Dendup Tshewang

# *URA DOZHI* VILLAGE: SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE THROUGH HERITAGE PROTECTION

MA Thesis in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management.

Central European University

Vienna

May 2023

# *URA DOZHI* VILLAGE: SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE THROUGH HERITAGE PROTECTION

by

Dendup Tshewang

(Bhutan)

Thesis submitted to the Department of Medieval Studies,

Central European University, Vienna, in partial fulfillment of the requirements

of the Master of Arts degree in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy,

Management.

Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Chair, Examination Committee

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Thesis Supervisor

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Examiner

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External Supervisor

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May 2023

I, the undersigned, **Dendup Tshewang**, candidate for the MA degree in Cultural Heritage Studies: Academic Research, Policy, Management declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Vienna, 31 May 2023

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Signature

# Abstract

Rural settlements in Bhutan, due to their isolated growth owing to limited intervillage cultural interchange, gradually developed over time their own unique character and sets of cultural traditions until recent decades. These unique villages, however, are being impacted by modernization in multiple ways, including the loss of local traditional architecture and settlement structure due to an influx of modern ideas and technology as well as social sustainability issues connected to population out-flow as the pace of modernization increased significantly in the twenty-first century. Since the concept of rural settlement management is fairly new in Bhutan, no concrete developmental plans yet exist to address these issues, but rather, planning is governed by general governmental acts, guidelines, and regulations resulting in the appearance of diverse architectural typologies within the same village. Such a practice has greatly impacted the architectural harmony of many villages in the country, degrading settlement structures and associated cultural heritage features. Thus, a site-specific developmental plan is urgently needed to manage the inevitable changes that will come to all rural settlements eventually no matter how remote. This thesis contains a plan for site-specific development and expansion with heritage protection at its core by taking *Ura Dozhi* village as a case study village. Included are all foundational steps necessary to create such a plan: *Ura Dozhi's* historical background and current, concrete settlement information such as building types and maps of houses, roads, and other significant features. In parallel, I have explored the current situation of various applicable legal tools that have and will shape the village's development in the future. With all this knowledge in the background, a development and expansion plan was prepared aimed both at maintaining the architectural harmony of the village and creating a socio-economic sustainable future ensuring long-term cultural continuity within the village.

# Acknowledgements

It would not be right to start this acknowledgment without mentioning my supervisor, Professor (Dr) Alice Choyke, who never failed to inspire and motivate me with her sincere care and concern throughout my thesis journey. I thank my good faith to have had this opportunity to receive your motherly love and care, and I am sincerely grateful to you for your selfless supervision and guidance to make this thesis a reality. I am deeply thankful to altruist Mr. Paul Lassus, managing partner of Lassus and Associates for your unwavering generosity and kindness showered on me. This thesis would not have been realized without your funding support for my field research, valuable contributions, and constant guidance. I remain forever in debt to you. I am also thankful to Professor (Dr) Jozsef Laszlovszky for your wonderful academic tutoring and for preparing me to write this thesis right from the first semester until its final realization. My gratitude also goes to all the professors and the departmental staff who have played their roles in many ways in shaping my thesis, directly or indirectly over the years of my master's studies. I want to acknowledge my cohorts in the Cultural Heritage Studies Program for their valuable contributions, comments, and feedback that helped in shaping my thesis.

I am also grateful to the people of *Ura Dozhi* and the staff of *Ura Gewog* for your support and cooperation during my field research, without which data collection would not be possible. Lastly, for this academic opportunity, I remain grateful to ASIA Onlus and the Druk Nyo Foundation for creating this wonderful scholarship - the Bhutan Heritage Scholarship in collaboration with CEU. I dedicate this work to each and every one of you who has been part of my thesis journey.

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All the pictures, figures, illustrations, and attributions are the work of the author except, where mentioned otherwise.

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# Definition of terms used.

The following terms will be used in my thesis. Their meanings are relevant to the geographical and cultural context of Bhutan only.

*Dzongkhag* : it is equivalent to the term 'district' in English. These are the primary subdivisions of the country. Bhutan is divided into 20 *Dzongkhags* with geographical areas ranging from 639 to 4309 square km.[1] The country, in total, covers 38,394 square km.

*Gewog* : refers to a group of villages in Bhutan. They represent a secondary administrative division below *Dzongkhags*. There are 205 *Gewogs* under 20 *Dzongkhags*.[2]

*Gdung* : social stratum wielding local power or the powerful lords who controlled several valleys over most of Bhutan in the period between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. The name and the power of the *Gdungs* were inherited. They controlled their valley for generations until the unification of the country in the seventeenth century, when most *Gdung* families gradually disappeared or lost their power.[3]

*Dozhi* : the term literally means "main four". *Ura* village consists of four settlement sections, which as a single unit is called *Ura Dozhi*.

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[1] "Districts of Bhutan," in Wikipedia, March 2, 2021, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Districts_of_Bhutan&oldid=1009776068.
[2] "*Gewogs* of Bhutan," in Wikipedia, January 27, 2022, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Gewogs_of_Bhutan&oldid=1068257773.
[3] John Ardussi, "The Gdung Lineages of Central & Eastern Bhutan- A Repraisal of Other Origin, Based on Literary Sources," Journal of Bhutan Studies 1 (1999): 64–83.

*Mangmi* : elected or chosen representatives of the people, who acts as a community or group leader.

*Chipoen* : elected or chosen representatives of the people. They act as assistants to the *Mangmi.*

*Taza* : elected or chosen representatives of the people who act as assistants to the *Chipoen.*

# Introduction

Having spent much of my childhood in a rural village in the eastern part of Bhutan in the region of *Trashigang*[4] *Dzongkhag* in a village called *Pam,* I grew up in a close knit-society with strong community cohesion. Although the national highway passed right through the village, it had minimum impact on the people's social life because there were only a few cars, and people still continued their old tradition of journeying within the village by walking along the traditional footpaths. Since my village is a scattered settlement, getting from one end of the village to the other required walking along the footpath network that connected every household. These footpaths played a crucial role in keeping open inter-personal communication within the community as people would visit neighbors' homes to rest. Gift-giving and offering refreshments took place automatically.

After completing my high school, I joined the youth leaving their traditional villages, to pursue my bachelor's degree, following which I started working in the Cultural Heritage Department in *Thimphu,*[5] the capital city of Bhutan. Since then, I have lost most of my connections with the village and during my brief, occasional visits, I was surprised and saddened to see that this settlement is no longer the same village where I once grew up. The impact of modernization has hit harshly, and the change is so drastic that even I feel like a kind of stranger in my own village. The new farm road has connected every household up to their doorsteps and with most of the local people owning a car, the traditional social cohesion that once existed through the footpath-network was completely lost. Furthermore, the village has somehow turned into a suburb with the emergence of modern buildings, occupied by tenants rather than owners and the establishment of several automobile workshops, fueled by its close location to the

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[4] "Trashigang Dzongkhag Administration," accessed May 22, 2023, http://trashigang.gov.bt/.
[5] "Thimphu National Capital of Bhutan | Britannica," April 28, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/place/Thimphu.

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provincial capital of the *Dzongkhag.* My work in the Cultural Heritage Program has exposed me to various concepts of rural management, and today I understand that such a drastic change could have been better managed if there had been some kind of dedicated development plan which took into consideration the traditional culture and heritage of the village.

I came across several similar rural villages in the country which are at various stages of development without a site-specific plan. During one of the workshops organized by UNESCO to introduce the concept of managing rural settlements, I came across *Ura Dozhi* village, the case study village for this thesis. The background is discussed in more detail later. This village is in the early stages of development with its rich culture and tradition still intact, unlike many other rural villages in Bhutan. The development of such rural villages is shaped by general governmental acts, guidelines, and regulations resulting in the appearance of different styles of building architecture springing up within these villages. The architectural harmony within the village is often visually disturbed, especially in the twenty-first century when the pace of development has increased significantly due to modernization. Further, the survival of rural villages is at risk due to population decline as a result of rural-urban migration, impacting social continuity in these villages. There is an urgent need to manage this inevitable change in a sustainable way with heritage protection at its core.

Bhutan in general began experiencing the impact of modernization only in the mid-twentieth century with the construction of its first motor road.[6] Until that point, the country had remained isolated and unknown to the rest of the world. Since then, the modernization process has progressed gradually. By the early twenty-first century, all parts of the country were connected to the road network, including rural settlements.[7] This road connectivity accelerated the pace

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[6] "Bhutan - Transportation and Communications," accessed April 25, 2023, http://www.country-data.com/cgi-bin/query/r-1497.html.
[7] "New Roads to Better Lives in Rural Bhutan," accessed March 3, 2022, https://blogs.worldbank.org/endpovertyinsouthasia/new-roads-better-lives-rural-bhutan.

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of modernization as it brought new ideas and materials into the rural villages, gradually altering various aspects of traditional rural life. For instance, modern materials and design ideas gained popularity while traditional building and construction techniques were slowly forgotten in the process. The traditional appearance and physical structure of villages changed which in turn hampered community vitality and cohesiveness. Moreover, with the introduction of modern education, which prepared the youth for white-collar jobs in towns rather than hard physical work in the fields and on the pastures, the pace of rural-urban migration increased significantly, endangering the very survival of rural settlements. The population exodus from the rural areas resulted in a structural shift in the country's economy from one based on agriculture to one based on white-collar employment.[8] This trend toward rural-urban migration has affected most rural settlements, leaving behind older generations. A few of the houses in these villages are left empty with no one living in them. Further, there are many cases where the elders are also forced to live in urban areas to care for their grandchildren while the parents work. This led to an abrupt change in the lifestyles and living standards of the people, which in turn puts huge pressure on people who still remain in the local community to retain ancient traditions and culture within the village. There is an urgent need, therefore, to improve preservation efforts in traditional rural villages and establish proper management for their future sustainability using an approach with heritage protection at its heart.

This concept of managing rural villages was introduced recently in Bhutan through a series of events organized by UNESCO. In 2014, the event began with Bhutan hosting an international competition on the cultural landscape topic to raise awareness of the importance of conserving

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[8] Royal Government of Bhutan National Statistic Bureau, *Rural Urban Migration and Urbanization in Bhutan* (Thimphu Bhutan: National Statistics Bureau, 2018).

cultural landscapes[9] along with traditional kinds of rural lifeways in Bhutan.[10] Following this competition, ''annual workshops on the topic of cultural landscapes'' were organized by the UNESCO with separate themes and aims until 2017. The workshop in 2015 continued to provide in-depth knowledge in the field of the cultural landscape, and in 2016, the aim shifted towards developing a management framework for the cultural sites, followed by the 2017 workshop, which focused on in-house capacity building in preparation for management plans for rural settlements in the country.[11] As a part of the 2017 workshop, six rural villages were selected across the country with six teams working on the preparation of a draft management plan for them. The selection criteria for these villages were mainly based on the participant's knowledge of the village, distance from the workstation,[12] uniqueness of the village, and its heritage significance. *Ura Dozhi*[13] village situated within the province of *Bumthang*[14] *Dzongkhag* was one of the six selected villages. I played a significant role in preparing the draft management plan for it at that time. Our team visited the village twice and interviewed a few locals and stakeholders while working on the draft management plan. However, due to time constraints and limited knowledge of the field,[15] the draft management plan for *Ura Dozhi* required improvement in several major areas as pointed out by international experts from UNESCO and local officials. The main recommendation on the draft management plan was to include the study and analysis of the *Ura Dozhi* settlement in order to understand its physical

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[9] As per UNESCO definition, ''Cultural landscapes are those where human interaction with natural systems has, over a long period, formed a distinctive landscape. These interactions arise from, and cause, cultural values to develop.''

[10] Roland Lin, "Support to the South Asian Cultural Landscape Initiatives" (UNESCO, 2018), 5, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000265961.

[11] Lin, 7–9.

[12] Since the work required several field visits, those village closer to the workstation were chosen.

[13] Since it is case study village for my thesis, the village is described in detail in chapter one.

[14] "About District," accessed May 15, 2023, http://www.bumthang.gov.bt/about-district.

[15] Most of the team members including myself were new to the concept of management plan.

structure and come up with a future expansion that is organic and in harmony with the local setting.[16]

In line with this recommendation and to come up with a comprehensive and practical plan to manage rural villages like *Ura Dozhi* village, I will develop an expansion and revival plan for the village in my thesis aimed at creating sustainable management of change within *Ura Dozhi* village. The management plan prepared for this village is expected to serve as a model for the protection of other similar villages across the country and accordingly convince policymakers and people in general of the possibilities inherent in this sustainable management strategy with cultural heritage at its core.

## Research questions

My thesis deals with the following major sets of research questions which are all connected to the notion of sustainable management of change through heritage protection:

1. What makes *Ura Dozhi* village unique and worthy of protection? What is the cultural heritage of the village?
2. How has modernization impacted this village and what are the main issues and challenges faced by the people now as they try to keep their culture and traditions alive?
3. The village consists of traditional buildings spread across a valley. How have the building architecture and settlement patterns changed over time? What are the different categories of buildings and their respective physical characteristics?
4. There are several central administrative acts, guidelines, policies, and management plans that necessarily shape the development of any rural village in the country. What

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[16] Lin, "Support to the South Asian Cultural Landscape Initiatives," 73.

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are the different legal tools that have shaped *Ura Dozhi* village until now and what will be their role in any future development work be?

5.  The village has expanded harmoniously over time, respecting the natural landscape, and following traditional construction techniques. How was such a harmony maintained in previous times and how can this change be managed without losing this harmony and the social traditions entwined with it?

6.  The impact of rural-urban migration has drained the village of its much-needed active population, leaving behind the few members from older generations to continue the culture and traditions of the village. How can younger members of this same community be attracted to return to the village and encourage them to maintain some cultural continuity for their own profit?

## Methodology

Field surveys and data collection represent my primary research approach. For the purpose of this thesis, a field visit was conducted to survey *Ura Dozhi* village, a survey that mainly focused on two major aspects. The survey was mainly possible due to financial assistance from Mr. Paul Lassus, who has also helped me with the process of the survey and documentation of the village. The first aim included detailed documentation of the village. Each house in the village was located within the village in relation to its place within the natural landscape, social and cultural features in the village, and proximity to access roads and footpaths accompanied by a detailed 360-degree photograph. Other details such as building architecture, materials, and construction techniques were also noted. Second, other aspects of the intangible heritage of the village such as historical data, oral traditions concerning the village, traditional political organization within the village, a chronology of village development, the age of individual houses, ownership within families, and functions of all structures within the village were

collected by interviewing people within the community. The information on the map and plot details was obtained from various relevant offices. These data were validated with other available sources from books, articles, journals, publications, online resources, and other relevant materials through desktop research. The data were then analyzed to understand the current state of the village in order to come up with an appropriate, site-specific future management plan.

## Limitations

Stakeholder consultation is one of the main limitations of my thesis. There are several stakeholders involved in the successful management of *Ura Dozhi* village, the local community being the most important one. A comprehensive consultation with them is crucial before finalizing any kind of plan to manage any changes and will require several field visits to discuss the plan with community people and relevant stakeholders during the preparation of the management plan. Since a repeated field visit now was not possible due to distance and time constraints, a proper, comprehensive stakeholder consultation could not be carried out for the thesis. However, regardless of these limitations, the expansion and revival plan for *Ura Dozhi* village in my thesis was prepared following a detailed study and analysis of the settlement with the historical background and the current state of settlement in mind. The finalization of the plan prepared in my thesis will include a comprehensive stakeholder consultation post-thesis in order to produce a practical and realistic expansion and revival plan for the people of *Ura Dozhi*.

Overall, this thesis represents a draft plan for the management of *Ura Dozhi* village, which is to be finalized post-thesis before its practical implementation at the site. Through the successful management of this village and from the lessons learned after the implementation of this plan, I hope to develop better preservation and management plans for other rural villages in the

country, and also inspire the local community to preserve their traditional rural village and lifeways.

# Chapter 1- *Ura Dozhi* village: where intangible meets tangible heritage traditions

For much of its history, until the mid-twentieth century, Bhutan's rugged terrain kept the populations of its rural villages isolated from one another. Cultural exchange between inhabited valleys, even neighboring ones, took place only sporadically, as the need arose, and resulted in each settlement developing its own unique character and sets of cultural traditions (and even the development of different local dialects within a few regions). *Ura Dozhi* village, the focus of this thesis, is no exception. In this chapter, I will provide a geographical and historical overview of the *Ura Dozhi* village within Bhutan and describe those aspects of its cultural heritage (tangible and intangible) directly related to the main topic of this thesis, managing inevitable social change within the village through heritage protection. I will also describe the challenges posed by modernization on these cultural elements, including traditional agricultural practices and animal keeping, which are also crucial components of *Ura Dozhi's* heritage, closely connected to long-term sustainability.

## 1.1 *Ura Dozhi* Village: Geographical context

Bhutan is a small South Asian country tucked away in the folds of the Himalayas, sandwiched between two industrial giants- China to the north and India to the south (see Figure 1). Geographically, the country is divided into three distinct regions, each with its own unique cultural identity.[17] These regions are further sub-divided into *Dzongkhags* (districts): an eastern region with six *Dzongkhags,* a central region with four *Dzongkhags,* and a western region with

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[17] "Bhutan Regions · Regions in Bhutan," accessed May 16, 2023, https://www.todaytourism.com/travel-guides/Regions-in-Bhutan.html.

