over the years the most skilled *ch'ö-pa* in the various religious arts become known in the area. There is considerable individual scope in these matters, therefore, and the best are rewarded by prestige and full employment. Knowing these benefits are possible, *ch'ö-pa* sometimes work hard to perfect their craft, and they may even change their life style to compete for those rewards.

A degree of competition results which inspires creativity and mobility. One example is the itinerant *Sö-nam* who had once lived in a *gön-pa* and only visited villages on the annual autumn begging circuit, when he would also perform services. He so liked the popularity and welcomed the regular income, that he eventually left his *gön-pa* to become an itinerant. He now travels through the valleys working at individual houses all through the year. Another energetic *ch'ö-pa* is *Nor-gyä* the bard (*ma-ni-pa*), whose poetry rings through D'ing-ri years after the pilgrimages are over. At those times *Nor-gyä* accompanies pilgrims from shrine to shrine, guiding the devotees with his exquisite poems

that sing the highlights of each holy place. The poems so enchant pilgrims that groups of them vie with each other to hire the bard for their own pilgrimage. Each party keeps him for several days, and with pilgrimage season so limited, he finds himself booked for several years in advance. Similarly a popular *ser-ky'im* becomes unavailable on short notice. Some *ser-ky'im dr'a-pa* claim to have a score or more regular clients, and they find themselves occupied every day in one or another of those households.

The *a-ni* of D'ing-ri, like most Tibetan nuns, have a reputation for their sweet rendering of the Buddhist prayers, and villagers have come to look forward to the women's annual tours into the hamlets. These present the rare occasions when prayers can be heard outside the *a-ni-gōn-pa*. The *a-ni* will meanwhile have been practicing their chanting, knowing appreciation will be expressed in the patron's generosity.<sup>10</sup>

#### CONCLUDING REMARKS

What all this amounts to in wider economic terms is solid economic support within D'ing-ri for its own religious system, with its fifty-four *gōn-pa* and 1,700 or so clerics. The richness of the system is to a large degree a reflection of the prosperity of modern D'ing-ri society. While it has drawn on some outside resources, most notably the *la-ma* teachers, the D'ing-ri religious complex is an expression of local character: the growing prosperity, the early history around Lang-kor and Tzib-ri, heterogeneity of population, the momentum of social mobility, the scope for individuality and so on.

As for one's membership in the religious community there are very few rules. The rules that give the system a framework and its motivation are at the centre where the *la-ma* operates, and at the edges with the population of laymen and other clients. The *ch'ö-pa*, whether itinerants, *yogin*, monastic officers or *ser-ky'im*, act as agents facilitating the interaction between the two parts of a wheel-like system. The *la-ma* is at the hub, clients are on the rim, and *ch'ö-pa* are the spokes. This model can also be seen as a symbol of the Buddhist wheel of life, with the vagaries of *sansaric* sufferings and needs spread along the edges, but drawn together through their links towards the central *Bodhisattva* with

<sup>10</sup>These sounds are now available from commercial productions. The first of several recordings by Tibetan nuns is *The Songs of Milarepa* (Broadband and Aziz, Lyrichord, 1975).

a promise for release and unity at the centre.

It is somewhat paradoxical that the chapter on D'ing-ri religion, compared to the preceding discussions, should reflect a character so much more fluid and individualistic. While the secular social structure is far from rigid, the *gön-pa*, in contrast to the hamlets, seem to be filled with people who exhibit a degree of independence that is sharper than that of laypersons. The religious ones appear to operate in a more fluid social atmosphere.

Evidence from our review of the religious complex adds strength to the general thesis that this example of a Central Asian culture is an affirmation of the continued vitality of their people through the nineteenth century into the modern period. With similar kinds of facts from other parts of Tibet and the Himalayas, it is highly probable that the dynamic and growing nature of D'ing-ri is not an isolated case but a more general condition in this part of Asia. It is hoped this study can be used as a model for anthropologists, a methodological model for historians, and a pragmatic model for Buddhists. Put this way, I may be unduly ambitious. For myself, I have already derived abundant excitement in bringing D'ing-ri into historical reality as its humble biographer.



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## Appendixes

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APPENDIX I

D'ING-RI SER-KY'IM GÖN-PA VILLAGES (1959)

