CHAPTER THREE

Section - A : Kinship System

1. Introduction.

1.1. A child, after birth, is affiliated to the kin group of the father, provided it is born of a couple whose union has been approved by society. An illegitimate child (wasi-haa) is affiliated to the mother's father's group. Such a child carries no stigma and has full rights as a member of his mother's father's group. On the other hand, if the unmarried mother after marriage takes the child along with her it is affiliated to her husband's group. There is only one case in the village of an illegitimate child being born to an unmarried girl. Due to early marriage the birth of illegitimate children is rare.

Gama has gladly accepted as his son a male wasi-haa brought by his wife. He refers to the boy as his own son. He loves the boy and does not seem to treat him differently from his own children. He has said that the wasi-haa will be eligible to inherit his property equally with his other sons.

Sengne Sengle's divorced wife was found living with him and gave birth to two sons. Though Sengne reported to have had no sexual relation with her, he referred to these two sons as wasi-haa, and considered them as his own children.

Similarly Tapang's divorced wife gave birth to a wasi-haa when Tapang accepted as his own daughter.

1.2. As a preliminary step in the study of kinship system, the kinship terms were collected. In the second stage the role of kinship system in the social machinery and rights and duties of one another
among the kins are taken into consideration. Their interpersonal relationship and the varying patterns of behaviours were observed among them.

1.3. The Daflas believe themselves to be the descendants of a founding ancestor. The two sons' sons of this ancestor, each became a progenitor founder of a branch consisting of his descendants in the male line. These two branches (Bedem and Bole) are held to be closely related due to the fact that their progenitor founders were brothers. As the lineages continued to increase and as they became unwieldy, new lineages came into existence in due course. All the Daflas try to trace their descent in the male line from a common ancestor, and regarded themselves as being related although in most cases no actual genealogical tie can be traced. The members of a clan are regarded as distant kinship as they are supposed to be descendants from a common ancestor.

2. Kinship Terminology.

2.1. The kinship terminology has some similarity to that of the Adis of NEFA (Boy, 1960. P.P. 215-221) and the Masai of East Africa (Bodeliffe-Brown, 1964, introductory chapter). Ego's elder brother, father's brother, father's father's brother, father's father's brother's son, father's brother's son (elder) are called by the same term, sheng. A separate term borg is used to denote ego's younger brother and others of his lineage in the same generation, but younger in age. A man applies the same term (ngaa kae) to indicate his own

* Discussed in details in the section 'Clan Organisation' within this chapter.
son and brother's son. The term *puna-ha* is used for his own daughter as well as his brother's daughter. This is illustrated in Table 1. In other words, a man uses one term for all the male persons of his lineage in the ascending generation viz. ᡦᡝสื่อ, excluding his father and father's father. A person, however, refers to his father's brothers as *pho-chu* or like father. In the descending generations of one's lineage one term *puna-ha* is used for all the male agnates and another term *puna-lu* is used to denote all the unmarried females.

2.3. Emphasis on one's own lineage is evidenced by the fact that there is a separate term for women, who have been married into the lineage. A man applies the term *puna-lu* to cover all the women married into his lineage, excluding his own wife who is *pho-lu* and his mother *maa*, his father's mother *maa*. The additional wives of one's father and father's father, are also *puna-lu*. All other women of ascending and descending generations are *puna-lu* to one as illustrated in the same Table 1.

2.4. The same classificatory principle is applied to the females of one's own lineage and belonging to one's own and preceding as well as succeeding generations. The elder sister of the man and all the women of his lineage in the ascending generations are covered by a single term *maa*. A separate term *puna-lu* is applied to one's own and classificatory younger sisters. All the females of the descending generation are *puna-lu*. All the persons marrying women from either ascending or descending generations of one's lineage are called by a common term *puna-lu*. Thus the father's father's elder sister's
husband, father's father's younger sister's husband, father's elder sister's husband, father's younger sister's husband, father's elder sister's husband, younger sister's husband, father's elder brother's daughter's husband, father's younger brother's daughter's husband and daughter's husband are all mabo. The younger brother of a mabo is called kihur-mabo, who becomes a mabo when he inherits the widowed sister of the ego. The children of his mabo are called donnea koe; donnea mene koe for a boy and donnea mene koe for a girl as shown in Table 2.

2.4. A man is connected through his mother with her lineage. His mother's brother is abkaa. The term abkaa covers all the male members of the mother's brother's lineage. The mother's brothers, the father and the father's brother of the mother's brother, the son of the mother's brother are also designated by the common term abkaa. Similarly, the women of ego's mother's brother's lineage are aabo. The mother's brother's wife and all the women married into mother's brother's lineage are aabo. An abkaa is addressed as koi and all the close male affines of the mother's brother's lineage are called koi-kote. The women of the mother's brother's lineage are called aabo-aibo.

2.5. All the male members of the wife's father's generation i.e., wife's father and wife's father's brother, and also the males of the ascending generation i.e., wife's father's father and wife's father's father's brother are abo. The wife's brothers (both elder and younger), and all their male descendants in the male line, are
All the women of the wife's father's lineage are *alea*. All the women married to the wife's father's generation both ascending and descending are *alvo*, as illustrated in Table 4. All the male members of wife's father's lineage are referred to as *ste-rega*, and all the women of that lineage as *alvo-baddi*.

2.6. The above analysis indicates that the characteristic feature of Dafila kinship terminology is the classification of a large number of relatives of one general kind. Thus, all the male persons of ego's generation and the ascending generation, who are senior to him in age are grouped together. Only his father is distinguished by a separate term *eho*, and the father's father as *ebo* whose social functions are much more specific than the general group *eho*. A man does not use a separate term to distinguish the children of his elder and younger brother from his own. The custom of junior and senior levirate is consistent with classification of the children in the same categories of kinship terms.

2.7. The most interesting classificatory term is *minfang* which is applied to all women married into the lineage irrespective of generation, with only a few exceptions. A *minfang* is a woman married into the lineage who can be inherited as a wife. Specific terms are used for the women when one cannot inherit as wives, the mother is *ee*, the father's mother and father's father's mother are *alvo*. According to Dafila custom, senior and junior levirate and inheritance of step-mothers is permissible and common. Inheritance of the son's widow is
possible but rare. In the reverse order a person can inherit a widow
niefung of the father's father's generation, which, however, is most
rare, and no such case is recorded.

2.0. The classification of the wife's mother with the mother's
brother's wife is perhaps due to the fact that the mother's brother's
daughter is a preferential mate. Under the classificatory principle
the mother's brother's wife, the mother's brother's son's wife, the
mother's brother's mother (i.e. mother's mother), the mother's brother's
mother's mother, are called aive. Similarly the father's mother and
father's mother's mother are in the same category as aive. A man calls
his wife's mother and wife's mother's mother aive, which term is
applied by his wife also to designate her husband's mother and her
husband's mother's mother. A junior wife of a person calls the senior
wife aive. A slave addresses her mistress as aive.

2.0. The wife's father, wife's father's father and the wife's
father's brother are all classified under the common term ato. These
persons of the wife-giving family have certain specific functions to
the wife-receiving family. Similarly a woman calls her husband's
father and husband's father's father ato. From the instances cited
above it is seen that in the Dafia kinship terminology, a single
term may be used for relatives of two or more generations. Generation
is generally not considered as a basic category of distinguishing
kinship terminology.
2.10. The classificatory terms vis. *ato* and *aiyo* deserve special
treatment. The term *ato* is used to indicate a person's father's
father and wife's father. Besides, a slave applies this term to his
master. The wives of these three categories of kins are covered by
the term *aiyo*. The categories of *ato* and *aiyo* are the persons who
command respect from and wield authority over the ego. The practice
of filial inheritance resulting in co-sharing of a woman by both
the father and the son to some extent frees the father from exercising
authority over his grown-up son. In Dafla society traditional
parental authority is exercised by the category of *ato* and *aiyo*.

Table 1.

Kinship Terms

Father's side: (the ego speaking):

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) \\
\text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) & \quad \text{Aio}(F) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\end{align*}
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\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) & \quad \text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) \\
\text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) \\
\text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) & \quad \text{Aio}(F) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\end{align*}
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\begin{align*}
\text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) & \quad \text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) \\
\text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) \\
\text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) & \quad \text{Aio}(F) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
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\begin{align*}
\text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) \\
\text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) & \quad \text{Aio}(F) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
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\begin{align*}
\text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) \\
\text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) & \quad \text{Aio}(F) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\text{Abong}(M) & \quad \text{Amo}(F) & \quad \text{Ato}(M) & \quad \text{Niafang}(F) & \quad \text{Magbo}(M) \\
\end{align*}
\]
### Table 2.
**Kinship Terms**

Sister’s Husband’s lineage — (the age speaking)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bekno (F)</th>
<th>Kimbe (M)</th>
<th>Kimbe (M) + Kingne (F)</th>
<th>Kimbe (M)</th>
<th>Bekno (F)</th>
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<td>Barbe (M)</td>
<td>Kingne (F)</td>
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<th>Bekno (F)</th>
<th>Kimbe (M)</th>
<th>Magbe (M) + Dengne (F)</th>
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<td>Barbe (M)</td>
<td>Kingne (F)</td>
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Dengne Kae-mega (M)  Dengne Kae-meme (F)

### Table 3.
**Kinship Terms**

Mother’s Brother’s lineage — (age speaking)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anknu (M)</th>
<th>Anknu (M) + Aiye (F)</th>
<th>Anknu (M)</th>
<th>Anknu (M)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Barbe (M)</td>
<td>Aiye (F)</td>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anknu (M)</th>
<th>Anknu (M) (M.B. of the age) Anknu (M) + Aiye (F) (Mother of the age)</th>
<th>Anknu (M)</th>
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<td>Barbe (M)</td>
<td>Aiye (F)</td>
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<th>Anknu (M)</th>
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<td>Barbe (M)</td>
<td>Aiye (F)</td>
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Table 4.

Kinship Terms.

Wife's Father's lineage - (the ego speaking)

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c}
\text{Bekme}(F) & \text{Ato}(M) & \text{Ato}(M) & \text{Ato}(M) & \text{Bekme}(F) \\
+ & + & + & + & + \\
\text{Barbo}(M) & \text{Aiy}(F) & \text{Aiy}(F) & \text{Aiy}(F) & \text{Barbo}(M) \\
\text{Bekme}(F) & \text{Ato}(M) & \text{Ato}(M) & \text{Ato}(M) & \text{Bekme}(F) \\
+ & + & + & + & + \\
\text{Barbo}(M) & \text{Aiy}(F) & \text{Aiy}(F) & \text{Aiy}(F) & \text{Barbo}(M) \\
\text{Bekme}(F) & \text{Ato}(M) & \text{Ato}(M) & \text{Ato}(M) & \text{Bekme}(F) \\
+ & + & + & + & + \\
\text{Barbo}(M) & \text{Aiy}(F) & \text{Ego}(M) & \text{Aiy}(F) & \text{Barbo}(M) \\
\text{Bekme}(F) & \text{Ato}(M) & \text{Ato}(M) & \text{Ato}(M) & \text{Bekme}(F) \\
+ & + & + & + & + \\
\text{Barbo}(M) & \text{Aiy}(F) & \text{Barbo}(M) & \text{Aiy}(F) & \text{Barbo}(M) \\
\end{array}
\]

3.1. In Dafila society a married couple lives separately in a hearth of its own, generally after the birth of the second child. A married couple, so long as they do not begot children, are known as fundera. On the other hand, a married couple with their children form a deepar, which, in fact, is the centre of kinship organisation. The family is the 'intimate circle' (Evans - Pritchard, 1966, P.152) which one sees as something quite distinct from one's wider kin. The family of procreation (depper) is closely attached to the man's family of orientation. The paternal uncles with their children are included in the bigger kin group only a degree more distant from the paternal group. The uncles and their descendants are indicated by a term known as abeng-bore which, in fact, covers all agnatic relations on the father's side covering any generation ascending or descending with whom genealogical relationship can be traced through a known ancestor. But as soon as a particular generation fails to demonstrate its genealogical relationship with another, it falls outside the group of abeng-bore. Such a group is also considered to be a kin group of distant degree and is indicated by the term nikhe-kophe i.e. patrilineally related kin with whom genealogical relationship is believed to have existed. The Dafilas distinguish the real kin (abeng-bore) from distant kin (nikhe-kophe). Another group of recognised kin which falls outside this category but which belongs to the same eponymic clan (nydshe) is designated by the term, nyde-lasskin.
3.2. Admittedly recognition of kinship between and among individuals is a factor in determining behaviour in all types of societies. It is a fact that kinship terms relate to an individual or category of persons from whom certain types of behaviour are expected. Moreover, there are important correspondences between kinship nomenclatures and social practices. In Dafla society certain social ties cut across the membership of the elementary family, doppur. The existing practice of senior and junior levirate coupled with filial inheritance and permissible extra matrimonial relations with the category of nitung reinforces the strength of kinship bonds beyond the limits of doppur to that of a bigger group called abora-bora.