10 *Dzongkhags,* comprising a total of 20 *Dzongkhags* in the country.[18] *Ura Dozhi* village is located in the center of *Ura Gewog,* within *Bumthang Dzongkhag,* which lies in the central part of Bhutan.[19] The area has long served as the main gateway between east and west Bhutan.[20] Unlike most other *Dzongkhags, Bumthang* lies within a broad and gentle valley surrounded by ancient glaciers.[21] It consists of four *Gewogs,* namely *Chokhor* and *Tang* to the north and *Ura* and *Chumey* to the south (see Figure 2).[22]
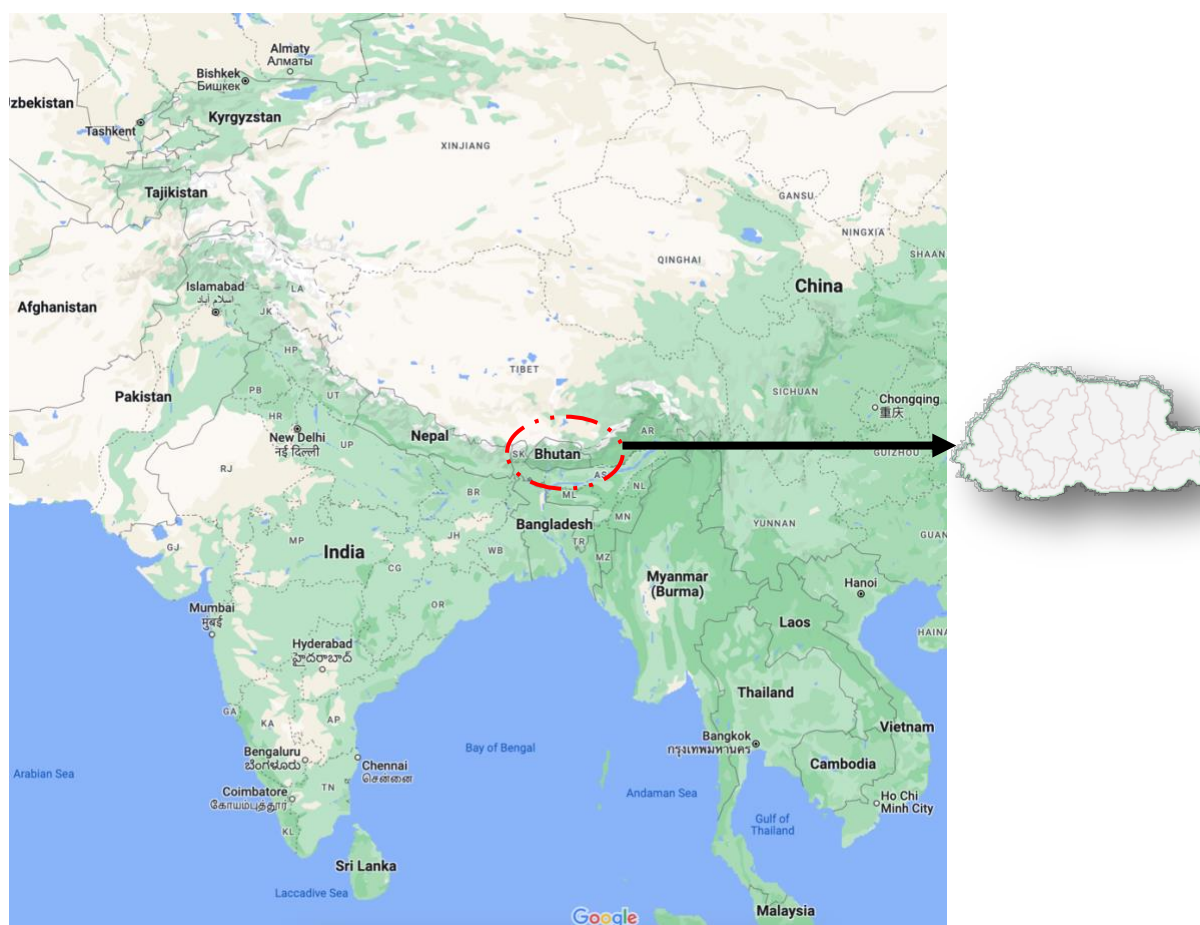


*Figure 1. Location of Bhutan in a global context marked on Google Maps (accessed April 14, 2023)*

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[18] "Bhutan (03/08)," U.S. Department of State, accessed May 16, 2023, //2009-2017.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/bhutan/101839.htm.

[19] "Ura Valley Bhutan Medieval Setup with Cluster of Houses | Travel to Bhutan," *Bhutan Himalayan Holidays || Travelling to Bhutan* (blog), accessed April 30, 2023, https://bhutanculturaltravel.com/ura-valley-bhutan/.

[20] easeindia, "Bumthang – Gateway To East Bhutan," *EaseIndiaTravel* (blog), January 17, 2022, https://www.easeindiatravel.com/bumthang-gateway-to-east-bhutan/.

[21] "Places to Visit in Bumthang, Tourist Places & Top Attractions," accessed May 23, 2023, https://especialvacations.com/bhutan-packages/destination/bhumthang.

[22] "Gewogs | Royal Government of Bhutan," accessed April 30, 2023, http://www.bumthang.gov.bt/gewogs.
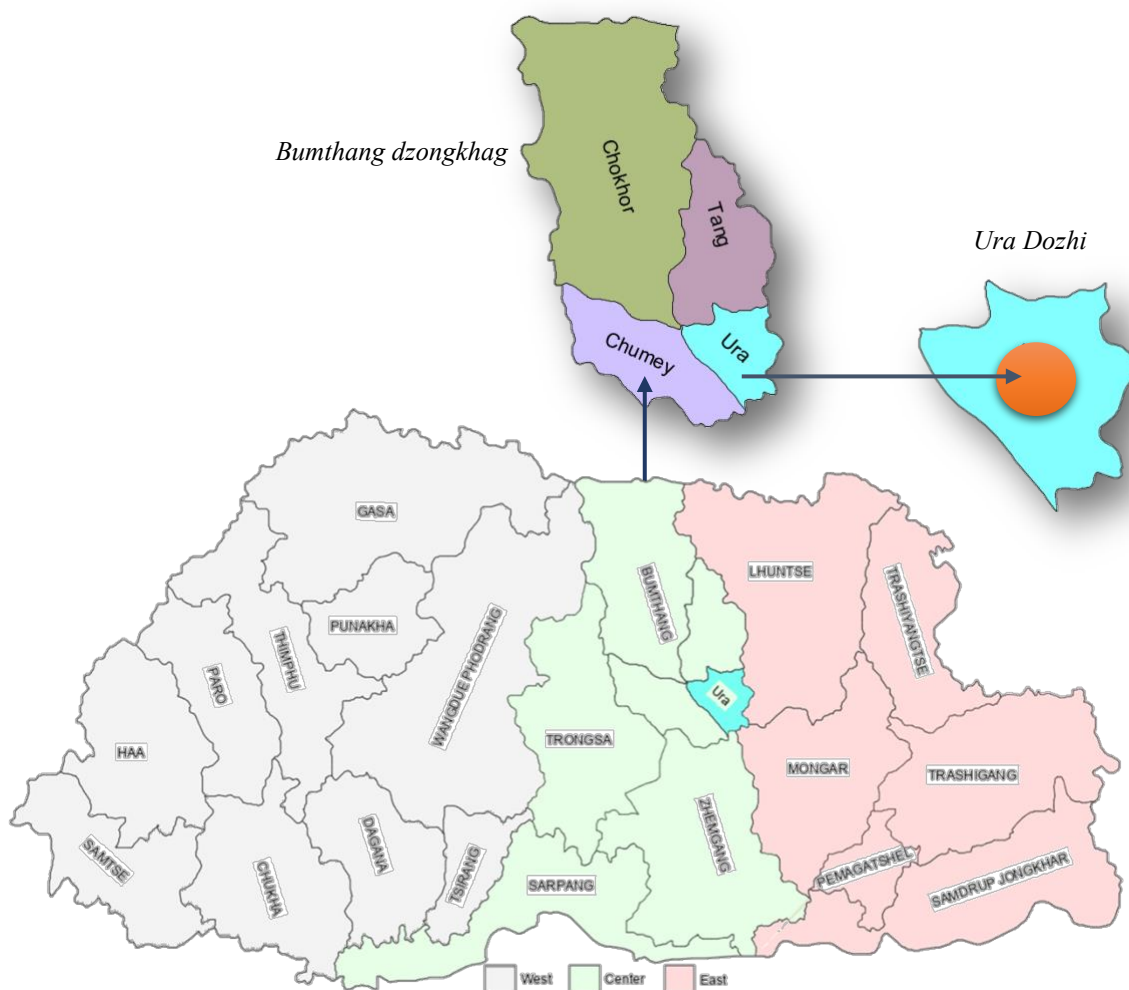
*Figure 2. Regions of Bhutan, Bumthang Dzongkhag and Ura Dozhi village (Illustration by author)*

The *Ura Gewog* is further sub-divided into ten main villages, namely: *Tangsibi, Shingnyeer, Shingkhar, Pangkhar, Somthrang, Beten, Trabi/Krispa, Tarshong, Toepa* and *Chari.* The *Gewog* has a total population of 2286 in 301 households.[23] The last four villages *(Trabi/Krispa, Tarshong, Toepa* and *Chari)* present as a single clustered settlement called *Ura Dozhi,* meaning "the main four" and are usually treated as a single village by the local community. The *Ura Dozhi* settlement lies on a very gentle slope, in contrast to the steep topographic characteristics of other villages in the *Gewog,* with an arable landscape in its surroundings. The clustered settlement pattern likely arose to save land suitable for agricultural production by crowding all

[23] "Ura, Gewog Profile," n.d., http://www.bumthang.gov.bt/gewogs/ura.

the houses and other buildings into a central location (see Figure 3). However, the settlement has gradually spread across to the other side of the valley as well.



*Figure 3.  Expansion pattern of Ura Dozhi settlement marked on Google Earth (accessed April 14, 2023)*

## 1.2 *Ura Dozhi:* Historical context

Karma Phuntsho (2013) characterizes the history of Bhutan as falling into five periods: The prehistoric period - the years before the introduction of Buddhist culture (seventh century CE); The early historic period – the time of early diffusion of Buddhism (seventh century CE to tenth century CE); The early historic period – the later diffusion of Buddhism (the tenth century to seventeenth century); the medieval period (seventeenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century); the early modern period (1907 to 1960); and lastly the modern period (for a detailed description on this periodization, read Karma Phuntsho's History of Bhutan, 2013).[24]

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[24] Karma Phuntsho, *The History of Bhutan* (London: Haus, 2013), 60.

The development of *Ura Dozhi* dates back to the early historic period between the tenth and seventeenth century during the later diffusion of Buddhism in Bhutan. In this period, the country was not unified but rather ruled by important groups of secular families known as *Gdungs*. They were powerful landlords who exercised secular authority over certain territories as well as provided protection to their subjects within their domain until the region was unified into a single state in the seventeenth century.[25]

## 1.2.1 *Ura Gdung*

According to oral tradition, *Ura Gdung* is believed to be the first *gdung* in the country from where other *Gdungs* are said to have spread. However, Karma Phuntsho (2013) argues that due to the absence of any written records, these claims cannot be substantiated. He provides three different narrative versions for the origin of *Ura Gdung*. In the first version, his narration is linked to divine intervention, where a child was gifted from heaven to rule this place in answer to the people's prayers. However, the lineage ended after three generations and the fourth-generation leader was prophesized to be born in Tibet. According to the prophecy, people identified this leader and brought him to *Ura* from Tibet as their ruler. In the second version, Phuntsho begins with similar accounts, where the child gifted from heaven ruled the eastern part of the country but after a series of unfortunate events, his followers killed him. The ruler died with a prophecy that he would be reborn in Tibet and that his loyal followers must find him there. The people found him according to his prophecy but on his way back to the east, the boy refused to return to the people who had betrayed him. He instead decided to stay in Ura and rule the area. Lastly, in the third version, Phuntsho relates that the god descended from heaven to rule *Ura* but did not produce any descendants. He instead, upon his death, left the prophecy that he would be reborn in Tibet and must be brought back to *Ura* to rule the place.

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[25] Phuntsho, 114.

Just as in the two earlier narratives, the people brought him back to *Ura* from Tibet to rule the area (for a detailed historical description of all three versions, read Karma Phuntsho's History of Bhutan, 2013).[26] All three versions converge into a single account of *Gdungs* rule, thereby leaving no doubt about the history of *Ura Gdung*. This story is further validated by a plot of land, widely believed to contain the remains of the *Gdung's* fortress at the center of the village although the structure itself has not survived except in the oral memory of the local population (see Figure 4). However, due to the absence of any written records, the original scale of the fortress cannot be determined as the new buildings seem to have gradually encroached on the fortress compound except for the depicted plot remain.



*Figure 4. Map showing plot remains of the Gdung with a picture of the plot where it is believed the Gdung once stood (Map and picture by author)*

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[26] Phuntsho, 115.

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## 1.2.2 Development of *Ura Dozhi* settlement

According to oral tradition, the *Ura Dozhi* settlement is said to have formed around the *Ura Gdung's* fortress as a result of the population seeking refuge under his rule against the ongoing internal wars and raids in the region. As the *Ura Gdung* settled in this area, people from four nearby villages began to relocate and settle around his fortress.[27] The first to do so were people from *Kellingzan* village who settled along the southern side of the fortress. They called themselves *"Trabi/Krispa"* meaning the earliest settlers. With the *Gdungs* providing protection and helping people survive, people from other nearby villages also started to settle around the fortress. The people from *Krongsapong* village, located in an area north of the fortress, settled by the northern side and were called *"Toepa"*, meaning "above" as they settled towards the upper side of the fortress. Meanwhile, the people from *Pamdang* village, lying east of the fortress, settled around the fortress' horse stables. They were primarily responsible for looking after the horses of the lord and were accordingly named *"Tarshongpa"* meaning the ones who look after horses. Lastly, the people from the *Goyongmapong* village, located west of the fortress, settled around the western boundary wall of the fortress and were called *"Charipa"* meaning the ones who settled around the boundary wall. This oral account is substantiated by the archaeological remains of the old villages, which can be found in all four of their original locations (see Figure 5). These four groups of settlements might have been separated with visible distinctions in the past around the fortress, but currently the physical (but not administrative) boundaries are blurred due to increasing population growth and associated constructions.[28] However, the settlement cluster is still known as a combination of four villages (*Trabi/Krispa, Tarshong, Toepa,* and *Chari*) as described earlier.

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[27] "Ura History of Ura Dung Nagpo | Mandala Collections - Audio-Video," accessed May 16, 2023, https://av.mandala.library.virginia.edu/video/ura-history-ura-dung-nagpo.

[28] Samten Yeshi, "A Brief History of Ura Village | Mandala Collections - Texts," accessed May 16, 2023, https://texts.mandala.library.virginia.edu/text/brief-history-ura-village.
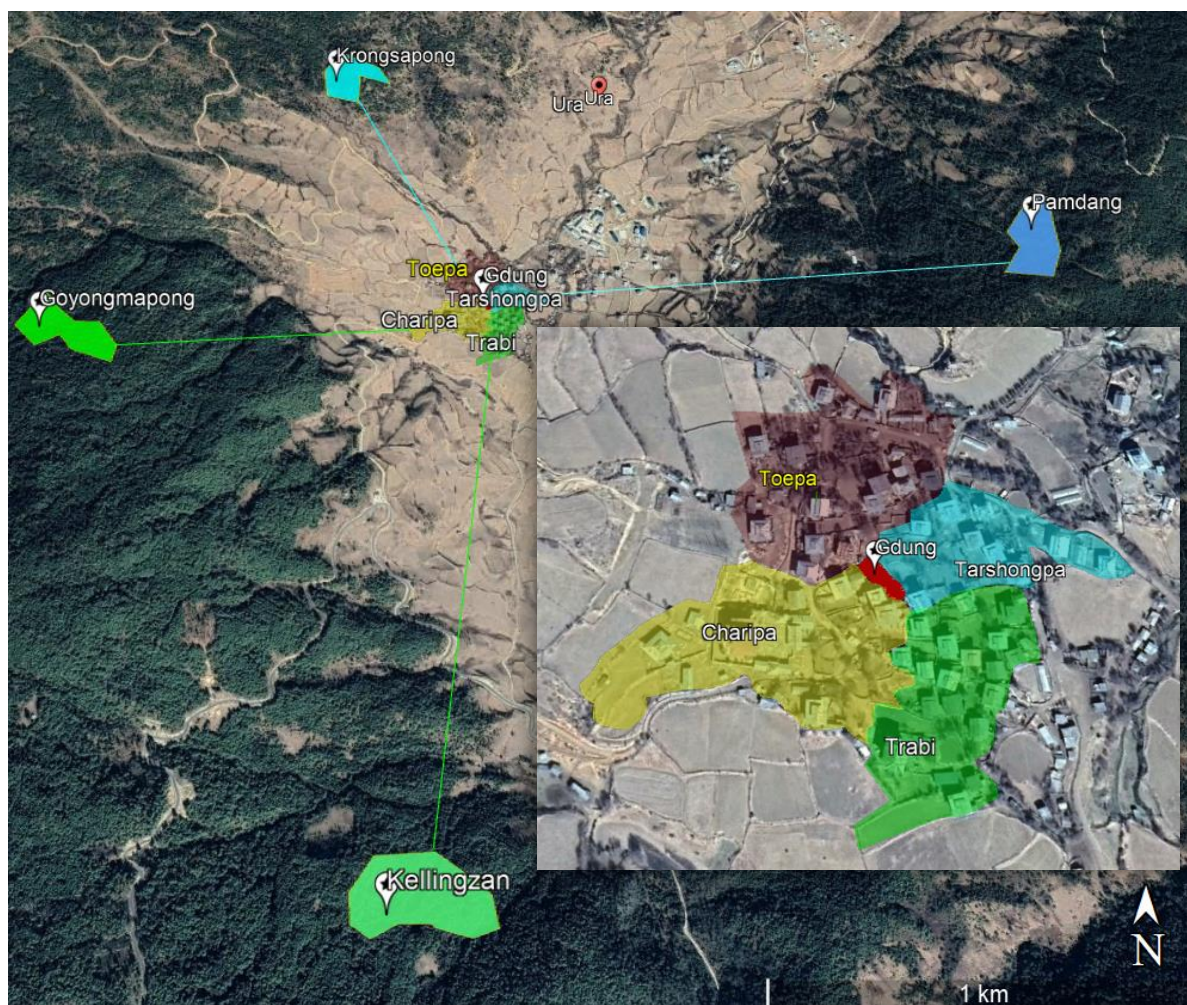
*Figure 5. Ura Dozhi settlement & location of old village ruins marked on Google Earth (accessed April 15, 2023)*

## 1.3 *Ura Dozhi:* Cultural Heritage

Under the *Gdung's* reign, the people from these four sections of the village coexisted peacefully

for generations while following the unique culture and traditions that developed under their

rule. In the thirteenth century, however, *Ura* village was introduced to Tibetan Buddhism[29]

leading to the adoption of various other cultural traditions, deeply influenced by the Buddhist

way of life. Nonetheless, the people of the *Ura* village never abandoned their inherent culture

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[29] Yeshi.

and traditions from the time of the *Gdung's* reign, thereby creating the unique blend of cultural heritage traditions that characterized this village.