<i>(phonetic rendering)</i>	<i>Village Name (transliteration)</i>	<i>No of Persons</i>	<i>No of Houses</i>
Dr'ag-kar-po	<i>brag dkar po</i>	100	18
Gön-sar	<i>dgon gsar</i>	100	20
Nga-nyän	<i>na myan</i>	100	20
T'ong-tro-ling	<i>thon kro gliñ</i>	90	16
Mug-pa	<i>rmug pa</i>		
D'ar-gyä-ling	<i>dar rgyas gliñ</i>	45	
Chag-ch'u-mo	<i>lcags chu mo</i>	30	5
Lha-dong	<i>lha gdon</i>	60	12
Ra-p'ug	<i>ra phug</i>		
Chag-p'u	<i>lcags phu</i>	42	7
Gye-dr'ing	<i>'gye drin</i>		
Na-lum	<i>na lum</i>	45	9
Lang-kor	<i>glan skor</i>	90	13
Ch'u-bar	<i>chu dbar</i>		
Gön-sam	<i>dgon bsam</i>		
Mug-ch'ung	<i>rmug chün</i>		
Gön-lha-dong	<i>dgon lha gdon</i>	40	8
Gön-p'ug	<i>dgon phug</i>	200	21
Ch'ö-lung	<i>chos lun</i>	100	14
Tza-ri-bug	<i>rtsa ri 'bug</i>		
Shar-lung	<i>śar lun</i>	50	1
Gön-pa-j'ang	<i>dgon pa byan</i>	67	12
Lha-ding	<i>lha ldin</i>		
Riu-ch'e (before 1940)	<i>riu che</i>	100	18
Lung-j'ang	<i>rlun byan</i>		
Yöl-dong	<i>yol gdon</i>	120	19
Dza-kya	<i>rdza skya</i>	60	10

See Map 7 for distribution over D'ing-ri

## APPENDIX II

D'ING-RI LAY VILLAGES (1959)<sup>1</sup>

(phonetic rendering)	Village Name	(transliteration)
Kar-ky'u		<i>dkar khyu</i>
D'ing-p'ug		<i>diñ phug</i>
J'e-p'ug		<i>bye phug</i>
Tza-tr'a		<i>tsa khra</i>
Shag-le		<i>śag sle</i>
Tr'i-ri		<i>khri ri</i>
K'um-ch'ung		<i>khum chuñ</i>
Drong-ch'ung		<i>'bron chuñ</i>
Dre-lhã		<i>'dre lhas</i>
Te-tung		<i>ste stuñ</i>
Tr'ag-tze		<i>khrag tse</i>
Mãn-tö		<i>sman stod</i>
Mãn-mä		<i>sman smad</i>
Tr'eng-kya		<i>phreñ skya</i>
Gyã-pön		<i>rgya dpon</i>
Kar-ch'ung		<i>kar chuñ</i>
P'u-ri		<i>phu ri</i>
Gu-tso		<i>mgu mtsho</i>
Tr'ül-dül		<i>phrul 'dul</i>
Gön-mar		<i>dgon dmar</i>
Do-ch'ö		<i>mdo mchod</i>
Tsa-da		<i>tsha mda'</i>
Ch'u-tsän		<i>chu tshan</i>
Dong-pa		<i>gdon pa</i>
Zhing-ri		<i>ziñ ris</i>
Lang-kor <sup>3</sup>		<i>glan skor</i>
Lang-tr'i		<i>glan khri</i>
Ku-ra		<i>ku ra</i>
Dro-de		<i>sbro bde</i>
Tag-tsang		<i>stag tshan</i>
B'e-kar		<i>be dkar</i>
Shar-tö		<i>śar stod</i>
Shar-mä		<i>śar smad</i>
Nö-ch'ung		<i>gnos chuñ</i>
Yül-ch'ung		<i>yul chuñ</i>
Sa-lha		<i>sa lha</i>
Shi-pe		<i>śi spe</i>
Pe-nag		<i>spe nag</i>