3.3. The positive form of duty prescribing actions to be performed and the negative form imposing avoidances of certain acts with him are exhibited in some aspects of their socio-economic life. Three distinct 'level of behaviour pattern' - 'actual behaviour', 'average of all such individuals behaviour' or 'the norm' and 'the ideal behaviour' as suggested by Leach (1961,F.3) are observed in their society. Marriage with father's sister's son and mother's brother's daughter is said to be most preferred but actual cases of such marriages are few (refer to the discussion in section on marriage). In the ideal behavioural pattern a son should not indulge in sexual advances towards his step-mothers when the father is alive. In the average behaviour pattern a son enjoys sexual relations with a stepmother or stepmothers secretly outside the house, although this is socially disapproved.
Nebe is the third son of Piaji Veil's first wife. Nebe is grown up and married. Piaji is old and has young wives in addition to his first wife (Nebe's mother) who lives with another person. It is believed that Piaji cannot satisfy his young wives sexually. Now, Nebe treats one of his step-mothers just like his wife. He sleeps with her in his parental house not without the knowledge of his father although he protested at first about the affair. But now he seems to have accepted the situation as a natural result of his incapacity to satisfy his young wives.

3.4. Inheritance of an elderly widow does not always imply cohabitation. But a man has an obligation to look after any widowed niefong and her children of his lineage.

Sengge Senged's case is striking. Sengge has inherited his father's elder brother's widow as his wife. Although that 60 years old woman was referred to as his wife by 35 years old Sengge, there was little possibility for sexual congress with her. But still Sengge had an obligation to look after this woman who had no adult children to look after her.

3.5. A rich mape is an honoured guest to the wife-giving family. He not only gives bride price to his father-in-law, but he also directly helps his wife's father by giving him heads of mituma to procure fresh wives. In such a case the dalem received by the father-in-law with his bride will, of course, pass on to the son-in-law. The father-in-law gladly hands over the dalem to his mape but for whose generous gift he could not have married another wife or wives. The son-in-law not only provides such perishable goods to his parents-in-law during their life time but he is also required to
offer a mithun or a pig or at least a cock on the graves of the father-in-law and mother-in-law. This offering is called *ramdang dooma.*

3.6. On the other hand, polygyny is a source of influence in the society since a person having more than one wife has a larger number of affines on whom he can rely at times of crisis. A person's social position is enhanced considerably by the nature of his affinal connections by marriage. A polygynous Dafla takes pride in mentioning his rich and influential affines.

3.7. Married daughters and sisters of a family are known as *dooma.* A married daughter or sister continues to use the same kinship terms as before marriage. The unilateral change to *dooma* in kinship terminology by the parental group is related to complete or near complete severance with the parental family after marriage. A divorced *dooma* is hardly, if ever, received back by the parental family. The villagers of Betgarh are unanimous in their refusal to welcome a married daughter after divorce for fear of having to return the bride price. It is further to be noted that the married daughters rarely visit their parental home whereas the son-in-law (maybe) quite often has to visit his parents-in-law's house, particularly in connection with the transactions involved in his marriage. He is an honoured guest in his father-in-law's house and is allowed to stay in the eastern part of the hearth (*vydang*), whereas the married daughter is not permitted even to enter into that area nor even to touch the storage basket.
(dongching). Neither is she permitted to enter into the granary.

A *dongne* is not allowed to open the box where the family heirlooms are stored. She, however, is allowed to cook food in the parental family.

3.8. The severance of relationships with a married sister or a daughter is also reflected in another aspect of their day-to-day life. In case of absence of the mother or lack of milk in the mother's breast any woman of the agnatic lineage of the baby can offer breast milk. But in no case can a *dongne* offer breast milk to a child of her parental group. In the absence of a woman of the *abeghe-brege* group a distantly related agnate (*nikbe-kenbe*) can offer milk to a baby, but not a *dongne*.

3.9. The mother's brother is an important kinsman who is expected to help his sister's son at times of need. The articles he gives should, however, be returned. When a child is born to his sister, he is forbidden to visit her house until the umbilical cord of her newly born baby has fallen off. If he happens to visit her per chance does not sit inside the house. Breach of this taboo would cause the belly of the newly born child to be deformed. The mother's brother gives a present of a few beads to his sister's child. Such a gift is believed to protect the child from evil spirits. A mother's half-brother is regarded as a more distant relation, although the same term *akku* is used.

3.10. Social relations with the mother's lineage are perpetuated
by marriage with the mother's brother's daughter or mother's sister.

In the absence of such marriages, the kinship bond is renewed by exchange of gifts (arrus). Such exchanges of gifts are quite distinct from bride-price and dowry and there is no relation between the two. When there is a fresh marriage alliance with the mother's brother's family the question of removal of kinship ties by exchange of gifts does not arise.

Jamma offered to Beragi, his mother's brother, two bullocks, three Assamese silk clothes and a dog. Beragi in return gave a present of a chain of beads to Jamma. Jamma explained that arrus became necessary because Beragi had no marriageable daughter for Jamma.

3.11. Certain social ties cut across the membership of the elementary family, doppay, to connect it with the agnatic lineages abong-bera. On the occasion of marriage, the heads of the families of the abong-bera group of the bride-groom offer gifts of one Assamese silk cloth (gadi) each to the parents of the bride. Such a gift, ber-bacha, has no relation to the bride-price. At Betgarh the traditional gift of Assamese silk cloth has gradually been replaced by currency notes. In place of the cloth a person offers money varying from Rs. 20'00 to Rs. 50'00. On the other hand, the heads of the abong-bera group of the bride pay 10 tadok or dele beads to the bride-groom's parents. Such gifts are distinct from the dowry and are known as lakpi or lassu. A man will not purchase a kinsman as a slave, but he does not mind if a kinsman is sold as a slave to others.

3.12. Evans - Fritchard (1966, p. 178) has pointed out that people do not live together unless they are kin, but kinship is made effective,
by living together. The kinsmen of the Betgarh people are scattered in many distantly situated localities of the Kimin and Subansiri Frontier Divisions of NEFA. Most of the households have a majority of their kinsmen in the hills. As a result, the effective ties of kinship are those within the village itself rather than those between Betgarh and the Daflas of the hills. In certain aspects of their socio-religious life the functional importance of wider kinship ties are limited to the kinsfolk within the village.
CHAPTER THREE

Section B: Clan Organization

1. Introduction.

1.1. The traditional belief of origin from a common ancestor, Ḫotami is the major unifying factor of the village community. A Dafila is expected to behave in “Dafila-way” and to follow the forms of social conduct as a member of society. The cohesion of the village community is rarely reflected in concerted action. There is nothing like a Dafila national festival celebrated by the people as a whole. The household rituals and marriage ceremonies are confined to a number of families of relatives and members of the clan. Only in certain occasions like great ‘U-le’ worship and the marriage ceremony of a rich person are the majority of the villagers invited. Factions due to quarrels and feuds are endemic but they are resolved to a great extent through ceremonial friendship pacts, stated earlier.

1.2. The village is still in a fluid state owing to the immigration of people from a large number of clans (nyobe). The solidarity of the families of a particular clan is reflected in limited aspects of their socio-economic life. The clan numbers are held to be related and are bound to each other by ties of mutual help. Quarrels between members of the same clan are rare. All the clans are regarded as equal and occupational specialisation according to clan is not found.
On certain occasions the story of their origin is told by expert
niebus through which people are reminded that all the Daflas
originated from a common ancestor and are related to one another.

1.3. As the members of one clan are scattered through the tribe,
they do not ever come together as a unit to renew their sense of
unity. They have no single authority, such as chief or clan council.
Moreover, due to the location of the village of Betgarh far from
the rest of the tribe, contact of the people of a particular clan
in socio-religious ceremonies is limited. A man, however, regards
all the men of his clan who are senior to him as his classificatory
elder brothers (abong) and those who are junior to him as his
classificatory younger brothers (boro). The recognition of a
kinship bond uniting the members of the clan is expressed in the
rule of clan exogamy.

2. Origin of clan.

2.1. Tami is the cultural hero, who is supposed to be the
original ancestor of the Daflas. As such Tami is called Ḍe-Tami
or Father Tami, the meaning of Ḍe being father. Ḍe-Tami
married a number of wives. He first married Dyuni, the sun goddess.
From this union he had a son, Ni and a daughter, Nai. Afterwards
Ni and Nai lived as husband and wife and they had two sons namely,
Nina and Nia. From Nina the tigers originated and from Nia the
Bengalis or Daflas. Nia had two sons, Dedam and Dole. From Dedam
the Tagins (Eastern Daflas) originated and from Dolo, the Yames (Western Daflas) came into existence. From the important male 
progenies of each group were formed some important sub-groups which 
are known as dhabees. The dhabees are again sub-divided into 
smaller groups called wyboe. Ībe-Tami married one of his female 
slaves Bajini from whom he had two daughters named Bassury and 
Bangsurry. From Bassury, their neighbouring tribe the Miris, 
originated. So the Miris are held to be related to the Daflas. Thus 
the traditional story not only unites the different groups of Daflas 
into one but also establishes brotherly relation with their neigh-
bouring tribe, the Miris.

2.2. The traditional story of their origin and other information 
collected indicate that formerly the whole of the Dafla tribe was 
divided into two moieties vis., Dedom and Dolo, each of which was 
strictly exogamous. The villagers are of the opinion that in the 
beginning the Dedom group could marry from Dolo group, only. At first, 
Bingdom from Dedom group married a girl, Yages from Dolo group, and 
Bingle from Dolo group married a girl named Yabe from Dedom group. 
Sukla (1950,P.55), however, mentions a third group, namely Bepum of 
which only a few clans are now in existence. This group is totally 
absent at Betgarkh. In later times the dual divisions each multi-
plied into eight dhabees or phratries. These dhabees were exogamous. 
Gradually moiety exogamy vanished giving place to dhabee exogamy. 
The dhabees are sub-divided into wyboe (clans). In modern times 
wyboe exogamy alone is strictly observed.
2.3. The dual organisation and the arrangements of the phratries and clans of the Daflos is shown below.

Each division is divided into 8 Sub-sections.

A. Beose :— (i) Takko, (ii) Paphi, (iii) Songreng (iv) Ninsa (v) Kiga 
(vi) Gajeng (vii) Gayeng (viii) Tablung.

B. Dolo :— (i) Takeng (ii) Jili (iii) Sengne (iv) Pareng (v) Niri 
(vi) Dega (vii) Same (viii) Selem.

Sections and Sub-sections of Division, Beose.

1) **Beose** — Takko (From ancestor Figa Takko Beose)

   **Nyobes** — Tako, Taleung, Laji, Mache, Dure, Kaloa, Kago, 
   Dyoni, Manchi, Dura, Pau, Pachu, Honey, Yosi, Tagi, Bale, 
   Talea, Keni, Niri, Sublem, Kasi, Tachi.

2) **Beose** — Paphi — (From ancestor Figa Paphi Beose)

   **Nyobes** — Tachang, Tana, Bafa, Teo, Barba, Niri, Keli, Seblem 
   Doba, Kalung, Kaloa, Fido, Cheba, Fibum, Sublem, File.
iii) **Pedem Biiaco - Senang** := (From ancestor Baga Sengrang Debose)

   **Nyobes** - Kara, Tari, Tota, G bias, Tote, Baghang.

iv) **Pedem Biiaco Higa** := (From ancestor Benga Higa, Debose)

   **Nyobes** - Mabem.

v) **Pedem Biiaco Gia** := (From ancestor Bonga Gia, Debose)

   **Nyobes** - Tameng, Tari, Kara, Genser.

vi) **Pedem Biiaco Giaeng** := (From ancestor Bonga Giaeng Debose)

   **Nyobes** - Tanga, Kamehe, Bero.

vii) **Pedem Biiaco Giaeng** := (From ancestor Bonga Giaeng Debose)

   **Nyobes** - Taha, Tari.

viii) **Pedem Biiaco Tableng** := (From ancestor Bonga Tableng Debose)

   **Nyobes** - Tase, Tari, Changheng, Yoda, Boren, Kamder, Gelo, Tader.

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**Sections and Sub-sections of the Division B.**

**Pole**

i) **Pole Baga-Biakacce Takang** := (From ancestor Biga to Biakac and from Biakac Takang Debose)

   **Nyobes** - Welii, Wag Dengoe, Longdo, Siri, Pante Tayan, Natung, Bero, Tabe.

ii) **Pole Maceco Maje Jili** := (From ancestor Moge Maje and from Maje Jili Debose)


iii) **Pole Minzte Sengac** := (From ancestor Minzte Sengac Debose)

   **Nyobes** - Dasha, Wasi, Taku, Gredi, Grena.
iv) **Dole Narhaso Parang** : (Founder ancestor Narha Parang Deboso)

*NYGAGE* - Mengnang, Lengde, Leda, Lera, Taba, Yarden.

ev) **Dole Bighao Bibinao Niri** : (Founder ancestor Biga to Bibi and from Bibi Niri Deboso)

*NYGE* - Bico, Bida, Nodi, Youngda, Bings.

vi) **Dole Narhaso Dega** : (Founder ancestor Namba Dega Deboso)

*NYGB* - Sengde pole, Pegi, Taru.

vii) **Dole - Sene** :

*NYGB* - Extinct.

viii) **Dole - Selen** :

*NYGB* - Greda, Gane, Chedda.