## 1.3.1 Unique Governance System

The village developed a special system of governance structured around community power-sharing during the reign of the *Gdungs* and this system is continued proudly by the people to the present day, representing a kind of political heritage in itself. The village maintains a system of appointing sixteen representatives (mostly men),[30] four members, called *Mangmi* from each village section, *Chipoen* (one from each section) and *Taza* (two from each section). While the *Mangmi* oversee the entire village, the *Chipoens* are responsible for their respective section, aided by the *Tazas*. Locals claim that this organization was the first system of power-sharing in the region, spreading from here to other parts of the country. These members play an active role in coordinating community activities throughout the year.[31]

In this system of governance, the responsibilities of sixteen representatives have always been held by men until now[32]. Such a male-centric culture might have arisen due to the nature of the representatives' duties, which involves organizing festivals and community events that require a significant amount of time outside the household activities. The tendency for women to be in charge of the household and the requirements of heavy physical work in the fields have always limited women's roles outside of the house in the past. Further, monastic education, which was most accessible to men, produced a greater number of educated men capable of taking on such village-wide organizational responsibilities compared to illiterate women. However, with the introduction of modern farming methods and a Western education system, this trend is

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[30] Although there is no rule that prohibits women from participation, they always took a back seat in the past as they were responsible for tending to household duties.
[31] Yeshi, "A Brief History of Ura Village | Mandala Collections - Texts."
[32] This is as per the oral story of few of the elder population. It needs to be validated further with other sources.

expected to change as women would be equally capable of undertaking such responsibilities now or in the coming future.
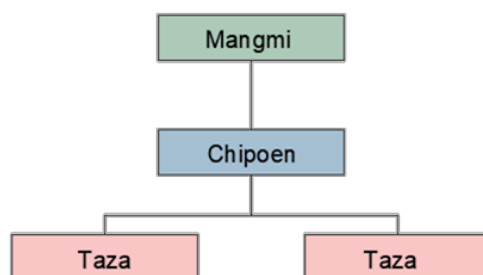


*Figure 6. Structure of power-sharing system-identical for all four sections of village (Illustration by author)*

## 1.3.2 Festivals

The village is known for its exuberant cultural traditions and festivals which are spread across one calendar year, beginning from the first month until the ninth month of the Bhutanese lunar[33] calendar. During festivals, people have a chance to take a break from their daily agricultural work to enjoy and socialize among themselves. These events play a crucial role in bringing people together and keeping the community social connections alive. Most of the festivals in the village have their roots in religious practices and associated belief systems, which were heavily influenced by the introduction of Buddhism in the thirteenth century CE.[34] This is evident from the fact that seven of the nine annual festivals (see the list of the festival below) in *Ura Dozhi* village are associated with Buddhist beliefs. Since Buddhism is widely practiced across the country, such festivals are common across the country and are not particularly special to *Ura Dozhi* village. Unique to this village, however, are the festivals of *Ura Yakchoe* and *Ashi Lhamo*, which, unlike other festivals, have their roots not just in Buddhism but are

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[33] "Bhutanese Calendar, (1900 to 2099)," accessed May 16, 2023, http://www.bhutanesecalendar.com/.
[34] Yeshi, "A Brief History of Ura Village | Mandala Collections - Texts."

associated with people's beliefs in the surrounding natural features and local deities. The following are the lists of festivals that take place annually in *Ura Dozhi* village:

| 1 | First month | : | *Yu-ney* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Second month | : | *Kangjur recitation* |
| 3 | Third month | : | **Ura Yakchoe** |
| 4 | Fourth month | : | *Zhing-dup* |
| 5 | Fifth month | : | *Ten-dha* |
| 6 | Sixth month | : | *Drukpa-tse-zhi*[35] |
| 7 | Seventh month | : | **Ashi Lhamo** |
| 8 | Eighth month | : | *Drupchen* |
| 9 | Ninth Month | : | *Lhabab Duechen*[36] |

Apart from all these festivals, the villagers also participate in an annual mushroom festival organized by the *Ura Gewog* office. *Ura Gewog* office lies on the other side of the settlement.

## 1.3.2.1 The Ura Yakchoe festival

One of the main festivals unique to *Ura Dozhi* is the *Ura Yakchoe* festival celebrated between the 12th and 16th day of the lunar calendar, over a period of five days. Karma Phuntsho in his article "*Yakchoe:* the grand festival of *Ura* village" argues that the name *"Yakchoe"* has two different etymological origins. The first origin is a literal translation of the word *"Yakchoe"* which means the offering to the cattle god, while the second origin is based on the Buddhist influence which translates as a "good offering" to religious masters. Regardless of its origin,

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[35] Haroon Mohsin, "First Sermon of Lord Buddha," National Today, June 29, 2022, https://nationaltoday.com/first-sermon-of-lord-buddha/.
[36] admin, "Lhabab Duchen," *Manjushri Dharma Center* (blog), accessed May 16, 2023, https://manjushridharmacenter.org/event/lhabab-duchen/.

the festival has evolved with a legend influenced by Buddhism.[37] According to this legend, the village was once struck by a leprosy epidemic and the people prayed to God for a cure. As an answer to the prayer, the god came disguised as a man and gifted a statue of *Vajrapani*[38] to an elderly woman. Upon the advice of the village priest, the statue was taken to the *Gaden* temple in a nearby village. It is said that when the statue arrived at the *Gaden* temple, a nine-headed serpent rose from the center of the village and made its way downstream, curing people from the epidemic (in Buddhism, it is believed that the leprosy is caused by the serpent world and a *Vajrapani* statue is the best antidote against the serpent world).[39] Since then, the *Yakchoe* festival was initiated not only to thank the god for curing them of disease but also to protect them from similar misfortune in the future, thereby promoting the emotional well-being of local people apart from their social well-being.

The festival begins with inviting the *Vajrapani* statue from *Gaden* temple to the *Ura Dozhi* temple followed by rituals, ceremonies, and dances which last for five days. The festival ends with the priest moving around the village carrying the statue and blessing each household in *Ura Dozhi.* The statue is finally left in the house, believed to be the dwelling of the elderly woman to whom the statue was first gifted. After three days, the statue is then returned to *Gaden* temple (see Figure 8 for the route of the statue during the festival).[40]

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[37] Karma Phuntsho, "Yakchod: The Grand Festival of Ura Village," in *Splendours of Our Culture: Festivals of Bumthang Dzongkhag*, ed. Yonten Dargye and National Library (Bhutan) (Thimphu: Research & Media Division, National Library & Archives of Bhutan, 2018), 208–20.
[38] "Vajrapani — Buddha World," accessed May 16, 2023, http://www.tamqui.com/buddhaworld/Vajrapani.
[39] Phuntsho, "Yakchod: The Grand Festival of Ura Village," 208–20.
[40] Phuntsho, "Yakchod: The Grand Festival of Ura Village."

*Figure 7. Left- Procession scene of inviting Vajrapani statue during Ura Yakchoe festival. Source: Bhutan Rebirth Tours and Treks (accessed May 13, 2023)*
*Right- Yakchoe celebration on the courtyard of village temple. Source: PhotoHound (accessed May 13, 2023)*



*Figure 8. Gaden temple and processional route of statue marked on Google Earth (accessed April 15, 2023)*

The festival is managed by the four appointed *Mangmi* from the village assisted by four *Chipoens* and eight *Tazas.* The preparation begins a month in advance when the *Chipoens* and *Tazas* collect cereals from the households for brewing alcohol. Both men and women practice and rehearse dances. A day before the festival, *Chipoen* and *Taza* collect contributions (mainly

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dairy products) from their respective section of the village and store them in their designated storage room (see Figure 9). Each door is designated for a particular village segment.



*Figure 9.  Storeroom dedicated to the four sections of village (Picture by author)*

To ensure the smooth organization of the festival, responsibility is equally divided among the people, with elders taking on responsibilities such as store managers, disciplinarians, cooks, and as hosts for guests while the younger men and women are responsible for serving the guests and people from the community.[41]

## 1.3.2.2 The Ashi Lhamo festival

The *Ashi Lhamo* is another festival that is unique to this village. It has a similar origin legend behind it like *Ura Yakchoe's* story. According to oral tradition, it is said that the village was infected with an outbreak of a disease (like cholera) caused by the displeasure of the local mountain deity called *"Ashi Lhamo"* who resides on the nearby mountain called *"Phursheyla"*.[42] The ladies of the village appeased the deity by making food offering and songs with lyrics containing words of praise for the goddess. It is believed that the village was able to recover from the disease in this way. Offerings to the deity have been continued on an annual

[41] Phuntsho, 208–20.
[42] "Phursheyla," accessed May 15, 2023, https://places.kmaps.virginia.edu/features/69906#ixzz4envfAsik.

basis since that time. Unlike the *Ura Yakchoe* festival, where most of the responsibilities are carried out by men, the men have no role to play in this festival besides drinking alcohol prepared by the ladies. The ladies of the village start preparing for the festival a month ahead by collecting cereals from each household for brewing alcohol and they start fermenting the grains in the houses chosen to act as the host dwelling.[43]

On the 8th day of the 7th month of the traditional Bhutanese lunar calendar, the ladies embark on their journey towards the *Phursheyla* mountain to make an offering to *Ashi Lhamo.* The ladies sing the song *"Temo la jon"* meaning 'come to witness the performance' as they climb up the mountain, inviting all the local deities to feast on the food they bring with them and witness their dance on the top of *Phursheyla.* Upon reaching the mountain top, they make an offering and perform the *Ashi Lhamo* dance around the main spot (see Figure 10).[44] The ladies then return to the *Ura* temple, where they sing and perform dances for the people. Day one ends with ladies gathering at the host house and serving alcohol and tea to the men of the community. On the second day, the ladies go to appease another local deity *"Ratpai Tashipelzang"* who resides on *Ratpaila,* a mountain located to the southwest of the village. Day two follows a similar traditional ritual of making offerings and with ladies from the village singing to appease the deity with their final performance taking place inside the village temple. Once again, men are served alcohol towards the evening when the dances are over.[45]

The festival signifies the traditional Bhutanese faith that regards nature as a vibrant world inhabited by supernatural beings and illustrates the harmonious coexistence of people and the environment over many centuries.[46]

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[43] Karma Phuntsho, "Sang: A Women's Ceremony in Ura," accessed May 1, 2023, https://texts.mandala.library.virginia.edu/book_pubreader/40871.
[44] Circular spot formed on the hill due to the movement of women dancers.
[45] Karma Phuntsho, "Loden Foundation," accessed May 1, 2023, https://www.facebook.com/lodenfoundation/posts/pfbid0AEpTY9VgH7gmGh17ynnD8aPeJLzcaEeTsvfCJEY6 aivqXqKW33LbhburLCqe7apml.
[46] Phuntsho, "Sang: A Women's Ceremony in Ura."

*Figure 10. Ladies making offerings and performing dances at the prescribed spot on the top of Phursheyla mountain. Source: Bhutan Culture Atlas (accessed March 5, 2023)*



*Figure 11. Processional route for the ladies during Ashi lhamo to Phursheyla and Ratpaila mountains marked on Google Earth (accessed April 15, 2023)*

## 1.3.2.3 Ura valley mushroom festival

Ura Valley is known to have a favorable environment that allows Matsutake[47] mushrooms to grow in abundance in the forest. Due to its rarity in the world and the high demand for this

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[47] Matsutake mushroom is locally known as *Sangay Shamu.* It still cannot be grown as a crop, so the farmers have to trek into the forest to harvest it.

mushroom species, its market price can go as high as $1,000 per kilogram.[48] However, because of the high demand and consequent issues of over-harvesting, the mushrooms are becoming rarer. Therefore, to raise awareness of its sustainable harvesting and to assist the farmers to market their harvested mushrooms more easily by bringing buyers right into the village, the Tourism Council of Bhutan initiated the festival in 2008.[49] The *Ura Gewog* organizes the festival annually in the month of August at the *Gewog* office. They also organize mushroom-picking events that welcome both tourists and local visitors. During these events, participants are taught how to identify and carefully pick edible mushrooms[50] from the wild, an important part of the local cuisine. The freshly collected mushrooms are then cooked and enjoyed together, creating a communal experience that connects people with nature and traditional food practices. Such events provide opportunities for local people to showcase a variety of traditional mushroom dishes. With these events, visitors not only get to experience the natural beauty of the area but also gain a deeper understanding of the local culture and way of life. Apart from this, the locals also engage visitors in traditional songs and dance performances.[51]



*Figure 12. Left: Display of mushroom varieties from Ura valley. Source: Bhutan Broadcasting Service (accessed May 1, 2023); Right: Matsutake mushroom. Source: World Tour Plan (accessed May 1, 2023)*

[48] Olivia Austin, "Sangay Shamu, the Prized Matsutake Mushrooms of Bhutan," *Flagship Luxury Expeditions* (blog), February 10, 2021, https://flagshipluxuryexpeditions.com/sangay-shamu-the-prized-mushrooms-of-bhutan/.
[49] "Ura Matsutake Mushroom Festival - 2020," BookMyTour, accessed May 16, 2023, https://www.bookmytour.bt/bhutan-events/ura-matsutake-mushroom-festival.
[50] There are several species of mushrooms in the forest of Bhutan and a good knowledge on identifying the edible from non-edible mushroom is a must.
[51] "Bhutan Is Home to One of the Most Expensive Mushrooms in the World," accessed May 16, 2023, http://www.dailybhutan.com/article/bhutan-is-home-to-one-of-the-most-expensive-mushrooms-in-the-world; "Ura Matsutake Mushroom Festival - 2020."

*Figure 13.  Mushroom festival site marked on Google Earth (accessed April 16, 2023)*

## 1.3.2.4 Other annual festivals

In addition to the well-known *Ura Yakchoe*, *Ashi Lhamo*, and the more recent Mushroom festivals, the *Ura Dozhi* people enjoy a vibrant cultural life with a variety of other Buddhist festivals throughout the year. The traditional Bhutanese lunar calendar is filled with significant celebrations, including *Yu-ney* in the first month, *Kanjur* recitation in the second, *Zhingdup* in the fourth, *Tendha* in the fifth, *Duptsezhi* in the sixth, *Drupchen* in the eighth, and *Lhabab Duechen* in the ninth month. While these festivals may have less elaborate celebrations than the more popular ones, they offer opportunities for the community to come together and interact with each other, free from the pressures of hosting guests or accommodating outside visitors.

## 1.3.2.5 Challenges related to festivals

Despite their cultural significance, the survival of the *Ura Dozhi's* festivals, except for the mushroom festival, is threatened by the challenges of modernization and rural-urban migration. Karma Phuntsho (2018) notes that two-thirds of the village's population, mainly the younger generation, have migrated to urban areas, leading to a shortage of person power to organize and participate in these festivals. This shortage has resulted in a decrease in community solidarity and voluntarism, with the villagers now having to pay modest fees to dancers during

the festival. Moreover, the increased reliance on imported food ingredients for festivals has added to the financial burden on the community.[52] Therefore, to ensure the survival and continuity of these festivals, it is important to revive the village by incorporating modern change and opportunities while making it into a sustainable and vibrant community through a greater self-reliance on homegrown food.

## 1.3.3 Architecture and settlement pattern[53]

The traditional architecture of *Ura Dozhi* village is characterized by two- or three-story tall buildings constructed with locally available materials such as stone, mud and timber. The ground floors, composed of more walls with limited openings (used for the kitchen and storage purposes) and upper floors composed of more openings and fewer walls (used as living rooms and bedrooms), are typical features of the traditional buildings found in the village (see Figure 14). Although the general design and function of buildings have not changed significantly, the use of modern building materials is now found in most of the renovation or extension works taking place in the village (see Figure 17).

The buildings follow a traditional gable roofing system of two-sided roofs with a raised upper roof. However, over the last few decades, the village has witnessed the use of different roofing systems in a few of the newer houses, that is, the four-sided roofing system. The construction of the temple with a four-sided roof might have influenced this design as we see those houses with four-sided roofs mostly concentrated in the vicinity of the temple. Traditionally, the choice of roofing material was also influenced by the availability of a local raw material - timber. The timber from a particular kind of wood that can be easily split into shingles was traditionally the main roofing material. This kind of roofing required frequent replacement, posing huge

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[52] Phuntsho, "Yakchod: The Grand Festival of Ura Village."
[53] The architecture and settlement pattern of the village is discussed in chapter two in more detail.

environmental pressures on nearby forests. Today, most houses have replaced their timber roofing with corrugated iron sheets, although some households still use timber due to financial constraints. While this iron roofing provides a solution in terms of reducing the human impact on the surrounding forest areas, it badly compromises the aesthetics of the houses.



*Figure 14. House with fewer openings and more walls on lower levels, and fewer walls and more openings on upper levels (Picture by author)*



*Figure 15. Left: Typical two-storied houses; Right: Typical three-storied houses (Picture by author)*



*Figure 16. Left: Four-sided iron roof; Right: Two-sided timber roof (Picture by author)*

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*Figure 17. Use of modern materials (cement and bricks) in renovation or extensions (Picture by author)*

The village's settlement pattern is characterized by the concentration of buildings towards the center, leaving more open areas for agricultural cultivation. The houses, despite appearing crowded from a distance, maintain adequate setbacks with respect to neighboring houses, ensuring privacy for each household enclosed within a boundary wall constructed with a stone base with firewood stacked on it. This boundary wall runs along the edge of the plots, which in turn defines the internal network of footpaths connecting all the households.[54] These walls serve the dual purpose of marking the internal footpath network and keeping animals from entering the courtyards or coming within the settlement cluster. As a result, the entry ways to the houses are either raised or fitted with gates. Moreover, the internal footpath system within the settlement cluster remains undisturbed by the construction of an access road as this road runs along the periphery of the main settlement. The internal footpath system is strictly limited to human use, while the access road is shared by both cars and cattle.



*Figure 18. Left: Access Road; Right: Internal footpath network with boundary wall (Picture by author)*

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[54] In some cases, these types of boundary walls have been replaced with fencing made of timber poles and iron wires or wooden planks.