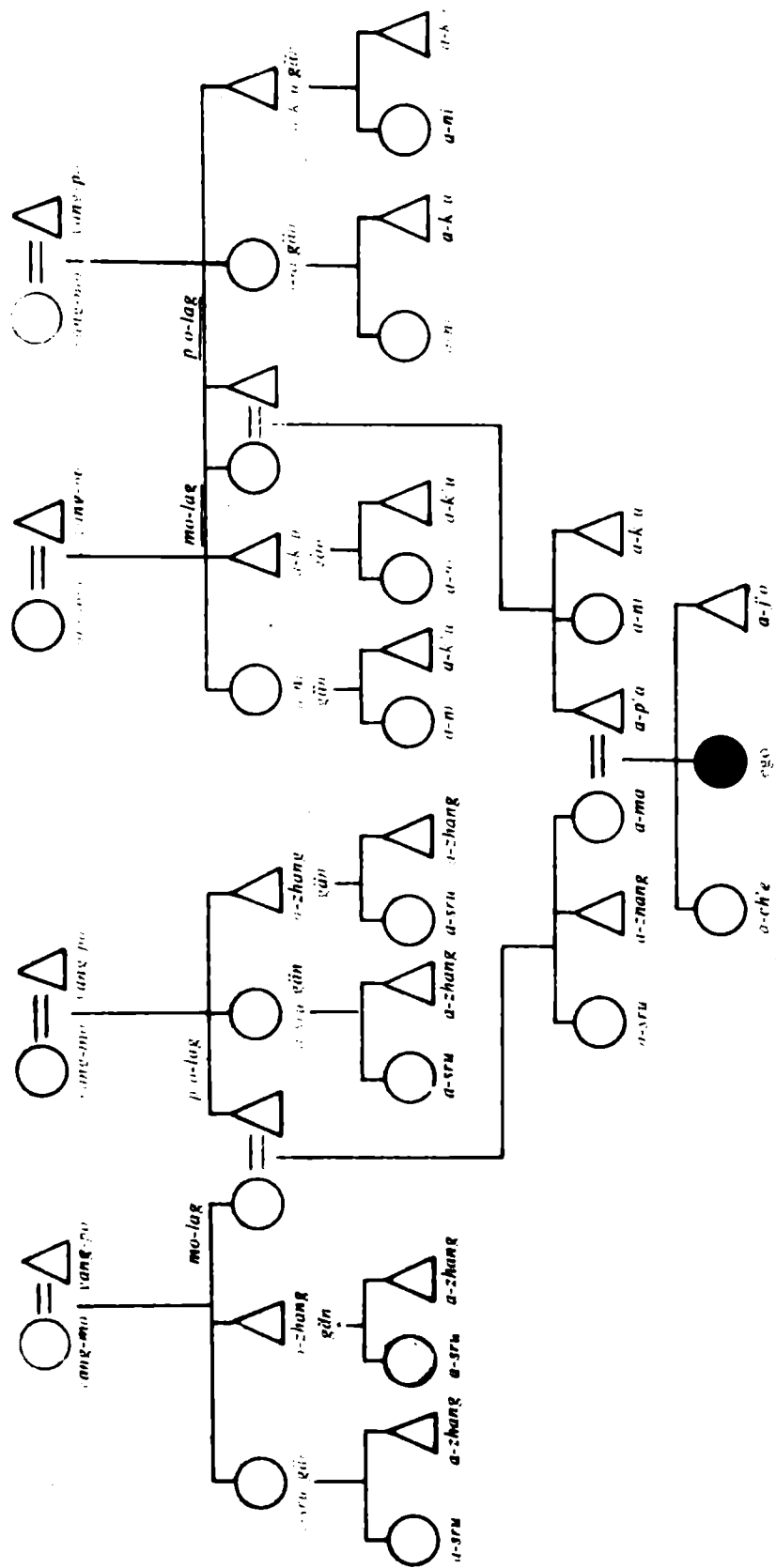
De-sa	<i>sde sa</i>
Zha-kar	<i>ža dkar</i>
Gang-gar	<i>sgaṅ sgar</i>
Ra-zam	<i>ra zam</i>
Ra-ch'u	<i>ra chu</i>
Shar-lung <sup>1</sup>	<i>śar luṅ</i>
Nā-lung	<i>naṣ luṅ</i>
Lung-j'ang <sup>2</sup>	<i>rluṅ byaṅ</i>
Dzeng-gog	<i>rdzeṅ gog</i>
Me-mo	<i>me mo</i>
Ngam-pa	<i>ṅam pa</i>
Tza-kor	<i>rtsa skor</i>
Ja-lung	<i>lja luṅ</i>
Pang-le	<i>spaṅ le</i>
Kya-hrag ( <i>nomadic region</i> )	<i>skya hrag</i>
Ling-nub	<i>gliṅ nub</i>
Ling-shar	<i>gliṅ śar</i>
Ch'u-dr'ug	<i>chu drug</i>
Shi-ri-da	<i>śi ri mda'</i>
B'ar-tso	<i>bar mtsho</i>
Yi-shar	<i>g'yi śar</i>
Nub-lung	<i>nub luṅ</i>
Tö-mi	<i>stod mi</i>
Da-mar zhi	<i>gda dmar g'zis</i>
Mang-ky'ung	<i>maṅ khyuṅ</i>
Pang-sä	<i>spaṅ gsad</i>
Yöl-dong	<i>yol gdon</i>
Kong-tza	<i>koṅ tsa</i>
Nä-sa	<i>naṣ sa</i>
Dong-p'ug	<i>gdon phug</i>
Tr'om-ze	<i>khrom ze</i>
Lho-ch'en	<i>lho chen</i>
Gyä-nor	<i>rgya nor</i>
Shel-kar-dzong	<i>śel dkar rdzoṅ</i>

<sup>1</sup>The location of all these hamlets appears on Map 8. Some are indicated in the Tibetan mental map (Map 3).

<sup>2</sup>Note that the three names Lang-kor, Shar-lung and Lung-j'ang are also listed as D'ing-ri *ser-ky'im*. Nevertheless there are separate lay communities adjacent to the *gön-pa*.