2.4. The list indicates that the Dafnas are divided into 117 *nyghes*. But informants are of the opinion that there might be even more *nyghes* in different localities. The number of *nyghes* has so much multiplied that it has become increasingly difficult for the people to recollect the full list from their memory.

3. **Clan Affiliation and Functions of Clan.**

3.1. A family is an integral part of a bigger clan group. The clan is patrilineal and strictly exogamous. The clan of a person is retained throughout his life. But a slave no longer can maintain his affiliation to the clan of his descent since he/she is automatically adopted to the master's clan without going through any ritual. In case of polyandry, the second suitor, if a member of a different clan from that of the first husband, must get himself adopted into
the latter's clan. In the case of a woman her father's clan name remains unchanged even after marriage. Her nyake does not change to that of her husband. This facilitates the inheritance of the widowed woman by other members of the family.

3.2. There are no territorial demarcations between clans and in certain households families of different clans live together. The most important function of the clan in the village is the regulation of marriage. Marriage is prohibited within the clan. The exogamous rules relating to the moieties Dedan and Dele and the 16 phratries have, however, lapsed. On ceremonial occasions, marriage and ritual performances, clansmen are invariably invited besides certain others. The clansmen also consider it to be their duty to join a great ceremony like 'U-le' though such a ceremony is performed by an individual family. All the members of the clan concerned are thought to be partially benefited by the performance of such a ceremony because the nyaka utters words which invoke the blessings of deities for the collective benefit of all the members of the clan (nyaka-langa). Many of the relatives and clansmen contribute poultry and rice-beer for such a worship.

3.3. In a cooperative undertaking (railegone or renoma) such as the construction of new house and agricultural operations clansmen sometimes combine for work, though non-clansmen also willingly cooperate when invited. It is reported that in the hills each clan has common land called sangda. Intrusion into a sangda by a person of
another clan is liable to a minimum fine of one mithun. At Betgarh the clan land-holding is totally absent.

3.4. For any misdeed, committed by an individual the clan as a whole cannot be held responsible. But the clan elders always take an active part in the council of elders (nyele) to defend their accused clansman. The complainant is also supported by his clan elders who discuss the matter for hours together in his support. The clansmen readily help a needy clansman in case of emergency. A person who is incapable of paying a heavy fine imposed upon him is helped by loans voluntarily offered by his clansmen.

3.5. Only one case of deviation from the rule of clan exogamy is recorded in the village.

Sera Tacheng eloped with Yayong, daughter of Tapeng Tacheng and fled away to a village in North Lakhimpur. The parents were very annoyed but kept silent. The kinsmen and clansmen as well as the villagers complained to both the parties and demanded that the irresponsible pair should be punished. So Tapeng with some other villagers, went to the Dafia village in North Lakhimpur and virtually captured the pair. Sera was kept confined, his left leg being locked in a wooden socket (Lepa-parma) to prevent escape. The village elders, mostly members of Tacheng clan, found Sera to be guilty and asked him to pay two bullocks and a dao to Tapeng as fine. Sera submitted to it without protest.

No other case sexual relation or marriage within the clan is reported.

3.6. Table 1 indicates that there were 107 families of 40 clans belonging to 12 debases or phratries in the village. Although there
are families belonging to a large number of clans, the clans of the Takeng debase dominate. The families of the Wel clan were the first settlers in the village and that might have attracted families of that debase to migrate from the hills to settle in the present village.

Another important clan group in the village belongs to Paphi debase and Takke debase.

Table 1.1.

Distribution of Households and Population by Clan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl. No.</th>
<th>Clan</th>
<th>No. of families</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>% of total population</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Takeng Pehase</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Weli</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>5.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Wagae</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>7.22</td>
</tr>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Siri</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>8.10</td>
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</tr>
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<td>5.</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>2.82</td>
</tr>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>1.94</td>
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<td>Miri Pehase</td>
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<td>Gunghli</td>
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<td>Sub Total</td>
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<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jili Debase</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>--------</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Sengde</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3.52</td>
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<td>0.53</td>
</tr>
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<td>16.</td>
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<td>17.</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>Tana</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Rafa</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
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<td>21.</td>
<td>Tao</td>
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<td>Sub- Total</td>
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<td>Taleng</td>
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<td>Laji</td>
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<td>Kuni</td>
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<td>Gumer (bagheng)</td>
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<td><strong>Hina Debase</strong></td>
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<td>Tane</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>Changkong</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td><strong>Borung Debase</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grand Total</strong></td>
<td>107</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
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</table>
CHAPTER THREE

Section C: Marriage.

1. Introduction

1.1. In Dafna society marriage is regarded as a procreative and economic partnership and is often referred to as a system of procuring or purchasing a wife rather than marrying a wife. In the majority of cases the economic status of both the parties is taken into consideration. A rich man tries to procure his wife from a rich family. The father of a healthy hardworking and white-complexioned daughter can expect a high bride-price. The primary factor which is taken into consideration by a girl's father in settling a marriage is the wealth of the groom's family rather than the physical beauty or even age of the groom. The girl's opinion is hardly taken into consideration.

2. Marital Status

2.1. The distribution of population at Botgarh by age, sex and marital status is shown in Table 1. Although a large number of boys and girls are stated to be unmarried, the prevailing customs among the Dafnas are such that in most cases marriage negotiations are made long before the attainment of puberty of boys and girls. Marriage is universal and celibacy is thought to be unnatural. Only two physically disabled persons above 35 years are found to be unmarried. Another notable feature of the civil condition of the population is the absence
of any widow below the age of 35. The custom of step-mother inheritance and inheritance of elder brother's or younger brother's widow is the main reason for an absence of widows in the reproductive age-group. Moreover, in Dafla society a woman in her productive stage is in demand as a wife even after widowhood or divorce. This is due to the fact that there are some poor people without a mate who cannot easily procure a wife because of the high rate of bride-prices. There was only one divorced woman who was expected to marry within a short time.

Table 1.
Distribution of Population by Age, Sex and Marital Status: 1934.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age group</th>
<th>Married M</th>
<th>Married F</th>
<th>Unmarried M</th>
<th>Unmarried F</th>
<th>Widowed M</th>
<th>Widowed F</th>
<th>Divorced M</th>
<th>Divorced F</th>
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<tr>
<td>Below 5</td>
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<td>162</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 15</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>66</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15 - 25</td>
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<td>40</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>25 - 35</td>
<td>23</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
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</tr>
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<td>35 - 45</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 55</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 65</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>65 - 75</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 and over</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total - 118 162 129 123 10 15 8

6% of total to 44'29 53'82 52'06 40'87 3'74 4'98 8'33

Total population of each
One of the outstanding features of Dafla marriage, is the system of child marriage. Although this is not the dominant type of marriage some rich parents procure mates for their sons even before the attainment of puberty. It may be noted that several persons below 15 years may be taken as married, although they do not live together as married couples for incompletion of the payment of the stipulated bride-price.

One of the Pinji's son, who is about 10 years old is married to a 14 years old girl. Pinji said that the couple sleep together and there is no probability of cohabitation. Pinji's son who is a pupil of class III, felt embarrassed when his father spoke about his son's marriage in his presence.

2.2. According to Dafla values a rich person should marry as many wives as he can afford. Acquisition of more than one wife by well-to-do persons is nothing but a sound investment of the surplus wealth which if not invested in that way might be wasted. Getting more wives is regarded as a proper investment of the money earned. Procuring a wife means the addition of an active working member in the family. Although some persons under the influence of modern values thought it to be a 'shameful custom' most of the richer people have plural wives and are hopeful of getting more.

2.3. The following Table shows the number of living wives of the married persons of the village.
In contrast to the rich persons who possess many wives the poorer have only one wife each and the poorest have to be satisfied with sharing a common wife with uterine or clan brothers and even with persons of other clans. To the poor Dafnis, it is a very serious problem to procure a suitable mate by paying a heavy bride-price.

2.4. One of the duties of parents is to see that their adolescent child gets a suitable mate of opposite sex. This responsibility exclusively devolves on the parents, the clan members remaining quite aloof from such arrangements. The only part the clan members play in arranging a match is that it strictly lays down that clan exogamy must be observed in selecting a mate by the parents.

2.5. The father wants to see during his life-time that all his grown up sons are married. A poor father becomes very unhappy and impatient if he fails to procure wives for his grown up sons. The story of such an unfortunate father is still current among the Dafnis. The traditional story goes like this:

Once there was a poor man who failed to procure wives for his 3 marriageable sons. As his death was nearing, he felt very ashamed for his failure in discharging his paternal duty. Finding no
other alternative he made a secret plan. He ordered his sons to fill up his carrying basket with ashes. The sons followed the order. The old man entered the jungle without informing anybody. On his way he left a trail of ashes. Inside the jungle he entered into a big trap set up by a rich man to bag wild animals. He entered the trap willfully, knowing very well that the trap will surely kill him. He died in the trap. The sons became anxious as their father did not return home at night. They searched for him here and there and at last went to the jungle by following the trail of ashes that their father had left. They were astonished to find the dead body of their father inside the trap. On enquiry it was revealed that the trap was set up by a very rich man. The bereaved sons wanted to take revenge by killing the rich man who set up such a trap without informing the villagers. The village elders prevented them from such a drastic action and took up the case for consideration. The council of village elders found the rich man guilty and asked him to pay 29 mithnas to the aggrieved family. With these 29 mithnas the sons of the poor man procured wives and afterwards became rich persons.

To the villagers it is a teaching story. It illustrates the strength of a father's obligation to provide bride-gifts for the marriage of his sons.

3. Inheritance of Wives

3.1. The following table shows the types of marriage by inheritance at Botgarh.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inheritance of</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Elder Brother's widow</td>
<td>21 cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger Brother's widow</td>
<td>2 cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's widow (step mother)</td>
<td>4 cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's elder Brother's widow</td>
<td>1 case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son's widow</td>
<td>1 case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elder Brother's Son's widow</td>
<td>1 case</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1.2.

3.2. The society prescribes the inheritance of step mother, elder brother's wife, younger brother's wife, whenever they are widowed. One can also inherit the father's elder brother's or younger brother's widow as wife. Similarly, a person can inherit the widow of a son and widows of that generation provided suitable inheritors are lacking. The father's father's widow, excluding the father's own mother can also be inherited in principle. But inheritance of widow of the father's father's generation and that of son's generation rarely occurs. Theoretically, widows of the son's son's generation can also be inherited. In other words, all the female members married to a family excluding one's own mother and father's father's mother are potential wives when one can inherit after widowhood. Such potential wives are referred to as niafang and as a nefang (actual wife) after inheritance. As far as practicable the married women are retained within the family, if not always as wives, at least as labour strength.

3.3. A widow niafang is inherited by the unmarried (or sometimes married) younger brother of the deceased husband, first preference being given to the next unmarried younger brother. In the absence of any younger brother, the elder brother inherits. Such cases occur mostly in the monogamous families. In polygamous families the grown up son inherits the widowed step-mother or step-mothers as wives.

Sangno Sengdo inherited the widow of his father's elder brother, as wife.

Jumuna Tacheng inherited his widowed step-mother as his wife at his tender age, because Jumuna's father had no brother.
There is only one case of inheritance of son's widow as wife. Tapeng Tacheng married Mosori to his youngest son Baka. After the death of Baka Tapeng's eldest son Pawai could have inherited her. But Pawai had already 2 wives and had strained relations with his father. So Tapeng has inherited his son's widowed wife, Mosori as his own. After the death of Tapeng, Pawai has inherited Mosori who was the wife of his younger brother and his father in succession.