*Figure 19. Left: Gate at the entry; Right: Raised entry to the house with boundary wall (Picture by author)*

## 1.3.4 The Old Route

Due to its central location geographically within Bhutan, the valley has served as a gateway between east and west for centuries. The old trade route passes right through the village, marked by long-walled stupas[55] and landmarks reflecting generations of human movement (see Figure 21). However, the construction of the National Highway in 1960 rendered this route obsolete, and today it stands as a testament to the village's historical role as a major trade route. Perhaps the presence of a settlement along this trade route, combined with a landscape conducive to agriculture, contributed to the development of this village. Recently, the Trans Bhutan Trail is developing plans to revive this old route for hikers and trekkers. [56]

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[55] Long-walled stupas (*Mani Dangrim*) are mostly found along the passes or routes across Bhutan. Read "Mani Dangrim: Their forms and functions" by Karma Phuntsho for detailed background on it (https://texts.mandala.library.virginia.edu/text/mani-dangrim-their-forms-and-functions)
[56] "Tans Bhutan Trail," Trans-Bhutan Trail, accessed May 16, 2023, https://www.transbhutantrail.com/.
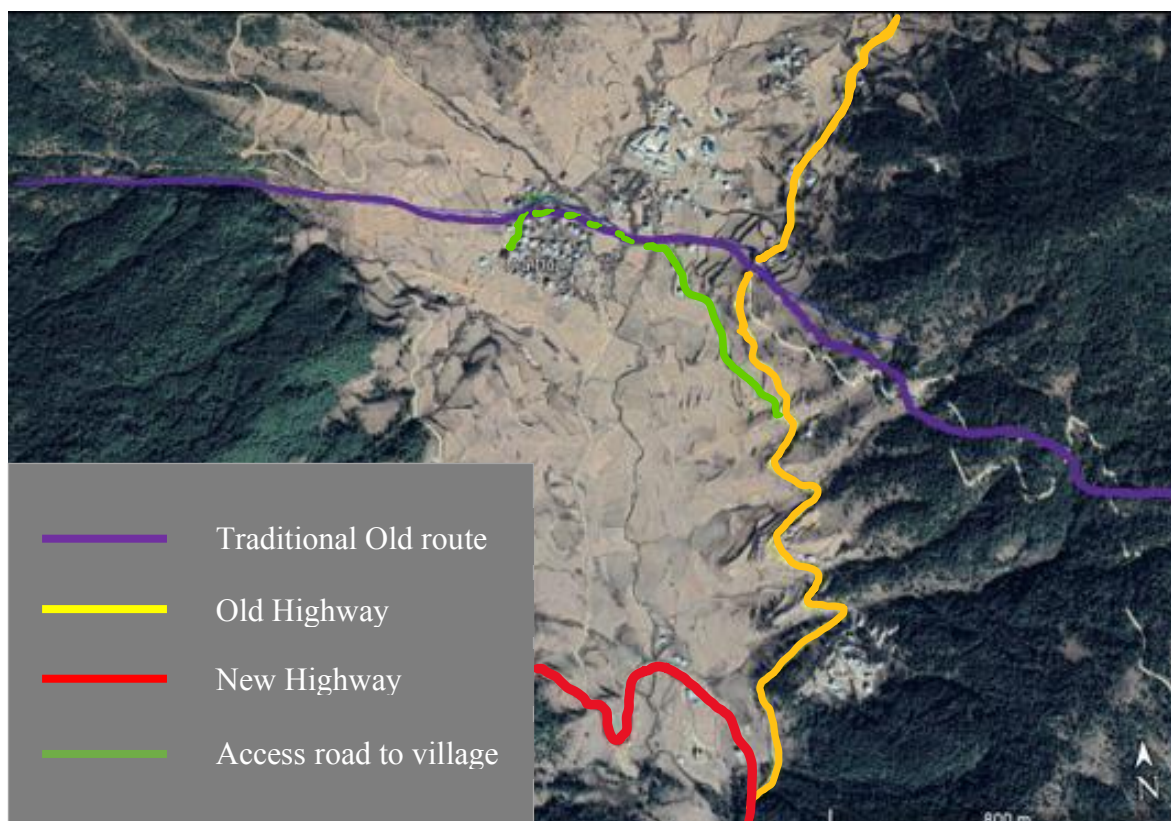
*Figure 20. Old route, Modern Road (old and new highway) and village access road marked on Google Earth (accessed May 12, 2023)*



*Figure 21. Long-walled stupa along the old route (Picture by author)*

## 1.3.5 Other cultural features

Apart from these tangible pieces of cultural heritages, the village has several other cultural features that play a crucial role in the social life of people and show the close interrelationship between the people of this village and nature. Firstly, belief in the existence of *Naga* represents the respect of the people for the non-human occupancy of the landscape and their harmonious co-existence with it. *Nagas*, alluring beings depicted as part human and part serpent, dwell in

rivers, lakes, and oceans, and they possess the ability to assist both humans and deities.[57] Such a location occupied by *Naga*[58] is considered sacred and it becomes a place of worship and offering for the local people. Secondly, the view of several stupas[59] within the village landscape is evidence of the people's respect for Buddhism and its influence on their everyday life. It reminds people in between their busy daily work of the importance of practicing Buddhism and are a monument to the people's reverence for their religion. Lastly, the series of water mills along the stream, which flows through the valley, symbolizes the ability of the people to harness the forces of nature while living in harmony with it. These water mills are still used and are a crucial component of the village's cultural heritage.



*Figure 22. Left: Naga; Center: Stupa; Right: Water Mill (Picture by author)*



*Figure 23. Location of water mills along the stream marked on Google Earth (accessed May 16, 2023)*

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[57] "What Is Naga, Definition from Yogapedia," Yogapedia.com, accessed May 16, 2023, http://www.yogapedia.com/definition/8563/naga.

[58] "Naga | Hindu Mythology | Britannica," accessed February 8, 2023, https://www.britannica.com/topic/naga-Hindu-mythology.

[59] Dorji Phuntsho, "Buddhist Stupas and Their Symbols in Vajrayana Buddhism in Bhutan," n.d., accessed May 16, 2023.

## 1.4 The National Highway and its potential social impacts

Due to its central location, the valley has long served as the main trade route between east and west Bhutan for centuries. The old national highway (see Figure 20- yellow line in the map) passes along the eastern border of the village while the new highway passes along the western border of the village,[60] giving travelers a perfect view of the settlement. The national highway has had both positive and negative impacts on the village. On one hand, the highway enabled them to earn additional income as they are now able to market their agricultural produce to other parts of the country. This increased mobility brought in new ideas and products which made their lives much easier and more comfortable. However, on the other hand, the trend of rural-urban migration increased significantly, draining much of the younger population out and leaving the village in the hands of an elderly population who may be the last generation to carry on the culture and traditions of the community. This rural-urban out-migration, if allowed to continue, could result in the complete loss of cultural continuity, which in turn will lead to loss of much of the village's cultural heritage traditions. The only way to revive this village through maintaining some kind of cultural continuity would be to create better economic opportunities, to be discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

## 1.5 *Ura Dozhi:* Agriculture and livestock

The residents of *Bumthang* historically relied on swidden farming, a form of rotation agriculture, to cultivate grains and cereals, supplemented by livestock products.[61] However, according to Sangay Wangchuk and Stephen F. Siebert (2013), the region's rural livelihood underwent significant changes in the last quarter of the twentieth century, with a shift from

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[60] "Transport in Bhutan," in *Wikipedia*, accessed May 16, 2023, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Transport_in_Bhutan&oldid=1061878160.

[61] Sangay Wangchuk and Stephen F. Siebert, "Agricultural Change in Bumthang, Bhutan : Market Opportunities, Government Policies, and Climate Change," *Society & Natural Resources* 26, no. 12 (December 2013): 1375–89, https://doi.org/10.1080/08941920.2013.789575.

subsistence farming to cash crop cultivation. The authors argue that this shift was due to government's policy of banning swidden farming, which limited the area of cultivation to their privately owned lands. Further, with potatoes gaining popularity as a cash crop in international markets, now made accessible through the construction of the motor road, the crop production system was significantly impacted. The prevailing practice became "potato in rotation with wheat, barley, buckwheat, or vegetables," and subsistence farming was no longer common, leading to increased reliance on imported cereals.[62] Such a shift is clear in *Ura Dozhi* village where potato is the main cash crop for the people.[63] Although recently the local people of *Ura* found an alternative source of income from selling Matsutake mushrooms, the potato remains their only consistent source of revenue.

Apart from the shift in agricultural practice, the system of animal keeping has also changed in *Ura Dozhi* village. For instance, people no longer send their cattle to pasture as they must remain in the village, guarding their potato fields from the ravages of wild boars and deer. Additionally, the government has introduced new cattle breeds from India[64] with the aim of enhancing livestock production. People in the village now prefer to keep a smaller number of these more productive cattle breeds for their dairy products, resulting in a significant reduction in the overall cattle population in the *Gewog* (now 13.11 cattle per household).[65] This initiative has been well-received by the community, as it allows for similar or more production of dairy products with less effort.

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[62] W Roder, K Nidup, and S Wangdi, "Marketing Bhutanese Potato – Experiences, Challenges and Opportunities," no. 4 (n.d.): 72.

[63] Wheat, barley and buckwheat are produced mainly for personal consumption only.

[64] Sonam Tashi, Ugyen Yangchen, and Dhan Bdr Gurung, "Case Studies of Successful Farmers, Agri-Enterprises and Farmers' Groups and Cooperatives in Bhutan," *Center for Sustainable Mountain Agriculture, College of Natural Resources, Royal University of Bhutan*, 2022, 82.

[65] Department of Forests Ministry of Agriculture, Royal Government of Bhutan Ura, Bumthang, "Thrumshingla National Park Management Plan (July 2008 - June 2013)" (Department of Forests), accessed November 6, 2022, file:///D:/MA%20works/Thesis/Urafile/Thrumshingla%20National%20Park%20Plan%20of%20Management%20FINAL%20for%20PDF%2019th%20August.pdf.

## 1.6 Chapter summary

*Ura Dozhi* village is one of the few rural villages left in the country with distinctive culture and traditions, both tangible and intangible. The historical influence of the *Gdungs* rule has shaped the settlement pattern of the village, leading to a nucleated pattern with uniform buildings connected by a well-defined network of footpaths. However, the impact of modernization has left the continuity of the village's cultural heritage at risk, with a significant number of people leaving the village. The only time for the people who have left the village to reconnect with the village is during the important festivals such *Ura Yakchoe, Ashi Lhamo* and the Mushroom festival, during which many of them return to participate, resulting in an automatic transmission and continuity of culture. Moreover, the village has also experienced changes in agricultural production systems, leading to a shift towards cash crops and increased reliance on imported food items. In order to sustain cultural continuity within the community and to improve food self-sufficiency through reviving the traditional agricultural practice system, it is crucial not only to impede the exodus of the villagers but also to encourage the return of those who have already left.

As a first basic step, it was necessary to have a comprehensive understanding of all the tangible aspects of the village such as buildings, architectural styles, development patterns, construction materials etc., before preparing any plans for encouraging people not to leave or return to the village. To achieve this goal, a detailed survey and analysis of the settlement will be discussed in the following chapter.

# Chapter 2- Exploring settlement structure: A survey and data analysis

Although *Ura Dozhi* village originally developed around the fortress of *Ura Gdung* as per oral traditions and historical sources, the village underwent continuous expansion over time resulting in the appearance of distinct architectural styles, materials and construction techniques, as well as settlement patterns based on various factors. To gain a comprehensive understanding of all these tangible aspects of the village, in this chapter, I will provide a detailed survey of the settlement, including all the natural and cultural elements associated with it. This survey data will be analyzed to understand the building typology and trends in architectural style currently in use. Finally, the analysis results will be discussed.

## 2.1 Understanding settlement morphology

Rural settlements in Bhutan primarily grew around the temple, monastic complexes, or the manor houses of powerful influential people such as *Gdungs,* and these structures were situated in the most prominent locations in the village, with traditional homes built beneath them, reflecting the reverence for these structures and the power they held.[66] As seen in chapter one, as per oral tradition, *Ura Dozhi* also developed in a similar way around the fortress of *Ura Gdung.* The village retained this settlement pattern over time and remained unaffected by modernization despite the disappearance of the *Gdungs* influence. However, this claim is speculative and to understand the settlement in its current state, it was crucial to understand the present-day settlement morphology.

[66] Ministry of Work & Human Settlement, "National Human Settlement Policy 2019," 4–6, accessed February 16, 2023,
https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/default/files/National%20Human%20Settlement%20Policy%20of%20Bhutan%202019.pdf.

The study of settlement morphology is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between individual houses and other cultural and natural features within the village. The village can be characterized as a clustered settlement that gradually expanded across the valley. Despite the historical significance of the *Gdungs* fortress located at the center of the village, as described in chapter one, the current orientation of houses does not seem to reflect any correlation with the fortress' believed location, except for a single house that faces toward where it was supposed to have stood. Instead, the houses face towards the valley below or the temple above, likely influenced by the natural topography of the site, the post-fortress establishment of the village temple, and the construction of the old east-west highway. It is believed that this shift in building orientation occurred over the last five or six decades when almost all houses in the village were reconstructed. However, due to a lack of written records or even oral tradition, it is unclear if the architectural design of the houses was maintained during this reconstruction. In addition, people in the village are not aware of the exact construction year of their own houses except for the newer ones. When asked, residents of the village typically provided information about the age of their houses in comparison to the age of other houses, as they primarily recall the sequence of construction, data which requires further verification. Thus, the age of the individual buildings studied in this research should be validated in more detail later.

A significant factor that has influenced the current morphology of the settlement is the shift in the system of cattle raising. With the advent of modernization and a decrease in the number of cattle (as previously discussed in chapter one), cattle were removed from the ground floor of homes[67] and relocated to separate sheds on the outskirts of the settlement, mostly near the

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[67] In the past, domestic animals were kept at the ground floor of the residential houses while the people occupied the upper floors.

stream. This restricted cattle access within the main settlement cluster,[68] not only helped to maintain cleanliness but also created additional space for agricultural production. In some instances, these newly vacated spaces were utilized to construct greenhouses, providing a steady supply of vegetables even during the colder seasons.
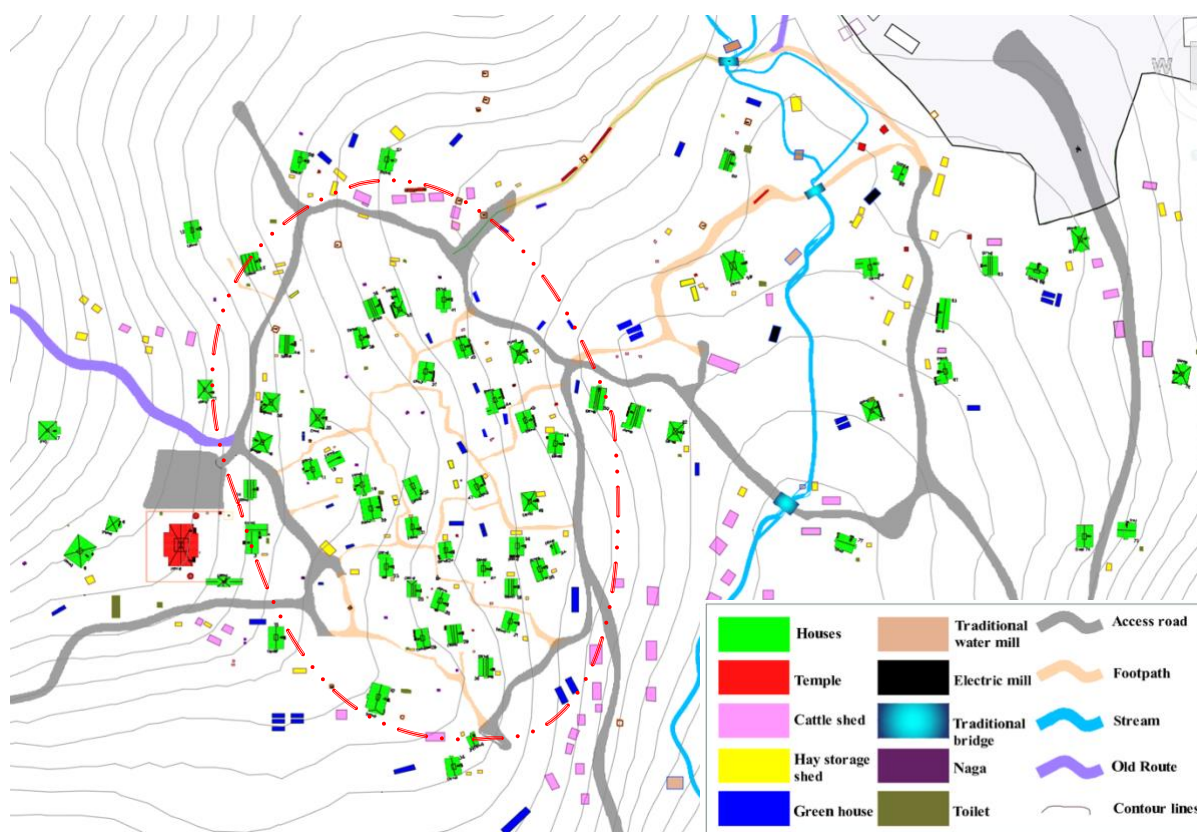


*Figure 24.  Ura Dozhi map with main settlement cluster marked in red (Map by author)*

## 2.2 Survey and analysis

A detailed field survey of the village was conducted for the purpose of this thesis, to understand the existing settlement structure and houses, and to determine the patterns of development and expansion. Data on land plot details and contour were obtained from the National Land Commission. However, the contour map, extracted from the overall map of the country,[69] could

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[68] For the purpose of this thesis, the settlement cluster of the village bordered by farm road is considered to be the main settlement cluster (see Figure 24)

[69] The contour map obtained from the National Land Commission represents the contour map for whole country with large intervals.

not be used directly because the interval size was too large (100 m) for the small area of the village. To obtain finer contours, the map was interpolated with Google Maps' 3D imagery to produce a smaller contour interval (10 m). During the survey, all the built structures[70] such as the temple, plot remains of the *Gdung's* fortress, and individual houses were marked on the map together with their dimensions, orientation, direction of the main entrance door, staircase, direction of the main facade, location in relation to other houses, and any ancillary buildings such as cattle sheds, hay storage, toilets, and greenhouses in its vicinity. Further, the different architectural elements such as roofing style, window type, and number of floors were also noted for each of the built structures. Additionally, other natural and cultural features within the settlement such as streams, old routes, road networks, water mills, internal streets, stupas, bridges, and institutional areas (village school) were also marked and located. The survey was accompanied by detailed photographic documentation, which included photographs of all four facades of the individual building and a 360-degree view of the surrounding landscape, as well as an overall bird's-eye view of the entire settlement.

