

Genderlect.

By Kedar Nagila

Gurung (1976) narrated that Dura (Tura in J.P Cross's reference) lived during the enthronement of Kalu Saha. When he was killed by Ghale Raja at Baglunpani, his younger brother Yasobrahm Shah succeeded him in Lamjung in 1550 B.S/ 1493 A.D. Ghimire (1993 A.D) also related how fourteen castles were constructed during this era. My informant, 82 year-old Jaman Sing Dura revealed to me that their form of communication was a secret language used exclusively in the palace. From a preliminary observation, the women might have lived outside of the palace during this feudal regime.

This paper examines the use of language among the Dura people, and notes differences in language use among the sexes. The research suggests that women used a different language from that used by their male counterparts. The endangered West Himalayish Tibeto-Burman language (Bradley 1997; Van Driem 2001; Toba and Rai, 2002; Noonan 2007; Lewis, 2009) survived in the oral tradition of the many Gurung and few Dura women. However, many linguists consider it to be extinct (Lewis, 2009). This paper highlights the reasons for the group integrating as the Gurung; Gurung–Dura; Dura-Gurung; Rai; and Thapa (Van Driem 2001, Subba 2002, Nagila, 2006, 2007). It also focuses on a recent theory that the Dura, realizing their identity after their inclusion in a 2001 population census as a distinct ethnic group, with a population of 5,169, and having own mother tongue, moved over to use the Nepali language. Being involved in research over the last five years, I have analyzed genderlect. This analysis includes lexical, syntactic, morphological and phonological differences and how these function towards the expression of gender roles.