APPENDIX III

THE BILATERAL KINSHIP SYSTEM OF THE DING RI PEOPLE



APPENDIX IV

A SELECTED LIST OF D'ING-RI VILLAGE TAX SCHEDULES

<i>Village Name</i>	<i>No of Households</i>	<i>Tax-in-Kind<sup>1</sup> (Recipient's Name)</i>	<i>Monk<sup>2</sup> Tax</i>	<i>Military Tax</i>
<b>A. Villages designated as central government property</b>				
Gön-pa J'ang* (formerly owned by a private estate in Sa-kya)	12	Shel-kar La-dr'ang <sup>3</sup>		
Gön-p'ug* (formerly owned by private estate)	21	Shel-kar La-dr'ang		
Te-tung	7	Lo-säl-ling K'ang- tzang (in Drä-pung, Lha-sa)	1 man to Päl-ding Gön- pa (in D'ing-ri)	1 man
Yöl-dong	18	P'el-gyä-ling <sup>4</sup> (branch of Se-ra, Lha-sa)		5 men
B'ar-tso	32	P'el-gyä-ling	3 men to Shel-kar-ch'ö- de <sup>5</sup>	
Ling-shar	18	P'el-gyä-ling		
Yi-shar	23	P'el-gyä-ling		
Kong-tza	22	P'el-gyä-ling	1 man to Shel-kar-ch'ö-de	
Ra-ch'u	19 (govt subjects) 1 (private noble subject)	Shel-kar-ch'ö-de	4 men to Shel-kar-ch'ö-de and (pre-1940) 2 men to Dro-p'an-kar-ling	
Taa-da	13	P'el-gyä-ling		

Sä-lha	17 (govt subjects) 1 (private noble subject)	P'el-gyä-ling	1 man
Do-ch'ö	18	Yi-zhi-ka in J'ang province	
Gön-lha-dong*	8	P'el-gyä-ling	
Yöl-dong-gon*	19	Wong-nga La-dr'ang	
Ch'ö-lung-gön*	14	Shel-kar La-dr'ang	
Shi-pe	15	Gang-gar, for Shel-kar <i>dzong</i>	2 men

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**B. Villages designated as property of a religious establishment**

Kar-chung	17	Tra-shi-thün-po (in Zhi-ka-tze)	
Tr'ag-tze	30	Tra-shi-lhün-po	3 men to Shel-kar-ch'ö-de 1 man to Dro-p'än-kar- ling

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**C. Villages designated as private (nobles') property**

Lha-dong-gön*	12	Pu-rang Estate <sup>6</sup> (owner)	each household <sup>7</sup> sends a son to Pu-rang Gön-pa
Shar-lung*	14	Sa-kya Estate <sup>6</sup> (owner since 1950)	
Na-lum*	9	Na-lum La-ma Estate (owner)	
Gön-mar*	22	Pu-rang Estate (owner)	each household sends a son to Shel-kar-ch'ö-de
Nub-lung	30	Pu-rang Estate (owner)	2 men

Tza-kor	50	Wo-ma-lung Noble Estate (owner)	10 govt houses in Tza-kor pay to Shel-kar-ch'ö-de	each govt house sends a son to Shel-kar-ch'ö-de	2 men
Dong-pa	30	Pumapa Noble Estate in Sa-kya (owner)			2 men
De-sa	17	Sa-kya Estate (owner)			
Dre-lhä	19	Pu-rang Estate (owner)			

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\*designates those hamlets which are *ser-ky'im gön-pa*. Blanks have been left where information is unavailable.

<sup>1</sup>Tax-in-kind refers to butter and other agricultural goods. The recipient is a government designated subleasee, usually a religious institution. Work levies are made against all D'ing-ri villages but they are not registered in this table.

<sup>2</sup>The monk tax refers to the conscription of men into monkhood. The term is usually for life, unlike the military tax which recruits individuals for shorter periods.

<sup>3</sup>La-dr'ang is the estate of a *la-ma* which is economically independent from the rest of the monastery but still government-supported.

<sup>4</sup>P'el-gyā-ling is a Ge-lug monastery of considerable size on the Tibet-Nepal border at Nya-nang. Dro-p'än-kar-ling is another major subleasee in the Nya-nang area, but it is said to be a Ka-gyü-pa tradition monastery.

<sup>5</sup>This is the large Ge-lug community of monks on the edge of D'ing-ri, a considerable number of whom are recruited from the local population. It is independent of Shel-kar-dzong, the regional headquarters, although it is a major government stronghold.

<sup>6</sup>Since the precise name of the noble family is unknown we list only its locality: for example Pu-rang and Sa-kya.

<sup>7</sup>A household is required to send a son only if there are three born in the generation; if not, other arrangements are made.



