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van Driem
A Grammar of Dumi

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in memory of
my loving father
George Henri van Driem
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Contents

Acknowledgements	vii
Abbreviations	xiii
Transliteration and transcription	xvii
1. The Dumi	
1.1. The Dumi and their neighbours	1
1.2. The linguistic situation	4
1.3. The material and the speakers	8
1.4. The Dumi kinship system	11
1.5. Dumi shamanism and the animist pantheon	22
1.5.1. The shaman: calling and classification	29
1.5.2. The <i>Kha:pkor</i> , the <i>naksæ-sele</i> and witch doctors	32
1.5.3. The <i>Na:ghi</i> , <i>Niŋdza:</i> and the <i>naksæ-kibi</i>	38
1.5.4. Death, mourning and the hereafter	43
2. Phonology and Phonetics	
2.1. Vowel phonemes and their allophones.....	49
2.2. Consonant phonemes and their allophones	52
2.3. Hiatus and the syllable	57
2.4. The orthography	59
3. Nominal Morphology	
3.1. Number	61
3.2. Case	
3.2.1. The ergative	62
3.2.2. The absolutive	64
3.2.3. The instrumental	65
3.2.4. The genitive	66
3.2.5. The vocative	67
3.2.6. The locative	68
3.2.7. The comitative	74
3.2.8. The ornative	76
3.2.9. The ablative	76
3.2.10. The comparative	78
3.3. Compounding	79
3.4. Pronouns	80
3.4.1. Morphemic analysis of personal pronouns	82
3.4.2. Personal possessive prefixes	84
3.4.3. Interrogative pronouns	86
3.5. Numerals	87
3.6. Adjectives	89

4. Conjugations of the Verb	
4.1. Conjugations and morphophonology	91
4.2. Intransitive conjugations	95
4.3. Transitive conjugations	99
4.4. Apophony and homophony	116
5. Morphology of Simplicia	119
5.1. Prefixes	
5.1.1. The third plural subject morpheme <ham->	122
5.1.2. The marked scenario prefix <a->	123
5.1.3. The preterite negative morpheme <mə->	124
5.2. Suffixes	
5.2.1. The reflexive morpheme <-nsi>	125
5.2.2. The 1s→2 morpheme <-n>	129
5.2.3. The first person plural morpheme <-k>	133
5.2.4. The first first person singular morpheme <-ŋ>	133
5.2.5. Tense	135
5.2.6. The second first person singular morpheme <-ə>	140
5.2.7. The 1s→3/PT <i>portemanteau</i> <-u>	141
5.2.8. The inclusive morpheme <-i>	141
5.2.9. The exclusive morpheme <-i>	142
5.2.10. The non-first person subject morpheme <-a>	143
5.2.11. The third singular preterite patient morpheme <-i>	144
5.2.12. The dual morpheme <-i>	145
5.2.13. The non-first person singular morpheme <-a>	145
5.2.14. The non-first person dual morpheme <-si>	146
5.2.15. The non-first person plural morpheme <-ini>	147
5.2.16. The negative morpheme <-nə>	149
5.3. Overview of affixal slots and their fillers	150
5.4. Verbs ‘to be’	168

6. Aspect and Aspectivizers	
6.1. Aspect	177
6.2. The nominalizer suffix	190
6.3. Aspectivizers and <i>Aktionsarten</i>	197
6.3.1. The allative aspectivizer	199
6.3.2. The continuous aspectivizer	200
6.3.3. The dimittive aspectivizer	202
6.3.4. The ponent aspectivizer	203
6.3.5. The profferative aspectivizer	205
6.3.6. The durative aspectivizer	206
6.3.7. The perseverative aspectivizer	207
6.3.8. The colligative aspectivizer	208
6.3.9. The frolicsome aspectivizer	209
6.3.10. The itive aspectivizer	210
6.3.11. Miscellaneous aspectivizers	212
6.3.12. Pseudo-aspectivizers	213
7. Causatives and Transitivity	
7.1. Unproductive causatives: reflexes of Tibeto-Burman *- <i>t</i> directive suffix	215
7.2. The productive causativizer <i>mitni</i>	224
7.3. Transitivity and impersonal constructions	227
8. Perfect Tenses	
8.1. Perfect and pluperfect	237
8.2. Negated perfect and pluperfect	240
8.3. The negative perfect gerund	243
9. Other Verbal Constructions	
9.1. The perfect gerund	245
9.2. The present gerund	248
9.3. Imperative	250
9.4. The adhortative	257
9.5. The optative	258
9.6. Clause-final mood particles, conjunctions and reported speech	260
9.7. The infinitive	267
9.8. The supine	271
9.9. The active participle	272
9.10. The impersonal first plural inclusive	275

Appendices

I. Texts

The Dumí creation myth	277
The original family of Man pitted against the <i>Hāyu</i> or cannibals	288
The myth of <i>Hopli</i> , the first son of <i>Khopsi-Likpa</i> and <i>Naghilem</i>	319
Conversation 1	322
Conversation 2	324
Conversation 3	325
Formulaic farewell	326

II. Paradigms

1. Intransitive verbs	329
2. Transitive verbs	335
3. Reflexive verbs	362

III. Dumí-English Glossary	365
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IV. Plates	437
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References	447
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Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
A	agent (of a transitive verb)
ABS	absolutive case marker
ADH	adhortative
adj	adjective
adv	adverb
ALL	allative aspectivizer (vide 6.3.1)
AP	active participle
ASS	assertive
augm	augmentative
C	consonant
caus	causative
COM	comitative
COL	colligative aspectivizer (vide 6.3.9)
conj	conjunction
CNT	continuous aspectivizer (vide 6.3.2)
CTR	contrary to expectation particle: wa
d	dual ¹
dem	demonstrative
DEPR	deprehensative
dim	diminutive
di	dual inclusive ¹
dir	directive
de	dual exclusive ¹
DUR	durative aspectivizer (vide 6.3.6)
e	exclusive ¹
EMPH	emphatic particle
Eng	English
ERG	ergative case marker
exp	expletive
f	feminine
fig	figurative
GEN	genitive
HOP	frollicsome aspectivizer (vide 6.3.9)
i	inclusive ¹
imp	impersonal conjugation
IND	individualizer suffix: <-bœ>
INF	infinitive

¹ also as a superscript to disambiguate English glosses

INST	instrumental
IPF	imperfective
irr	irregular
interj	interjection
interr	interrogative
lit	literally
LOC	locative
m	masculine
MS	marked scenario (vide 5.1.2)
n	noun
NEG	negative
Nep	Nepali
NOM	nominalizer
npG	negative perfect gerund
NPT	non-preterite
ns	non-singular
num	numeral
∅	zero
OPT	optative
p	plural ²
P	patient (of a transitive verb)
part	particle
pe	plural exclusive ²
pf	prefix, prefixal slot
PF	perfective
pfG	perfect gerund
pi	plural inclusive ²
poet	poetic, characteristic of elevated diction
postp	postposition, postpositive
PP	passive participle
prG	present gerund
PT	preterite
REF	reflexive/reciprocal
REP	reported speech particle, i.e. hearsay evidential
RES	resultative aspectivizer
s	singular ²
S	subject (of an intransitive or reflexive verb)
sf	suffix, suffixal slot
SUP	supine
Σ	stem
Tib	written Tibetan
v	verb

² also as a superscript to disambiguate English glosses

vi	<i>verbum intransitivum</i> , intransitive verb
VOC	vocative
vr	<i>verbum reflexivum</i> , reflexive verb
VS	<i>Vikram Samvat</i> era
vt	<i>verbum transitivum</i> , transitive verb
*	reconstructed or unattested form
[]	phonetic transcription/etymological note
/ /	phonemic transcription
<>	morpheme/allomorph
<	derives from
→	direction of a transitive relationship

Transliteration and transcription

Nepali words are transliterated from the *devanāgarī* script using the following symbols:

	<i>a</i>		<i>ā</i>	
	<i>i</i>		<i>ī</i>	
	<i>u</i>		<i>ū</i>	
			<i>ṛ</i>	
	<i>e</i>		<i>ai</i>	
	<i>o</i>		<i>au</i>	
	<i>m̐</i>		<i>ḥ</i>	
<i>k</i>	<i>kh</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>gh</i>	<i>ṅ</i>
<i>c</i>	<i>ch</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>jh</i>	<i>ñ</i>
<i>ṭ</i>	<i>ṭh</i>	<i>ḍ</i>	<i>ḍh</i>	<i>ṇ</i>
<i>t</i>	<i>th</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>dh</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>p</i>	<i>ph</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>bh</i>	<i>m</i>
	<i>y</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>v</i>
	<i>ś</i>	<i>ṣ</i>	<i>s</i>	
		<i>h</i>		

Furthermore, the following conventions are observed:

Silent *a* is not rendered in the transliteration, even though it is not generally deleted with a *virām* in the *devanāgarī* orthography.

The *anusvāra* written above a vowel is transcribed as the homorganic nasal it represents: *ṅ*, *ñ*, *ṇ*, *n* or *m*. The *candrabindu* or *anunāsika* used to indicate vowel nasality in *devanāgarī* is transliterated by the symbol *~* placed above the vowel.

The distinctions between *i* and *ī*, *u* and *ū*, *b* and *v*, *ś* and *ṣ* and *s*, preserved in the orthography, are also rendered in the transliteration, although they do not necessarily correspond to any phonemic distinctions in modern spoken Nepali. The *hrasva* / *dirgha* length distinction does not exist for *i/ī* and *u/ū* in spoken Nepali. Orthographic *v* usually represents the same phoneme as *b*, i.e. /b/, the most frequent allophone of which is [b]. Elsewhere, *v* represents the less common phoneme /w/ in words characteristic of somewhat elevated diction such as the adjective *vallo* 'near, proximal' or the formal conjunction *athavā* 'or' (cf. Dutch *oftewel*) or represents a sub-phonemic glide in words such as *haluvā* 'sweet porridge' or *uvā* 'Himalayan barley'. There is one sibilant phoneme in modern colloquial Nepali /s/ with some allophonic variation.

An official and universally accepted spelling standard for Nepali has not yet been established. However, Pokhrel *et al.* (2040), Rabinovič *et al.* (1968) and Pradhān (1983) are taken as the spelling standard. For place names, I have adopted as a standard the spelling most used by the local *jillā* or *gāū pañcāyat* (e.g. on their printed stationary or on signs). When language or tribe names do not appear in Pokhrel or Rabinovič, the spellings of authoritative Nepali authors or of authoritative Indian

authors writing in Hindi are adopted, except when these are obviously arbitrarily chosen *devanāgarī* renderings of Romanized spellings.

Finally, there is considerable variety in the manner in which Nepalese final /ŋ/ is rendered in *devanāgarī* orthography. In the orthography of some authors, final /ŋ/ is spelt *ni*, whereas in the orthography of other authors /ŋ/ is rendered *niḡ* or as *g* with an *anusvāra* or *candrabindu* above the preceding vowel. The latter orthography is often chosen even when there is no following or underlying phoneme /g/. For example, the common postposition /səŋə/ 'with' is written as *saṅga* or *sāga*, whereas the phonologically more satisfactory spelling *sania*, although attested, is rare and generally viewed as incorrect.

Literary Tibetan orthography is transliterated using the symbols:

<i>k</i>	<i>kh</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>ṅ</i>
<i>c</i>	<i>ch</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>ñ</i>
<i>t</i>	<i>th</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>p</i>	<i>ph</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>m</i>
	<i>ts</i>	<i>tsh</i>	<i>dz</i>
<i>w</i>	<i>ś</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>ḥ</i>
	<i>y</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>l</i>
<i>ś</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>h</i>	<i>a</i>
<i>i</i>	<i>u</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>o</i>

Literary Burmese orthography is transliterated using the following symbols:

<i>k</i>	<i>hk</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>ṅ</i>
<i>s</i>	<i>hs</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>ñ</i>
<i>t̥</i>	<i>h̥t̥</i>	<i>ḍ</i>	<i>ḍ</i>	<i>ṇ</i>
<i>t</i>	<i>ht</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>n</i>
<i>p</i>	<i>hp</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>bh</i>	<i>m</i>
<i>y</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>θ</i>
	<i>h</i>	<i>l</i>	<i>a</i>	
	<i>i</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>ε</i>	
	<i>ɔ</i>	<i>o</i>	<i>u</i>	

The creaky tone is generally indicated by *accent grave*. The creaky tone is left unmarked in syllables with final orthographic *-p*, *-t*, *-k* or *-s*, where it is automatic. The breathy tone is indicated by *accent circumflexe* above the vowel, and the level tone is left unmarked. The *θèθètañ* or mark of nasalization is transliterated as a tilde *~* above the vowel.