Bouram was the son of Bajem's older brother. Bajem has inherited his older brother's widow, Potep (Bouram's mother). Bouram married Janai Tacheng and after the death of Bouram, Bajem has inherited the widow of his older brother's son.

4. Preferential Mate.

4.1. The society prescribes and prohibits certain marriage types. The most preferred type is the marriage with one's 
宅
i.e., mother's brother's daughter. The lesser frequency of the marriage with one's 宅 is stated to be that one does not like to enter into a fresh marriage contract with his sister's son so long as the bride-price of the sister is not fully recovered. The mother's sister is said to be a preferential mate but no such marriage is recorded. This type of marriage can also take place in an indirect form. When the father marries two sisters, the widowed mother's sister can be inherited. If the mother's sister is not married to the same clan of a person the mother's sister can be married.

4.2. Clan exogamy is strictly followed and breach of the rule is not tolerated. When a marriage is proposed, the Baflas very
carefully examine the society and clan relationship of the families involved. The society also prohibits marriage with one's sisters daughter (dame-kep) or father's sister's daughter (dame-kep). No satisfactory explanation for the prohibition could be given by the villagers except clearly hesitating at the belief that such a married pair would have unmanageable number of children. The prohibition of marriage of a person with a dame-kep seems to be a logical sequence of identifying the father's sister's daughter with the father's sister who belongs to the father's clan. Such a marriage would obviously mean something like a marriage with one's clan-sister.

5. Types of Marriage.

5.1. There are several ways of concluding a marriage and the negotiated type of marriage with proper payment of bride-price and dowry is upheld by the society. There are other types of marriage recognised and approved by the society but are not considered to be orthodox and respectable forms. Table 4 shows the ways by which mates are acquired in the village.

Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Marriage by</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negotiation (nedda)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service (ma-neddar)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capture (sena Nedda)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elopement (nycna Buna)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrusion</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inheritance</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2. Marriage by negotiation establishes a lasting bond between the wife-giving and wife-receiving families. In this form of marriage the bridegroom's family pays the bride-price as agreed upon and the bride's family offers dowry matching with the articles received. Marriage is also affected by capture or elopement which, however, occurs comparatively rarely. This is because courtship before marriage is uncommon. Owing to the settlement of marriage at an early age a maiden hesitates to involve herself in any open love affair with a youth. Although a man does not expect his bride to be virgin, an open affair of a girl after marriage settlement is not tolerated by the groom's family. The selected bride's parents are warned. If the girl continues the affair, she is captured by the groom's relatives. The poor Dafilas work for a stipulated period in the bride's house in lieu of bride-price.


6.1. Marriage negotiations and settlement are elaborate affairs. It has been observed that in marriage negotiations the initiative lies with the groom's party. Any proposal from the groom's side involves parting away with a substantial amount of the surplus wealth assiduously acquired by the groom's parents. Fixation of the bride-price shara-rana is governed by the paying capacity of the groom's party as well as the bride's party and willingness on the part of the wife-receiving party to clear up the instalments as early as possible. The wife-giving party has to reciprocate the receipt of
an instalment of the *share-taka* by giving adequately valued dowry (*dolom*) to the wife-receiving party. A rich Dafla is not satisfied in procuring a wife without adequate *dolom* with her. Paying higher bride-price means receiving valuable dowry in return. This custom leads to the marriage within families of equal status. It is, however, not rare for a rich Dafla to marry a girl from a poor family. But a poor man cannot marry a girl from a rich family. Much depends on whether the girl's family approves of such a proposal. Thus in general the major part of the village wealth and traditional currencies circulate within the richer section of the population.

6.2. A rich person takes pride in declaring his assets to the would-be bride's family through his go-between (*ghoma* or *bakki*). Another interesting fact of their culture is that the heirlooms possessed by each family are known to all the villagers. In a traditional Dafla family it is the heirlooms like Tibetan bells (*mate*), beads (*tassang*), long knives (*dau*) and brass dishes (*tale*) which are real movable properties, there being no individually owned landed property. At Betgarh, however, Dafla families possess land settled under Annual pattas. This possession is taken into consideration besides other wealth mentioned above.

6.3. The economic condition of the people at Betgarh varies with the type of land holding as wet paddy cultivation is the principal source of income. The possession of land has become an
important factor in the negotiation of marriage at Botgarh. In the hills the land is not individually owned and possession of other valuable articles determines one's capacity for marrying a number of wives. At Botgarh, the importance of cultivable land in procuring wives is reflected in Table 6.

Table 6.

Average size of Owned Land according to Number of Wives: 1964.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Wives</th>
<th>No. of persons</th>
<th>Average size of land holding (Acres)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With 1 wife</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>4.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With 2 wives</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>7.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With 3 wives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With 4 wives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Persons having bigger areas of land holdings also possess more cattle and heirlooms which are used for payment of bride-price and dowry.

6.4. Marriage settlement is also dependent upon the recommendations of an expert pithaba who finds out the suitability of the proposed union by divination. The indications are carefully studied on the liver of a chicken. If the omens are good, negotiation begins. The groom's party kills a pig taken with them for the purpose. When the Botgarh people negotiate such a marriage in the hills a pig is brought from a relative or a known person of a hill village on loan.
One half of the pork is distributed among the clansmen and others of the bride's party gathered on the occasion. The neck portion and a small quantity of the pork is offered to the groom's party. A dgo and in some cases a piece of Assamese silk cloth in addition to it is formally offered to groom's parents. This dani-stok ceremony is celebrated by feasting with rice-beer, pork and food. The pork-curry prepared in the bride's house is not offered to the groom's party. They take the meat by roasting it on fire by themselves. At the end of the first negotiation a pailful of rice-beer is brought from the bride's to groom's house.

7. Bride price and Dowry.

7.1. The bride price is always settled in the presence of relatives and clansmen of both the parties concerned. Moreover, both the parties will bring their own witnesses (Hakki or Shema). Separate bundles of small bamboo sticks (kattar) are made representing each item of the bride-price settled. The bundles of kattar are kept on a hanging platform above the hearth. When an instalment of the bride price is paid the exact number of kattar are destroyed in presence of shema. Breach of marriage settlement is not tolerated. A girl whose marriage is settled, does not dare to violate it or to choose somebody she loves. If it happens, the girl shall have to face a difficult situation and the parents would lose their face in the society.

Tana Laji's wife, a violator of marriage contract, cannot take blood, liver and tongue and the head of a sacrificed animal which are considered harmful for her health. She must also leave her bed
early in the morning, before sunrise, the breach of which is believed to cause her husband's premature death. Tana's wife knows that she will have to lead a life like that for a deed which the society condemns. Her marriage was settled with a person living in the hills. But she loved Tana, and she disliked the idea of going to the interior hills. So, one night she came to Tana's home and expressed her desire to live with him. Tana was in a dilemma. The villagers, especially the 2 families which entered into the marriage contract, considered him guilty for such a happening. But he added that only a coward could refuse such a woman who willingly intruded into the house to be a wife. Tana paid the bride price and 2 mithans as fine to the suitor's family with whom the marriage was originally settled.

7.2. Marriage among the Daflas is brought about by payment of bride-price in instalments and the ritual part of marriage is very insignificant. One cannot think of procuring a wife without having the capacity of paying the minimum bride-price.

Bajen Tameg who takes an active part in marriage negotiations remarked, 'If one wants to bring a girl to sleep with him as a wife and wants her to work for him for her whole life, he must be able to pay a minimum price of two mithans for her two hands, two mithans for her two legs and one mithan for her head and the body. If one can pay 5 mithans, he could easily give two more emi cloths and a dzo as <em>ghora-rama</em>. This is the minimum bride-price for a respectable Dafla and for this he gets a chain of beads as dowry (<em>dalem</em>). If he can pay more mithans he could get more <em>dalem</em> such as a Tibetan bell or a slave'.

Thus the hands and the legs are given more importance than the body. It is the two hands and legs of the girl which will work for her husband.
7.8. The bride-price is paid in instalments. Some of the Paflas said that the sooner one can clear it up the better for him. But in most cases it is observed that it takes a long time to clear up the bride-price. The bride is handed over only when the major part of the bride-price is paid. After the payment of the first instalment of the bride-price, the minimum agreed upon the bride's family pays the first part of the dowry of 1 or 2 chains to tadak or daleh beads. The first part of the dowry is known as daleh. Dowry varies with the varying quantum of bride-price. The fixation is governed by a sense of reciprocity commensurate with the bride-price received. It may be mentioned here that although nithuns are held to possess a sufficient degree of uniformity; in some cases it becomes necessary to define the standard. A pregnant nithun is considered as equivalent to two nithuns. Two bullocks are considered as equivalent to one nithun. The bride's people can hand over the bride to the groom after the payment of the minimum bride-price. The bride's people can hold up the final hand-over of the bride after the receipt of the minimum bride-price in expectation of receiving more and more bride-price, which, however, entails payment of extra dowry. After the receipt of these to five extra nithuns a few sudi cloths and dana, the second part of the dowry of one or two chains of dada or daly or 1 chain of costly ahemara bead is paid. This part of dowry is known as Ali and the beads paid are called Ali teakram. After the payment of the second instalment of bride-price the final ceremony is performed.
7.4. When a marriage is settled between two rich families the final ceremony may not take place even after the payment of the second instalment of the bride-price. The bride's people ask the groom's people to pay more. The groom's people pay additional mitums and other articles and when such articles are paid the bride's people pay a Tibetan bell (maje) or a slave with the bride. This part of dowry is called *jew-labor* or *Rau-Peeka* and *Dalek.* When a slave is given the witness of the bride's people say:

"The slave will collect fire-wood from the jungle, work in the field and provide feed to the pigs. The bride should be provided with light domestic works only. All the hard work will be performed by the slaves on behalf of the bride."

7.5. Rich parents give with their married daughter & one or two chains of beads and two silver ear-rings and bracelets as gifts. Such gifts are known as *Camin* and have no connection with the dowry. Rich parents also give a present of one chain of beads to the son-in-law, wishing him a happy married life. This is known as *mashe-vala.* Table 6 and Table 7 indicate the pattern of bride-price paid and dowry received by the villagers of Betgarh.

7.6. Marriage is the chief occasion on which mitums change hands. Although mitums are the traditionally accepted item of bride-price, bullocks are also accepted at Betgarh. A pair of healthy bullocks is taken as equivalent to a mitum. Bullocks are very important at Betgarh as draught animals. The change over from mitums
to bullocks is very significant in view of the location of Betgarh in the plains region where bullocks are purposefully harnessed to ploughs and carts. This alternative arrangement is also important due to the fact that the plains area is not suitable for keeping mithuns. The hill Dafetas also accept bullocks as bride-price and in such cases the animals are killed and dried meat is taken home. At Betgarh, money in cash is also paid in lieu of the mithuns or bullocks. Such an offer is gladly accepted. Salt also forms an important part of bride-price especially when the bride is brought from the hills.

7.7. In each formal visit the groom's parents or guardians should take with them certain presents of dried meat and rice-beer to the bride's house. When the whole or the major part of the bride-price is paid, the girl is handed over to the groom's family. The essential element of the marriage contract is transfer of perishable goods from bride-groom's family and heirlooms from bride's family. The two groups united by marriage enter into permanent contract by these means.

7.8. Acceptance of bride-price involves the following obligations:

(a) In case of death of a girl within 2 years, after marriage younger sister of the deceased or any other such girl should be given in marriage to the bereaved husband. In such cases, only a nominal bride-price is paid for the next girl. If a girl is not given replacement of the wife who has died, the groom's family can claim the return of the whole bride-price. Similar claims can be made in case of a barren wife.
b) In case of premature death of a woman the wife-giving family should provide another girl at a lower bride-price. If they fail one-fourth of the bride-price, paid for the girl, is required to be returned when demanded.

e) If the wife divorces the husband and returns home, the girl's parents are required to return the bride-price in lots received by them.

7.9. It is not necessary that the bride-price should be fully paid before marriage, but it is understood that payment should reach a certain point to the satisfaction of bride's family. Each payment is made in the presence of witnesses and the families and kin of both the parties, which are associated with feasting mostly with the articles provided from the groom's family. The social ties of conjugal and affinity are made stronger by each payment of bride-price and counter payment of dowry. The final ceremonies are usually held in the winter months, when they have plenty of food. Moreover, it is possible to travel to the hilly regions of NEPA only in the winter months. The rains cut off the contact between the hill and plains Daflas for the major part of the year.
### Table 6.