## 2.2.1 Housing typology
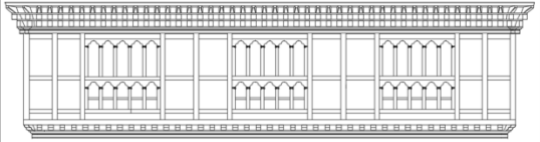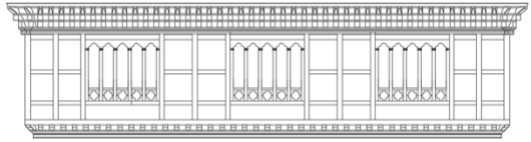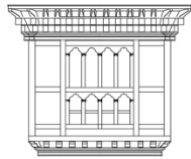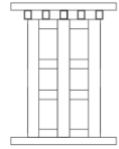
Although all the buildings in *Ura Dozhi* village have undergone total reconstruction within the last few decades, the buildings retained their traditional architecture and setting within the village. There are currently seventy-four houses in the village, mostly concentrated in the main settlement and partly scattered across the other side of the valley. The houses in the settlement have slightly different architectural features based on the location, usage, and time of their construction indicating the influence of external ideas and human migration. To understand the various building types within the settlement, a housing typology was constructed. This typology incorporates the most distinctive architectural features of individual buildings such

CEU eTD Collection

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[70] The survey encompasses 74 built structures that span across the valley.

as roofing style and window types, distinguishing buildings through a chronology of their architectural development and influence in the village. However, there remain a few houses that do not fit into this categorization and are grouped into the exceptional building category.

## 2.2.2 Definition of architectural elements

To better understand the different architectural elements described in the typology construction, the following architectural terms from the Bhutanese Architectural Guideline will be used to describe different features of architectural elements.[71]

| *Rabsel* | timber frame with multiple windows and panels that cantilevers from the wall. | |
|---|---|---|
| *Rabsel Gocham-thognyim* | double-tiered window with panels on either side, covering whole of the upper facade of the building and extending towards the right and left facade. | |
| *Rabsel Gocham* | single-tiered window with panels on either side, covering whole of the upper facade of the building and extending towards the right and left facade. | |
| *Lobur Rabsel* | double-tiered window with panels on either side and covers a segment of the wall facade. | |
| *Geykar payab* | narrow window with most basic design (simple plain rectangular timber frame). | |

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[71] Ministry of Work & Human Settlement, "Bhutanese Architecture Guidelines," 2014, 225.
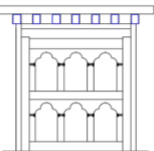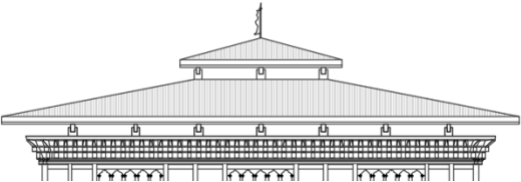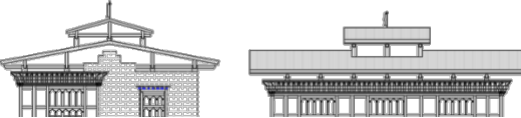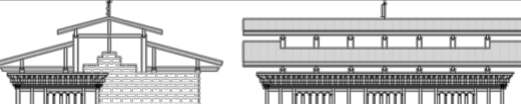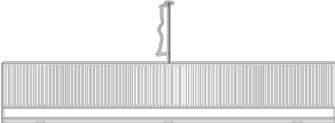
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Boego payab* | single-tiered window with all the details of traditional architectural elements complete. | |
| *Horgo payab* | double-tiered window with all the details of traditional architectural features complete. | |
| *Jabzhi* roof | square hipped roof sloping in all four directions. It can be one-layered or multi-layered to form a pagoda style roof. | |
| *Jamtho* roof | small gable roof laid over a longer gable roof in layers, one over the other. | |
| *Drangim* roof | gable roof of the same length laid over a lower gable roof. | |
| *Gungdhar* | white flag with blue, yellow, and red stripes erected on top of the roof. | |
| *Thama* painting | simple painting- red, black, and white. | |
| *Dring* painting | elaborate colorful painting. | |

*Table 1. Lists of architectural terms and their definition along with typical representations of each (Illustration by author)*

## 2.2.3 Type 1: *Jamtho* roofed houses with a standard window opening at ground floor level (both *Boego payab* and *Horgo payab*)

The typical feature of the first type is a combination of *Jamtho* style of roofing with standard windows (both *Boego payab* and *Horgo payab*) openings at the ground floor level. This type is the most common building type, represented by thirty-three houses, located mainly in the

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main settlement with a few examples scattered across the other side of the valley. These houses possess a rectangular plan with dimensions ranging from 6 x 8 meters to 10 x 12 meters (length X width).

This type can be further divided into two sub-types based on the number of floors. Eight houses belong to the first three-story sub-type, with the ground floor classified as a half-basement (as only part of the space towards the front is usable). The ground floor is partly exposed on the sides, and fully exposed on the front facade. This is because these houses are built on steeper terrain and their construction respects the natural slope. The second sub-type, which constitutes the majority of the first type, comprises twenty-five two-story houses, constructed on relatively flatter ground (manually leveled in a few cases) unlike the first sub-type, thus maintaining a uniform exposure on all four facades.

Most of the houses in this type retain their original rectangular plan, except for eight houses that underwent later extensions on either side of the shorter facade facing either the north or south. The houses of this type are primarily used for domestic purposes, except for house number 12,[72] which doubles as a homestay[73] for guests (with a few rooms converted into guestrooms for their accommodation). In terms of roofing materials, only three houses retain their traditional timber shingle roofing style, while the remaining houses have replaced them with corrugated iron sheets.

This style of building is one of the oldest in the village and it is still practiced to this day. The oldest house in this category is forty-five years old while the most recent is just one year old.

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[72] Please refer to appendix for detail description of the individual housing typology.
[73] Accommodation facility in which a local family offers lodging facilities to travelers in their own home, often located in rural areas or beyond city limits.
Tourism Council of Bhutan, "Guideline for the Registration of Village Homestays 2019," 2, accessed October 23, 2022,
https://www.tourism.gov.bt/uploads/attachment_files/tcb_gjDE_REVISED%20VHS%20GUIDELINE.pdf.
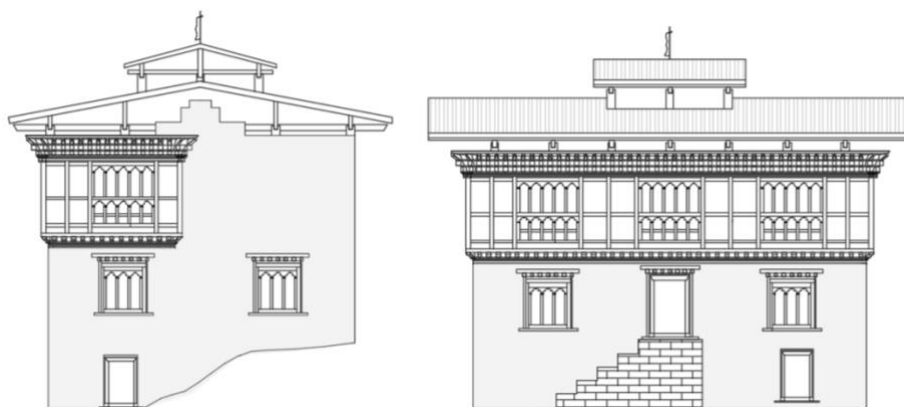
*Figure 25. Sub-type 1-three-storied house- Left: side elevation; Right: Front Elevation (Drawing by author)*



*Figure 26. Sub-type 2-two-storied house- Left: side elevation; Right: Front Elevation (Drawing by author)*

## 2.2.4 Type 2: *Jamtho* roofed house with a basic window opening at ground floor level (*Geykar payab*)

The typical features of the second type comprise a *Jamtho* style roof with a basic window (*Geykar payab*) opening on the ground floor level. This type, represented by only four houses, is primarily located in the southeastern corner of the main settlement. The houses have a rectangular plan with dimensions ranging from 7 x 8 meters to 10 x 16 meters (length X width).

This type is further divided into two sub-types based on the number of floors. The first subtype is a three-story building, represented by one house in the village. Unlike the first sub-type of the first type, this house is built on flat ground, with a fully usable ground floor. The second sub-type comprises the two-story houses, which constitute the majority of the second type, with

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three houses. These houses are constructed on relatively flat ground (with manual leveling in some cases), resulting in uniform floor levels on all four facades.

Most of the houses in this group are primarily used for residential purposes, except for one house, which now serves as a homestay for guests. Two of the houses in this group have undergone later extensions, either on the sides or the rear facade, while the remaining two houses retain their original rectangular shape without extensions. All the houses in this group have replaced their traditional timber shingle roofing with iron sheets.

Although this style of construction, like type one, is one of the oldest styles used in the village (with the age of the houses ranging from 20 to 35 years), such construction is no longer practiced in recent years.



*Figure 27. Sub-type 1-three-storied house- Left: side elevation; Right: Front Elevation (Drawing by author)*



*Figure 28. Sub-type 2-two-storied house- Left: side elevation; Right: Front Elevation (Drawing by author)*

## 2.2.5 Type 3: *Drangim* roofed house with a basic window opening at ground floor level (*Geykar payab*)

The defining characteristic of the third type combines a *Drangim* style of roofing with a basic window (*Geykar payab*) opening at the ground floor level. This type, represented by seven houses, is primarily found in the northern and southern corners of the main settlement. These houses have a rectangular plan with dimensions ranging from 7 x 9 meters to 8 x 10 meters (length X width).

Like earlier types, this type is also divided into two sub-types based on the number of floors. The first subtype includes three three-storied houses, with a half-basement on the ground floor due to the natural ground slope, like the first sub-type of type one. The second sub-type includes four two-storied houses, which are constructed on relatively flat ground, resulting in uniform floor levels on all four facades.

Most of the houses in this group are primarily used as residential dwellings, except for house 13, which doubles as a homestay for guests. The houses in this group retain their original rectangular plan without any later additions. In terms of roofing material, most of the houses still feature traditional timber roofing, although two houses have been updated with iron sheet roofing.

Although this style of construction is one of the oldest in the village, with the age of the houses ranging from 30 to 47 years, such construction is no longer practiced in recent years.
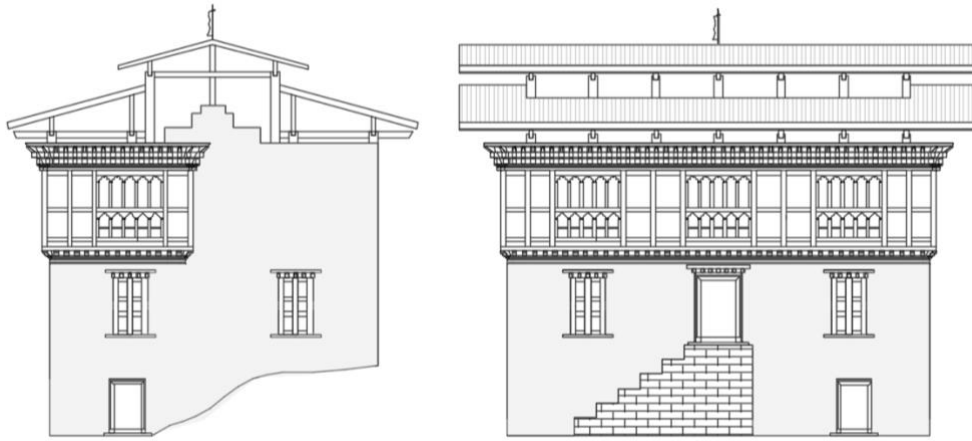
*Figure 29. Sub-type 1-three-storied house- Left: side elevation; Right: Front Elevation (Drawing by author)*
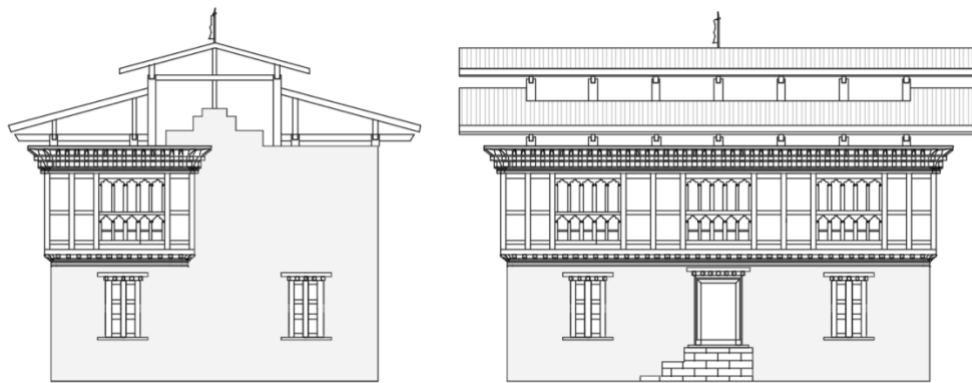


*Figure 30. Sub-type 2-two-storied house- Left: side elevation; Right: Front Elevation (Drawing by author)*

## 2.2.6 Type 4: *Drangim* roofed house with a standard window opening at ground floor level (both *Boego payab* and *Horgo payab*)

The typical feature of the fourth type constitutes a combination of a *Drangim* style of roofing with standard windows (both *Boego payab* and *Horgo payab*) opening at the ground floor level. This type, represented by five houses, is scattered across the valley. The houses have a rectangular plan with dimensions ranging from 7 x 10 meters to 8 x 12 meters (length X width).

The houses in this group are primarily residential, with most maintaining a rectangular plan. However, one house features an additional structure added at a later date. In terms of roofing

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materials, only one house has retained its traditional timber shingle roof. The other roofs were replaced with iron sheets.

Although this building type is among the oldest in the village, with houses ranging in age from 15 to 30 years, such construction is no longer practiced in recent years.
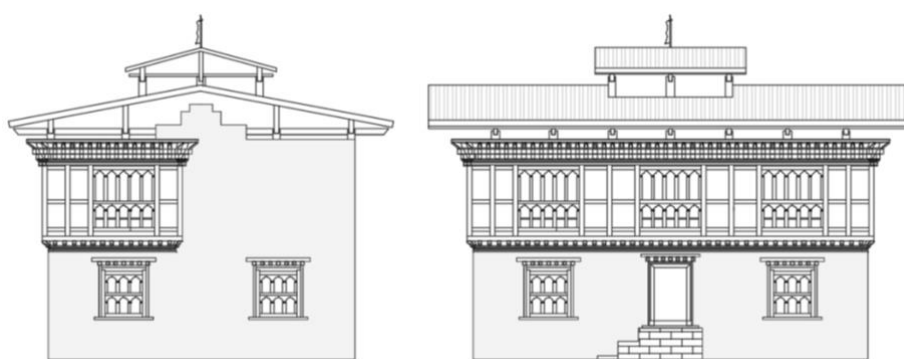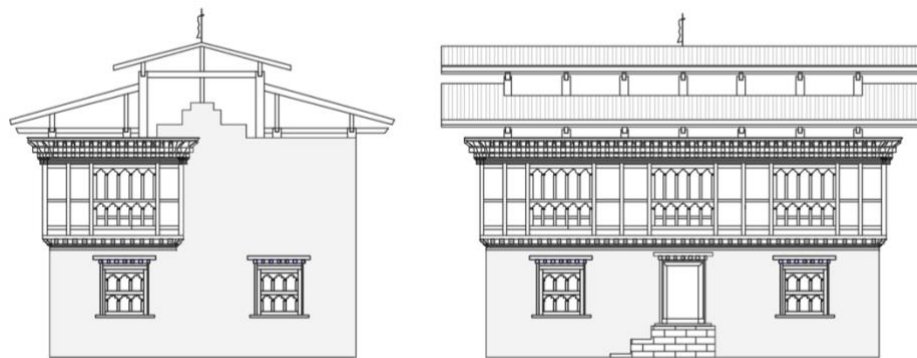


*Figure 31.  Type 4-two-storied house- Left: side elevation; Right: Front Elevation (Drawing by author)*

## 2.2.7 Type 5: *Jabzhi* roofed house with *Rabsel gocham*

The typical feature of the fifth type comprises a combination of *Jabzhi* style roofing with *Rabsel Gocham* window openings at the upper floor level. Represented by six houses, this type is primarily located within the main settlement, except for two houses on the western and opposite sides of the valley. These houses have a rectangular plan, with dimensions ranging from 8 x 10 meters to 12 x 14 meters (length X width).

This type is further divided into two subtypes based on the number of floors. The first sub-type, represented by two houses, shares similar features with the first sub-type under type two, as they are three-storied houses constructed on flat, manually leveled ground and are used exclusively for residential purposes. The second subtype, which comprises the majority with four houses, is also constructed on flat, manually leveled ground with two stories.

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The houses in this group are primarily residential and do not yet have accommodations for homestays. They maintain a rectangular plan without any later additions. All the timber shingle roofs have been replaced with iron sheets.