Transcriptions of modern Burmese are given between brackets in the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet listed below. The transcription, although a broad phonetic one, assumes an interpretation of Burmese phonology. Nasalization is analysed as a syllable-final segment. All syllable-initials indicated have phonemic

status except /ð/, which is an allophone of /θ/. The phoneme /w/ is restricted to literary pronunciations. The post-initial glide /j/ occurs only after bilabials and laterals. The vowels [ɪ] and [ʌ] are not phonemes, but allophones of /i/ before final glottal stop and /a/ after initial or post-initial /w/ in closed syllables respectively.

syllable-initials						syllable-finals		
<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>k</i>	<i>tɕ</i>	<i>s</i>	<i>θ</i>	<i>ʔ</i>	~	
<i>ph</i>	<i>th</i>	<i>kh</i>	<i>tɕh</i>	<i>sh</i>				
<i>b</i>	<i>d</i>	<i>g</i>	<i>dz</i>	<i>z</i>	<i>ð</i>	vowels		
<i>m</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>ŋ</i>	<i>ɲ</i>					
<i>m̄</i>	<i>n̄</i>	<i>ŋ̄</i>	<i>ɲ̄</i>			<i>i</i>	<i>ɪ</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>l</i>	<i>w</i>	<i>j</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>h</i>		<i>e</i>	<i>ə</i>	<i>o</i>
<i>l̄</i>	<i>w̄</i>	<i>f</i>				<i>ɛ</i>	<i>ʌ</i>	<i>ɔ</i>
							<i>a</i>	
post-initial glides						and the diphthongs		
	<i>j</i>	<i>w</i>				<i>ei</i>	<i>ai</i>	<i>au</i> <i>ou</i>

The vowel [ə] does not occur in closed syllables and lacks distinctive tone. The vowel /a/ has the allophone [ʌ] in closed syllables after initial or post-initial /w/, e.g. *wat* /waʔ/ [wʌʔ] ‘to wear’, *lwân* /lwâ / [lʌ] ‘too, excessively’. Diphthongs do not occur in open syllables, and the diphthongs [ei] and [ou] can be analysed as allophones of /e/ and /o/ in closed syllables, e.g. *lup* /loʔ/ [louʔ] ‘work’, *im* /ẽ/ [eĩ] ‘house’. The vowels /a/ and /ɛ/ also occur in closed syllables, e.g. *wañ* /wẽ/ ‘enter’, *sak* /sɛʔ/ ‘motor’, *kap* /kaʔ/ ‘crisis’, *lam* /lā/ ‘road’. The vowels /u/ and /ɔ/ do not occur in closed syllables, and the phoneme /u/ does not occur after initial or post-initial /w/. The vowel /i/ occurs in closed syllables only with final /l/, where it is realized as the allophone [ɪ], e.g. *hras* [ʃɪʔ] ‘eight’. Nasalization is indicated only above the second letter of a diphthong symbol, leaving room for a tone mark, if any, above the first letter.

The creaky tone is indicated by *accent grave* except in glottal stop final syllables, where creaky tone is automatic. The breathy tone is indicated by an *accent circumflexe*, and the level tone is left unmarked. A phonetic description of Burmese tones in monosyllabic citation forms is provided by U Thein Tun (1982). The creaky tone is

short, pronounced with pharyngealized voice and has a sharply falling contour 5-1. The breathy, heavy tone is long, pronounced with breathy voice and has the contour 4-5-4. The level tone is neither long nor short and has the contour 3-1.

Chapter 1

The Dumi

1.1. The Dumi and their neighbours

Dumī Rāī is a Kiranti language spoken in *Khoṭān jillā* or *Khoṭān* district in the *Sagarmāthā* or Everest zone of eastern Nepal. The Dumi speaking area is limited to five *pañcāyats* all abutting the *Rāva* and *Tāp* rivers near their confluence and upriver therefrom. These are: *Bāksilā*, *Sapteśvara*, *Sasarkā*, *Khārmī* and *Mākpā*.

The term *Rāī* is a collective ethnonym for several groups of people speaking related Kiranti languages, viz. Sangpang (*Sānpānī*); Chamling (*Cāmlīnī*); Bantawa (*Bāntāvā*); Kulung (*Kulūnī*); Yakkha (*Yākhā*); Puma (*Pumā*); etc. Dumi is one of these Rai languages; its immediate neighbours are Thulung (*Thulūnī*); Nachering (*Nāccherīnī*, *Nācerīnī*) and Kohi (*Kohī*) to the north (from northwest to northeast) and Tilung (*Tilūnī*, *Tilīnī*); Chamling and Sangpang to the south (from southwest to southeast).

The term 'Kiranti' (Nep. *Kirāntī*, *Kirāṭī*) has both a geographical and a linguistic meaning. Geographically, Kiranti has to do with the mountainous and hilly regions of easternmost Nepal, traditionally known as *Kirāṭ* and subdivided into three distinct regions: *Pallo Kirāṭ*, *Mājh Kirāṭ* and *Vallo Kirāṭ*.

Pallo Kirāṭ 'Far Kirant' comprises the better part of Nepal's *Kośī* and *Mecī* zones as far east as Sikkim and as far west as the *Arūn* and constitutes the area traditionally known as *Limbuwān*, the ancient, tribal homeland of the Limbus. *Pallo Kirāṭ* includes the population centres *Dhankuṭā*, *Cainpur*, *Tāplejuṅ* and *Myānlūnī*. In addition to the Limbus, *Pallo Kirāṭ*, or *Limbuwān*, is the home of the *Āṭhpahārīya*, Belhare (*Belhāre*, *Belhārīya*), Chintang, Lambichong, Lohorung and Yakkha.

Mājh Kirāṭ 'Middle Kirant' comprises the mountainous regions lying to the west of the *Arūn* stretching up roughly up far as the *Likhu* river in the north and the confluence of the *Sun* and *Dūdh Kosī* in the south. Major population centres in *Mājh Kirāṭ* include *Diktel*, *Bhojpur*, *Solusallerī* and *Okhaldhungā*. *Mājh Kirāṭ* is the homeland of various Rai tribes: Bahing (*Bāhīnī*), Bantawa, Chamling, Chukwa (*Cukvā*), Dimali (*Dimālī*), Dungmali (*Dumālī*), Khaling (*Khālīnī*), Khesang (*Khesānī*), Kohi, Kulung, Mewahang (*Mevāhānī*), Nachering, Puma, Sangpang, Thulung and Tilung. The Dumi too are inhabitants of *Mājh Kirāṭ*. The indigenous Dumi term for *Mājh Kirāṭ* is *Tsupla Ro?di*.

Vallo Kirāṭ 'Near Kirant' comprises the mountainous portion of *Janakpur* zone to the west of Middle Kirant and includes the population centres *Rāmechāp*, *Cārikoṭ* and *Sindhulīmāḍī*. *Vallo Kirāṭ* is the homeland of the Rai groups: Chaurasi (*Caurāsī*), Hayu (*Hāyu*), Jerung (*Jerūnī*) and Sunwar (*Sunuvār*).

As a linguistic concept Kiranti is one of the branches of Tibeto-Burman corresponding to Benedict's Bahing-Vayu nucleus (1972: 4-11). It includes Limbu, Yakkha and the various languages and language groups collectively known as Rai. Within Kiranti, Dumi's closest relatives appear to be Kohi (*Kohī*) and Khaling (*Khālīnī*). Like Khaling

and Kohi, Dumī more closely resembles other Kiranti languages spoken to the west of the *Sālpā* watershed than any of the Eastern Kiranti languages such as Limbu, Yakkha or Lohorung.

Related to Kiranti are Newari, a language indigenous to the Kathmandu valley, and the Sikkimese language Lepcha. Tibeto-Burman languages spoken in eastern Nepal which do not belong to the Kiranti group are the languages of the Tibeto-Kanauri branch of Tibeto-Burman spoken especially along the northern frontier, such as Sherpa and Jirel, and the Tibeto-Burman languages Dhimal and Meche spoken in the Terai. In common parlance, the Dhimal and Meche are often called *Madeskā Kirāṭī* ‘Kirantis of the Terai’ or *Madesī Limbū* ‘Terai Limbus’, but these names are of no linguistic significance and merely relate to the fact that the Dhimal and Meche are of the Mongoloid race, speak Tibeto-Burman languages and live in eastern Nepal.

The modern term *Kirāṭī* is derived from the older form *Kirāta*, the first attested use of which is to be found in the *Yajurveda* where it designates an alpine, cave dwelling people of the Mongoloid race living in the northeast. Subsequent references to *Kirātas* in the *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* and *Kirātārjunīya* portray the *Kirātās* as fierce, warlike and handsome savage hunters living in the densely forested eastern Himalaya, with golden complexions which gave them an appearance very distinct from the Indo-Aryan inhabitants of the Gangetic plain. Historically the term *Kirāta* probably covered all Mongoloid peoples living alongside the northeastern fringe of the Subcontinent. In its modern form, however, the term *Kirāṭī* applies strictly to the speakers of Kiranti languages in eastern Nepal.

The Dumī call themselves *Dumī ro?dī*, or simply *Ro?dī* which means ‘Rai’ and also functions as the generic term for other Rai ethnic groups. The Dumī have been referred to in Nepali variously as *Jimī*, *Jimdār*, *Kirāntī* and *Dumī Rāī*. Currently the terms *Jimdār*, *Jimī* and *Kirāṭī* have fallen into disuse because these originally flattering ethnonyms have now locally acquired a pejorative connotation and are a source of embarrassment to the Dumī.

A fanciful etymology for the Nepali term *Dumī* related by the head shaman of *Hal-khum* village *Bhīmal Sīn* is that it is derived from *dimi*, the third dual or first dual inclusive preterite form of the verb *dimni* ‘to meet’. *Bhīmal Sīn* tells that, according to this folk etymology, in ancient times two brothers are said to have come from the north down the *Dūdh Kosī* to *Lamdī:dza*, the present-day Dumī homeland. Upon arriving at the confluence of the *Dūdh Kosī* and the *Rāva Kholā*, the two forefather progenitors proceeded upstream and then agreed to go their separate ways in order to scout the tract of land before them. One of the brothers followed the *Tāp* river upstream. The other proceeded up the *Rāva*. When they each independently climbed the *Bāksilā* ridge, they met each other there and said:

- (1) *Intsi* *ŋə* *dim-i*.
 we^{di} EMPH meet-d
 We^{di} have met again!

Aside from the fact that *Bhīmal Siñ* did not appear to accord much credence to this etymology himself, this account is difficult to reconcile with the fact that the ethnonym *Dumī*, from the Dumī point of view, is originally an exonym applied to them by the Nepalis. A possible native source for this Nepali term, also suggested by *Bhīmal Siñ*, although in a more serious vein, is the commonly used Dumī autonym *Roʔdimi*: ‘a Rai, Rai person’. This term consists of the noun *Roʔdi* ‘Rai’ and the suffixed bound morph <-mi:> ‘man, person’. According to this hypothesis, the term *Dumī* would have been taken from the last two syllables of the native term *Roʔdimi*:, whereby the first syllable would, not altogether incorrectly, have been taken to mean ‘Rai’³.

Dumī ethnonyms for neighbouring peoples include *Liboʔomil*, the ethnonym denoting the Nepalis. *Liboʔomil* is the plural of *Liboʔo* ‘the Nepali language’ and, as such, denotes those who speak the Nepali language, viz. mainly the *Bāhun* (Brāhmaṇ) and *Chetrī* (Kṣatriya). The term *Liboʔo* ‘Nepali language’ consists of the elements *boʔo* ‘language’ and *li*. The *li* is a triangular wicker basket used for carrying freight on one’s back, suspended from a plaited strap of fine bamboo fibre worn across one’s forehead. This type of basket is used throughout Nepal and is known in Nepali as a *ḍoko*. In Dumī then, Nepali is ‘the language of the *ḍoko*’.

The Dumī refer to the Gurungs (*Gurūi*) collectively as *Naksebim* and to an individual Gurung as a *Naksim*. *Naksim* also happens to be the Dumī word for ‘sheep’. The term for Newari (*Nevārī*) is *Neksim*, and the term for the Newari as a tribe, nation or ethnic group is *Naksebim*. The Tamangs (*Tāmāñi*), the Sherpas (*Šerpā*) and any of the miscellaneous cis-Himalayan Tibetan ethnic groups are referred to collectively as *Saksebim*, and an individual belonging to one of these ethnic groups is called a *Saksim*. The Sunwar tribe is known to the Dumī by the name *Suksebim*, and an individual Sunwar is referred to as *Suksim*. All these ethnonyms ending in <-sim> may take the plural suffix <-mil> when the speaker wishes to indicate a group of individuals belonging to a particular ethnic group. The collective ethnonyms ending in <-bim> are, by contrast, used in the singular and refer to the ethnic group as a whole. These collective ethnonyms in <-bim> may also be pluralized to create the special effect of manifoldness by individualizing members of a collective group, e.g. (5) in 7.2. The Tibetans are referred to as *Huppa*, a nominal which can be used both as an adjective and as a nominal head.