APPENDIX V

D'ING-RI MONASTIC GÖN-PA (SANCTUARIES)\* 1959

<i>(phonetic rendering)</i>	<i>Monastery Name (transliteration)</i>
1 Dza-rong	<i>dza roñ</i>
2 Do-ngag-ch'ö-ling (main)	<i>mdo snags chos gliñ</i>
3 Sam-tän-ch'ö-p'ug	<i>gsam gian chos phug</i>
4 Tra-shi-t'ong-mön	<i>bkra śis mthoñ smon</i>
5 Ch'ö-ling-k'or	<i>chos gliñ bhkor</i>
6 J'ang-ch'ub-t'ar-ling	<i>byañ chub thur gliñ</i>
7 Rong-ch'ung	<i>roñ chuñ</i>
8 Rong-p'ug-tö-she-rab-ling	<i>roñ phug stod śes rab gliñ</i>
9 Ch'ö-k'or-gang	<i>chos 'khor sgañ</i>
10 Lang-kor	<i>glañ skor</i>
11 Lab-tr'än	<i>slab phran</i>
12 J'ang-ding	<i>byañ ldiñ</i>
13 Tra-mar	<i>tra dmar</i>
14 Tzib-ri Kiu-tsang (main)	<i>rtsibs ri ki'u tshañ</i>
15 Sam-ling	<i>bsam gliñ</i>
16 Kya-p'ug	<i>skya phug</i>
17 Tra-shi-t'ong-mön	<i>bkra śis mthoñ smon</i>
18 Ding-po-ch'e	<i>sdiñ po che</i>
19 Sam-drub-ch'ö-ling	<i>bsam 'grub chos gliñ</i>
20 Ne-rang	<i>ne rañ</i>
21 De-ch'en-teng (Nya-nang)	<i>bde chen steñ</i>
22 Yu-lo-kö	<i>g'yu lo bkod</i>
23 Tra-shi-ch'ö-teng	<i>bkra śis chos steñ</i>
24 Lang-tso	<i>glañ mtsho</i>
25 Na-dr'a	<i>na dra</i>
26 P'a-ma Ch'ö-drön	<i>pad ma chos sgron</i>
27 Zur-k'ang	<i>zur khañ</i>
28 Päl-ding	<i>dpul ldiñ</i>
29 Ga-ra	<i>dga' ra</i>
30 Nam-ding	<i>gnam ldiñ</i>
31 Ch'ö-zang	<i>chos bzañ</i>
32 Gön-sar	<i>dgon gsar</i>
33 Gön-chog	<i>dgon lcog</i>
34 Shel-kar-ch'ö-de	<i>śel dkar chos sde</i>

These are the centres where only coenobites reside; they are distinct from the D'ing-ri *ser-kv'im gön-pa* (Appendix I). See Map 9 for distribution over D'ing-ri.

One to 7 are units within the Dza-rong complex; units 9 to 13 are branches of Dza-rong located in other parts of D'ing-ri. The 11 centres, 14 to 24, are parts of the Tr'i-pön La-ma network.

## APPENDIX VI

### LIST OF TIBETAN TERMS APPEARING IN THE TEXT

In order to enable scholars to know the spellings of the Tibetan terms used, those which are not transliterated in the appendix lists of place names are listed below, in a collection of proper names and a list of common words. They are transcribed according to the system adopted by the Library of Congress (1970) which, for the convenience of readers, is set out here.

#### Vowels and diphthongs

ཨ	a	ེ	e
ཨི	i	ེའ	o
ཨུ	u		

#### Consonants

gutturals		palatals		cerebrals		dentals	
ཀ	ka	ཅ	ca	ཌ	ta	ཏ	ta
ཁ	kha	ཇ	cha	ཎ	tha	ཐ	tha
ག	ga	ཉ	ja	ཏ	da	ད	da
ང	ña	ཏ	ña	ཏ	dha	ན	na
				ཏ	na		

labials		affricatives		semivowels		sibilants		aspirate	
པ	pa	ཏ	tsa	ཡ	wa	འ	za	ཨ	h
ཕ	pha	ཏ	tsha	འ	a	འ	za		
བ	ba	ཏ	dza	ཡ	ya	འ	sa		
མ	ma			ར	ra	འ	sa		
				ཡ	la				

All transliterated words remain uncapitalized and italicized.

Names of persons and places are capitalized in their phonetic rendering, in which case they are not placed in italics.