This style of construction, characterized by its four-sided roof, is relatively new and possibly appeared a few decades ago following the construction of the village temple.[74] Since then, it has been used occasionally, with an average of one construction every four years over the last 25 years.
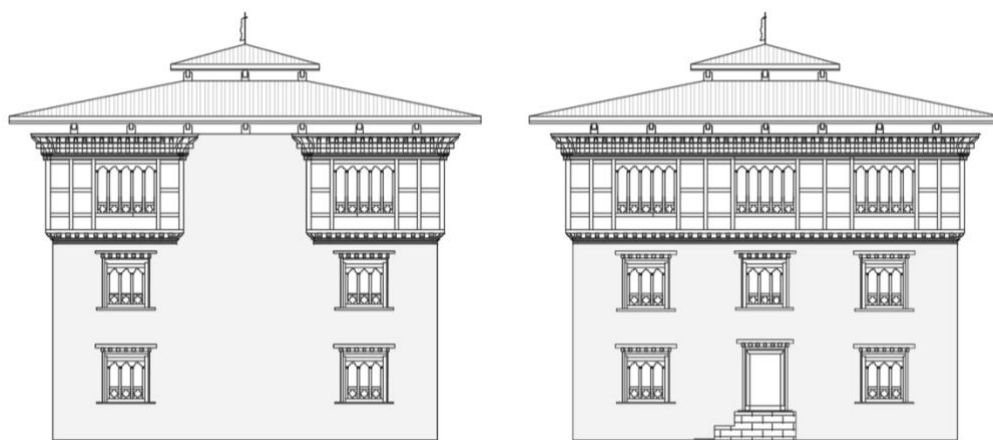


*Figure 32. Sub-type 1-three-storied house- Left: side elevation; Right: Front Elevation (Drawing by author)*
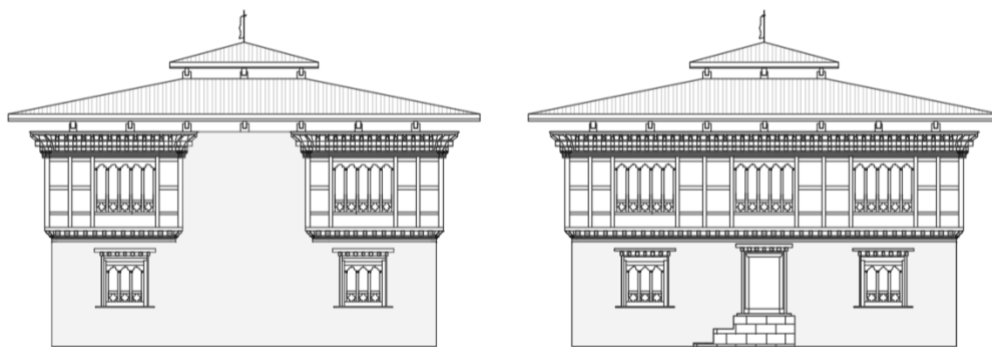


*Figure 33. Sub-type 2-two-storied house- Left: side elevation; Right: Front Elevation (Drawing by author)*

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[74] This conclusion is based on the chronological study of building construction and few oral accounts from the village. It needs to be further validated later.

## 2.2.8 Type 6: *Jabzhi* roofed house with *Rabsel gocham-thognyim*

The typical feature of the sixth type is the combination of *Jabzhi* style roofing with *Rabsel Gocham-thognyim* window openings at the top floor level. This type, represented by six houses, can be found scattered across both sides of the valley. These houses have rectangular plans with dimensions ranging from 8 x 10 meters to 8 x 12 meters (length X width).

This type is also further divided into two sub-types due to the presence of both two- and three-storied houses. The first sub-type, represented by two houses, shares characteristics with the first sub-types of types one and three as they are three-story houses with a ground floor that is partially classified as a half-basement. The second sub-type, represented by four houses, is two-storied, like other second sub-types, and is also constructed on relatively flatter ground. However, the ground has been manually leveled in some cases to ensure a uniform floor level on all four facades.

The houses in this group are primarily used for residential purposes and do not yet provide homestay options. They have retained their original rectangular shape without any extensions and all the shingle roofs have been replaced with iron sheeting.

Construction of houses in this style is not popular, as only one house has been built every five years in the past thirty years, similar to the frequency of construction in type five.

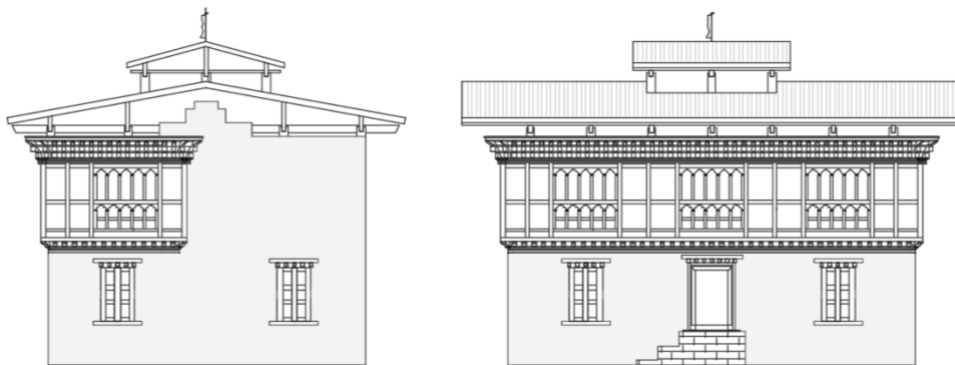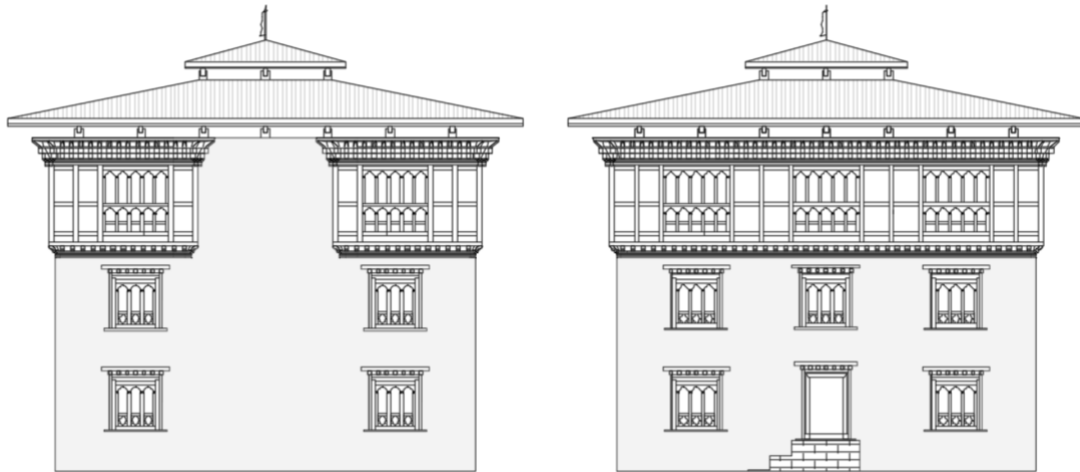*Figure 34.  Sub-type 1-three-storied house- Left: side elevation; Right: Front Elevation (Drawing by author)*
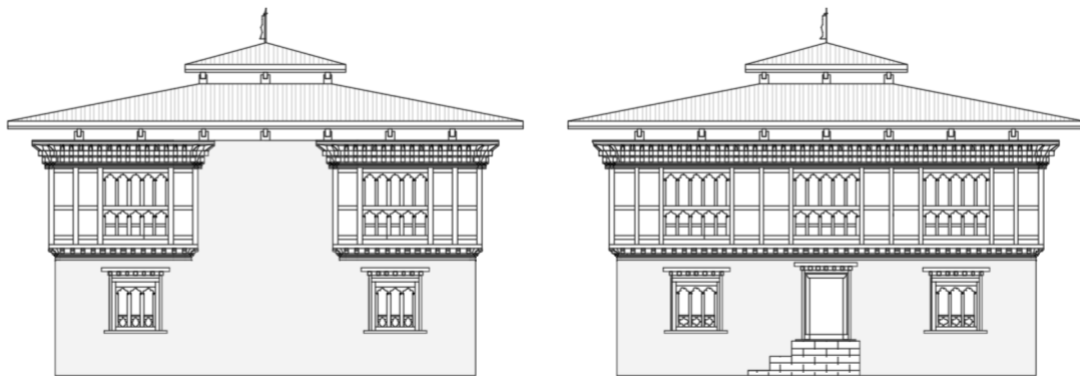


*Figure 35.  Sub-type 2-two-storied house- Left: side elevation; Right: Front Elevation (Drawing by author)*

## 2.2.9 Type 7: Temporary houses

The seventh type, represented by two houses, is located on each side of the valley. These single-story rectangular houses have dimensions of 4 x 6 meters to 6 x 17 meters (length X width) respectively. They appear to be relatively new and were likely built to address temporary housing shortages in the village.



*Figure 36.  Temporary houses (Picture by author)*

## 2.2.10 Type 8: Exceptional buildings

The exceptional eighth type, consisting of six buildings scattered across the valley, stands out because of the distinct architectural designs and varied layout plans that do not align with any of the previously discussed types. For example, house number 40 showcases an L-shaped plan with a unique combination of four-sided and two-sided roofs, while house number 69 possesses a C-shaped plan with a one-of-a-kind four-sided roof. The remaining houses have complex plans with sophisticated roofing systems that are not found in traditional architecture. These constructions represent a departure from traditional building practices and seem to be an expression of individual creativity or an idea borrowed from outside the village. Though these houses were built a few decades ago, such construction never became popular and is no longer practiced in recent years.



| *House number 8* | *House number 40* | *House number 59* |
| *House number 68* | *House number 69* | *House number 71* |

*Figure 37.  Exceptional buildings (Picture by author)*

## 2.2.11 Type 9: Religious and community houses

The classification of this type nine is mainly based on the function of the buildings as opposed to the earlier types. This type is represented by five buildings located on the upper western edge of the village, outside the main settlement area.

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Type nine is further divided into three sub-types based on the functions of each building. The first sub-type is the temple, which is the most important building in this group. The Temple lies at a central point among the other buildings. The construction of all other buildings in this complex plays a role in the use of the temple by the local community. The second sub-type, represented by three houses, is the community houses which are mainly used during various festivals in the village. For instance, the two pavilion houses (house numbers 2 and 3) are used to accommodate guests and monks during festivals. Additionally, the ground floor of house number 3 is used as a storehouse, while house number 4 serves as a common kitchen. The third sub-type (house number 7) is a relatively new addition to this group and serves as a residence for the principal monk of the temple. Unlike other residential buildings in the village, this structure is owned and maintained by the community.



*Temple*

*House number 2*

*House number 3*

*House number 4*

*House number 7*

*Figure 38.  Religious and community buildings (Picture by author)*

## 2.2.12 General features of the building typology

The houses in the settlement, despite their architectural variations, share several similarities in terms of their positioning, general morphology, and functionality. These similarities can be observed in the rectilinear shape of the houses, which are aligned parallel to the topographic contour lines, facing the valley or highway. The main orientation of the houses is defined by large openings on the upper floor, known as *"Rabsel Gocham,"* which not only let in ample

natural light but also feature intricate timber designs, adding to their aesthetic appeal. These large openings in the front facade of the house limit options for making changes to the facade. Typically, any additions or extensions are made to the sides or rear of the building.

Another shared feature among these houses is the provision of toilets. Most houses have additional toilet structures attached to the north or south sides while for some, toilets are built separately from the main building. However, some of the newer houses have built-in toilets. This indicates that the village has largely abandoned traditional cesspit toilets in favor of more modern and hygienic alternatives.

Accessibility is an important feature in these houses. Three-story houses typically have two access points, one on the first floor and one on the ground floor. Two-story houses usually have one access point on the ground floor, but there are a few houses that have access on both levels. The access points to these houses are typically reached by stone staircases. Additionally, some two-story houses also have a wooden ladder for accessing the second level. Further, many of these houses are decorated with traditional *dring* (40 %) or *thama* painting (32 %). The remaining houses are unpainted and mostly constitute newly constructed ones.

## 2.3 Discussion
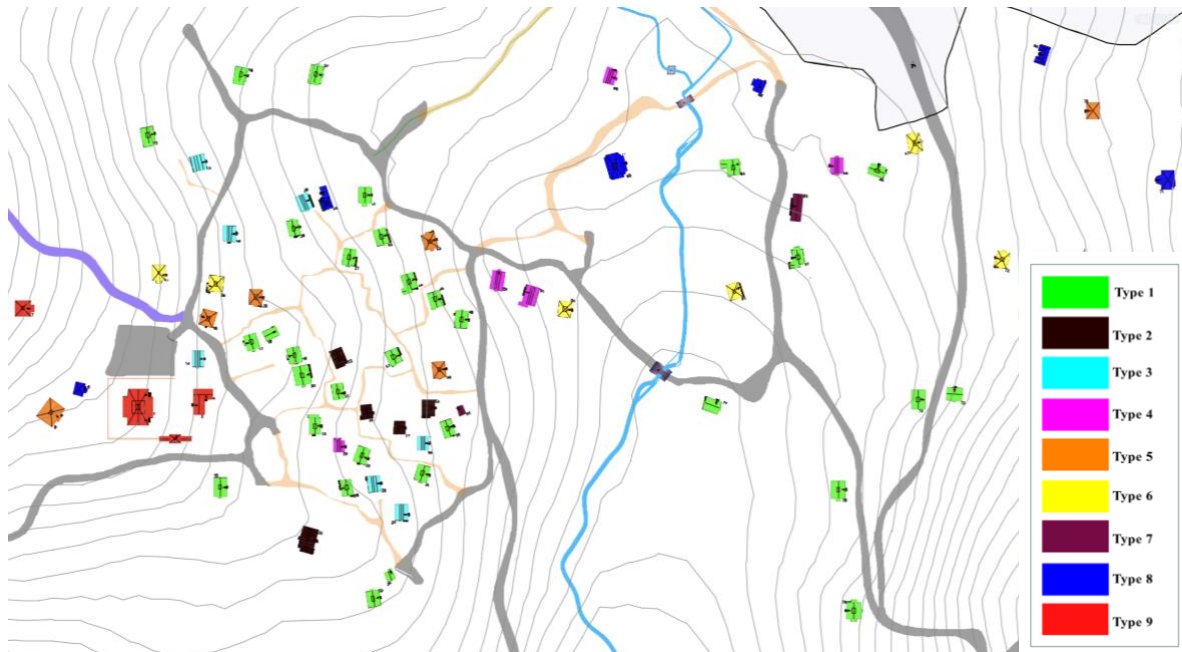


*Figure 39. Typology map (Map by author)*

The typology map in Figure 39 provides a clear visual representation of the various architectural types described earlier. Type one is by far the most prevalent, covering 45% of the valley, while type two is the least common, accounting for only 5% of the area. Types one and two share the same roofing systems (*Jamtho* roofing) but have distinct differences in their ground-floor window styles. Types three and four are relatively uncommon, both accounting for only 9% and 7% coverage respectively. They share the same roofing system (*Drangim* roof) but with different window styles. The common feature shared by these four types is the gable roof system, a roof that slopes in two directions. These houses are assumed to represent the earliest village architecture because, originally the roofing materials were solely timber shingles, which allowed roofing to be done only in gabled roofed format.
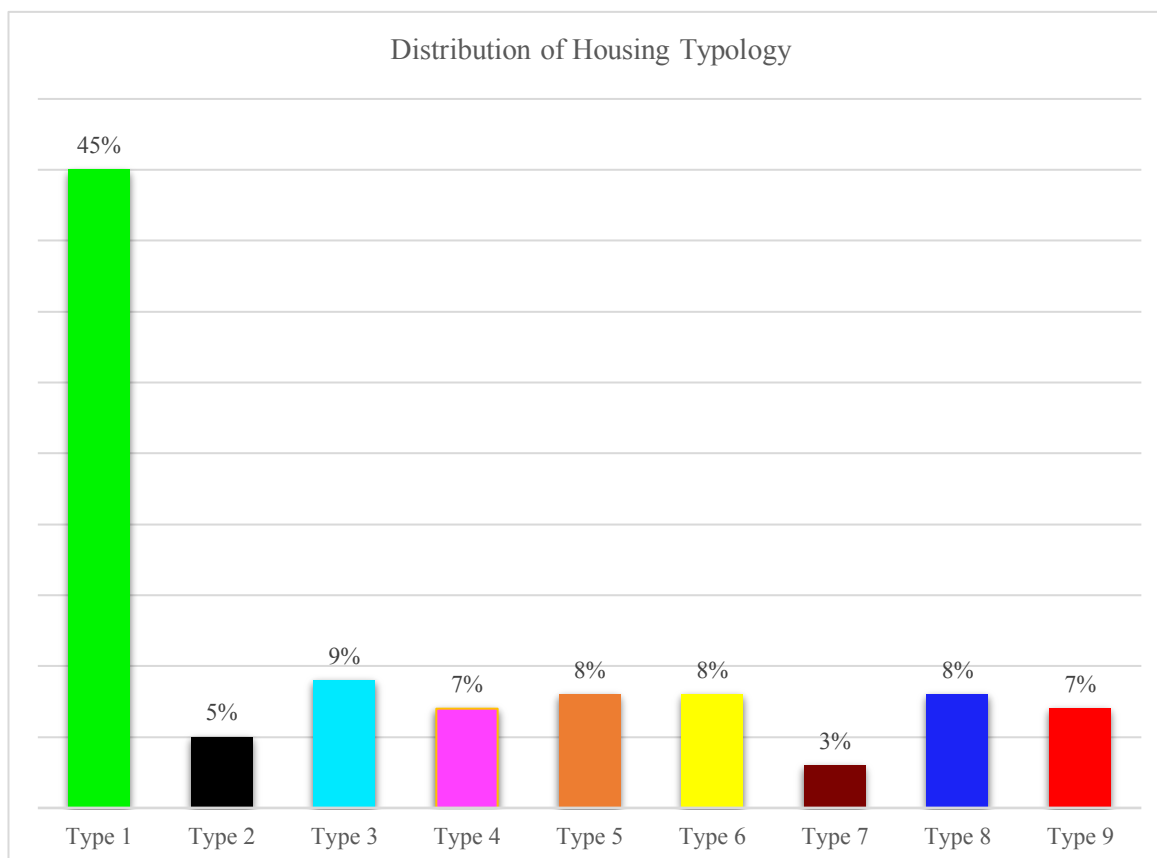
*Figure 40. Distribution of houses (74 numbers of built structures) as per their typology (Illustration by author)*

Types five and six are less common, with 8% coverage each. They have similar roofing systems (*Jabzhi* roof) but differ in the main window openings on the upper floors. Type seven, at only 3% coverage, is one of the least represented building types as they are temporary and lacks the traditional architectural features of other building types within the village. Lastly, types eight and nine are also not very common, with 8% and 7% coverage respectively since they represent architectural outliers.

Overall, type one is widely practiced in the construction of buildings, while types five and six are less commonly employed. The practice of the remaining types has largely been abandoned. This kind of typology study is crucial to show the villagers the existing styles of construction and accordingly influence their choice in the new construction or renovation of houses within the village in order to maintain the visual integrity of the settlement for future.

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## 2.4 Chapter summary

The houses of *Ura Dozhi* are grouped under nine categories based on their most distinctive architectural features such as roof style and window types, reflecting the chronology of architectural development and the expansion patterns of the settlement. However, despite this categorization, the houses share several similarities in terms of their general morphology and functionality. For instance, all the houses follow similar rectilinear ground plans aligned parallel to the topographic contours facing the valley or highway, and the extensions to the existing houses are always carried out either on the shorter facades or the rear facade. Thus, even though the houses display chronological variation in their architectural design, the inherent orientation of the settlement remained unchanged. Additionally, the result of the analysis shows that the village has always preferred traditional and local building architecture as it is widely practiced compared to newer architectural forms. These traditional house types and individual elements can also be used to eventually offer building templates to the villagers.