The Limbus (*Limbū*) are referred to by the Dumī as *Siriṅpa* or as *Liʔmbi*. The Dumī expression *Liʔmbi* consists of the noun *liʔm* ‘side or face of a mountain’ and the locative postposition <-bi> indicating ‘same elevation as speaker’. The second element <-bi> might alternatively be the same as the ethnic adjectival suffix used to form the adjectives *naksimbi* ‘Gurung’, *nekximbi* ‘Newari’, *saksimbi* ‘Sherpa, Tamang’ and *suksimbi* ‘Sunwar’. The expression *Liʔmbi* is an old expression which had already become infrequent when *Bhīmal Siñ* learnt his native language. *Bhīmal Siñ* recalls the term *Liʔmbi* and its plural *Liʔmbimil* used as a noun solely in reference to the Limbus,

³ The expression *Rodimi*: exists in Dumī alongside the compound *Roʔdi-mi:n* ‘Rai person, Rai individual’, composed of *Roʔdi* ‘Rai’ and the word *mi:n* ‘man, person’.

who in Dumi are properly referred to by the term *Siriṅpa*. The term *Li?mbi* is said to have a friendlier flavour than the neutral term *Siriṅpa*. Its usage is explained by the fact that the Limbus, *Li?mbi*, are *Kirāṭi* brethren living on the other side of the mountains but considered to be distinct from the *Ro?di* 'Rai' peoples. The existence of the Dumi term *Li?mbi* suggests that the Nepali term *Limbū* 'Limbu' was at one time taken from Dumi or some related Rai language. It is highly unlikely that the Nepali term *Limbū* could have been taken from any of the Limbu autonyms (cf. van Driem 1987: xix).

The Hayu (Nep. *Hāyu*) are known to the Dumi by the Nepali name *ha:yu* but also by the indigenous terms *na:tsirmi* 'savage' and *mi:n dzikpi* 'man eater, cannibal'. Campbell (1840: 611) reported that the *Hāyu* in eastern Nepal were identified with demons or *rākṣas*, originating from *Laṅkā-Palaṅkā* (i.e. *Śrī Laṅkā* or Ceylon), and that the *Hāyu* were worshippers of *Rāvaṇa*. However, Michailovsky (1981: 20, 1988: 28) believes that the tradition of identifying the non-Hindu *Hāyu* with the *rākṣas* was an idea probably originally invented by the Hindu *Khas* to distinguish the shamanistic *Hāyu*, worshippers of *Rāvaṇa*, from themselves, worshippers of *Rāma*.

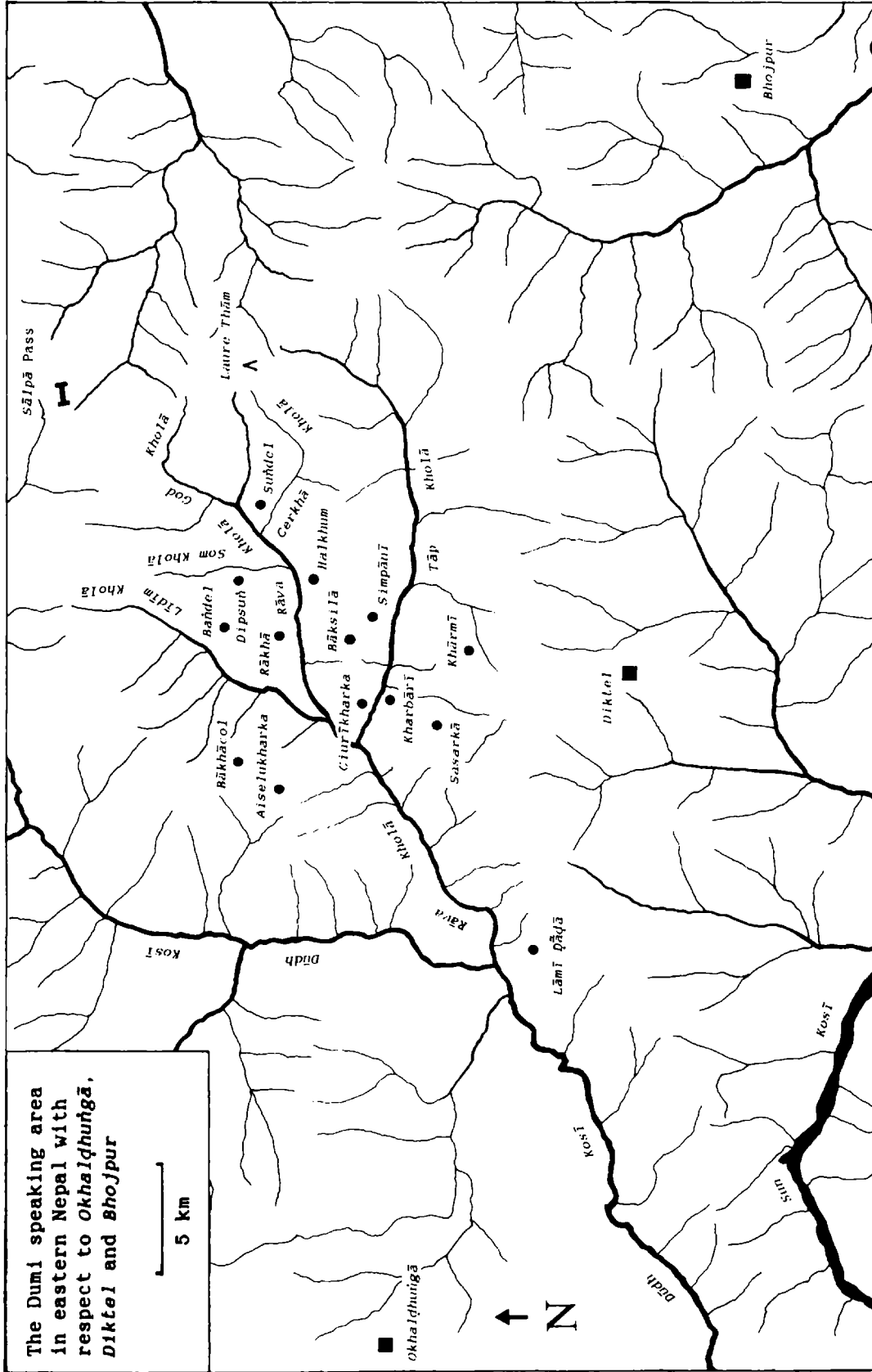
According to the lore of the Dumi, the *ha:yu* are the original, cannibalistic *rākṣas* who peopled the earth in ancient times. To the Dumi, the term *ha:yu* signifies *rākṣas*. Elderly Dumi claim to be ignorant of any connexion of the *Hāyu* with a *Laṅkā-Palaṅkā* legend and disclaim familiarity with an allochthonous origin for the *Hāyu*, suggesting rather that the *Hāyu* are indigenous to Nepal and insisting that the ancestors of the presentday *Hāyu* practised cannibalism.

1.2. The linguistic situation

There are several dialects within the Dumi speaking area. Judging from survey data gotten from elderly Dumi speaking inhabitants of *Ciurīkharka* (in *Sapteśvara*), *Sasarkā* and *Kharbārī* (in *Sasarkā*), *Mākpā pañcāyat*, and *Halkhum* (in *Bāksilā*) and from their own impressions of the dialect diversity of their native tongue, a dialect mosaic of four pieces emerges:

- (1) the dialect surrounding the confluence, i.e. *Sapteśvara pañcāyat*, including the southern slope of the *Bāksilā* ridge between the two rivers immediately above the confluence,
- (2) the dialect spoken in *Sasarkā* and *Khārmī* to the south of the *Tāp*,
- (3) the dialect of the *Bāksilā* ridge between the *Rāva* and *Tāp* rivers, excluding a portion of the southern slope immediately upstream from the confluence and excluding the area surrounding the headwaters of the *Rāva*, and
- (4) the dialect of *Mākpā* to the northwest of the *Rāva* near the confluence.

The area of the *Bāksilā* ridge dialect, listed as (3) above, includes the area traditionally known as *Lamdi:dza* and believed by elderly Dumi to be the ancestral Dumi



homeland. *Lamdi:dza* extends from the *Rāva Kholā*, above its confluence with the *Tāp* up to the top of the *Bāksilā* ridge. It excludes the southern slope of the ridge and adjacent areas of *Sundel*, *Simpānī* and *Mākpā*. The toponym *Lamdi:dza* is unknown to the non-Dumi inhabitants of the area. In fact, many of the younger generation Dumi are more familiar with the Nepali exonyms for the newer settlements, such as *Bāksilā*,⁴ and many of the original Dumi toponyms have been forgotten.

The *Bāksilā* dialect as spoken by septuagenarians and sexagenarians in the Dumi homeland of *Lamdi:dza* forms the basis of this grammar. The material presented here was collected by the author during a three-month stay in *Halkhum* in the house of *Bhīmal Siñ Rāi* in late 1986, during which period he also scouted the rest of the Dumi speaking area.

The *Bāksilā* dialect area abuts on the Kohi homeland in *Sundel* around the headwaters of the *Rāva*, and the *Bāksilā* dialect appears to bear great similarity to Kohi in its pronouns and verbal morphology, the differences apparently being largely lexical. The Dumi dialect of *Mākpā pañcāyat* gives the appearance of being as distant from the *Halkhum* dialect of Dumi as *Halkhum* Dumi is from the neighbouring language Kohi. Yet even solely on the basis of *Mākpā* data, Toba's one hundred word lists (1973: 4-7, 1976: 3-4) still reveals greater proximity between Dumi and Kohi than between Dumi and *Khaling*, *Nachering* or *Sangpang Rai*.

On the basis of samplings collected during a few hours, the *Mākpā* dialect seems to diverge markedly from the other dialects. With the exception of the first singular pronoun *aŋ*, the pronouns of *Mākpā* Dumi differ from those of the remaining dialects, and the affixal morphology of the verb is different as well. The numeral system of *Mākpā* Dumi begins to diverge from that of the other dialects sharply after 'two'. Compare *Mākpā* Dumi *tukli* 'one', *sakli* 'two', *sukli* 'three' and *balikpi* 'four' with *Halkhum* Dumi *tikbo* 'one', *sakbo* 'two', *ryekbo* 'three' and *timbo* 'four'. However, the *Mākpā* dialect lexicon for body parts, household items and high frequency verbs appears to be identical or nearly identical to that of the *Halkhum* dialect. The Dumi dialect of *Mākpā* is located at a linguistic crossroads, *Mākpā pañcāyat* being contiguous with both the *Nachering* and *Thulung* speaking areas. In *Mākpā pañcāyat*, there are no speakers of Dumi in *Aiselukharka* bazar itself. The ethnic Dumi who live in *Aiselukharka* do not speak Dumi. *Aiselukharka* bazar is a mainly a Newari settlement on the frontier between the Dumi and the *Thulung* speaking areas. Sueyoshi Toba has provided a one hundred word list of *Mākpā* Dumi, but an in-depth study of *Mākpā* Dumi is still sorely needed.

The remaining dialects are far more homogeneous. Frequent expressions, such as *Pida!* 'Bring it!', *No:ta* 'It's all right', *Ma:ngu ye go:ti ye?* 'Is there some or isn't there any?', are identical throughout the Dumi speaking area.

⁴ *Bāksilā*, the Nepali neotonym for the bazar on top of the ridge between the *Rāva* and *Tāp* rivers, is composed of the elements *bāk* [< *bāgh* tiger] and *silā* [*śilā* stone], allegedly because a tiger was once killed at the site of a large boulder atop the present-day bazar area.

The Dumi are now a minority in the area to which they are indigenous. According to Regmi (1983: 213) the Dumi constitute roughly one quarter of the population in *Khotān* district. The main allochthonous groups are the Gorkhali (esp. *Chetrī*), the Newari, Gurung and Tamang. On the basis of what I was able to find out about the recent history of land ownership along the entire northern slope of *Bāksilā pañcāyat* and large parts of the southern slope, along with the mutually corroborating accounts by elderly Rai, the most recent great influx of non-Rai must have taken place just within living memory at the beginning of this century. It appears that this last great influx had a larger impact than any previous incursion, for it resulted in the Dumi being outnumbered in their own homeland. The elderly Dumi men recall with regret that they sold many of their lands to the immigrants for prices that today seem ridiculous to them. In this connexion, one elderly man remarked:

- (2) *Syendi ma:ndi-m-ʔa khələ tsa:m-a.*
 talons without-NOM-INST all be.lost-23S
 Due to [our] not having had talons, all has been lost.
 (Nep.nai nabhaeko-le sab harāyo.)

Some of the enclaves of allochthonous groups, however, seem to date from previous waves of immigration. For example, the *Nevār* settlement in *Aiselukharha* bazar (*Mākpā pañcāyat*) is said to be at least two hundred years old. The Gurung settlement under *Halkhum* just above the *Rāva* is said to be of some antiquity. The concentration of Tamangs just north of *Bāksilā* bazar dates from the time that they were the miners in a now defunct iron mine, the orifice of the central shaft of which is still visible under the vegetation, about halfway between *Halkhum* and *Sotmā* on the northern slope above the *Rāva*.

It is therefore not surprising that retention is low amongst the Dumi, and surviving speakers of Dumi are scarce. The generation in their 20s and 30s virtually speak only Nepali; people now in their 40s and 50s generally speak Dumi to varying extents, but with a reduced phonology; members of the generation presently in its 60s and 70s largely speak Dumi but are now also fluent in Nepali as a second language. On the whole, retention seems to be somewhat higher in the *Mākpā* area where there is a greater number of middle-aged Dumi who have retained some of their language. However, language retention amongst the youngest generation is no greater in *Mākpā pañcāyat* than in the *Bāksilā* area, contrary to what many young Dumi in the *Bāksilā* area, many of whom have never been to *Mākpā*, suppose to be true.