APPENDIX VII

COMMON TIBETAN TERMS

<i>a-ch'e</i>	<i>a che   a lce</i>	<i>dr'ib</i>	<i>grib</i>
<i>a-j'o</i>	<i>a jo</i>	<i>dr'og</i>	<i>grogs</i>
<i>a-k'u</i>	<i>a khu</i>	<i>dr'o-ma</i>	<i>gro ma</i>
<i>a-ma</i>	<i>a ma</i>	<i>dr'ong-ming</i>	<i>gron miñ</i>
<i>a-ni</i>	<i>a ñi</i>	<i>dr'ong-pa</i>	<i>gron pa</i>
<i>a-nii-gõn-pa</i>	<i>a ñi' i dgon pa</i>	<i>dr'ug-pa-tse-zhi</i>	<i>drug pa tshes b'zi</i>
<i>a-ni-log</i>	<i>a ñi log</i>	<i>dr'ung-lag</i>	<i>druñ lags</i>
<i>a-p'a</i>	<i>a pha</i>	<i>dr'ung-yig</i>	<i>druñ yig</i>
<i>a-rag</i>	<i>a rag</i>	<i>d'ü-ch'en</i>	<i>dus chen</i>
<i>a-zhang</i>	<i>a zan</i>	<i>d'ü-ch'ung</i>	<i>dus chuñ</i>
<i>b'ag-ma</i>	<i>bag ma</i>	<i>dung-gyü</i>	<i>gduñ brgyud</i>
<i>b'ag-yog</i>	<i>bag g'yog</i>	<i>d'ur-tr'ö</i>	<i>dur khrod</i>
<i>b'ar-d'o</i>	<i>bar do</i>	<i>dzo</i>	<i>mdzo</i>
<i>bu</i>	<i>bu</i>	<i>dzong</i>	<i>rdzoñ</i>
<i>bu-mo</i>	<i>bu mo</i>	<i>gä-ch'ö</i>	<i>rgas chos</i>
<i>ch'ang</i>	<i>chan</i>	<i>ga-nye</i>	<i>dga' ñe   dga' gñen</i>
<i>ch'ang-k'ang</i>	<i>chan khan</i>	<i>gän-po</i>	<i>rgan po</i>
<i>ch'ang-köl</i>	<i>chan skol</i>	<i>ge-long</i>	<i>dge sloñ</i>
<i>ch'ang-shä</i>	<i>chan bsad</i>	<i>ger-pa</i>	<i>sger pa</i>
<i>ch'am</i>	<i>'cham</i>	<i>ge-tsül</i>	<i>sge tshul</i>
<i>cham-ch'ung</i>	<i>lcam chuñ</i>	<i>gõn-pa</i>	<i>dgon pa</i>
<i>cham-ku-zhab</i>	<i>lcam sku zabs</i>	<i>go-sha-gyab-pa</i>	<i>bgo bsa'rgyab pa</i>
<i>cha-shä</i>	<i>ca bsad</i>	<i>gül-gyän</i>	<i>mgul rgyan</i>
<i>chi-ky'ab</i>	<i>spyi khyab</i>	<i>gu-t'ug</i>	<i>dgu thug</i>
<i>ch'ö-pa</i>	<i>chos pa</i>	<i>gyäl</i>	<i>rgyal</i>
<i>ch'ö-ten</i>	<i>mchod rten</i>	<i>gyäl-rig</i>	<i>rgyal rigs</i>
<i>chum-ma-dung</i>	<i>lcam ma dui</i>	<i>gyäl-po-lo-sar</i>	<i>rgyal po lo gsar</i>
<i>ch'u-zhib</i>	<i>phyu zib</i>	<i>gyü</i>	<i>brgyud</i>
<i>da-d'ar-shä</i>	<i>mda' dar bsad</i>	<i>jar-nä</i>	<i>dbyar gnas</i>
<i>da-dr'og</i>	<i>zla rogs</i>	<i>je-rig</i>	<i>rje rigs</i>
<i>dag-mo</i>	<i>bdag mo</i>	<i>jin-dag</i>	<i>sbyin bdag</i>
<i>dag-ku-zhab</i>	<i>bdag sku zabs</i>	<i>j'o-lag</i>	<i>jo lags</i>
<i>da-mo</i>	<i>zla mo</i>	<i>k'a-drül-wa</i>	<i>kha 'bral pa</i>
<i>dañ-shä</i>	<i>gdan bsad</i>	<i>k'an-po</i>	<i>mkhan po</i>
<i>da-rog</i>	<i>zla rogs</i>	<i>kar-sur</i>	<i>dkar bsur</i>
<i>d'ar-shä</i>	<i>dar bsad</i>	<i>ka-shä</i>	<i>ka bsad</i>
<i>de-pön</i>	<i>sde dpon</i>	<i>kä-shä</i>	<i>skas bsad</i>
<i>döl-pa</i>	<i>gdol pa</i>	<i>k'a-trä-ki-min-dro</i>	<i>kha sprad ki min 'gro</i>
<i>dr'ag-tzän</i>	<i>drag btsañ</i>	<i>kor-k'ong</i>	<i>skor khoñ</i>
<i>dr'ä-kang</i>	<i>bras rkañ</i>	<i>ku-gyü-pa</i>	<i>sku brgyud pa</i>
<i>dr'a-log</i>	<i>grwa log</i>	<i>ku-dr'ag</i>	<i>sku drag</i>
<i>dr'a-pa</i>	<i>grwa pa</i>	<i>ky'im-tzün</i>	<i>khyim btsun</i>