Apart from an understanding of settlement structure and its expansion pattern, it is also equally important to understand the role of different legal aspects and their implication on the overall development of the village. Therefore, the following chapter will discuss various applicable acts, guidelines, policies, rules, and management plans that have shaped the growth of village until now. Further, this will ensure that any kind of future expansion or development plan in the village is within the permissible legal framework of the area concerned.

# Chapter 3- Legal Framework: applicable acts, guidelines, policies, regulations, and management plan

The results of the survey and analysis from chapter two are essential first step for the preparation of any management or development plan for the village. However, before setting up any such future development plans for *Ura Dozhi* village, it is also necessary to understand the applicable legal framework that has shaped the village until now and its implication for the various aspects of the proposed upcoming development plan. In this chapter, I will review all the applicable acts, guidelines, policies, regulations, and management plans of the relevant governing authority. Discussions will be limited only to those clauses and sections that apply to this proposal for the development plan within *Ura Dozhi* village. The aim is to better understand all necessary procedures required to ensure that any kind of development proposal for the village lies within the law in order to develop efficient solutions and recommendations for managing inevitable change in the village. Towards the end of the chapter, I will also discuss the current practice of implementation of this legal framework in *Ura Dozhi* village and inter-relationship between various implementing agencies.

## 3.1 The Land Act of Bhutan 2007

The Land Act of Bhutan 2007 is established within the National Land Commission Secretariat[75] as an independent authority. It is the highest decision-making body pertaining to the land issues in the country. The commission aims to promote efficient management of land, regulation of

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[75] "རྒྱལ་ཡོངས་ས་ཆ་ཚུན་ཚོགས། — National Land Commission Secretariat," accessed May 3, 2023, https://www.nlcs.gov.bt/.

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proper land use and ownership, provide security of land tenure, and provide equal opportunities in the use of land resources for socio-economic development.[76]

The act classifies lands within the country into eight categories depending on the nature of its use (*Article 19*): wetland, dry land, cash crop land, residential land, industrial land, commercial land, recreational land, institutional land, and other categories that commission may define from time to time. This land category is mainly important because the act restricts certain kinds of development activities to particular land categories only. For instance, the houses can be built on residential plots only, and if a residential plot is not available, other land categories need to be converted into one. Currently, the act allows land interconversion between any land category except for the wetland category, which cannot be converted into another category (*article 89*).

Houses within *Ura Dozhi* village are constructed on residential plots surrounded by *dry land* areas. Therefore, according to the act, before any kind of future expansion proposal in the village, the land within its boundaries must be legally converted into residential land.

## 3.2 The National Construction Industry Policy 2020

The National Construction Industry Policy 2020 was established under the authority of the Construction Development Board[77] within the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport[78] with a mission "to create an enabling environment for the vibrant and green construction industry

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[76] Royal Government of Bhutan, "Land Act of Bhutan 2007," accessed October 22, 2023, https://www.nlcs.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/The-Land-Act-of-Kingdom-of-Bhutan-2007-English.pdf#:~:text=many%20laws%20for%20the%20benefit%20of%20the%20people,the%20ownership%20and%20use%20of%20land%20for%20socio-.
[77] "WEB-Construction Development Board," accessed May 3, 2023, http://www.cdb.gov.bt/web/index.
[78] "Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport – 'Construction Industry: Solutions through Innovation and Improved Technology,'" accessed May 3, 2023, https://www.moit.gov.bt/en/home-2/.

through innovation, standardization and regulation".[79] Based on the policy, any kind of construction in urban areas must conform to modern traditional architecture and rural villages with their age-old traditional architectural practices (*Article 6.3, ii*).

Therefore, any new construction in *Ura Dozhi* must conform to the existing traditional architectural norms of the village. The act also encourages green design techniques through incentive schemes (*article 6.5, i*), which can be well utilized for making the houses in the village more energy efficient.

## 3.3 The National Human Settlement Policy of Bhutan 2019

The National Human Settlement Policy of Bhutan 2019 was established within the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport with the mission "to provide a framework for planning and development of environmentally sustainable, culturally and economically vibrant and disaster resilient human settlements". It aims to promote a comprehensive and integrated settlement planning approach through the preservation of tradition, culture, and vernacular architecture.[80] The traditional settlement system is characterized by the presence of temples and houses with patterns influenced by the availability and layout of the land, unlike modern settlements which developed based on trade and commerce (*Article 6.1*). Further, the policy indicates the importance of promoting rural settlements that have developed harmoniously over time respecting the natural environment and topography (*Article 6.1.1, policy statement 6.1.1.2*).

Therefore, *Ura Dozhi* village will be promoted as per *policy statement 6.1.1.2* as a village that has developed in close association with the natural landscape and strong cultural traditions derived from its complex historical origins. The buildings have been constructed harmoniously,

[79] Ministry of Work & Human Settlement, "National Construction Industry Policy 2020," accessed February 15, 2023, https://www.gnhc.gov.bt/en/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/National-Construction-Industry-Policy-2020.pdf.

[80] Ministry of Work & Human Settlement, "National Human Settlement Policy 2019."

respecting the natural topography of the place. Further, *Ura Dozhi* village will be preserved and promoted as a materialized form of Bhutanese culture as per *policy statements 6.1.3.1 and 6.1.3.2* as the village is located on a gentle slope and possesses tangible heritage features such as temples at the top end followed by traditional houses below presenting beautiful views to the travelers moving along the modern east-west highway which runs along the southern boundary of the village as well as for trekkers traveling along the old traditional route, which runs through the village. The unique settlement development pattern reflects the socio-cultural identity of *Ura Dozhi* village.

## 3.4 The Bhutan Building Regulation 2018

The Bhutan Building Regulation 2018 was established within the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport to promote safe, functional, and accessible settlements which will enhance the quality and living standards of the people while encouraging the preservation of the natural and cultural landscapes of the country.[81]

This regulation details the building permit requirements and potential exemptions for any kind of work related to the building such as construction, demolition, renovation, or extension. The act prohibits any kind of new construction or alteration to a building without valid building permits from the local authority (*Articles 23, 24 & 25*). However, the permit does not apply to minor renovation work not affecting the external appearance of the building or not impacting the density of the existing built-up area (*Article 27*). Nevertheless, this exemption does not apply to heritage buildings or structures within the vicinity of heritage buildings (*Article 28*). Since the *Ura Dozhi* village will be identified as a heritage village, the permit exemption will not apply here.

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[81] Ministry of Work & Human Settlement, "Bhutan Building Regulations 2018," accessed October 22, 2022, https://bhutan.eregulations.org/media/Final-Buidling-Regulation__2018_1.pdf.

The regulation further mentions the application process for building permits including the considerations for application and decision-making (*Articles 29, 30, 49, 50 & 51*). It also clarifies procedures for ex-post-facto approval of permits for those works which commenced without building permission (*Articles 6, 57 & 58*). The act then details the composition of the review board for addressing complaints and grievances through *articles 59* until *64*.

The guideline restricts any kind of new development (commercial) in the existing village cluster except for converting existing houses into homestays (*Article 135*) in accordance with guidelines for establishing village homestays (*Article 136*) from the Tourism Council of Bhutan. Since *Ura Dozhi* village is a clustered village, no additional development to be used for housing guests or tourists is permitted as per this act. However, there is a possibility of converting existing houses into village homestays with due approval from the Tourism Council of Bhutan.

The only new construction in the existing cluster permitted by the act is the construction of residential buildings. However, to maintain the architectural harmony of the existing settlement, the new building must follow existing orientations while building height is restricted to three stories or less depending on the slope of the land (*Articles 140, 141 & 144*). The buildings in *Ura Dozhi* village follow a particular orientation depending on the building's location in relation to topographic contours, neighboring houses, and streets to maintain the system of orientation. Since the settlement lies in a gently sloping valley, the height restriction to three floors suits the *Ura Dozhi* context.

## 3.5 The Guidelines for the Registration of Village Homestays 2019

The Guidelines for the Registration of Village Homestays 2019 was established within the jurisdiction of the Tourism Council of Bhutan[82]. Council[83] is composed of nine members headed by the Minister for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade[84] along with various high-level members from other relevant agencies. The guidelines aim to provide accommodation facilities for local and foreign tourists in rural areas to enable them to experience authentic Bhutanese lifestyles with host families, consequently allowing the host family to generate income.[85]

This guideline allows traditional houses to be converted into Village Homestays (VHS) provided they meet the assessment criteria and are then certified by the Tourism Council of Bhutan (*Articles 9 & 10*). If the individual homeowner is not satisfied with the assessment results, they can appeal to the Director of Tourism Council of Bhutan for grievances (*Article 15*). Since many of the existing houses in *Ura Dozhi* village will be converted into village homestays, due approval must be sought from the Tourism Council of Bhutan for the establishment of the homestays as per the guideline. The village already has a few houses which are currently functioning as village homestays.

## 3.6 The Cultural Heritage Bill of Bhutan 2016

The Cultural Heritage Bill of Bhutan 2016 was prepared by the Department of Culture and Dzongkha Development[86] to protect cultural heritage and its management in the country. The

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[82] "Home | Tourism Council of Bhutan," accessed May 3, 2023, https://www.tourism.gov.bt/.
[83] The Tourism Council of Bhutan was subsumed under Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment as the Department of Tourism recently. The Guideline however remains the same.
[84] "Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade – RGOB," accessed May 3, 2023, https://www.mfa.gov.bt/.
[85] Tourism Council of Bhutan, "Guideline for the Registration of Village Homestays 2019."
[86] "Department of Culture and Dzongkha Development - DoC," accessed May 3, 2023, https://doc.gov.bt/en/.

Bill, however, remains unenacted until now and the articles under this bill remain unenforceable by law. The following discussion on the Bill assumes eventual enactment of the Bill by the government.

As per the Bill, a cultural heritage committee will be established as an independent authority with control and authority over funding, registration, designation, offenses, and delivery of approval for any work related to heritage in the country.[87] The Bill mandates the local government to identify the cultural landscape encompassing the cultural elements of local importance[88] within their jurisdiction and accordingly prepare rules and regulatory plans to sustain the cultural landscape in consultation with the Department of Culture and Dzongkha Development (*Articles 31 & 32*). Further, the Bill restricts any kind of renovation works on heritage buildings or sites without approval from the Department of Culture and Dzongkhag Development (*Articles 152 & 153*). However, the requirement for approval is exempted if it is connected to minor maintenance work that does not impact the heritage value (*Article 155*) of the building or site.

The Bill also describes the incentive schemes for the protection and safeguarding of heritage such as providing subsidies for local materials, reduction or waiver of customs duties, and a timber subsidy (*Articles 214, 215 & 216*).

In line with this Bill, *Ura Dozhi* village will be identified as a heritage site, and any kind of new development must seek approval from the Department of Culture and Dzongkha Development except for those aspects of development exempted under *Article 155*. Since the

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[87] Department of Culture MoHCA, Bhutan, *Draft Cultural Heritage Bill of Bhutan 2016* (Thimphu), accessed June 19, 2022, http://www.departmentofculture.gov.bt/en/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/Cultural-Heritage-Bill-of-Bhutan-ver.-2016AUGenglish.pdf.

[88] Cultural element of local importance as per the Draft Cultural Heritage Bill of Bhutan includes the ''those elements which contribute to cultural landscape such as built structures, distinct architectural styles, settlement patterns, land-use patterns, natural settings, and geographical formation of cultural significance, as well as practices of intangible cultural heritage.''

village is eligible for all the incentives as per this Bill, people will be more encouraged to preserve their heritage buildings.

## 3.7 The Forest and Nature Conservation Rules of Bhutan 2017

The Forest and Nature Conservation Rules of Bhutan 2017 was established within the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources[89] to facilitate an efficient delivery of forest-related services to Bhutanese citizens so that the natural resources are easily available, accessible, and affordable while maintaining its sustainability.[90] As per this rule, all forests in Bhutan have been declared as state-reserved (*Article 10*). From this state-reserved forest, the Department of Forests and Park Services[91] declares certain areas to be protected areas as per *Article 41,* for which separate management plans shall be prepared for their protection (*Articles 43 & 44*). The Department has accordingly declared ten protected areas,[92] including *Thrumshingla* National Park which borders *Ura Dozhi* village.

Since the *Ura Dozhi* village is bordered by *Thrumshingla* National Park on three sides and lies within its buffer zone, any kind of activity, including building and repairing structures that require resources from the forest such as timber for making traditional shingle roofs must follow the management plan (*Article 48*).

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[89] "Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources," accessed May 3, 2023, http://www.moenr.gov.bt/.
[90] Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Royal Government of Bhutan, "Forest and NAture Conservation Rules and Regulations of Bhutan" (Department of Forests and Park Services, 2017), https://bhutan.eregulations.org/media/FNCRR%202017.pdf.
[91] "Department of Forest and Park Services," March 27, 2023, https://www.dofps.gov.bt/.
[92] Ministry of Agriculture and Forests, Royal Government of Bhutan, "Department of Forests and Park Services," n.d., https://www.dofps.gov.bt/introduction-phrumsengla-national-park/.

## 3.8 The *Thrumshingla* National Park Management Plan

The *Thrumshingla* National Park Management Plan was established within the Department of Forests and Park Services to develop sustainable management practices for settlements, wild and domestic species, and resources in and around the park while enhancing sustainable tourism and institutional strengthening.[93]
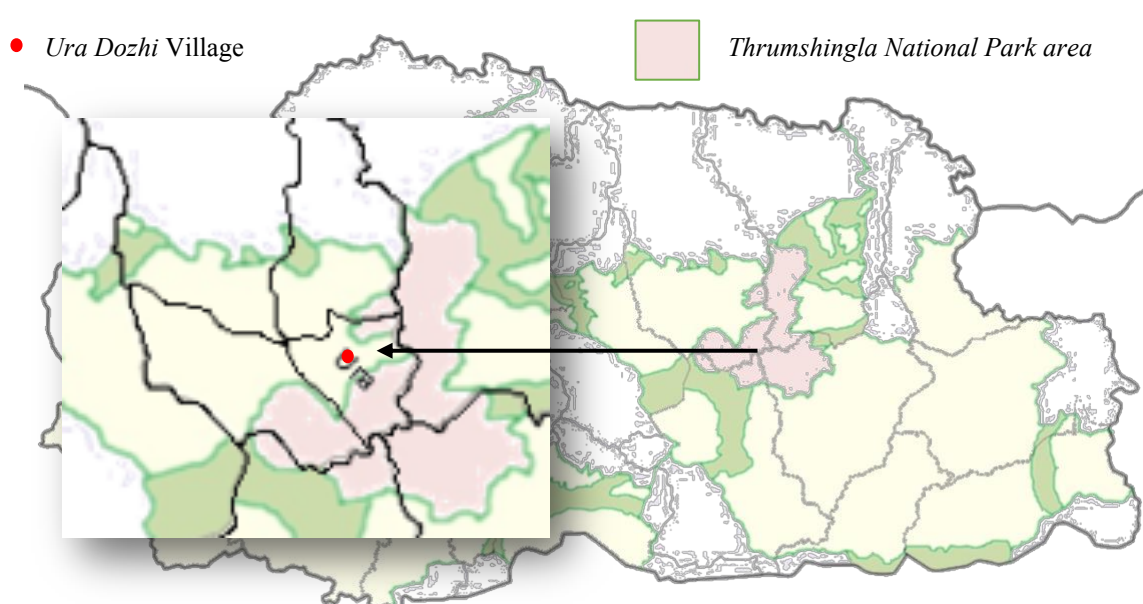


*Figure 41. Location of Thrumshingla National Park within Bhutan and in relation to Ura Dozhi village. Source: Thrumshing La (accessed April 6, 2023)*

As per the *Article 4.3.3.6, Ura Dozhi* village falls within the buffer zone of the park (within 5 km). To ensure a harmonious coexistence, the park will implement various strategies to reduce the impact of the local community on the park's resources. For instance, the park will supply improved cattle breeds (improved in terms of dairy production but reducing the traditional breeds) to reduce free forest grazing (*Article 4.6.3.8*); promote sustainable use of timber roofing or supply alternative roofing material (*Article 4.6.3.11*), and many other things. Overall, the

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management plan aims to reduce timber-based product consumption by local people by introducing new construction styles and modes of livelihood.

## 3.9 Application of legal frameworks in practice

All the legal frameworks described above are governed by as many as five independent agencies (Department of Culture and Dzongkha Development [DoCDD], Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport [MoIT], Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources [MoENR], National Land Commission Secretariat [NLCS] and Tourism Council of Bhutan [TCB]) who works hand in hand in various other fields including the preservation of traditional Bhutanese settlement such as *Ura Dozhi* village. For instance, the proposals for building construction in rural settlements are issued with clearance for timber utilization from the MoENR only after receiving the building permit from MoIT, who in the first place verifies the land approval from the NLCS. Further, if the proposal involves buildings such as temples, then the building permit is issued by DoCDD, who then follows similar procedures like checking Land approvals, etc. The clearance for timber utilization is then issued in a similar pattern.

However, in the absence of separate development and expansion plan for the village, there is a risk of losing the traditional rural settlement system, which is seen with the establishment of the *Ura* school[94] complex in the valley. All the infrastructures of the school complex are constructed with modern materials and the design of the buildings is not in harmony with the style of *Ura Dozhi's* houses, thereby producing a jarring picture of two different settlements. In addition, there are also several new houses within the *Ura Dozhi* village itself being constructed using newer design features and roofing system over the last few decades.

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[94] "Ura Central School," accessed January 1, 2023, https://www.uracs.edu.bt/.