In the village of *Halkhum* there lives a sixty-nine year old *Damāī* who also speaks Dumi fluently. This old *Damāī* tells that when he learnt Dumi, it was truly the living local language. His grandsons, like their Dumi contemporaries, speak no Dumi.

The fact that the low-caste *Damāī* speaks Dumi parallels the situation in the *Phedāp* where members of the *Damāī* caste can speak Limbu. The high-caste *Bāhun* and *Chetrī*, on the other hand, are under no real pressure to learn the local language and have not done so. On the contrary, the indigenous Rai peoples have been and remain

under pressure to assimilate linguistically and culturally to the *Bāhun* and *Chetrī* (cf. van Driem 1991a).

1.3. The material and the speakers

Unlike Limbu or Frisian which are languages on the decline, Dumi is a language in the throes of death, and the material in this book comprises the little that has been wrested from death's grip for posterity. The only previous published source of data on the Dumi language is the 'Dúmi' word list collected by the great pioneering Himalayan linguist Brian Houghton Hodgson (1857: 351-371, 1880: 194-215). I began my work on Dumi upon instigation of *Catur Bhakta Rāī*. *Catur Bhakta* is now a teacher in *Diktel* but was born and raised north of the *Tāp* in the hamlet of *Ciurīkharka*. By the light of an oil lamp one evening in *Sāhili Dīdī*'s hostel in *Diktel* (*Khoṭān* district), *Catur Bhakta* spoke to me with fervour of the impending loss of the native tongue and oral traditions of his tribe. The following day, we hiked north together via *Muḍhe*, *Payyā* and *Chiptī* to *Sasarkā*. There with the help of the local school master *Pratimān Rāī*, we sought out the house of *Dal Bahādur Rāī*, the last surviving fluent native speaker of Dumi in *Sasarkā*. This septuagenarian spoke the language, as Michailovsky would put it, *dans la mesure où sa dentition le lui permettait*. *Dal Bahādur Rāī* was of great assistance to me during my brief stay in *Sasarkā*, and the corpus with which he provided me constitutes the basis for all my observations regarding the *Sasarkā* dialect of Dumi.⁵ Data gathered from *Dal Bahādur* were corroborated in part by what little remained of the tribal tongue in the memories of members of the following generation of Dumi in *Khārmī*, *Sasarkā* and downhill in *Kharbārī*, now all elderly to middle-aged.

Afterwards, *Catur Bhakta* took me to the house of a sexagenarian speaker of Dumi in *Ciurīkharka*. The man's command of his native language was beyond question, but he could not be of assistance to us because of his nearly total lack of teeth and the onset of senile dementia. We learnt from him and from his middle-aged children that four of the remaining speakers of Dumi in the *Ciurīkharka* and *Sotmā* area, whom *Catur Bhakta* had presumed to be alive, had all passed away within the past year and a half.

Subsequently, *Catur Bhakta* brought me to the house of the septuagenarian *Bhīmal Siñ Rāī* in ward (Nep. *vaḍā*) 6 of *Halkhum* village in *Bāksilā gāū pañcāyat*, on the northern slope of the *Bāksilā* ridge above the *Rāva Kholā*. *Bhīmal Siñ*, his wife, his wife's older sister, his even older brother *Chāmū Dhan Rāī* and their surviving con-

⁵ The aged *Dal Bahādur* complained to me that his grandson returned home from India with an M.A. which, as *Dal Bahādur* explained to me, meant that his grandson had become an educated man. But when *Dal Bahādur* addressed his grandson in Dumi, his grandson replied in Nepali: *Ke bhaneko, bāje?* 'What are you saying, grandpa?' *Dal Bahādur* commented bitterly that it was difficult for him to fathom how his grandson could now be an educated man when he does not even understand his native language.

temporaries became my informants. *Bhīmal Siñ*'s home is the only house-hold in all of the Dumi speaking area, with the possible exception of *Mākpā pañcāyat*, where Dumi is still the daily and usual medium of communication. This is one of the reasons⁶ why the several remaining speakers of Dumi, including *Bhīmal Siñ*'s elder brother, would pay regular visits to *Bhīmal Siñ*'s home. These elderly men and women come on foot from areas to the west and east of *Halkhum* to speak their language and enjoy each other's company.

Bhīmal Siñ's elder brother *Chāmū Dhan* lives alone to the east of *Halkhum* toward the ridge crest at a distance of what for *Chāmū Dhan* amounts to a full day's walk from *Bhīmal Siñ*'s house. The other elderly speakers of Dumi live in their separate households where they live with their offspring and offspring-in-law who have some passive but hardly any active command of Dumi. Some elderly Dumi and most elderly Dumi women have never travelled far beyond their homeland. For example, *Bhīmal Siñ*'s wife and her elder sister have little conception of places like *Dharān*, *Solukhumbu* (*Solusallerī*), *Okhaldhuniḡā*, *Bhojpur*, *Dhankutā* or *Udaypur*. This contrasts sharply with the mobility and wanderlust of the younger generation.

Bhīmal Siñ himself, however, has seen much of the world beyond the confines of *Lamdi:dza*. On the 16th of November 1937 *Bhīmal Siñ* began service in the 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles, first as a regular soldier and, after the 1st of January 1955, as a warrant officer and, after the 12th of January 1956, as a lieutenant. He left the Colours on the 24th of August 1961 after 23 years and 259 days of military service. His military conduct was rated as 'exemplary'. During his term of service, *Bhīmal Siñ* served in Malaya, Burma and Hong Kong, but the largest portion of his service by far was spent at Madras. Interestingly, whereas *Bhīmal Siñ* had never learnt a word of Malay or Tamil, he could recall a few words of Burmese. The year of *Bhīmal Siñ*'s birth is listed as 1918 on official documents, but anyone familiar with this part of the world will not be surprised to learn that his actual year of birth was 1914. This means that he was not 19 but 23 years of age when he joined the Gurkha Rifles.

Bhīmal Siñ spoke Dumi exclusively until the age of 10 when he was first exposed to Nepali. *Bhīmal Siñ* learnt Nepali from that age but claims to only have started using it regularly as a medium of communication when he entered the 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles at the age of 23. He was 46 or 47 when he was discharged from service, at which time he returned to his native village of *Halkhum*. The other men serving in the 7th Gurkha Rifles were predominantly fellow Kirantis, mainly Limbus and various types of Rai. *Bhīmal Siñ* tells that the company also included a small number of Gurung and Magar (*Magar*, *Maṅgar*) and even an odd *Chetṛī* or *Bāhun*. The commanding officer was British, and the *lingua franca* used by all, including the commander, was Nepali.

Bhīmal Siñ's wife, *pipi* 'grandma', is the youngest-born of her siblings. *Pipi*'s elder sister, who often comes to stay in *Bhīmal Siñ*'s house, is the third-born sister in *pipi*'s maiden family. All *pipi*'s other sisters and brothers are now dead.

⁶ Another reason is the important religious significance of *Bhīmal Siñ*'s house and his status in the Dumi community. This topic will be treated below.

Bhīmal Siñ has two sons and four daughters. His eldest son is deceased. Shortly after the death of the eldest son, the youngest son went to *Deharā Dūn* in *Uttar Pradeś* to join the Indian army and took the wife of the deceased eldest son with him, leaving his own wife, son and daughter behind in *Bhīmal Siñ*'s house. *Bhīmal Siñ*'s eldest daughter lives in *Dharān* where she is married to a *dājyū* of *Catur Bhakta Rāī*. The second-born daughter lives on the other side of the mountain. The third-born daughter is married to a young fellow of *Halkhum* village named *Lachumān*. *Lachumān* and his wife spend as much time at *Bhīmal Siñ*'s house as at *Lachumān*'s parents' house a little further uphill. They have one daughter. *Lachumān* has allowed himself to be vasectomized for which he received a remuneration of NRs. 200. *Bhīmal Siñ*'s youngest daughter studies in *Dharān* where she speaks Nepali with an affected Darjeeling accent.

Two of *Bhīmal Siñ*'s grandsons live in his house and are taken care of by *Bhīmal Siñ* and his wife. This has led to the unusual situation that these two very young boys are the only people of their generation with a large passive knowledge of Dumī.

Bhīmal Siñ's household is not only a gathering place for the elderly remaining speakers of Dumī. *Bhīmal Siñ*'s house is a place of special religious significance in the Dumī community because *Bhīmal Siñ* is the community's oldest and wisest shaman. His knowledge of magic, lore and tradition is renowned, and the upcoming head shaman *Tek Mān Bi'ræsmi Murahō?Rāī* is his apprentice.

Because *Bhīmal Siñ* holds the ancestral rank of head shaman, more numerous and more rigorous household taboos and observances must be upheld within the walls of his house than within other Dumī households. Observance of these taboos meant that the author could not sleep in *Bhīmal Siñ*'s house but had to sleep on the veranda and, when the weather began to turn cold, on top of the *dzam* or rice straw (Nep. *parāl*) in the barn house.

Although *Bhīmal Siñ* has attempted to pass on the oral traditions of his ancestors to his apprentice, his efforts have met with only marginal success because his apprentice, although talented as a shaman, lacks the full native command of the language which would otherwise enable him to commit the old myths and legends to memory. These orally transmitted myths are recited in a specially modulated tremolo 'goat's voice'.

It became evident to me that these texts, are committed to memory verbatim with great fidelity when, on several occasions, it happened that one of the elderly male visitors would arrive unannounced whilst *Bhīmal Siñ* was reciting a myth for my benefit out on the *pa:ntel* 'farmyard'. The elderly visitor, as yet unnoticed by *Bhīmal Siñ*, would squat on the veranda or sit down on a *muḍā* and chime in to form a duet, so that *Bhīmal Siñ* and the elderly visitor would be singing the same lyrics in unison. I was astonished the first time this happened and thrilled on each subsequent occasion. Despite *Bhīmal Siñ*'s assertions regarding the antiquity of the oral traditions, the oddly modulated voice, syncopated rhythm and free verse composition of the myths had previously led me to suspect that *Bhīmal Siñ*'s recitations were extemporaneous amalgams of orally transmitted myths rather than the actual myths themselves.

1.4. The Dumi kinship system

The Dumi are divided into various allegedly strictly exogamous clans known as *sa:me* (Nep. *pāchā*). These clans are subdivided into families with their own family name or *supe?* (Nep. *thar*). All Dumi know to which clan they belong. However, in sharp contrast to the elderly generation, most young Dumi no longer know their family name. Virtually the entire young Nepalophone generation of ethnic Dumi sports the family name *Rāi* as do many people belonging to other Rai ethnic groups.

The two most numerous clans in the *Lamdi:dza* and *Sasarkā* areas are *Bi'ræsmi:* and *Tsosmi:*. The clan name *Bi'ræsmi:* is explained as being composed of *bi'ræc* 'chilli pepper' and the bound morph <-mi:> 'man' [< *mi:n* 'man']. In *Sasarkā*, the *Bi'ræsmi:* clan is called *Burasmi:* or *Brasmi:*. The most numerous Dumi clan in the *Mākpā* area is *Dikmi:* or *Dikpa*. Another less numerous but toponymically interesting Dumi clan in *Mākpā pañcāyat* is the clan which goes by the name *Məkpa*.

The *Bi'ræsmi:* clan includes the *supe?* or family names *Dimatsu*, *Ho:di*, *Horosi*, *Muraho?*, *Rimdu*, *Roŋkosi*, *Rotki*, *Sarasi* and *Sotma*. Members of the *Sotma supe?* live in *Lamdi:dza* primarily in a village known as *Sotmā* or *Capletī Gāū*, near the village of *Thāmā Gāū* on the northern slope of the *Bāksilā* ridge, above the *Rāva kholā*, about halfway between *Halkhum* village and the confluence of the *Tāp* with the *Rāva*.

Muraho? is a *supe?* of the *Bi'ræsmi:* clan, said to be a particularly old surname by those whose surname it is. It is the surname of *Bhīmal Sinī* and his relatives. The surname *Muraho?* is said to derive from the word *mir* 'pigmented glass hairs on the culm sheathes clothing the internodes of a bamboo culm (*phapo?o*)'. The derivation is alleged to have to do with the fact that the *Muraho?* forefathers were quarrelsome and pugnacious warriors, based on the association with *mir* which is an irritant which, when it comes into contact with the skin, causes itching and rash.

The original Dumi wedding was a *corī bihā*, 'elopement' or 'marriage by abduction'. The mythological precedent for this Dumi practice is said to be *Khopsi-Likpa*, who seized his wife *Na:ghile:m*. At the time of *Bhīmal Sinī*'s childhood, the *corī bihā* was still commonly practised among the Dumi until it became restricted by Nepalese law. According to the elderly Dumi, marriage by abduction was the only form of marriage practised by their parents and grandparents.,

- (3) *Luph-ini-kə* *hu:d-ini*.
 seize-p23-pfG fetch-p23
 They would abduct them and bring them back with them.