<i>lä</i>	<i>las</i>	<i>p'o-lag</i>	<i>pho lags</i>
<i>la-dr'ang</i>	<i>bla bran</i>	<i>p'o-lha</i>	<i>pho lha</i>
<i>la-ma</i>	<i>bla ma</i>	<i>p'ug-dzi</i>	<i>phugs rdzi</i>
<i>läñ</i>	<i>lan</i>	<i>pün</i>	<i>spun</i>
<i>lha-b'ab-d'ü-ch'en</i>	<i>lha babs dus chen</i>	<i>rab-j'ung</i>	<i>rab byün</i>
<i>lha-dro</i>	<i>lha sgro</i>	<i>sa-ga-da-wa</i>	<i>sa ga zla ba</i>
<i>lha-k'a</i>	<i>lha kha</i>	<i>sa-jang</i>	<i>sa dbyañ</i>
<i>lha-k'ang</i>	<i>lha khañ</i>	<i>sa-ma-dro</i>	<i>sa ma 'brog</i>
<i>lha-mo</i>	<i>lha mo</i>	<i>sang</i>	<i>bsañs</i>
<i>lha-söl</i>	<i>lha gsol</i>	<i>sem-nag-po</i>	<i>sems nag po</i>
<i>lu</i>	<i>klu</i>	<i>sem-so</i>	<i>sems gso</i>
<i>lüt-dzong</i>	<i>glud brdzoñ</i>	<i>ser-kyem</i>	<i>gser skyems</i>
<i>mag-pa</i>	<i>mag pa</i>	<i>ser-ky'im</i>	<i>ser khyim</i>
<i>mag kang</i>	<i>dmag rkañ</i>	<i>so-nam-pa-lo-sar</i>	<i>so nam pa lo gsar</i>
<i>ma-ni-pa</i>	<i>ma ñi pa</i>	<i>srang</i>	<i>srañ</i>
<i>ma-ni-lha-k'ang</i>	<i>ma ñi lha khañ</i>	<i>sru-mo</i>	<i>sru mo</i>
<i>mar-sur</i>	<i>dmар bsur</i>	<i>t'ang-ka</i>	<i>thañ ka</i>
<i>mi-b'og</i>	<i>mi bogs</i>	<i>ta-shä</i>	<i>rta bsäd</i>
<i>mi-mang</i>	<i>mi dmañs</i>	<i>ten-drel</i>	<i>rten 'brel</i>
<i>ming-i'o</i>	<i>miñ tho</i>	<i>t'eo-tr'a-ril</i>	<i>the'o phra ril</i>
<i>mi-ser</i>	<i>mi ser</i>	<i>tog-dän</i>	<i>rtogs ldan</i>
<i>mi-tsang-ch'en</i>	<i>mi tshañ chen</i>	<i>tr'äl-pa</i>	<i>khral pa</i>
<i>mi-tsang-ch'ug-po</i>	<i>mi tshañ phyug po</i>	<i>tr'ül-söl</i>	<i>'khrus gsol</i>
<i>mo-lag</i>	<i>mo lags</i>	<i>tsog</i>	<i>tshogs</i>
<i>mo-lha</i>	<i>mo lha</i>	<i>tsog-len-par-shog</i>	<i>tshogs len par sóg</i>
<i>mo-pön</i>	<i>mo dpon</i>	<i>tsog-lu</i>	<i>tshogs glu</i>
<i>na-ma</i>	<i>mna' ma</i>	<i>tsong-pa</i>	<i>tshoñ pa</i>
<i>nam-i'ar</i>	<i>rnam thar</i>	<i>tzab-j'e-pa</i>	<i>tshab byed pa</i>
<i>nang-ten</i>	<i>nañ rten</i>	<i>tza-wäi-la-ma</i>	<i>rtsa ba'i bla ma</i>
<i>nang-zhin</i>	<i>nañ b'zin</i>	<i>tzam-pa</i>	<i>rtsam pa</i>
<i>nä-tän</i>	<i>gnas brtan</i>	<i>tzün-mo</i>	<i>btsun mo</i>
<i>ngag-pa</i>	<i>snags pa</i>	<i>u-ch'en</i>	<i>dbu chen</i>
<i>ngon-lag</i>	<i>snön lag</i>	<i>u-dzä</i>	<i>dbu mdzad</i>
<i>ngo-ten</i>	<i>bsno rten</i>	<i>wang</i>	<i>dhañ</i>
<i>nö-pa</i>	<i>gnod pa</i>	<i>yag</i>	<i>g'yag</i>
<i>nye-po</i>	<i>ñe po</i>	<i>yang-mo</i>	<i>yañ mo</i>
<i>nyer-pa</i>	<i>gñer pa</i>	<i>yang-po</i>	<i>yañ po</i>
<i>nyung-ch'ung</i>	<i>ñuñ chuñ</i>	<i>ya-wa</i>	<i>ya ba</i>
<i>ön-po</i>	<i>dhon po</i>	<i>yu-shä</i>	<i>g'yu bsäd</i>
<i>pang-go</i>	<i>sprañ go</i>	<i>yu</i>	<i>g'yu</i>
<i>p'äng-sang</i>	<i>phañ gsañ</i>	<i>za-sum-ba</i>	<i>bza' gsum ba</i>
<i>p'än-tzün</i>	<i>phan btsun</i>	<i>za-tsang-nyi</i>	<i>bza' tshañ gñi</i>
<i>p'än-yön</i>	<i>phan yon</i>	<i>zeng-shä</i>	<i>gzeñs bsäd</i>
<i>pe-za pe-zang</i>	<i>spe hza'  dpe hzañ</i>	<i>zhab-iän</i>	<i>zabs brtan</i>
<i>p'o-wa</i>	<i>'pho ba</i>		