**Bride Prices Paid.**

**Case Study of Jaspur Village**

| No. of Wives | No. of cases for which information available | Mithun |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Cash |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
|              |                                            | Total No. | Average per wife | Total No. | Average per wife | Total No. | Average per wife | Total No. | Average per wife | Total No. | Average per wife |
| Married 1 wife | 58                                          | 259      | 4                   | 372      | 6                   | 174      | 3                   | 569      | 10                  | 34      | 1                   | 3,100.00 | 53.4 |
| Married 2 wives | 29                                          | 171      | 6                   | 180      | 6                   | 93       | 3                   | 493      | 17                  | 32      | 1                   | 5,360.00 | 184.8 |
| Married 3 wives | 7                                           | 52       | 7                   | 36       | 5                   | 23       | 3                   | 141      | 20                  | 6       | 3                   | 600.00  | 200.7 |
| Married 4 wives | 1                                           | 8        | 8                   | 12       | 6                   | 5        | 5                   | 10       | 10                  | 3       | 3                   | -      | -                   |
| Married 5 wives | 4                                           | 33       | 10                  | 10       | 3                   | 30       | 8                   | 77       | 19                  | -       | -                   | -      | -                   |
| Married 6 wives | 6                                           | 78       | 12                  | 18       | 3                   | 23       | 5                   | 205      | 34                  | 19      | 3                   | 2,250.00 | 375.0 |

**Total** | 108 | 608 | 6 | 622 | 6 | 353 | 3 | 1,525 | 15 | 94 | 1 | 11,310.00 | 107.7 |

*Note: \( \frac{1}{2} \) or more of an article in average is taken as 1 unit and below \( \frac{1}{2} \) is neglected.*
### Table 7

**Dowry Received**

**Case Study of Betran Village**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Wives</th>
<th>No. of cases for which Dowry Received</th>
<th>Tadok heads (No.)</th>
<th>Delay heads (No.)</th>
<th>Tadok heads (No.)</th>
<th>Delay heads (No.)</th>
<th>Chandra heads (No.)</th>
<th>Traditional (No.)</th>
<th>Female Slave (No.)</th>
<th>Male Slave (No.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married 1 wife</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>46 (32)</td>
<td>11 (5)</td>
<td>3 (2)</td>
<td>4 (3)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married 2 wives</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>47 (14)</td>
<td>24 (7)</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3 (3)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married 3 wives</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married 4 wives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 (1)</td>
<td>3 (1)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married 5 wives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18 (4)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>2 (2)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married more than 5 wives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3 (4)</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>v</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total**: 60

(87) (14) (3) (4) (6) (5) (8) (6) (2)

**Note**: Numbers in the brackets indicate number of wives in case of which Dowry received.

8.1. Although the final marriage ceremony is not a very elaborate affair, preparation for it begins weeks ahead. It is an occasion for feasting and merry-making and exchange of gifts between the kin people of both the parties. To bring a girl from a hill village 10 or 15 persons including the parents of the groom, the groom himself, other near relatives and some other villagers go to the bride's house. The date of marriage is fixed by the medicine-man-sum priest (niha) after divination. They carry with them plenty of dried meat and rice-beer. When the marriage takes place within the village a bullock or nithya is taken to the bride's house where it is killed for the marriage feast. The slaughter of an animal provided by the groom's party for the marriage feast provides public sanction and legality of the transaction. The party stays in bride's house for one or two nights and huge quantities of meat, rice-beer and boiled rice are consumed. The father of the groom carries a spear with him on such a journey.

8.2. The ritual part of the marriage is very simple. The niha offers one cock to Saunston deity for a happy married life. The cock is released alive. The neighbours and sometimes the people from the whole village enjoy the marriage feasts. The whole night is spent in singing and dancing. The groom himself may also take part in it. In the morning certain sport competition like long-jump (didak), stone throwing (janak), high-jump (achin), pole-jump (dal), inserting
pointed bamboo sticks on the roofs (lodak), take place between the boy's and girl's parties. Sometimes there is mock fighting among the young persons in the form of wrestling and the winners of all the contests are loudly cheered. The winners of the bride's side are offered meat from the groom's side. It is interesting to note, however, that the winners of the groom's side are not offered anything from bride's side. There takes place dancing which is accompanied by drum beating. Women do not take part in dancing. In the marriages, that take place within the village, the merry-making is simple.

8.3. In addition to feasting, the heads of families and the kin of the bride and bridegroom have to perform certain important social functions. Before the final parting the groom's close kin-group, abong-boro, offers andi cloths, dae, coins and in some cases firemaking instruments on a winnowing fan. These presents are collected by the witness of the groom's side and handed over to the bride's parents. After this the abong-boro of the bride offers one to ten beads on the same winnowing fan. These are collected by the witness of bride's side and then handed over to the groom's party. Usually a bride refuses to accompany the party and is taken away somewhat forcefully. The bride's parents and relatives also accompany the bride to the groom's house. Just before entering the groom's house, the bride is required to kill a pig or a mithun with a dae. This would indicate the final acceptance of the groom by the bride. The newly wedded pair must not go to the bride's house
within one month after marriage. After marriage a girl takes food in her father's house after the performance of naffo ceremony by a niehu by sacrificing a cock.

9. Conflicts Regarding Bride-price and Dowry.

9.1. Conflicts arising out of non-payment of the negotiated bride-price or expected dowry are settled by the appointed witnesses (chanes) and the villagers. The role of chanes in this respect is vital. They are trusted by the villagers as they are always selected from respectable families. Each chame is paid one dae and in some cases one dae and one andcloth as remuneration for their service in the settlement of a marriage. Moreover, a chame is provided with rice-beer, meat and food in each meeting for marriage negotiations.

9.2. But despite of such arrangements, payment of bride-price and dowry in certain cases remains incomplete. Such irregular and incomplete payment subjects the two groups of relatives to perpetual strains. It is informed that after the payment of the minimum bride-price the bride is brought home but the parents of the bride fail to pay the dowry or willfully defers payment. The groom's family stops the payment of subsequent instalment of bride-price under the pretext of non-receipt of the dowry. This leads to conflicts and quarrels. Table 8 shows the percentage of marriage in which the dowry remained totally unpaid. In such cases very strained relations between the wife-giving and wife-receiving families were observed. In no case can a marriage take place without payment of the minimum bride-price.
Table 18.

Number of Wives for which Bride-Price Paid and Dowry Received.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. of Wives</th>
<th>No. of Wives</th>
<th>For which information available</th>
<th>Dowry received</th>
<th>For which dowry not received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married 1 Wife</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25 (44.83)</td>
<td>25 (44.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married 2 Wives</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13 (44.83)</td>
<td>13 (44.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married 3 Wives</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 (57.17)</td>
<td>4 (57.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married 4 Wives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (100.00)</td>
<td>1 (100.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married 5 Wives</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 (100.00)</td>
<td>4 (100.00)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married 6 Wives</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4 (86.67)</td>
<td>2 (42.86)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 105 60 45 (57.14) (42.86)

Note: Figures within the brackets indicate percentages.

10. Arrangement for Peaceful Married Life.

10.1. It is noted earlier that insistence on chastity on the part of boys and girls is not a primary factor in negotiating a marriage. However, a peculiar situation arises when the parental group has to arrange the marriage of a girl of illegitimate birth or of a girl giving birth to an illegitimate child or a girl of dubious moral character. The parents adopt a special measure to safeguard the
security of married life of such a daughter as well as to save her from ignorance that might be caused by reference to her past life by the wrathful husband. Such an arrangement is known as Fater-Konyen. The contract is made by payment of a chain of tadek beads in addition to the dowry. As usual this transaction takes place in the presence of witnesses to ensure strict adherence to the contract entered into by payment of special gift. Any violation of this contract by the unwary husband frees his wife to go back to her parents to lodge a complaint against her husband's misbehaviour. Such a breach of contract entitles the parents of the girl to receive back the chain of tadek bead. The offender son-in-law has to pay a fine of one nithun to the above-born of the girl who distribute the meat among the families. He shall also have to pay a fine of one nithun to the father-in-law to appease him. The father can keep his married daughter in his house as long as the fine is unpaid.

II. Other Types of Marriage.

11.1. The poor Daflas who are not in a position to pay the bride-price work in the house of the would-be father-in-law for a stipulated period varying from 4 to 6 years. A person without having an able-bodied working male member in the family prefers the service of the would-be son-in-law, rather than the bride-price. During this period the green lives like a member of the family. When the girl is grown up they can live like husband and wife. After the stipulated period of service the boy takes his bride to his parental house.
Bengia Chide, a man aged 25 years, was working in Tepeng's house for 6 years in order to be able to marry Tepeng's daughter. After the period of service Tepeng, the betrothed girl refused to go to Bengia's house and Tepeng had to pay a heavy fine (Refer to case discussed in Chapter I - Village Administration).

Tari (12 years old) was working at Marks Tacheng's house for 2 years to marry Marks's daughter (about 14 years old). Tari will have to work for another 3 years to qualify himself.

Tayan was working in Niajeng's house for 3 years to marry Niajeng's daughter, Fano. The term of service is 6 years.

11.2. A mate can also be acquired by capture of the bride. This, however, is a rare practice and the 3 cases of capture in the village took place as the necessary consent to the marriage was withheld and the arrangements were violated after the payment of a part of the bride-price. There are few cases of elopements which led to the imposition of fines, on the grooms in addition to the usual bride-price. In such a case the relation between the family of the boy and that of the girl is normalised only when the bride-price is settled and payment of a part of the bride-price is made.

During the field investigation, a young girl of sixteen was captured for Pahi Tana, a boy of 10. Pahi's older brother, Tamm negotiated the marriage in the village of Gomara where there was only one Dafia household. Tamm paid 2 pairs of bullocks and 2 emdi cloths to the girl's parents as a part of the bride-price settled earlier. But in the meantime the girl fell in love with another Dafia young man. Approaching difficulties, Tamm with the help of
some other young men Takbe, Katirem, Bengia Apa and Tale went to Gornara. When the male members of Gornara went out of the house, they forcefully captured the girl. The women present tried to resist but could not help. The girl shouted on the road. Tamm killed a pig and then the young men who helped in the capture of the girl were offered pork and rice-beer. The girl tried to escape but the doors were closed from outside. The parents of the girl came after 4 days and they were offered rice-beer.

Nijai Siri captured a girl, Tareng, of the same village whom he loved for a long period. On the night of the capture, Nijai Siri's house was guarded by some of his friends and relatives. Next morning, the bride-price was settled and a pair of bullocks, one endi cloth and one dao were offered to the girl's parents.

Tapu Laji, at the age of 50 years, settled his third marriage in Tari-Takka village situated 15 miles away from Betgarh. After the payment of 2 mithuns, 4 bullocks and a cash of Rs. 400/-00, he was informed that his would-be-wife, a 16 year old girl, was in love with some other Dafila young man with whom she might flee away to the hills. Tapu approached the girl's parents and demanded that they should hand over the girl to him. But they refuse to do so till the major part of the bride-price was paid. So Tapu decided to capture the girl. One day 15 male members (including Tapu and his eldest son Tanu) went to the girl's village and captured the girl from the girl's house without much resistance. After a week from the date of capture the girl's older brother, Taya and mother Takhly came to Tapu's house with some other villagers. Tapu killed one bullock and one pig which were offered to the gathering. The girl's parents and relatives went back home with the share of meat they had received from Tapu. The girl lived with Tapu for about a year, after which she fled away to her parents' village. Tapu is determined to capture her again.
12. Polyandry.

12.1. Colonel Dalton (1872) mentioned that polyandry was common amongst the Daflas and cited one unmistakable case which came under his personal notice. Sitaram Johri (1962, P.154) states that polyandry is practised among the Daflas, the Hill Miris and the Galong as of NEFA. On the other hand, Captain G.A. Nevill (1921), stated, 'I am sure that the practice of occasional polyandry mentioned by Dalton, never existed among the Daflas: in my experiences of them, I never heard of it, and a Dafla would look on the practice with disgust'.

12.2. Leach (1961, P.105) states, 'although polyandry has been an important topic of anthropological discussion for almost a century, the definition of the concept remain strikingly unsatisfactory'. In certain aspects Dafla polyandry may differ from polyandry in the other societies, but polyandry is a recognised form of union among the Daflas and a number of unmistakable cases of polyandry are recorded at Betgarh. It is not only an arrangement for sexual intercourse, but is an approved form of union among the poor Daflas.