According to the Dumi custom, if a man met a girl on a path in the forest to whom he had taken a liking, he was entitled to seize her on the spot and abduct her without either of the party's parents having been informed beforehand. The native Dumi expression for 'to get married' is:

- (4) *Ki:m-to:ma ho:t-ni*
 house-eldest(f.) fetch-INF
 fetch oneself 'an old lady'

or, more poetically:

- (5) *No:me delme ki:m-mu ho:t-ni!*
 sister-in-law sister-in-law house-mother fetch-INF
 fetch [oneself] a house mother and [one's elder brothers]
 a sister-in-law.

If the girl's parents disagreed with the union when they found out, they could come and take the girl back by force. If the girls' parents turned out to have no objections to the marriage, then relatives and people from the community would come to ascertain whether the girl herself had any objections to the wedding. If the bride-to-be was found to be unopposed to the wedding, then the wedding ceremony would be performed even if her parents were opposed to the union.

- (6) *'Lalikhā-bi mo:-ŋ-ə-m' a:ts-a kho*
 love-LOC sit-1s-1s-IPF say-23S if
mu-pu-ʔa ya mwo: ye min-ni
 mother-father-ERG too what also do-INF
tsa:p-t-ini-nə.
 can-NPT-p23-NEG

If [the abducted bride-to-be] says 'I am staying [here] in (i.e. on account of) love', then there is nothing at all the parents can do [about it].

A traditional Dumī wedding used to be an intimate affair without the accompaniment of percussion instruments and the musical fanfare of an Indo-Aryan Nepali wedding. Only the immediate family and most intimate relatives and friends would attend the ceremony which for the greater part would be conducted indoors and at which the shaman would officiate. The marriage is consecrated with *imma* which is imbibed in large quantities.

The *jantī* or 'marriage procession' is an Indo-Aryan innovation introduced from the Terai which has no place at a traditional Dumī wedding. Those Dumī who perform the wedding ceremony according to the indigenous fashion form a small and dwindling minority. It is probable that the indigenous ceremony will have vanished along with the Dumī language and oral traditions within a generation.

Nowadays, a prospective Dumī husband has to go to ask the consent of the girl's parents. *Bhīmal Sini* and his male contemporaries see this not only as an abandonment of the native custom but also as a degradation of the position of the male in Dumī society.

Mixed or inter-*jāt* marriages, although permitted by Nepalese law, are not yet sanctioned by the elderly and conservative Dumī or, for that matter, by many other conservative people in Nepal. Traditionally a Dumī may marry another Kiranti, i.e. a Rai or a Limbu. In the event that a Dumī marry a Limbu, the Limbu must vow to give up forever the sacrilegious habit of eating goat's meat. Marriages with Tamangs, Gurungs, Newaris and Indo-Aryans (*Bāhun*, *Chetrī* etc.) are not considered acceptable.

The Dumī used to practise polygamy, albeit sporadically. Now this practice has largely been abandoned in compliance with Nepali law and customs. Traditional Dumī custom also provided for divorce, although the step was a drastic one, particularly for the man who took it. The traditional way of enacting a divorce was for the man to walk out on his wife and children and abandon them and, as a result, all his property and real estate as well.

The following is a description of the Dumī system of kinship terms. No sound inferences about Dumī social structure can be made solely on the basis of the kinship terminology, for, as Kroeber (1909: 84) observed, 'Terms of kinship reflect psychology, not sociology. They are determined primarily by language and can be used for sociological inferences only with extreme caution'.

The Dumī terms for mother are *ma*, *mu* and *mama*. The terms for father are *pa*, *pu* and *papa*. The terms for grandfather and grandmother are *tsutsu* and *pipi* respectively. An honorific and ceremonial term for grandfather is *nuri-tsutsu* or 'leopard-grandfather'. Sex of connecting relative is not a relevant criterion here, as maternal grandparents are not distinguished terminologically from paternal grandparents. However, both sex of connecting relative and age in generation are criteria in differentiating aunts and uncles.

parallel uncle

older than parent	<i>te:te:</i>
younger than parent	<i>phopho</i>

parallel aunt

older than parent	<i>te:te:m</i>
younger than parent (paternal)	<i>tsitsim</i>
younger than parent (maternal)	<i>nono</i>

cross uncle

paternal	<i>pusaim</i>
maternal (older than mother)	<i>kiki</i>
maternal (younger than mother)	<i>kira</i>

cross aunt

paternal	<i>nini</i>
maternal (older than mother)	<i>ma:ɪdzu</i>
maternal (younger than mother)	<i>kiramu</i>

Whereas Dumi distinguishes paternal parallel uncles and aunts, *te:te:* and *te:te:m* as well as *phopho* and *tsitsim*, on the basis of their age with respect to the connecting relative, ego's father, age in generation is not a distinguishing factor with respect to paternal cross aunts and uncles, *nini* and *pusaim*.

The maternal aunt and uncle system is more elaborate. Age in generation in the maternal system is an important criterion in distinguishing parallel aunts and uncles, *te:te:m* and *te:te:* as well as *nono* and *phopho*, as well as cross uncles and aunts, *kiki* and *ma:ɪdzu* as well as *kira* and *kiramu*.

elder brother	<i>wa:tto</i>
elder sister	<i>nana</i>
younger brother	<i>tsa:ri</i>
younger sister	<i>birma</i>

In addition to the sibling terms in the table above, Dumi has a term *sibewa* to refer to one's younger siblings collectively as well as the term *wa* to refer to a younger sibling individually, whether male or female. The term *wa* is far more frequent as a term of address and as a term of reference than either *tsa:ri* or *birma*, which are used when disambiguation of the referent's sex is required or a stylistic effect is sought after. In addition to the term *birma*, there is a term *khe:ma* 'younger sister' which is stylistically marked, possessing a formal, ceremonial connotation and lacking the diminutive and endearing quality of *birma*.

The terms *wa* 'younger sibling' and *tsu?u* 'child', unlike all other kinship terms, obligatorily take the first singular possessive prefix <ɔ:-> when used as a term of address, *O:wamil!* 'my younger siblings!', *O:wani!* 'my two younger siblings!', *O:tsu?u!* 'my child!'. The use of the first singular possessive prefix is optional when using other kinship terms as terms of address. The collective term *sibewa* is only used as a term of reference. One refers to one's brothers collectively with the term *wa:tto-tsa:ri-mil* and to one's sisters with the term *nana-birme-mil*. The loan *da:dze*, from Nepali *dājyū* 'elder brother', is used more frequently than *wa:tto* in the sense of 'elder brother', but the more formal, indigenous term *wa:tto* has been used in the kinship diagrams.

Dardze may also be used by women alongside *bubu* (vide infra) as a term of reference and address for her husband's elder brother.

One refers to one's child, whether son or daughter, as *tsu?u*. The word *tsu?u* 'child' also serves as a diminutive suffix, not only in kinship terms, *wa-tsu?u* 'baby brother, baby sister', but also as a general diminutive suffix for all nouns, *ki:m-tsu?u* 'cottage, little house'. One's son-in-law is *moktsu*, and one's daughter-in-law is *delme*. With regard to all the kinship terms discussed thus far, sex of speaker has not been a distinguishing criterion. With siblings' offspring, sex of speaker or, rather, whether ego and the connecting relative are of the same or of different sex is the relevant criterion. Parallel nephews and nieces are addressed and referred to as *yaŋsu*. Cross nephews and nieces are referred to and addressed with the loans *bhanim* [< Nep. *bhānija*] and *bhandzim* [< Nep. *bhānjī*], regardless of the sex of speaker. The Nepali terms *bhānija* 'sister's son' and *bhānjī* 'sister's daughter' contrast with Nepali *bhatijo* 'brother's son' and *bhatijī* 'brother's daughter'. In the male-speaking system, the Dumi terms *bhanim* 'cross nephew' and *bhandzim* 'cross niece' are equivalent to Nepali *bhānija* 'sister's son' and *bhānjī* 'sister's daughter'. In the female-speaking system, however, the loans *bhanim* and *bhandzim* are equivalent to *bhatijo* 'brother's son' and *bhatijī* 'brother's daughter'. It therefore appears that the loan terms *bhanim* and *bhandzim* were first adopted into the Dumi system by male and not female speakers.

Nieces-in-law and nephews-in-law, whether the spouses of parallel or of cross nephews and nieces, are indicated by the terms *delme* and *moktsu* and so are terminologically equivalent to daughters-in-law and sons-in-law.

Figures I and II illustrate the terms discussed thus far from the point of view of a male ego.⁷ In the female speaking system, the only differences from the diagrams shown would be that the terminology for siblings' offspring in Figures I and II would be reversed in keeping with the parameter that sex of speaker and sex of connecting relative are different or the same.

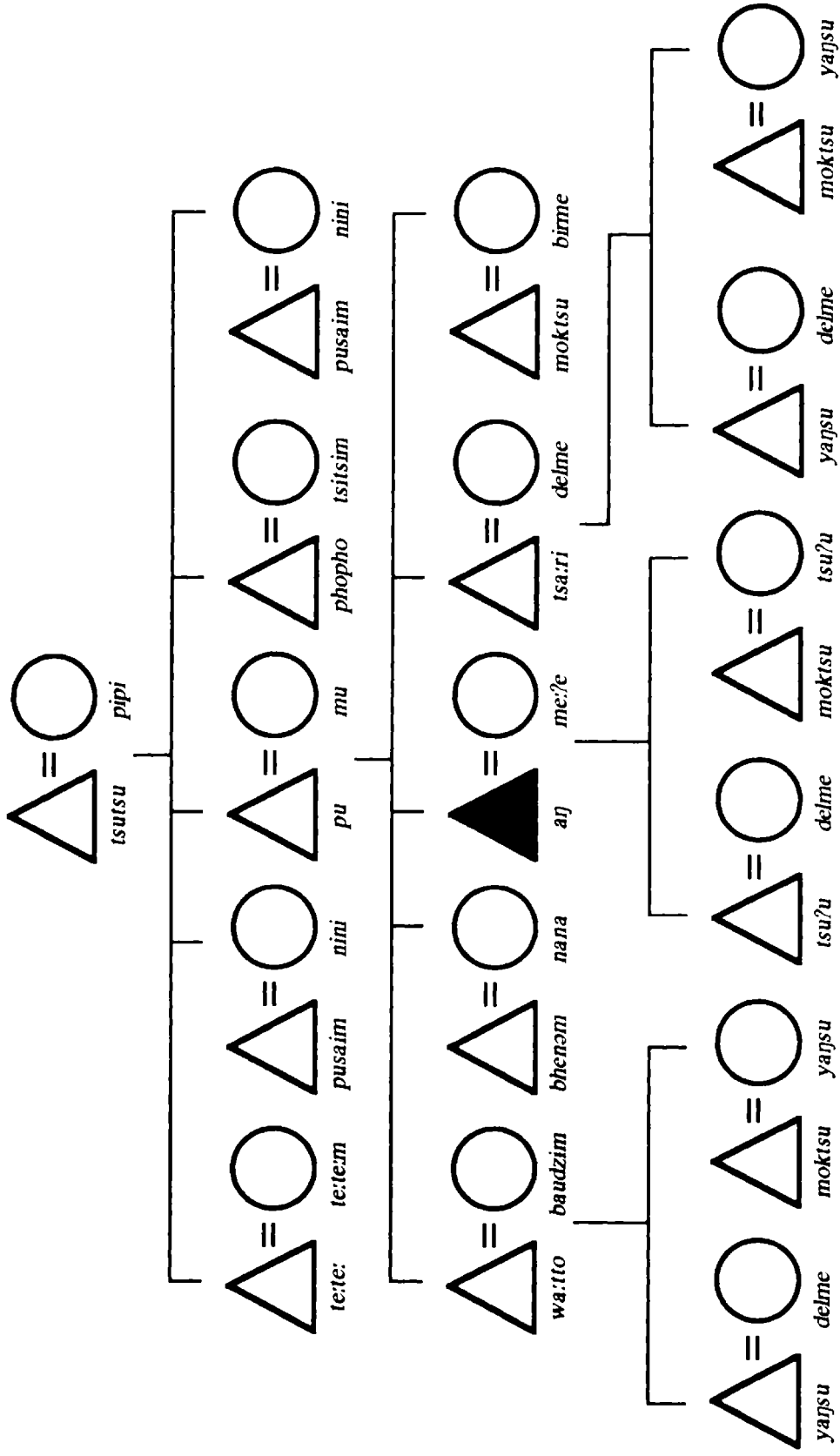
Dumi has a fairly elaborate in-law system. Father-in-law is *tsapi*, and mother-in-law is *tsatim*, regardless of the sex of speaker. Wife is *me:ʔe*, and husband is *dumbo*. Sex of speaker plays no role in Dumi terms for siblings' spouses and siblings' siblings-in-law, as shown in Figure III. Elder brother's wife is referred to with the loan *baudzim*, from Nepali *bhāujyū* 'elder brother's wife'. Elder sister's husband is referred to as *bhenəm*. Spouses of younger siblings, like nephews-in-law and nieces-in-law, are terminologically equivalent to sons-in-law, *moktsu*, and daughters-in-law, *delme*.