## APPENDIX VIII

### PROPER NAMES

A-do	<i>a mdo</i>
Chö	<i>gcod</i>
Ch'ö-j'o-ch'ö-ten	<i>chos jo mchod rten</i>
Ch'ö-zang La-ma	<i>chos bzañ bla ma</i>
Chung-ri-wo-ch'e	<i>gcuñ ri bo che</i>
D'ing-ri	<i>diñ ri</i>
D'ing-ri Zhung-pa	<i>diñ ri g'zui pa</i>
Drä-pung	<i>'bras spuñs</i>
Drä-pung Ge-she	<i>'bras spuñs dge bśes</i>
Dro-p'än-kar-ling	<i>'gro phan dkar gliñ</i>
Drug-pa Ka-gyü	<i>'brug pa bka' brgyud</i>
Dr'ung-so	<i>druñ so</i>
Dü-jom Rin-po-ch'e	<i>bdud 'joms rin po che</i>
Dzong-ga	<i>rdzoñ dga</i>
Ga-ra La-ma	<i>dga' ra bla ma</i>
Ge-lug	<i>dge lugs</i>
Gö-tsang-pa	<i>rgod tshan pa</i>
G'ung-t'ang	<i>guñ than</i>
Gyäl-tze	<i>rgyal rtse</i>
Jam-jang-dr'ag-pa	<i>'jam dbyañs grags pa</i>
Jam-jang-wang-mo	<i>'jam dbyañs dbañ mo</i>
J'ang	<i>hyañ</i>
J'ang-ch'en	<i>hyañ chen</i>
J'ang-ch'ung	<i>hyañ chuñ</i>
J'o-k'ang	<i>jo khañ</i>
K'am	<i>kham</i>
K'ar-ta	<i>mkhar rta</i>
K'ön	<i>'khon</i>
Kong-po	<i>khon po</i>
Kyi-rong	<i>skyid ron</i>
La-ch'i	<i>la phyi</i>
Lang-kor-nang-ten	<i>glañ skar nang rten</i>
La-tö	<i>la stod</i>
Lha-sa	<i>lha sa</i>
Lha-tze	<i>lha rtse</i>
Lo-säl-ling	<i>blo gsal gliñ</i>
Ma-chig-lab-kyi-drön-ma	<i>ma gcig lab kyi sgron ma</i>
Mang-yül	<i>man yul</i>
Mi-la-rä-pa	<i>mi la ras pa</i>
Min-dr'öl-ling	<i>smiñ grol gliñ</i>
Mü	<i>mus</i>
Na-dr'a La-ma	<i>na dra bla ma</i>
Nang-pa	<i>nang pa</i>
Ne-rang par-k'ang	<i>ne rang pa khañ</i>

Ngam-ring	<i>ñam rin</i>
Nga-wang Tān-dzin Nor-bu	<i>ñag dbañ bstan 'dzin nor bu</i>
Nya-nang	<i>ñā' nan</i>
Nying-ma	<i>ñin ma</i>
P'a-d'am-pa Sang-gyā	<i>pha dam pa sañs rgyas</i>
P'a-dr'ug	<i>pha drug</i>
Pāl-ding Gön-pa	<i>dpal ldiñ dgon pa</i>
Pāl-gu-tso	<i>dpal gu mtsho</i>
Par-zhing-ch'ö-lung-tze Gön-pa	<i>par zñiñ chos lunñ rtse dgon pa</i>
P'el-gyā-ling	<i>'phel rgyas gliñ</i>
P'o-dr'ag	<i>pho grags</i>
P'ung-ch'u	<i>phuñ chu</i>
P'ün-tzog-ling	<i>phuñ tshogs gliñ</i>
Pu-rang	<i>spu rañs</i>
Reu-mig	<i>re'u mig</i>
Rin-ch'en-ter-dzö	<i>rin chen gter mdzod</i>
Rong-p'ug	<i>ronñ phug</i>
Sa-da	<i>sa mda'</i>
Sa-kya	<i>sa skya</i>
Sam-yä	<i>bsam yas</i>
Sang-gyā-tān-jin	<i>sañs rgyas bstan 'jin</i>
Se-ra	<i>se ra</i>
Sing-dr'äg	<i>siñ grags</i>
Sum-pa K'än-po	<i>sum pa mkhan po</i>
To-wa	<i>lto ba</i>
Tra-shi-lhün-po	<i>bkra śiv lñun po</i>
Tra-zang	<i>bkra bzaiñ</i>
Tr'i-pön-Pä-ma Ch'ö-gyäl	<i>khri dpon pad ma cho' rgyal</i>
Tr'ül-zhig	<i>'khrul žig</i>
Tso-go	<i>mtsho 'go</i>
Tzang	<i>gtsaiñ</i>
Tzang-po	<i>gtsaiñ po</i>
Tze-ri-rong-kor	<i>rtsa ri ronñ skor</i>
Tzib-ri	<i>rtsib ri (Skt. śrī)</i>
Wang-nga	<i>'oñ ña</i>
Ya-näl	<i>ya nal</i>
Yang-gön-pa	<i>yañ dgon pa</i>
Yam-wang-mo	<i>yam dbañ mo</i>
Za-p'u-lung	<i>za phu lunñ</i>
Za-je	<i>ži byed</i>
Zhik-tze	<i>gžis ka rtse</i>
Za-ri-lha-khang	<i>ži khyo lha khañ</i>
Za-ri-khang-Ta-ma	<i>zu khañ bla ma</i>
Za-tze	<i>zi tso</i>



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