12.3. The situation has striking similarity with that of the Galong of Siang Frontier Division of NEFA as described by Srivastava (1962, P.P.74-75). Srivastava observed among the Galongs thus: 'the most important factor leading to the prevalence of polyandry is perhaps, the economic pressure on the family. The
prohibitive amount of bride-wealth is given jointly by the family. As the economic condition of an average family is not always sound, the family may not allow the remaining brother to bring wives, but they are allowed sex rights over the woman brought by the eldest brother. If the economic condition of the family is strengthened afterwards, some of the younger brothers may also get married.

12.4. The Dafla term for polyandry is 'yoba'. A polyandrous husband is called 'yobak'. There is no social disability attached to a polyandrous husband or to a polyandrous wife. The general tendency, however, seems to be to look down upon the practice with disapproval.

12.5. Three cases of adelphic polyandry and four cases of non-adelphic polyandry are recorded at Betgarh. In all the seven cases recorded, not more than two living husbands were found. It is, however, reported that in the adelphic type there might be more than two husbands. In all the cases, the husbands are found to be of poor economic condition and it is stated that they could not afford to procure mates individually by paying heavy bride-price. In one case of non-adelphic polyandry a couple had no child even after 10 years of their married life and a second husband was incorporated in the hope of begetting children.

12.6. In polyandrous relations the first husband is considered to be the principal husband. In accepting the second husband, mo
ceremony is performed and no formal announcement is made. The polyandrous marriage works smoothly though in certain cases conflict and rivalry for sexual favours are not uncommon. In one case of adelphic polyandry the second husband of a woman had murdered the first husband who was his elder brother. This is a solitary case of extreme sexual jealousy. In practice, however, a wiser married brother who fails to procure a wife for his marriageable brother arranges to share his wife with the knowledge of the villagers. This reduces hostility between a married brother and an unmarried frustrated younger brother. In general the polyandrous husbands practise economic cooperation; live in the same household, cook food in the same hearth and lead a normal family life. Sexual rights over the wife are said to be equal, and the wife is shared by mutual consent between the husbands. It is reported that a wife gladly accepts a second or even a third associated husband. Refusal on the part of the wife to accept a new husband is rare. The consent of wife's family or clan in accepting a second husband from a different clan is not considered to be necessary.

12.7. In case of non-adelphic type, if the second husband belongs to a different clan his clan is changed to that of the first husband when he enters into the polyandrous relation. The issue born from the wife are considered as the children of both the polyandrous husbands. But the legitimacy of the children of both the polyandrous husbands is traced through the first husband. This
custom is similar to that of the Gallongs as noted by Srivastava (1966, p.75). Among the Gallongs apart from having sex relations with the woman, the other brothers or the clan members have no right over the children born to her. At Betgari, in one case, the first husband of a polyandrous family secured a job outside the village and proposed to take with him his wife and their only daughter. The second husband could not object to the departure of the polyandrous wife with the first husband, but he claimed an equal right over the common daughter. The village elders, however, allowed the first husband to take the daughter with him and decided that in future the principal husband would be entitled to 3/4th of the bride-price of the daughter and the remaining 1/4th would be the share of the other husband.

12.8. C.V.P. Kaimanoff (1966, p.8) states, "Polyandry does not seem compatible with a puritan outlook on sex, and in all polyandrous societies so far studied it has been found that sexual relations are not held to be of great moral relevance". This is true for the Daflas too. But among the Daflas sexual licentious is not the sole reason of polyandry which is often entered into for economic reasons. The informants themselves are of the opinion that only a poor Dafla, who cannot afford to procure a wife by normal means, enters into polyandrous marriage. The bride-price is generally very high and the number of marriageable girls in comparison to marriageable boys is low, as the rich Daflas marry more than one wife. In some cases a second husband is incorporated with the hope of getting children.
12.9. Polyandry is not confined to any particular clan. The son of a polyandrous family may be a monogamous or polygamous in the next generation.

12.10. The case studies of adelphic and non-adelphic polyandry of Betgarh is given below:

(i) Tunne Bora (F) 35 years + Jamia Tacheng (M) Dead + Banti Tacheng (M) divorced + Tarem Tacheng (M) 40 years + Chotek Tacheng (M) 25 years.

Jamia first married Tunne, but after 2 years of the marriage he died. His younger brother Banti inherited her. But after some years he divorced her. Then the next younger brother inherited her. When Chotek, the fourth younger brother, was grown up Tarem asked him to share his wife and to live as Ishak. A boy was born from the first husband. The child is considered as the son of both the brothers. The reason advanced for polyandrous marriage is the poor economic condition of the family.

(ii) Kadami Jeme (F) 20 years + Berne Bora (M) 35 years + Senjem Bora 18 years.

Formerly, they lived at Betgarh, but migrated to some other village at the time of enquiry. As they were poor, the elder brother allowed his younger brother to share his wife. No ceremony was performed for the polyandrous alliance. The reason advanced was that the family was poor. Another reason might have been that the couple was childless. Even after the polyandrous relations they had no issue. It is reported that both the brothers are happy and there is no conflict about sharing of the wife.

(iii) Jaffe Youngda (F) 35 years + Tongma Malo (M) Dead + Rateng Malo (M) 30 years.

Tongma, the elder brother of Rateng, married Jaffe and had a son. After some years of the marriage Rateng became young and
of marriageable age. But he was not in a position to procure a wife. So the brothers decided to enter into a polyandrous relation. At the initial stage the relation between the two brothers was quite agreeable. But later on, the wife became more attached to Ratong who was much younger and healthier than his elder brother. Jaffe not only neglected Tongma in sexual advances, but also gave Ratong the better portion of rice-beer and food. One day it so happened that Jaffe kept the better portion of rice-beer in a pail hidden for Ratong and gave Tongma some rice-beer mixed with water. Tongma suspected the matter and forcefully took the rice-beer kept for Ratong. Ratong when back from jungle, heard everything from Jaffe. He became furious with Tongma and delivered eight strokes with his dao on Tongma's head and body. Tongma died on the spot. Ratong did not approach the village elders and went to the police station. He was imprisoned for 7 years by the Session Court. At the time of enquiry he was released from the jail when he restored living with Jaffe as husband and wife. He deeply regretted the past incident.

(iv) Aiti (F) 22 years + Rinso Tabo (M) 40 years + Tatte Take (M) 30 years.

Rinso and Tatte were on good terms. Tatte was very poor and was not in a position to procure a wife. Tatte himself proposed to live with Rinso's wife as yobak. Rinso agreed. No ceremony was performed nor any formal announcement was made. But the other villagers knew about their arrangement. After this agreement Tatte's clan was changed to that of Rinso who was the first husband. They lived together for about four years. A female child was born out of this polyandrous union. After that Rinso secured a job in the house of a Manager of a nearby tea garden. Rinso decided to take his wife and the daughter with him to the tea garden. Naturally, Tatte was not in a position to go with Rinso and he could not object to their common wife going with the first husband. But he pointed out that Rinso could not take away the common daughter as both of them had equal rights over the daughter. So Rinso had to take the help of the
village elders who decided that Tatte also had some right over the daughter. They, however, allowed Rinse to take the girl with him on the condition that Tatte would be eligible for one-fourth of the bride-price that they would get on the occasion of her marriage.

(v) Yareng (F) 28 years + Nijai Siri (M) 32 years + Bali Siri (M) 18 years.

Even after 10 years of their married life, Nijai and Yareng had no issue. Nijai incorporated Bali, a young man of his own clan, as the second husband of his wife. Bali was a poor boy and his parents died when he was a child. At the time of enquiry both the husband and wife were living happily.

(vi) Mayeng Jene (F) 40 years + Taje Kino (M) 40 years + Karle Bora (M) Dead + Sengle Kino (M) 30 years.

Taje Kino after 3 years of married life incorporated Karle Bora of the same village as Tobak for his wife. Karle was poor and was not in a position to get a wife by other means. The polyandrous family lived happily for some years and had a daughter. Then Karle died. Taje's married younger brother lost his wife and was not in a position to marry again. So both the brothers lived in a polyandrous family.

(vii) Yamin Likha (F) 30 years + Tapu Laji (M) 65 years + Tajek (M) 30 years.

Tapu was the first husband. As he became old and almost invalid Yamin, his wife, became intimate with Tajek who was a poor widower. Afterwards their affair was known to Tapu and others. Later Tajek was incorporated as the second husband and they were found living in the same polyandrous family.

13.1. The most interesting aspect of Dafla marriage is that for
a man a single marriage is not considered as the end of a full
sex life. However, sexual satisfaction is not the primary motive
behind marrying plural wives. A woman is considered as an economic
asset who works full time for the family. Such an asset will auto-
matically be inherited by some members of the family after the
death of the husband. The process of marrying one after another
leads to widespread disparity in age of husbands and wives. Some
old men married young girls as their second wives. In a few cases
the husband is as old as his wife's father, or even older. On the
other hand, in case of levirate and filial inheritance, widows
are generally elder than their inheritors. In some cases there is
no possibility of cohabitation. Although the aged husbands do not
like to confess their inability to satisfy their young wives sexually,
one young wife said without hesitation in the presence of her hus-
band that her aged husband had no capacity for cohabitation when
she was married.

Pinji Weli married a 15 year old girl when he was about
60 years old. It seems that he was quite conscious of his age at
the time of this fifth marriage. Pinji expected that his grown up
son by his second wife would inherit this young wife after his
death, but his son began to live with her during his father's life
time.

Tepu Laji married two young girls after 60 and one of them
has escaped to her parent's household. The other one is keeping a
second husband.

Bajom Tumeng, a man of about 55 years is going to marry a
girl of 14
Joanna inherited his widowed step-mother whom he considered as his elder sister at the beginning.

Sengno inherited his father's elder brother's widow who is older than his mother.

13.2. It is indicated earlier that for settlement of marriage at an early age, love affairs between a boy and a girl before marriage are uncommon. But men of poorer families do not marry before they reach the age of 20 to 25 years. The age of a youth for marriage is generally related to his economic condition. Girls are usually married after puberty, generally round about 14 to 15 years. But 11 cases of marriage of girls before attainment of puberty are recorded. Table 9 shows that out of the 162 cases studied about 54 percent of the marriages took place within the village.

Table 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place from which Married</th>
<th>No. of Wives</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Direct from Hills</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>40.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Local - Within the</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>53.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>same village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Local - Outside the</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>100.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the girls who are married from the hills are reported to be unfamiliar before their marriage with the men to whom they were married.
14. 

14.1 In Dafna society husband and wife should love and respect each other and work for their common benefit. If the marriage is unhappy either partner can initiate a divorce. But the woman, however, dissatisfied she may be with the behaviour of her husband, rarely takes the initiative. She knows quite well that if she proposes a divorce, her father or her brothers shall have to return the bride-price given by the groom's party along with indemnity if she be found guilty of infidelity or disobedient in other affairs.

14.2. There are occasions, however, when the woman herself initiates a divorce. This she does only when she is quite certain that her paramour will pay the whole of the bride-price given at the time of marriage together with the indemnity, if any, to the husband.

14.3. The husband may divorce his wife if he finds her guilty of leading a promiscuous life or if she is disobedient or barren. The parents of the woman never want to take back their daughter, however, miserable she may be in her husband's house, because they will then have to return the bride-price. Moreover, a husband who divorces his wife on adequate grounds is not required to return her dowry (dalem).

14.4. Even if a divorce is finally settled the husband does not permit the divorced wife to leave his house until and unless the
bride-price is returned. Divorced persons though live under the same roof do not have sexual relations. The divorced wife works for her divorced husband who maintains her till her bride-price is paid back. It has been observed that under such a situation, the divorced wife becomes full of remorse and unhappiness. She passes her days like a slave. The divorce is taken as a family affair and the village has nothing to do with it.

Fowai has two wives, but the youngest one is found to be disobedient. Fowai asked his father-in-law to return the bride-price and take back his daughter who was disobedient and had secret relations with others. But the father-in-law is reluctant to take his daughter back by returning the heavy bride-price received. The father-in-law is of the opinion that it is the responsibility of the husband to control his wife.

Pinji Weli is a very influential and rich man of the village. But his first wife has divorced him and selected another person as her husband. The next husband paid Pinji Weli the compensation claimed by him.
CHAPTER THREE

Section D : The family

1. Introduction.

1.1. There are 64 houses in this village occupied by 107 families. In the multi-family houses the families live separately forming independent households. Only 36 houses are occupied by single families. Of these 36 houses, 9 are occupied by polygynous families most of which are, in fact, combination of sub-families. The Daflas are individualistic by nature but in residential arrangement they prefer to live in a common long-house occupied by a number of families. This is not a peculiar feature of this immigrant village as the hill Daflas also prefer to live in that way (Shukla, 1959, P.57). At Betgarh, however, fresh immigrant families are accommodated by old settlers, temporarily.