The elder sister of an elder sibling's spouse is referred to as *nana* 'elder sister'. The elder brother of an elder sibling's spouse is referred to as *bhenəm* and is therefore terminologically equivalent to 'elder sister's spouse'. The term *rewo* denotes the younger brother of an elder sibling's spouse and, symmetrically, the elder brother of a younger sibling's spouse. Similarly, *rime* denotes the younger sister of an elder sibling's spouse as well as the elder sister of a younger sibling's spouse. The younger

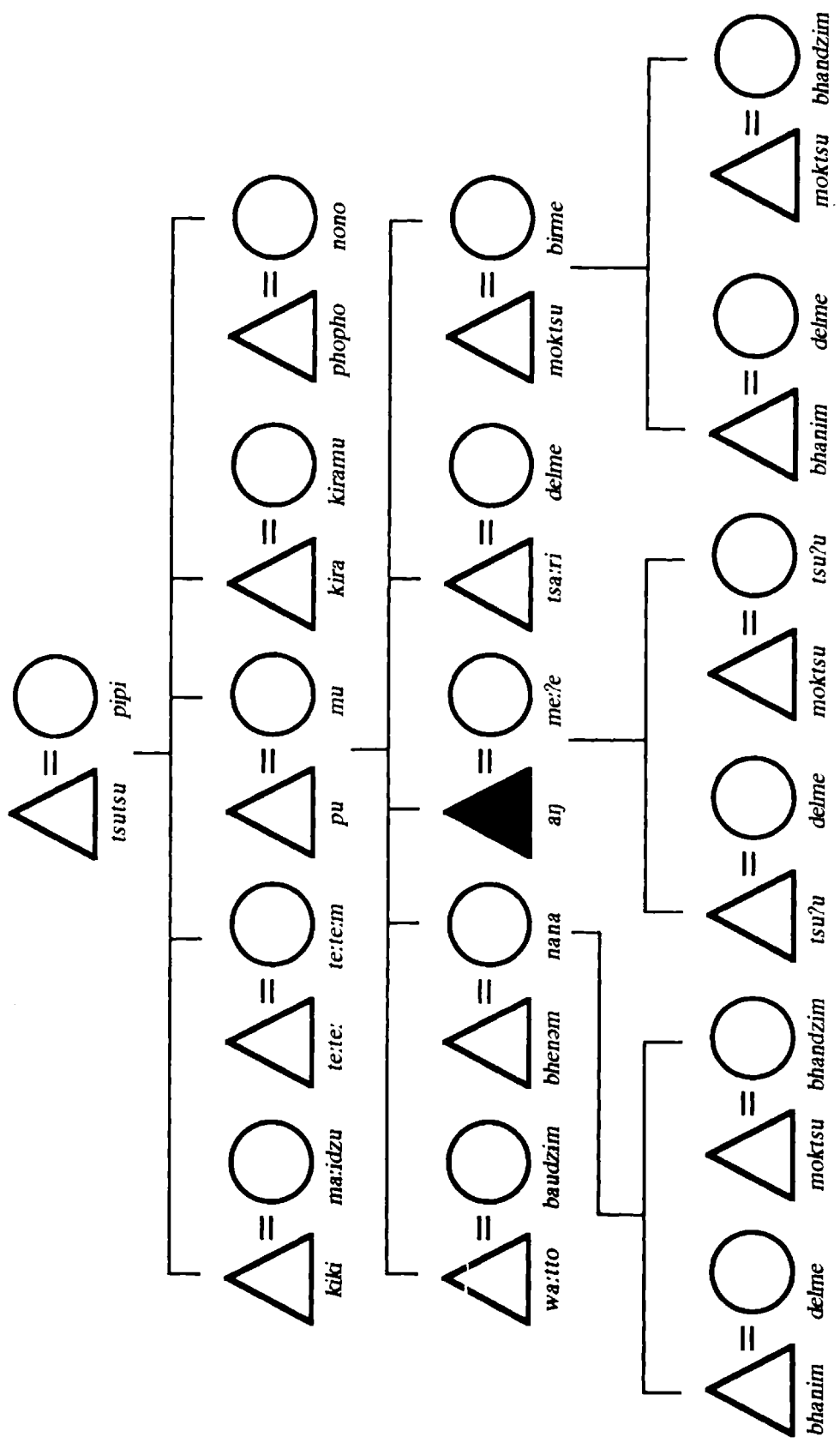
⁷ In the kinship diagrams, a horizontal line represents a single generation, and elder siblings are depicted to the left and younger siblings to the right.

brother of younger brother's wife is referred to by the loan *salo*, from Nepali *sālo* 'wife's younger brother'. The younger sister of younger brother's wife is referred to as *salim*, which is derived directly from Nepali *sāli* through affixation of the nominalizer suffix <-m>. The younger siblings of younger sister's spouse are, like nephews-in-law, nieces-in-law and the spouses of younger siblings, terminologically equivalent to son-in-law, *moktsu*, and daughters-in-law, *delme*.

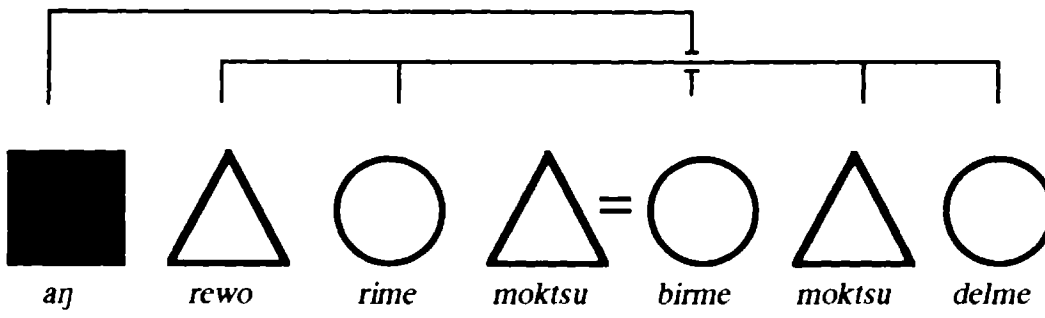
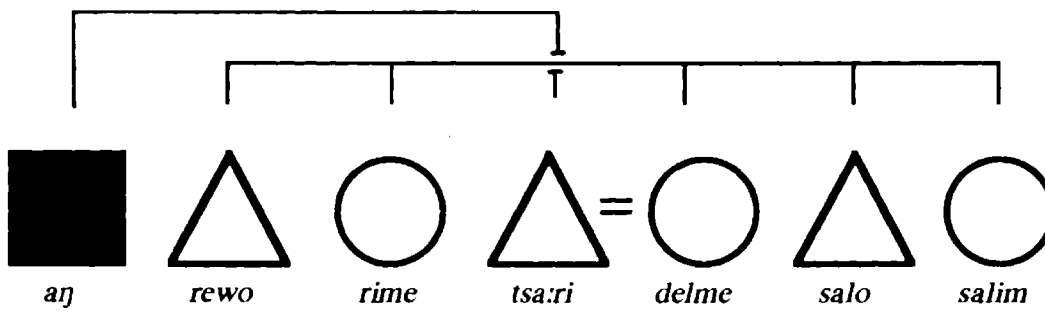
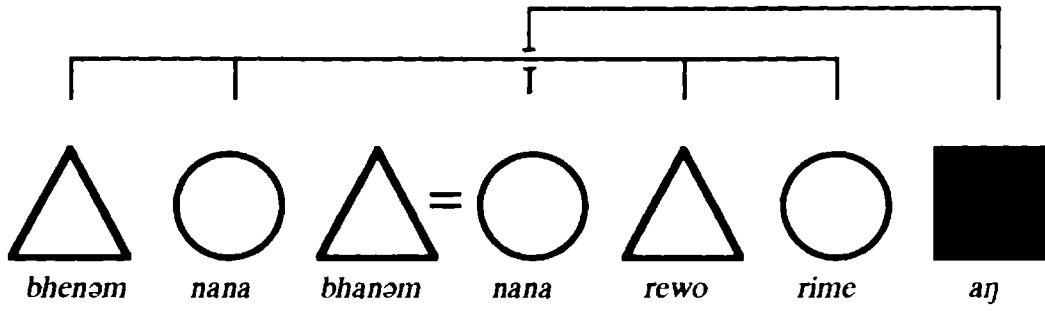
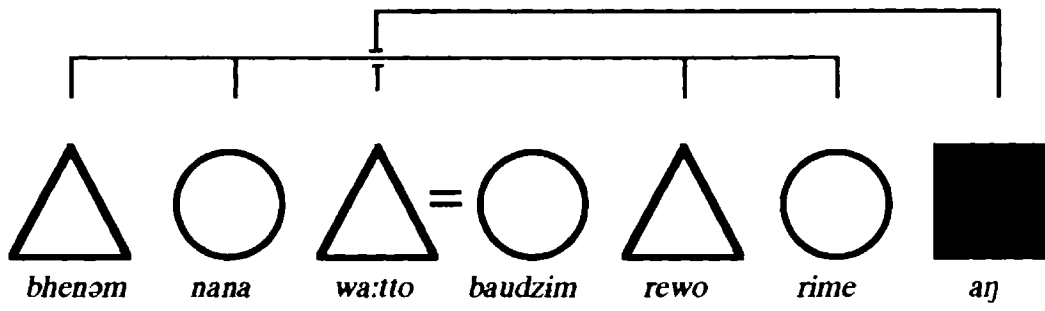
Terms denoting spouse's siblings and spouse's siblings' spouses are illustrated in Figures IV and V. In contrast to the terminology for siblings' spouses and siblings' siblings-in-law, sex of speaker is a distinguishing criterion. Both a male and a female ego refer to spouse's elder sister as *nana*, the same term with which one refers to one's own elder sister. Spouse's elder sister's husband is referred to as *bhenəm* and is therefore terminologically equivalent to one's own sister's elder husband. A male ego refers to his wife's elder brother as *dzethum*, a loan from Nepali *jethān* 'wife's elder brother'. A female ego refers to her husband's elder brother as *bubu*. The wife of both a *dzethum* in the male speaking system and a *bubu* in the female speaking system is referred to and addressed by ego as *nana* 'elder sister'. A male ego refers to his wife's younger siblings with the loan terms *salo*, from Nepali *sālo* 'wife's younger brother', and *salim*, from Nepali *sāli* 'wife's younger sister' with the Dumi nominalizer suffix <-m>. A female ego likewise refers to her husband's younger sister with a Nepali loan *nanda*, from Nepali *nanda* 'husband's younger sisters', but there is no specific term for husband's younger brother. The only proper way in which a female speaker can address or refer to her husband's younger brother is by using the appropriate ordinal kinship term. In both the male and the female speaking systems, spouses of one's spouse's younger siblings are, like nephews-in-law, nieces-in-law, spouses of younger siblings, and younger siblings of younger sister's spouse, terminologically equivalent to son-in-law, *moktsu*, and daughters-in-law, *delme*.



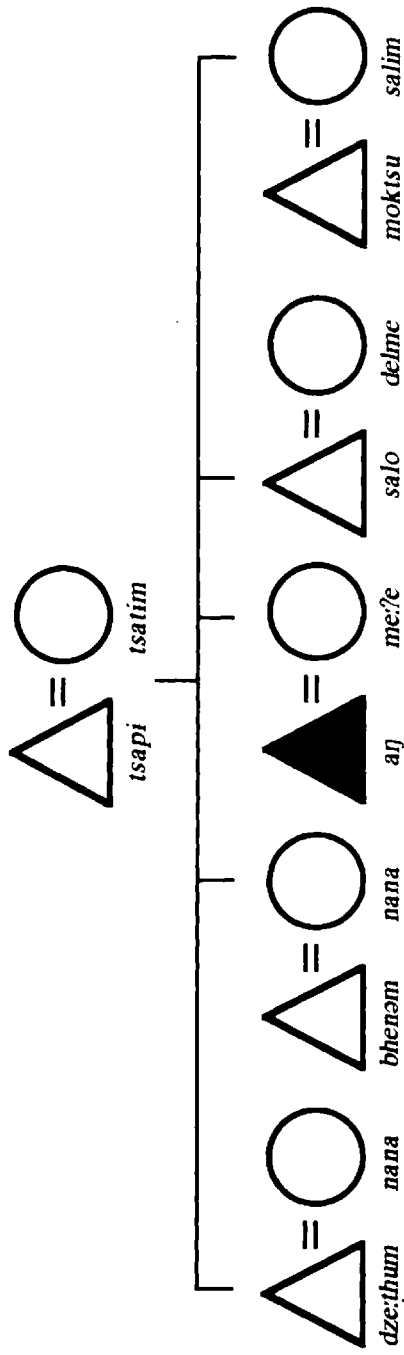
Kinship Diagram I
 Paternal Relatives and Male Siblings' Offspring
 (male speaking)



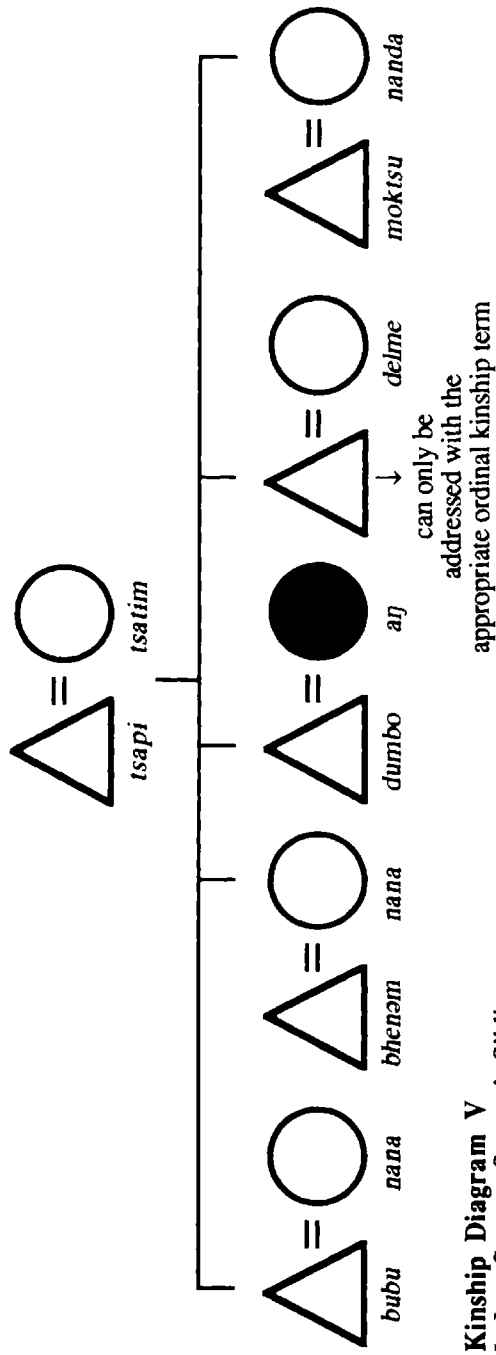
Kinship Diagram II
 Maternal Relatives and Female Siblings' Offspring
 (male speaking)



Kinship Diagram III
 In-Law System: Singlings' Spouses and
 Sibling's Siblings-in-law



Kinship Diagram IV
 In-Law System: Spouse's Siblings
 (male speaking)



Kinship Diagram V
 In-Law System: Spouse's Siblings
 (female speaking)

The following table presents Dumi ordinal kinship terms or, as Benedict (1945) calls them, 'kinship numeratives'. These kinship numeratives indicate the referent's order of birth within generation⁸ and, with the exception of *to:di* 'first-born male', are used for both siblings and offspring. The term *to:di* or *to:dise* is only used with respect to the referent as an offspring. When referring to an eldest sibling, the honorific terms *dispibi*, *timsibi* or *bisimbi* are used. The adjective *dispi* is used to refer to or address any elder brother respectfully. As in Nepali, the Dumi ordinal kinship terms are the terms of address and reference most widely used by kin and non-kin alike.

	male	female
first-born	<i>to:di(se)</i>	<i>to:ma</i>
second-born	<i>lumdi(se)</i>	<i>lumdimā</i>
third-born	<i>waki(se)</i>	<i>wakirma</i>
[in <i>Sasarkā</i>]	<i>parki(se)</i>	<i>parkirma</i>
fourth-born	<i>taki(se)</i>	<i>takirma</i>
[in <i>Sasarkā</i>]	<i>tsali(se)</i>	<i>tsalirma</i>
fifth-born	<i>miki(se)</i>	<i>mikirma</i>
[in <i>Sasarkā</i>]	<i>tсени(se)</i>	<i>tсенирма</i>
sixth-born	<i>mili(se)</i>	<i>milirma</i>
seventh-born	<i>tseki(se)</i>	<i>tsekirma</i>
youngest born	<i>sibirpa</i>	<i>sibirma</i>
[in <i>Sasarkā</i>]	<i>sibi(se)</i>	<i>sima</i>

The ordinal terms used in *Sasarkā* for third, fourth, fifth and youngest born sibling or offspring differ from those used in *Lamdi:dza* and are listed above separately. The *Sasarkā* term for youngest born, *sibise*, has a special vocative form *sibe* and a special endearing form *sirpa*.

The short forms of the male ordinal kinship terms above may be used adnominally as adjectives or as nominal heads themselves, e.g. *to:di* 'eldest born, eldest born son' and *to:di tsu?u* 'eldest born son', whereas the full forms with the ending <-se> are nouns and cannot be used adnominally, *to:dise* 'eldest born son'.

All the female ordinal terms have the suffix <-ma> and are, as such, listed in the form they take when they refer to a married referent. These same female ordinal kinship terms take the suffix <-mi> instead if the referent is virgin. Yet another kinship term in which the marital status of the speaker is a distinctive criterion is *tselpi* 'male sibling (married woman speaking)'.

⁸ The Nepali equivalents for these ordinal kinship terms are: *jeṭho/jeṭhī* 'first-born', *māhīlā/māhīlī* 'second-born', *sāhīlā/sāhīlī* 'third-born', *kāhīlā/kāhīlī* 'fourth-born', *antare* 'fifth-born', *jantare* 'sixth-born', *khantare* 'seventh-born', *kānchā/kānchī* 'youngest born'.

Married women may be addressed formally with the term *me:ʔmi* 'Missus' (Nep. *śrīmatī*), and unmarried but marriageable women may be formally addressed with the term *limtsəmi* 'Miss' (Nep. *suśrī*).

The Dumi kinship terms, like the Dumi language itself, have largely fallen into disuse. Paradoxically, many indigenous kinship terms are still used actively by the young generation despite their use of Nepali as the only medium of communication. The active retention of indigenous kinship terms amongst the Nepalophone youth is remarkable in view of the fact the indigenous kinship term system had apparently already been disrupted by the intrusion of Nepali loans by the time their grandparents acquired the language. The introduction of these loans into the Dumi kinship system may have disrupted the structure of the original system. The fact that a number of indigenous terms appear to be polyfunctional, e.g. *delme* 'daughter-in-law, etc.' and *moktsu* 'son-in-law, etc.', and that these very terms often happen to have synonyms, e.g. *no:me* 'daughter-in-law, etc.' and *deltso* 'son-in-law, etc.', may be signs of such a disruption.

Van Driem and Davids (1985: 122, 126-130) maintain that minimally four distinguishing criteria are necessary to account for Limbu kinship terms: sex, age in generation, sex of speaker, and whether siblings-in-law are related to ego via spouse or via sibling. The fourth criterion is not so much a criterion as a case of the authors' own linguistic and cultural background interfering with their perception of an alien kinship system. Spouse's siblings and sibling's spouses are simply something different altogether, and this becomes all the more apparent upon studying the Dumi in-law system (Figures III - V). However, on the basis of van Driem (1987: 506), a fourth distinguishing criterion in Limbu kinship terminology can be discerned, viz. marital status of speaker. The kinship term for which this parameter is relevant is Limbu *sammaba* 'male sibling (married female speaking)'. Van Driem and Davids' revised set of criteria to account for Limbu kinship terms would have to be: sex, age in generation, sex of speaker, and marital status of speaker. On the basis of the data presented here, it would appear that the same four criteria operate in Dumi kinship terms.

1.5. Dumi shamanism and the animist pantheon

In the Dumi pantheon there are two sets of deities: the *sim'nim-mil* and the *tsi:mo-mil*. The *sim'nim-mil* are cosmic, primordial deities or *deī ōtiōsi* who have existed since time primaeval and do not directly concern themselves with the affairs of individual mortals. Rather, *sim'nim-mil* become involved with the lot of mankind by bringing about natural disasters such as earthquakes, drought, floods or famine, or, if content, good weather. *Sim'nim-mil* is the plural form of *Sim'nim*, the Primal God, who is one of these primordial deities. The *tsi:mo-mil*, on the other hand, are lesser deities, including both household gods or *penātēs* and outdoor gods and goddesses. *Tsi:mo-mil* meddle in individual human affairs and must be kept appeased to avoid illness and calamity. The term *tsi?i* is a generic term for any deity, and the compound term *sim'nim-tsi:mo* is used to refer to the greater and lesser deities collectively in order to

distinguish them from other supernatural phenomena such as the disincarnate spirits of the deceased and dream apparitions.

Prominent cosmic deities in the Dumi pantheon include The Primal God *Sim'nim*, the Primordial Mother *Ri:be:m*, the Mother of All Things *Na:ye:m* and the Ultimate Progenitor *Ruwabhu*. Of these, *Sim'nim* and *Ruwabhu* interact most frequently with mankind and terrestrial affairs.

Sim'nim is the non-anthropomorphic Primal God of the cosmic order. *Sim'nim* is without gender, but this sexless god nonetheless has a female aspect. *Sim'nim* emerged from the undifferentiated primordial foam or *pāri* at the dawn of existence. It is the god of the universal genesis and of the origin of mankind; it is the sylvan goddess. *Sim'nim* is fate itself and embodies all the inexorable forces of destiny. *Sim'nim* constitutes a more fundamental but also a more impersonal force than *Ruwabhu*, but these two gods are intimately connected (vide infra).

Ruwabhu is a male god with several aspects. *Ruwabhu* is the Ultimate Progenitor and simultaneously the god of deceit, a quality apparent in all his aspects. The god *Ruwabhu* is visible to the naked eye as the planet Venus (Nep. *śukra*, *śukragraha*). It is not surprising that the planet Venus occupies an important position in the Dumi pantheon in view of the fact that, aside from the moon and the sun, Venus is the brightest of all periodic celestial phenomena, attaining an apparent magnitude of -4.4 at greatest elongation (48°). The fact that the planet Venus appears alternately as a morning star and as an evening star and, during conjunction, is obscured from view altogether represents an ever vacillating pattern of behaviour consistent with *Ruwabhu*'s deceitful nature.

The name *Ruwabhu* contains the suffix <-bhu> 'tree', which relates to another of the god's aspects. *Ruwabhu* is the cosmic tree bearing the various tiers of existence which, like the Norse tree of existence *Yggdrasil*, stands with his roots in the underworld whilst his highest branches stretch into the heavens and support the highest realms of existence. In his arborescent aspect *Ruwabhu* is closely tied to *Sim'nim*, the god of universal genesis. In the form of his *avatār*, the colossal serpent *Tophutsi*, *Sim'nim* lives coiled about the trunk and branches of the World Tree. It is said that in the beginning the earth was an orb completely covered with water, an endless sea. There was naught else. Then a beam of light shone onto the earth from the planet Venus, the Primordial Tree, and the water began to curdle, and so the continents congealed and the water of the oceans remained between them. Then the Primordial Tree descended upon the face of the Earth and all life forms fell out of the tree as it fruits. Then the Primordial Tree returned to the heavens in its Venusian aspect.

Ruwabhu also has a human aspect in which he can be seen only at close range. At a distance, he has the deceptive appearance of the splendrous and beautiful planet Venus, but at close range he is a hideous, leprous man, curled up in foetal position and covered with gaping wounds and oozing pus. *Ruwabhu* is afflicted with *Sim'nimkar* or leprosy, literally 'the Primordial or Genesis Wound', and he afflicts humans with this disease when they have displeased him.

Ruwabhu is the Ultimate Progenitor who impregnated *Na:ye:m*, the Mother of All Things. This event and the deceitful way in which it was consummated is related in the Dumi creation myth in Appendix I.

In addition to leprosy, calamities, natural disasters, inclement weather and a spoilt harvest are attributed to *Ruwabhu* when these events co-occur with Venus's change from a morning star to an evening star or vice versa, i.e. when Venus is in conjunction, in transition from eastern to western elongation or vice versa. For example, on the 24th of *Kārtik* 2042 (10 XI 1986) in the late afternoon it started raining and hailing suddenly in such a way that people feared it would damage the harvest. *Bhīmal Sīn* emerged from the house when he heard the stormy clattering, saying '*Ruwabhu ho: ye mwo: tsikha?*' (Has *Ruwabhu* come or what has happened?). The weather was attributed to the fact that *Ruwabhu* had become a morning star again after a period of invisibility. Venus had in fact been in conjunction five days before.

Ruwabhu also has a simian aspect in which he manifests himself to shamans. When he is seen by a shaman in his simian form, it is said to indicate that *Ruwabhu* is enacting divine schemes known only to himself.

Ri:be:m is the Primordial Mother who gave birth to *Na:ye:m*, either parthenogenetically or by conceiving her through being impregnated by an unknown source. For the Dumi the birth of *Na:ye:m* represents one of the primaeval mysteries. There is a plant sacred to the Dumi which is called *mindiri* (Nep. *ākāśbelī*), but which the initiated menfolk know by the name of *ri:be:m*. It is a yellow creeper without roots or leaves, found as an epiphyte on green shrubs and trees, especially in the crowns of plum trees. Poignant symbolism surrounds the plant, for it is for the Dumi a metaphor for the Primordial Mother *Ri:be:m*. Great significance is attributed to the creeper's lack of roots, lack of a peak and to its appearance as a complex entanglement of stringy, yellow fibres. Of its lack of roots or peak it is said that the plant is without beginning or end. The intertwined complexity of the plant is said to reflect the mystery and unfathomable complexity of the universe as a whole. Those men who, upon attaining adulthood, are initiated into the sacred lore are brought to a *mindiri* creeper in the forest away from the womenfolk, told the plant's true name and made to understand the metaphor. It is believed that bathing in the juice procured by crushing the *ri:be:m* alleviates jaundice.