1.2. The Daflas themselves admitted that quarrels and conflicts between families living in a common house are endemic. So there must be certain deep rooted reasons for such an arrangement. In the old days, raids in Dafla villages in the hills were common and families living together could offer effective resistance to the raiders. Non-availability of housing material may be another reason for such a living arrangement. It is also possible that families continue to occupy the same long-house after separation because the separation itself may be only a temporary feature of
the developmental cycle. After the death of the father the son may have to inherit the widowed step-mother and the two families of the father and the son are reunited. Similarly, at the death of a brother another brother may inherit the widow and the two independent families are united.

1.3. Although the kinship system is patrilineal, it is interesting to note that seven families are living in the long-house of the agnatic kin of the wife. In cases of marriage by service the son-in-law usually continues to live in his long-house and set up an independent unit there. Although this arrangement is not preferred, it is not considered objectionable. A man living in the house of his father-in-law may lose his chance of inheriting a widow of his lineage and may forfeit his claim on the property.

1.4. A son after separation cannot occupy the front portion of the house which is reserved for the father. But when the father becomes invalid he is required to occupy the rear portion. If a son becomes rich and influential, he may occupy the front portion of the house by sending his father and his family to the rear portion. This is because the less fortunate father might not be able to entertain the guests and kinsmen who, by custom, are accommodated in the front portion of the house.


2.1. A Dafla family is both a production and a consumption unit. A polygynous family is considered as the ideal and the
2.2. A married person is expected to have a separate hearth shortly after marriage and joint families are uncommon. With a view to keeping peace and harmony in family life, the father arranges a mate for a grown-up son as early as possible. In a polygamous family, as soon as a son becomes adolescent, he learns that the step-mothers are his potential wives whom he can inherit after the death of his father. In such a situation, a grown-up son may make sexual advances towards his stepmothers, especially towards the young ones secretly. A polygamous father is generally a rich father and can easily arrange a mate for his adult son. This step is taken as a safeguard against sexual rivalry between a father and a son. After marriage the son establishes a separate family hearth although he lives in the same house.

2.3. Similarly, it becomes difficult for two grown-up brothers to live together for a long period when the elder one gets married. This is primarily because of the fact that after the death of the father it is the social obligation of the elder brother to procure a mate for the younger brother. The elder brother knows that the younger brother might indulge in sexual relations with his wife.
So to fulfill his duty as an elder brother and to minimize sexual rivalry and conflicts, a mate is procured for the younger brother. The younger brother will have separate hearth after marriage. Naturally, horizontally extended joint families are uncommon and emergence of a family of this kind is only a temporary phenomenon. If the elder brother fails to procure a mate for his grown-up brother, he may be required under custom to share his wife with the younger brother either permanently or until such time as he succeeds in getting a mate for him.

3. Types of families.

3.1. On the basis of the data collected on the nature of families at Betgarh, family types in the village is shown in Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Type</th>
<th>No. of families</th>
<th>P.C. of families Total</th>
<th>No. of persons</th>
<th>P.C. of total persons</th>
<th>Average size of family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>54.07</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>40.85</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joint</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>19.63</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>27.46</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compound</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14.95</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>19.72</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9.35</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>11.97</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2. The polygynous family is like a combination of sub-families as stated earlier. The polygynous families are classified as compound families. Life in a monogamous simple family (nuclear) is observed.
to be less complicated and most of the families belong to this category. A nuclear family with husband, wife and unmarried children is the basic economic and social unit which might expand gradually through addition of subsequent wives. But some persons of the younger generation said they were in favour of monogamous families.

Jamma Prasad Tachang can very well afford to marry a second wife. His wife also very often insists on it. But Jamma is adamant and said that he would be ridiculed by his Assamese friends if he married more than one wife.

3.3. The joint families are temporary by nature and a married person is not satisfied till he makes a separate arrangement. In four families the would-be sons-in-law are staying temporarily (for marriage by service) and these families are classified as special types. Three families of polyandrous nature are classified as special types of nature of which is discussed under section on marriage. In other special families certain relatives reside as members of the family. In all types of families, the decision of the head of the family is generally accepted by the rest. A person is expected to show respect to all the elderly members.


4.1. Even in polygynous families each wife leads an independent family life with a separate hearth and certain properties of her own. A polygynous family in Betgarh is a combination of a number of sub-families. Dalsa polygyny is of disparate form the senior wife
having a superior position to those of others. The first wife of a husband is addressed as *nīp* by his subsequent wife or wives. The first wife exercises unrestricted authority over her co-wives who are, in fact, treated as subordinates to the first wife. After marriage, the second wife takes her food with the senior wife, but she makes her own arrangement for food after the birth of a child. The process continues in case of subsequent wives. The husband is the common head of the polygynous family. Ideally the husband should take his meals with his senior wife and in all important matters he should consult her. A man procures a subsequent wife in consultation with his first wife. In fact it is the first wife who takes the initiative in procuring subsequent wives for her husband.

After the death of his second wife Tana married another girl. Tana's wife while announcing the marriage added: "It is the duty of the first wife to arrange additional wife or wives for her husband. The additional wives would help the first one in all family duties. No doubt, the love and favour of the husband will be divided between the wives, but it does not matter. The husband will have a 'soft corner' for the first wife and in all important matters she is consulted".

4.2. At Betgarh, a polygynous husband takes his meals with a particular wife on a particular day with whom he also spends the night. If the husband spends a few nights consecutively with a particular wife, other wives who are deprived of the company of their husband at night might feel offended. A neglected wife might
rebuke her husband besides refusing him food when approached. The husband in such a situation has to be very tactful in order to appease the offended wife.

Pinji Weli, who is 65 years old, is very much attracted to his newly married 16 years old wife, but he is cautious in his dealings with other three wives. He very well knows that he has equal responsibility for all his wives and children. Some other villagers, however, feel that the old man with four wives does not lead a very happy life. In fact, he had five wives one of whom left him and has now been living with another person of the same village. "The life of a polygynous husband is not different from that of a stray dog. Like a stray dog searching for food from house to house, he approaches one wife after another begging for food and shelter" - they commented. But Rajom Tamong, a wealthy person with three wives remarked. "The poor people try to be satisfied with such rationalised feelings". A man having a number of wives can lead a happy life. The wives work in the field, cook food, prepare rice-beer and there is always competition between them to satisfy the husband. Moreover, a polygynous husband would be able to have a number of wives in the next world too".

4.3. A polygynous family at Betgarh is actually a combined unit of a number of sub-families. Each wife leads almost an independent family life. Shukla mentions that such a woman has a separate plot of land for cultivation of crops independently\(^1\). The husband shares in harvesting the crop and helps in cultivation. At Betgarh the bullocks, mithuns, pallas, tamaran and big does are held to be the common property of the polygynous family. Each wife has beads, poultry, pigs and goats of her own. But unlike in the hills, individual
cultivation of land by each wife becomes almost impossible, because of the fact that land is not freely available. There is fixity of land tenure and the land is owned by the husband. He allocates the land to his wives equally keeping the major share for his seniormost wife.

Out of 20 acres of land, Pinji Weli allotted 3 acres each to his three junior wives and the produce of the rest is kept in the granary of the first wife. Moreover, each wife has a small kitchen garden. Bajem Tamang with 3 wives is indifferent in this regard. He feels that it is unnecessary to allot land to each wife separately and each wife has the liberty to use paddy for family consumption.

4.4. In wet paddy cultivation the primary and the major field operations are to be done by men only. It is not possible for the women to complete all the field operations by themselves. Some elderly persons are of the view that the Dafna women do not plough the field only because no woman in the plains does that work. In a polygamous family, the wet paddy cultivation is taken as a common enterprise and in addition to family labour, agricultural labourers are employed on hire. In most cases the produce of the allotted land is kept by each wife individually in a separate granary of her own. For a family ritual, each wife prepares rice-beer. Mithun and bullocks are provided from the common stock. Poultry and pigs are provided from the individual stocks of the wives. For a propitiatory ceremony of the ailment of the husband, it is the duty of each wife to provide the required articles.
4.5. Although the sub-families of a polygynous family are relatively independent in nature each such family helps the other. When one such sub-family falls short of cereals, others make it readily available. Rice-beer prepared by one is shared by the co-wives. It is customary to offer rice-beer to the first wife by the co-wives. The co-wives in many families are seen gossiping with smiling faces. Conflicts arise in case of extreme favouritism of the husband for a particular wife.

Bajem's senior wife, who is aged, had complained that she was neglected by her husband. She said that Bajem was the younger brother of her deceased husband and had inherited her along with vast properties. She alleged that Bajem was very much attracted to his two young wives and she was almost a non-entity in the family. Had she been young enough she could have divorced such an unkind person and selected someone else as husband. But at this age no one would accept her.

5. Family Life.

5.1. The duties and responsibilities of the head of a family is reflected in different aspects of family life. A person takes care to see that his pregnant wife remains safe from the evil spirit poren. In the advanced stage of pregnancy a woman is not allowed to go to the jungle and is always allotted lighter jobs. The only ease of a child birth in the jungle is that of Jamma's wife. According to Jamma, he sent his wife to collect forest materials for making mats, as he was unaware that his wife was in an advanced stage of pregnancy. Moreover, a pregnant woman
is provided with restricted diet for easier and safer delivery.
As soon as the child is born the whole family especially the father becomes happy. As there is no professional midwife an expert woman in that line assists the parturient woman. In some cases the husbands themselves assist their wives at the time of delivery. Though there is a hospital nearby, no one, so far, has taken the help of a doctor at the time of delivery. Within a period of five years four women died in delivery cases.

5.2. No contraceptive methods are used to prevent conception.
A family with a large number of children is considered ideal. But many of the elderly persons expressed the view that poor families should have fewer children. Birth of a twin is considered to be a most unnatural event in a family life. Such a family is dreaded and is visited only by the old persons. The younger people avoid it for about 6 months after the birth of twins. If the children visit house where twins has been born the parents inflict physical punishments on them.

Rokup, a school boy, was punished by his guardian because he unknowingly visited the house of Kingo who whose wife gave birth to twins. Birth of triplets is unheard of and 'if such a thing happens the babies along with the mother would be killed'.

* At the advanced stage of pregnancy, a woman is not allowed to take potato, turn, egg and bacon violation of which is believed to cause severe labor pain. The aged women of the family ask the pregnant woman to put off her seam belts from waist and legs. The husband knows that pregnant women like to eat a kind of bark and sometimes dried soil (potter's clay) from the riverside which he does not
some of the elderly men commented. It is feared that if young persons visit and eat something in the family in which twins are born they also might be parents of twins in future.

5.3. It is the duty of the father to name a child. A newly born baby is christened as early as possible and some even do so on the day of its birth. The name of a person who died at a ripe old age is always preferred. A niebu is called for selecting the name by divination with the liver of a chicken. Sometimes the parents themselves name the child. The name of the child may be given according to the nature of the child. Crying male child is named Kapdom, and female child Kapdona and a wicked boy Bonya. Loge is

Continued from previous page.

forget to supply. The husband of a pregnant woman takes great care to see that the child in the womb does not take a deformed shape due to violation of certain customs. He does not participate in hunting and if he happens to go he refrains from killing wild animals. If the labour pain becomes acute and continues for long time a medicine-man(niebu) is summoned to drive away the spirit poran by magical means. In certain cases a kind-hearted and cheerful person (here) is asked to touch the body of the woman suffering from labour pain for easy delivery. The presence of a miserly man (mayang) makes child delivery very difficult. A beehive is kept on the front door so that the parturient woman and child remain unharmed from the evil spirits. The woman after delivery is allowed to take her unusual diet. She is not allowed to take amu-poe i.e. rice-beer prepared from husk-mixed rice and is allowed to consume enough of amu-poe rice-beer prepared from clean rice. No special food is prepared for the child. The father of the newly born child observes a set of rules till the umbilical cord of the baby falls off. Only an irresponsible person deviates from such observances. The father desists from cutting trees and canes during this period, violation of which would cause swelling in the umbilical cord. If it becomes indispensable to cut a tree, a wooden chip is brought home and put over the umbilical cord. The father does not carry very heavy loads, otherwise the newly born baby experiences breathing troubles. If he happens to kill a cock the baby will have stiff neck. All the members of the family take care to see that a mithan does not enter below the platform of the house which would cause deformed belly of the baby or the baby may be oblique eyed. On the 5th day after child-birth the woman present at the time of child delivery are feasted with food and rice-beer.
a name of a boy who was born in the month of Borwa in the Dafla calendar. In one case two sons of a person died at a very young age and out of a grief he has named his new born girl Sante, which means broom-stick. Broomstick is considered to be a most ordinary thing and that name was selected with the hope that the evil spirits might not harm the girl. Many enlightened people christen their children with names found among their Assamese neighbours: Jamuna, Dino, Kadomi, Jenaki are such names. The villagers request the outsiders to name their children. Sometimes the Nepali priests, living nearby, are also consulted.