Na:ye:m is the daughter of *Ri:be:m*. After being tricked by *Ruwabhu* into drinking his urine from the trunk of a tree, *Na:ye:m* conceived and became the Mother of All Things. This story is related in the Dumi creation myth. The Dumi maintain that because *Na:ye:m*'s pregnancy was the result of her being deceived by *Ruwabhu*, it is still taboo to drink from the trunks of trees, puddles or stagnant water. Great significance is attributed by the Dumi to the order in which the four most prominent creatures of the Animal Kingdom sprung from *Na:ye:m*'s womb: first *tsaptsi* 'the tiger', then *mo:ksi* 'the bear', then *tsokpi* 'the monkey' and then *miri-ma:ndi-m mi:n* 'Man, who has no tail'. Although Man is the younger sibling of the bear, tiger and monkey, he is *khələ-yikə dispī*, 'more able than all of them'. This is said to explain man's prowess as a hunter. The very first animate creatures to spring forth from *Na:ye:m*'s womb, however, were the *bhuskam* 'midges' and the *bhusum* 'mosquitoes'. The fact

that the insect world came to populate the world before the higher animals is seen as the explanation for their ubiquitousness and abundance.

The women are kept ignorant of such lore and remain oblivious to the theological or cosmological significance of many elements in the myths as well as the purport of all the sacred symbolism of Dumi lore, as they are excluded from discussions on sacred matters. Female witch doctors are the exception, but even they are said not to be accorded access to all the sacred lore.

In addition to *Sim'nim*, *Ruwabhu*, *Ri:be:m* and *Na:ye:m*, other minor *dei ōtiōsi* and *primaeval* humans with legendary status populate the Dumi pantheon, such as *Mukuli-Ya:rita* and *Dakhili-Surita*, the father and mother of the original human family in the time men still had wings, *Tsimtso* and *Parati*, the two White Crested Laughing Thrushes (*Garrulax leucolophus*) who escorted *Na:ye:m* from earth to the planet Venus, *Pəyipsi*, the first man to have emerged from the womb of *Na:ye:m* and the father-progenitor of all mankind, and the affable *Khopsi-Likpa*, whose story is related in a myth in Appendix I. These lesser *dei ōtiōsi* and legendary figures have in common with the other *sim'nim-mil* the fact that they originated in the period of *sim'nim-sə'lə-pa*, the Dawn of the World.

The sun, moon and earth are also *sim'nim-mil*, although their role is far less prominent. *Sa:khidippa* is the earth in its male aspect, and *Sa:khidimma* is the earth in its female aspect. The Primordial Earth, the God of Terran Creation, is known as *Sa:khidippa-tsi?i*. *Nina:mbi* is the Sun God, and contains the morpheme *na:m* 'sun'. The word *dzuniŋ* 'moon' appears to be derived from Nepali *jūn* 'moon', and the moon occupies a conspicuously minor position in the Dumi pantheon.

The lesser deities or *tsi:mo-mil*, on the other hand, although believed to be ancient, are alleged to be of much later date than the cosmic deities of the Dawn of the World. With the exception of the serpent *Tophutsi*, all other household gods are believed to have once been Dumi ancestors of awesome stature. Little is said to be known about their lives as human beings because many ages have elapsed since they were human beings. The more recent ancestors must be continuously appeased but must not be confused with the Ancient Ancestors who have become universal house gods.

Tsi:mo-mil who reside indoors in every Dumi household include *Tophutsi*, *Huppa Ho:* and *Huppa Ho:mi*. *Tophutsi* is a huge, dreadful serpent thicker than a man's thigh, who is the household incarnation or domestic *avatār* of the cosmic god *Sim'nim*. This is why *Tophutsi* is said to come from the planet Venus because in her cosmic form she is entwined about the trunk of the World Tree *Ruwabhu*. *Tophutsi* generally slumbers and remains dormant, but she may also slither through the house. *Tophutsi* remains invisible except for the shaman to whom she reveals herself on certain occasions. *Tophutsi* is not easily disturbed, but if disturbed, her wrath is inexorable. She causes leprosy, gangrene, consumption and invalidity. Elderly Dumi claim that leprosy or *sim'nimkar* has traditionally always been the most dreaded of diseases and is seen as an expression of the divine wrath of the primordial gods of creation. *Tophutsi* inflicts people with leprosy which he has taken with him from Venus, *Ruwabhu*, who suffers from it himself. Although *Tophutsi* lurks within each Dumi household, there is in reality but one *Tophutsi*.

The two household deities *Huppa Ho:* ‘Tibetan king’ (Nep. *Bhoṭe Deva*) and *Huppa Ho:mi* ‘Tibetan queen’ (Nep. *Bhoṭe Devī*) are each other’s consorts. The *Huppa Ho:* has the form of an ancient Tibetan aristocrat, and the *Huppa Ho:mi* has the form of an ancient Tibetan aristocratic lady. They are both easy to upset and, if displeased, quick to strike. They inflict vomiting, nausea and insanity.

Two of the lesser deities are both indoor and outdoor deities who are said to reside within the house but also wander about out of doors. One of these, *Ho:pa* (Nep. *Purve*, *Purbe* ‘eastern one’), when irritated, prevents people from eating by causing both a loss of appetite and by inducing vomiting. The other is cantankerous *Leletsi* (Nep. *Man Jhākri* ‘mind shaman’ or *Baresakhaṇḍī*) who has the appearance of a horridly ugly long-haired person. *Leletsi* is said to inflict much damage. When irritated he causes fever, delirium and insanity.

The *Tsi:mo-mil* also include the outdoor deities *Sa:pdim*, *Sa:pdimmi*, *Di:bumi* and *Kibi*. *Sa:pdim* (Nep. *Ban Rājā*) lives in the jungle and is said to have particularly long arms, hairy limbs and a hairy forehead. His general appearance is simian except that his hairy face resembles that of a bird. Like all *tsi:mo-mil*, he is mutable in form. *Sa:pdim* is invisible except for the shaman and for those who have disturbed him and evoked his wrath. If disturbed in one of his sylvan lairs, *Sa:pdim* gives vent to his rage by afflicting his victim with ailments of the heart which, to the Dumi mind, include both cardiac disorders and various forms of paralysis. *Sa:pdim* is said to bring about the ruination of many men.

Sa:pdimmi (Nep. *Ban Rānī*) is the highly irritable female consort of *Sa:pdim* and, like her husband, dwells in the jungle. *Sa:pdim* and *Sa:pdimmi* are generally not encountered together. *Sa:pdimmi*’s malevolent activities consist of inflicting people with the loss of speech, the loss of the powers of locomotion and paralysis of the limbs. *Bhīmal Sini* and other elderly people report that she has been particularly active during the past 25 to 30 years.

Di:bumi is the goddess of the hunt, a communal ancestor goddess of great importance to the menfolk. The men of the clan sacrifice a chicken to *Di:bumi* at the edge of a faraway cliff in the jungle. In worshipping *Di:bumi* the men of the clan are said to commemorate the fact that the hunt was the ancestors’ sole source of food. The ceremony is conducted far from home and kept secret from the womenfolk. If the goddess of the hunt be neglected, she may afflict the menfolk with illness or disability. The word *di:bumi* is also used in elevated diction to signify ‘the hunt’, ‘the hunter’, ‘prey’ or ‘game’.

Kibi (Nep. *Raikenī*, *riṅgaṭā calāune devatā*) is the name of a lesser outdoor deity and must not be confused with the homophonous term *kibi* ‘shaman’ (quod vide infra). *Kibi* lurks within crevices in precipitous escarpments and along large cliffs. He disguises himself in the form of a tree or a monkey or simply remains invisible. He causes people to feel vertigo, and his aim is to make people dizzy enough that they lose their balance and fall to their deaths.

Many taboos obtain in Dumi society, and many of these are not limited to the Dumi but are widespread in many areas of Nepal. For example, it is taboo to cut or bite one’s nails after sunset and before sunrise. Likewise, it is taboo to cut one’s hair or

have it cut except during daylight. Eye or ear infections, cuts, burns and all sorts of ailments are attributed to having aroused the ire of a particular god by non-observance of a particular taboo or ritual or by insult or injury to an animal raised as a sacrificial offering in honour of a particular god. Specifically Dumi taboos pertain to the *hotso* and the *dotsem*. The *hotso* and *dotsem* are rectangular bamboo wicker platforms suspended on ropes from the ceiling above the fireplace for storing pots and pans and for drying plants and foodstuff. The *dotsem* is the higher and smaller of two. The *hotso* and *dotsem* have special religious significance. The action of putting any article on these platforms or removing any article must be conducted with care and reverence, lest house gods who reside there become enraged. The *hotso* and *dotsem* are areas sacred to the ancestors. *Na:ghile:m*, the first housewife, was born on these platforms. This is related in a myth in Appendix I.

Two of the most obvious Dumi taboos are the dietetic proscription of beef and goat meat. Beef is not eaten because the cow is revered as a holy animal in the kingdom of Nepal, and the beef taboo is of Hindu, not of Dumi origin. In Nepal the slaughtering and eating of a cow is punishable by law with long-term imprisonment. The sacred status of the goat and the concomitant dietetic taboo are indigenous Dumi customs said to be of great antiquity. The reason behind the goat meat taboo is said to be a curse which a goat in ancient times uttered over all of the descendants of *Khopsi-Likpa*. The origin of this taboo is treated in Appendix I.

Since the *tsi:momil* are mainly ancestor gods and the ancestors of the Dumi are said to have feasted upon the blood of freshly slaughtered animals, offerings of blood are made to appease the household deities. Bloody offerings are now limited to the sacrifice of animals, mainly roosters, hens and buffalo. Ancestors are also worshipped or appeased when angered by incinerating food offerings in the fire. The shaman cries out at the voracious ancestors, saying *Lukhini wo! Lukhini me!* ('Hey, strike^P [at the food]! Strike^P [at the food]!'). Those participating in an inter-caste marriage become malevolent ghosts when they die because the soul of a person marrying out of caste cannot find rest for having broken with the ancestors. The major ceremony in honour of the ancestor gods is the annual pre-harvest *Niqdza:* ritual described below (1.5.3).

The cosmic deities or *sim'nim-mil* are also regularly the object of worship. On occasion, a family may slaughter and consume a sacrifice indoors in honour of one or all of the cosmic deities. As with the Limbu *mūlghar-pūjā*, the bones of the sacrificial animal may not leave the house, although, unlike the Limbus who bury the uningestible remains in the house floor, the Dumi burn the bones, hide and other uningestible portions of the sacrifice in the indoor fireplace. The significance of a Dumi indoor sacrifice is not equivalent to the indoor *mūlghar* sacrifice amongst the Limbus, and, not surprisingly when one considers the two different ways of disposing of the remains, the Dumi perform indoor sacrifices with greater frequency than is customary amongst the Limbus. The Dumi also perform indoor sacrifices occasionally for the indoor deities and as curatives to appease any deity which has afflicted a member of the household with some illness or misfortune. It deserves note that the name of the village of *Halkhum*, where most of the material for this study was gathered, is derived from the verb *halni* vt-1 'make an offering to a deity'.

Several Dumi septuagenarians report that at the time of their infancy, human sacrifice was also still practised on a small scale in old *Lamdi:dza*. In an annual ritual the head shaman would utter *ri:li*, spells and incantations (Nep. *mundhum*), whilst casting a newborn infant from a tall cliff at the top of the *Bāksilā* ridge, located a good walk along the ridge east of presentday *Bāksilā bajār*, atop a large escarpment to the south-east of and above the village of *Halkhum*. The newborn was hurled over this cliff to appease the primordial deities of *pari*, the primordial matter which rose up as froth on the surface of the primordial ocean. The sacrificial infant was known as a *pari-tsu?u*. When the *pari-tsu?u* hit bottom after being cast over the cliff, it was held that its soul would ascend like the original *pari*. According to *Bhīmal Sini* and other elderly Dumi who claim to recall this practice from their childhood, this practice was still observed by their grandfathers' generation and was abandoned only after intervention by the Nepalese government.

Everyone who happens to be in the land of *Kirāt*, whether Kiranti or Indo-Aryan, is liable to be afflicted by the *Kirātī* gods and household deities. In fact, many *Bāhun* and *Chetrī* and many other non-Rai living in the *Kirāt* who believe they have experienced the wrath of the *Kirātī* gods also abstain from eating goat meat. The several *Bāhun* and *Chetrī* families living in *Bāksilā* bazar claimed to greatly fear the gods of the Dumi who they said were very powerful in the area, although their influence did not extend beyond it, e.g. into the Terai. They say that the *Kirātī* gods heed man's words no more than the wind does when you tell it to blow the other way. The *Kirātī* gods only heed the trembling shaman who has half-entered the realm of the gods. Like the shamanist deities of the Limbus, none of the Dumi deities or disincarnate spirits are inherently benevolent. Deities are irritable beings which must be appeased and whose wrath must be allayed, not supreme beings to be turned to in time of need. There is no Dumi counterpart to the *bodhisattva*, the patron saint or the guardian angel. The shamans and witch doctors are believed to be the only ones capable of dealing with the virulent, evil forces of the supernatural.