5.4. The children grew up without any formal training. From childhood they accompany their parents to the paddy fields, where they learn the agricultural practices first by observation and then by actual participation. It is a Dafla's ambition that at least one of his sons should be a niehu. An expert niehu not only earns a lot by his profession but also protects the family and the society from evil spirits. According to popular belief a niehu is an ideal man and a son is persuaded by his parents to learn this profession from an expert.

5.5. The absence of youth dormitories in Dafla society has made it necessary for the young Daflas to get sexual experiences within or outside the parental house. It also hampers the educational progress of the children of the village. Two Daflas complained to
the Headmaster of the Local M.E. School about the sexual adventures of a 16 year old Dafla student of Class VIII. One of them complained that the boy was planning to elope with his wife. Moreover, in certain cases very tender aged boys are allowed to sleep with their wives. A twelve year old boy was married to a fifteen year old girl. Obviously the husband cannot discharge his obligations as a husband to his grown-up wife. They, however, believe that a younger husband grows up quickly if he is allowed to sleep with a grown-up wife.

5.6. Parental authority over the regulation of the sexual life of the daughters and sons is minimal. Some parents raise no objection even if their daughters earn money by selling their flesh. The girl too does not obviously lose face in the society because of her clandestine ways of earning money. Her value in the marriage market does not diminish thereby. Nor is there scarcity of grooms for such girls of dubious moral character.

5.7. Haimendorf mentions (1962, P.98) that Daflas consider their wives whom they obtain by the payment of enormous bride-price so much as their property that any indiscretion on their part is likely to rouse in them fits of uncontrolled rage. He adds that the Daflas seem to lack the Apa Tanis' tolerance and detachment in the regulation of personal and sexual relations and a higher standard of sexual morality is expected not only of married women but even of young girls who
enjoy none of Apa Tanis’ premarital freedom and independence. In Betgarh, however, the situation is somewhat different. It is reported that some unmarried girls go to the market places a day earlier and spend the night inside private houses or in some tea or pan shops where they occasionally earn money from outsiders by selling their flesh. There are a few instances of earning money by married women in such ways, who go to the market with the unmarried girls. In one case one European tea garden manager became very much attracted to a beautiful girl, and by offering some money and some other valuables took her to his garden residence where he kept her for some months. Some villagers considered her father to be a lucky one for getting valuable articles as a result of this clandestine affair. When the girl was sent back home she was not hated by the villagers nor had she lost her social position.

5.8. It seems that the villagers become satisfied when some sort of payment is made for such irregular sexual relations by outsiders. Within the community a fine is imposed for such disapproved acts. Within the community sexual relations with one’s step-mother and one’s elder brother’s wife are taken as family affairs and tolerated. The society, however, disfavors an open affair between a step-mother and a step-sen and that of a person with elder brother’s wife. A person is expected to show respect to his step-mother during the life time of his father. But in actual practice it is observed that the step-sens do not show respect to the step-mothers. The father feels relieved as soon as he can acquire a mate for his grown-up son.
CHAPTER THREE

Section E: The Slaves.

1. Introduction.

1.1. Slavery existed in many tribal societies of NEPA till recent years. It is now prohibited by law and the NEPA authorities have freed many slaves by paying compensation to the slave owners. Slavery is a very old institution among the Daflas. At Betgarh, there are slaves - both male (nera) and female (pana) - but the owners, being conscious of the law, usually refer to them as servants.

2. Rights and Duties of Slaves.

2.1. Among the Daflas slaves are not considered as a separate stratum of society but incorporated in the family and treated almost as family members. The slaves' feed is cooked with that of the master's family. There is no bar against inter-commensality. Male slaves do the same work as their master in agricultural, fishing and hunting activities. Female slaves too, are not differentially treated in matters of their routine work since they share the activities with their mistresses.

2.2. Although there is no clear cut division of labour between a slave and a master, the slaves are seen working very hard for the whole day. In the village the slaves do not have property of their own. A nera is considered to be the owner of his clothes, a dao, a
carrying basket and a smoking pipe. Similarly, a pane owns some pieces of ordinary clothes and cheap beads. A nere can represent his master in any cooperative undertaking such as hunting, fishing, agricultural activities and constructing a house. The master is responsible for his slave's faults and misdeeds, and is bound to pay the debts of his slave. He is also bound to compensate for any damage caused by his slave. A slave addresses the master as ate and the latter's wife as aiyo. These terms are generally used to very respectable persons by the Dafus.

2.3. The master arranges for a pane and a nere to live as husband and wife. The children of such a couple becomes slaves of their master.

Pinji's nere Male and pane Yamen lived as husband and wife, but Yamen died childless; Male is then allowed to live with Yatep, the pane of Pinji's son Tana. Yatep gave birth to a daughter who would be the common property of both Pinji and Tana.

2.4. Slaves do not have legal rights and are debarred from taking part in some religious ceremonies. In great U-le or Dorm worship, a slave is not allowed to approach the place of offering nor can he offer sacrifices. A slave is not allowed to express his opinion in the village council. In case of a breach of custom, the slaves may have to face more serious consequences than the masters. The master can sell a slave whenever he wishes to do so. But in certain respects, the slaves are considered as equal
members of Dafia society. A slave, when purchased from a different clan, is adopted into the clan of his new master. It is stated that sometimes a master when pleased with the conduct of the slave, manages to purchase a female slave for the latter. The master may help his slaves in the erection of a separate hearth, and what is more, the master may even hand over a part of his property to his favourite slave. Such a slave renders occasional help to his erstwhile master in times of need. Illicit relation between a woman of a master's family and a slave is viewed with disfavour. Sexual relation between a master and a slave girl is likewise considered immoral because the slaves are considered as clan members of the master. But instances of such lapses are not rare.

2.5. The owning of slaves has a prestige value and the masters feel proud to boast about their slaves. But as slavery is now prohibited by law, they hesitate to disclose information about it. There is no life-long stigma attached to the slaves. There is no slave clan. Eimendorf noted (1956, P.65-72) that a slave among the Dafias is a victim of circumstances and not an immutable member of a social class. But among the Apa-Tanis the slave class (mura) can never attain the status of patrician class (mite). Social mobility from mura to mato status can be traced in some Dafia families of Betgarh. These mura families fled away from
their hill habitat and settled in the present site and are now considered to be note families by the co-villagers.

Pinji Welli was once a nora. But he attained the status of a note and the master of four slaves. Now there is no social prejudice against him except casual references that he was once a nora.

3. Mode of Acquisition of Slaves.

3.1. Most of the slaves of Betgarh were purchased from the hills and the majority of the female slaves were acquired as parts of dowry. In the hills, on the contrary, most of the slaves are captives. It is stated that sometimes a person sells a member of the family in case of extreme poverty. In Betgarh there are cases of selling and reselling of slaves and also using female slaves as a part of dowry, but there is not a single instance of selling one's own relatives. In all the cases of purchase of slaves the basic payment is three to four mithuns. In some cases Assamese silk cloth (andi), doe and money in cash is also paid. Table 1 shows the number of slaves and modes of acquiring them at Betgarh.

Table 1.

Slaves at Betgarh

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode of acquisition</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Dowry</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Purchase</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(a) Pinji Well purchased Marchi Siri from village Peke situated in the border of Darrang and Lakhimpur District. Marchi's parents were very poor and that was why they sold their son to Pinji at a price of 4 mithuns. With his first wife Pinji got one pane, Yamen who died young. With second wife he had received another pane, Kampe who was about 14 years old, as a part of dowry. This girl lived with him for about 5 years and died. Pinji purchased his nura, Male (35 years old) from a hill village paying 3 mithuns. Both Marchi and Male are very obedient to Pinji.

(b) Tana Well purchased one pane, Yatop from Beyo village in Kameng Frontier Division. Tana paid 4 mithuns to Yatop's husband who sold her as she indulged in adulterous relations with many other Daflas. Yatop was of Bagheng clan and is now considered to be a member of Welli clan, the clan of her master.

(c) Bajon Tamong had 2 panes. He purchased one of them from Sengno Sengdo of the same village. Bajon paid 3 mithuns, 3 Assamese silk cloths and 2 daos, besides cash of rupees 15'00. Sengno purchased the pane from Pinjiran village, NEFA. The girl was of Chida clan and sold by her poor parents. Bajon also purchased another pane from Sepla area of NEFA. The girl was captive of a village raid and the master sold her to the people in the plains to prevent possible escape to her parents. Bajon said that the girls were adopted into his clan and thus sexual relations were prohibited. But he confessed that he had sexual intercourse with one of them several times. He also added that it would be disgraceful if the villagers knew about such a relation. Both the girls died and Bajon performed similar burial rites to those of nura girls. Bajon purchased one nura boy, Sepin Siri from Sepla, who fled away to the hills during 1960. Bajon has given up hope of recovering the slave.

(d) Bee Beehek's 16 years old nera, Bashang, is a smart boy for whom Bee paid 4 big mithuns. He has also purchased another
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12 years old pane from the hills. When she comes of age, Rao will allow her to live with Baehang as his wife.

(e) Radek Bora's elder brother purchased a nera and a pane from the hills. At the death of his elder brother, Radek inherited them.

(f) Tana Laji purchased one nera of 14 years from Belenka village of Subansiri Frontier Division, NEFA by paying 3 mithuns, one bullock and Rs. 50'00. The father of the boy was also a slave. The boy has fled away and the whereabouts of the boy is not known. Tana will bring him back forcibly if he can trace him.

(g) Ginak Taba's elder brother purchased a nera from his villager, Tajik. Tajik has purchased that nera from the Sepla area of NEFA. The price of the nera that Tajik received was two mithuns, two bullocks and Rs. 100'00 only. Ginak has inherited the slave after the death of his elder brother. Ginak has also purchased one pane of 14 years from a man of Tacheng clan of Sepla area of NEFA by paying three mithuns.

(h) Jamuna has received one pane of 12 years with his wife as a part of her dowry. The girl lived with Jamuna for about 5 years and worked like a member of his family. Jamuna has given her as a part of the dowry of his elder sister.


4.1. In the village, the distinction between nera and neta class is not very rigid. The relations between a master and his slave are generally agreeable. But the death of four female slaves at tender age indicates the miserable life of the slaves. Slavery is not a form of trade, although a master can sell his slaves when he so wishes. The attainment of neta status from that of nera is
dependent upon one's economic condition. A *nora* is recognised as a *note* when he becomes rich. But upgrading of *nera* and *notes* is also admissible through public approval known as *note hanung*. If a *nora* manages to arrange marriage with a *note* girl he is required to pay a *nitban* to the villagers. After this payment the *nora* is upgraded to *note* class. The stigma attached to *nora* clings inspite of this upgrading. But it may be noted that for all practical purposes an upgraded *nora* enjoys the rights and privileges of *note* people. But inspite of social mobility they think that in the other world a slave will be a slave, and the master a master. The slaves must serve in the other world too. Moreover, after death the possessor of slaves can easily go to the other world, whereas these without slaves have to face many hurdles.

4.2. In Dafila society there is demarcation not only between *note* and *nora* but also between these two ranks on the one side and the pig castrators (*rectem kidoabo*) on the other. The lowest rank both in status as well as in economic prosperity is occupied by the latter class of people. However, this class of people is totally absent in Betgarh and (the castration of pigs they employ persons from the hills. It is noteworthy to observe that the Dafilas do not take bacon of uncastrated pigs. On the other hand, the castrator among them occupies the lowest rank. Such a person establishes marital relationship with *nora* families which again look down upon *rectem kidoabo* as much lower than themselves. Certain
restriction; are imposed on such persons' movements. A pig-castrator cannot enter or leave the house of a mata by the front door but only by the back door. He is not allowed to approach the sacrificial plane. In this connection, it is interesting to note that among the Epa-Tamis of the Subansiri Division of NEFA there is a prejudice against the profession of castration of pigs (Naimendorf, 1962, P.72). A woman engaged in this profession is debarred from participation in feasts and religious rites.

4.3. The existence of slaves is still an indispensable part of Dafla socio-economic structure. The neras are required to sleep in the same living house in both the ends. They not only work hard for their masters, but also serve them as guards at night against any enemy or thief. The slaves serve their masters in all household activities.