Fortunately, the local population prefers traditional construction techniques and materials for building their houses as opposed to the architectural style used for the school.
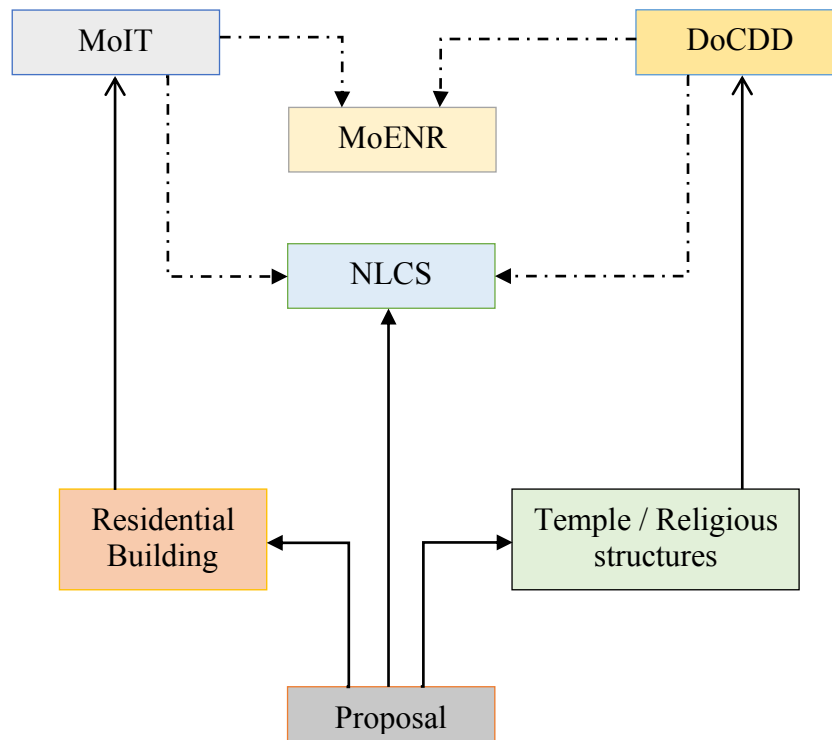


*Figure 42. Diagrammatical representation of the application of legal framework in practice (Illustration by author)*

## 3.10 Chapter summary

Any kind of development work within the *Ura Dozhi* village is governed by all these acts, guidelines, policies, regulations, and management plans as discussed in this chapter and any kind of future proposal for *Ura Dozhi* village must also fall within the limit of these acts and policies. With this in mind, a separate development and expansion plan for the village will be proposed in the next chapter as a way to manage the inevitable change that comes with the development.

# Chapter 4- Building construction and expansion plans: management of inevitable change

With the understanding of settlement morphology and building typology in chapter two and the applicable legal frameworks in chapter three, I will focus this chapter on the preparation of a development plan for *Ura Dozhi* village to manage the inevitable changes in building construction and expansion pattern. This plan can be used as a guiding principle for any kind of upcoming physical development and expansion within the village with the objective of maintaining the still-existing harmony between the built structures of the village and its immediate natural landscape.

## 4.1 Trends over time in changing building construction and expansion

*Ura Dozhi* village, like many other villages in Bhutan, has undergone changes in multiple fronts over time due to various factors. For instance, with an increasing population, expansion became necessary, filling empty spaces within the main settlements at first and then gradually spreading across to the other side of the valley. In a few cases, the requirements for larger space were met by extending existing buildings. These systems of expansion grew harmoniously over time following the traditional methods of construction and site selection processes. However, with modernization, there is a risk of losing this harmony between nature and built structures, posing both social and economic implications apart from aesthetic implications. For instance, the availability of heavy machinery has altered the natural site selection process for building construction, thereby making any location potentially suitable for construction despite slope angle, which in turn, results in the formation of artificial terraces replacing the natural slope. Such a practice can be seen in a few of the newly built houses in the village (discussed in

chapter two). This kind of artificial terrace disturbs the well-connected network of internal footpaths, thereby reducing the efficiency of communication and connection between houses. This has an adverse impact on the existing community cohesiveness, without which the cultural heritage of the village will fall apart, and the village will no longer be an attraction site for tourists, ultimately affecting the income of the people and economy of the village. Further, this kind of uncontrolled development disrupts the harmonious growth of settlement patterns, thus destroying the aesthetic beauty of the village. Therefore, by looking at the trends in changes in the village, the need for building construction and an expansion plan is deemed necessary in order to manage the change effectively.

## 4.2 Current practice of building construction and expansion

As seen in chapter three, currently, any kind of construction work in the *Ura Dozhi* village is governed by the various acts under the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MoIT) except for the land type, which is governed by the National Land Commission Secretariat (NLCS). An application for new construction, extension, reconstruction, or renovation is submitted to the *Dzongkhag*[95] administration for approval through the office of the *Gewog*[96]. The existing process of application for each administrative category will be described in detail in the following paragraphs.

### 4.2.1 New construction

Any kind of new construction in the village is carried out as per the Bhutan Building Regulation 2018[97] (a description of the regulation can be found in chapter three). The regulation refers to

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[95] *Dzongkhag* is equivalent to the term 'district' in English. These are the primary subdivisions of the country.
[96] *Gewog* refers to a group of villages in Bhutan. They represent a secondary administrative division below *Dzongkhag*.
[97] Ministry of Work & Human Settlement, "Bhutan Building Regulations 2018."

Bhutanese Architectural guidelines from 2014 [98] as a basis for traditional Bhutanese architecture as per *Article 3*. As per the regulation, any application for building construction must follow the following set of procedures.

1.  The first step for new construction is to verify the land details such as land ownership and land types through the National Land Commission Secretariat (NLCS). As per *Article 19* of the Land Act of Bhutan[99] (description of the act in chapter three), the land type must be residential land and must be converted to such if it does not yet have that status.

2.  After confirming the land status, the applicant then surveys the land to comply with the planning controls of the Bhutan Building Regulation[100] such as site coverage, which is 45 % of the land plot as per *Article 8,* and setbacks[101], which range from 2 to 6 meters depending on the numbers of floors in the building, as per *Article 13-15*.

3.  Technical drawings including architectural, structural, electrical, and plumbing drawings must be prepared as per *Article 35*. However, current practice for traditional buildings does not require other types of drawings beyond architectural drawings.

4.  The application is then submitted to the *Gewog* office[102] for document verification.

5.  The *Gewog* office then forwards the application to the *Dzongkhag* administration, who scrutinizes the application as per the regulation and then approves it. If the application does not qualify for approval, the *Dzongkhag* will request the office of the *Gewog* for additional documents.

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[98] Thinley Dhendup, "Bhutanese Architectural Guidelines," *2014*, accessed May 4, 2022, https://www.mowhs.gov.bt/.../2010/11/Bhutan-Arch-Guidelines-final-2014.pdf.
[99] Royal Government of Bhutan, "Land Act of Bhutan 2007."
[100] Ministry of Work & Human Settlement, "Bhutan Building Regulations 2018."
[101] Set back in here refers to minimum distance in meters from plot boundary, septic tank or existing building whichever is closer.
[102] As a reminder, the administrative district *Gewog* refers to a group of villages in Bhutan. They represent a secondary administrative division below *Dzongkhags*. The *Dzongkhag* refers to the primary administrative subdivisions of the country. There are 205 *gewogs* under 20 *dzongkhags* in Bhutan.

6. The *Dzongkhag* then issues a building permit to the office of the *Gewog* and forwards a copy to the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources (MoENR).

7. The office of the *Gewog* then forwards the building permit to the applicant.

8. The MoENR upon the request from the applicant issues a timber permit as per the building permit.

9. The applicant then finally can begin the construction.
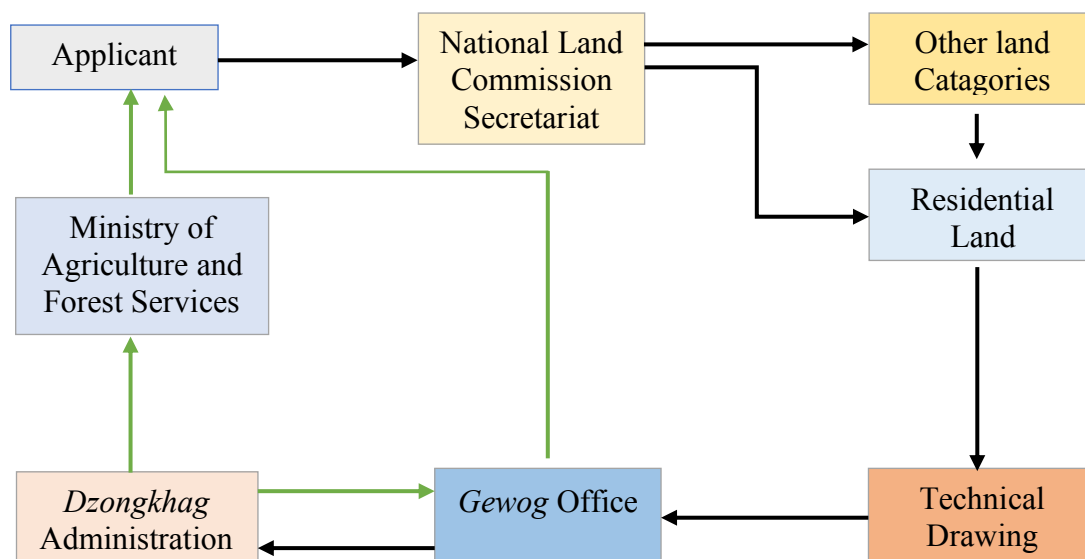


*Figure 43. Diagrammatical representation of current administration practice in building construction (Illustration by author)*

## 4.2.2 Maintenance and extension

When it comes to the work involving extensions, the application process is the same as for the new construction except for the issue of land status confirmation. However, the need for a building permit is exempted as per *Article 27* of the building regulation if the work only affects the interior of the building and does not add to the built-up area.

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All in all, the primary requirement for obtaining a building permit must meet the traditional Bhutanese architectural standards as per the Bhutanese Architectural Guidelines,[103] which is a general one for the whole country, as well as the land status requirement as per the Land Act of Bhutan[104], which is that of residential land. With the current practice, the settlement is not viewed from a holistic point of view but rather from an individual building perspective, whereby every application fulfilling all the criteria set above qualifies for approval. This approach has resulted in the development of a variety of architectural styles appearing within *Ura Dozhi* village such as the four-sided roofs and other new complex building architectures (as described in chapter two). Currently, the intrusion of this new architectural style is minimum within the main cluster and is confined mostly toward the outlier of the settlement, thus, maintaining an unspoiled blend with the overall settlement architecture. Therefore, to manage this intrusion and maintain the existing diversity of architecture at the same time, a dedicated plan is needed for the village.

## 4.3 Formulation and adoption of building construction and expansion plan

Cultural Heritage Bill (CHB) of Bhutan[105] as described in chapter three is a comprehensive bill aimed towards the protection and management of cultural heritage in the country. The bill provides a holistic view approach to protect heritage villages such as *Ura Dozhi* village. However, the bill has not yet been enacted, thus, depriving those protection measures of legal force. If the bill were to be enacted, *Ura Dozhi* village would most probably qualify as a heritage village, considering the rich heritage aspects of the village as described in chapter one, as per the *Article 31*. Consequently, any kind of future development within the village would

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[103] Dhendup, "Bhutanese Architectural Guidelines."
[104] Royal Government of Bhutan, "Land Act of Bhutan 2007."
[105] MoHCA, Bhutan, *Draft Cultural Heritage Bill of Bhutan 2016.*

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be governed by this bill. According to the bill, the identified heritage village must then have rules and regulatory plans in place for its management as per *Article 32*. To fulfill this requirement, the following building construction and the expansion plan need to be finalized in consultation with the *Bumthang Dzongkhag* administration and other relevant public offices including the offices of the *Gewog* and the people in the community itself. This plan would come into effect upon the approval by the *Dzongkhag Tshogdu*[106] of the *Bumthang Dzongkhag* as per *Article 33* and any application for construction or expansion henceforth within the village must be in accordance with this plan as per *Article 35* of this same bill.

The following construction and expansion plan of *Ura Dozhi* village presented in this thesis is not currently enforceable. It must be regarded as a proposal only. However, this proposal aims to serve as an inspiration when the competent authorities work out and adopt the regulatory plan for *Ura Dozhi* village if and when, the bill is enacted by the government.

## 4.4 The proposed building construction and expansion plan for *Ura Dozhi* village

In the developments below, I am anticipating the eventual enactment of the Cultural Heritage Bill and will refer to its provisions in their current state. This building construction and expansion plan is mainly prepared from the result of the analysis described in chapter two and must be finalized in consultation with *Dzongkhag* administration and other relevant public offices as described above, before its adoption.

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[106] Parliament of Bhutan, "The Local Government Act of Bhutan 2009," 2009, 3, https://www.mohca.gov.bt/download/LGAct2018Final.pdf.

## 4.4.1 Building construction plan

Building construction work in *Ura Dozhi* will cover any kind of activities related to new constructions, reconstructions, extensions, or modification of buildings to address the requirement of more space for human habitation. As observed previously, the changing times and a formerly growing population resulted in several new constructions and extensions within the village over time. Nevertheless, people somehow maintained the architectural uniformity of buildings in most cases. Few buildings were constructed with distinctive architectural styles borrowed from other regions or created randomly. Therefore, to maintain the inherent uniformity in the architectural design of the houses within the village, the following construction styles are recommended for any kind of upcoming activities (new construction, reconstruction, extension, or modification). To allow people to adapt to the needs of a modern lifestyle, this recommendation in the construction style is limited only to the exterior components of the buildings. Modern construction materials and techniques can be adapted to improve the interior living space of the building such as the living room, bedrooms, kitchen, toilet and washrooms, etc. Further, modern materials can be adopted wherever necessary depending on the various guidelines from other agencies while maintaining the exterior architectural style and material aesthetic of the building. The use of traditional timber shingle roofing material is preferred, although painted corrugated iron sheeting is accepted.

### *4.4.1.1 Building types*

Of the nine types of houses identified in chapter two, types 1, 2, 3 and 4 are gable-roofed houses. These are the most prominent building types found in the village (combined coverage of 66%) and define the general architectural landscape of the village. To maintain the architectural homogeneity of the village, these types are recommended. However, to acknowledge the existing diversity of the housing system, types 5 and 6 would also be

acceptable construction forms (combined coverage of 16%). These six types of acceptable

constructions can serve as an example for the population of the features and types they may

draw on for their new constructions in the village to maintain this homogeneity. This plan does

not recommend the construction of buildings with complex plans and roofing systems,

categorized as 'exceptional buildings' in chapter two. Such constructions not only fail to

conform to the traditional construction practice but also destroy the aforementioned

architectural harmony of the building scape. The list of acceptable housing types is as follows:

| Building Type | Distinct architectural feature | Construction |
|---|---|---|
| Type 1 | - *Jamtho* roof style<br>- Standard window opening at ground floor (either *Boego* or *Horgo payab*) | Recommended |
| Type 2 | - *Jamtho* roof style<br>- Basic window opening at ground floor (*Geykar payab*) | Recommended |
| Type 3 | - *Drangim* roof style<br>- Basic window opening at ground floor (*Geykar payab*) | Recommended |
| Type 4 | - *Drangim* roof style<br>- Standard window opening at ground floor (either *Boego* or *Horgo payab*) | Recommended |
| Type 5 | - *Jabzhi* roof style<br>- *Rabsel Gocham* | Accepted |
| Type 6 | - *Jabzhi* roof style<br>- *Rabsel Gocham-thognyim* | Accepted |

*Table 2. List of acceptable housing types*

## 4.4.1.2 Extensions and modifications

One of the major driving factors which led to the requirement of a later addition to the existing

structures is the introduction of a modern toilet system. Almost every household in the village

has now replaced the traditional cesspit toilet with a modern toilet system (with septic tanks)[107], and these toilets, as observed in chapter two, are always attached either on the shorter facades or rear facades of the building. These extensions, however, also comprised additional living spaces in a few cases. When it comes to a number of the recent constructions, however, the houses have built-in toilets, making the necessity for later extension obsolete. Generally, extensions of any kind are not recommended unless it is for a toilet structure. However, if there is a genuine proven need for the additional space, extensions are allowed on a case-by-case basis on the condition that the architecture and construction technique of these extensions blend in with the existing building in terms of construction technique, material, design, and height. Extensions can be carried out as per the following table:

| Extension element | Preferred facade | Acceptable facade | Not acceptable |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Toilet structure | Shorter facade facing away from the road or street | Shorter facade facing road or street in exceptional case | Front facade |
| Additional space | Shorter or rear facade facing away from road or street | Shorter or rear facade facing road or street in exceptional case | Front facade |

*Table 3. Acceptable and unacceptable extensions*

## 4.4.2 Expansion plan

Expansion in *Ura Dozhi* village will refer to the spreading of the settlement within the valley resulting from the construction of new buildings. Although the village did not have any kind of earlier expansion plan, building growth occurred harmoniously by maintaining the uniform orientation and construction styles within the valley, mainly relative to the valley and highway, as well as the natural site selection process (where the slope of the landscape played a major

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[107] The technical specifications and construction details of the modern toilet system with septic tank will be as per the guidelines of relevant agencies in order to ensure that they are fully functional and up to the standard.

role) as described in chapter two. However, with the availability of heavy machinery and establishment of farm roads inside the village, there is a risk of losing this naturally developing settlement pattern. Therefore, with the aim of preserving a still well-established settlement pattern, any kind of future expansion within the village will be governed by following the expansion plan. The houses must be constructed on a natural ground slope without creating artificial terraces. The expansion plan must, however, respect the heritage assets such as the old route, *Nagas*, and stupas found within and outside the settlement cluster.

| Details | Preferred | Acceptable | Not acceptable |
|---|---|---|---|
| Building orientation | Longer facade aligns parallel to the topographic contour | Alignment of longer facade slightly deviates from the contour but faces valley below or highway | Alignment of longer facade deviates largely or is perpendicular to topographic contour |
| Direction of main facade | Faces valley below or highway | Faces road or street above | Faces neither road/street nor valley/highway |
| Site selection | Out of main settlement and below village temple | Within the main settlement with adequate offset distance from neighboring buildings | Above the temple or within the main settlement without adequate offset distance from neighboring buildings |

*Table 4. Expansion plan details*

The constructions must be aligned in parallel to the topographic contour of the landscape. The main facade of the building as described in chapter two is defined by a large timber frame opening, decorated with intricate designs, which faces towards the valley below or road above. Therefore, to maintain this continuity in the direction of the main facade, any new construction must follow a similar orientation. Further, the site selection should be such that it must be located outside of the main settlement but below the village temple to maintain the traditional rural setting of the village where the temple is normally located at the top end of the village

followed by the village houses (as described in chapter three). Site selection within the main settlement is accepted, however, if there is adequate offset distance from the neighboring houses. Figure 44 shows the expansion plan for the village.
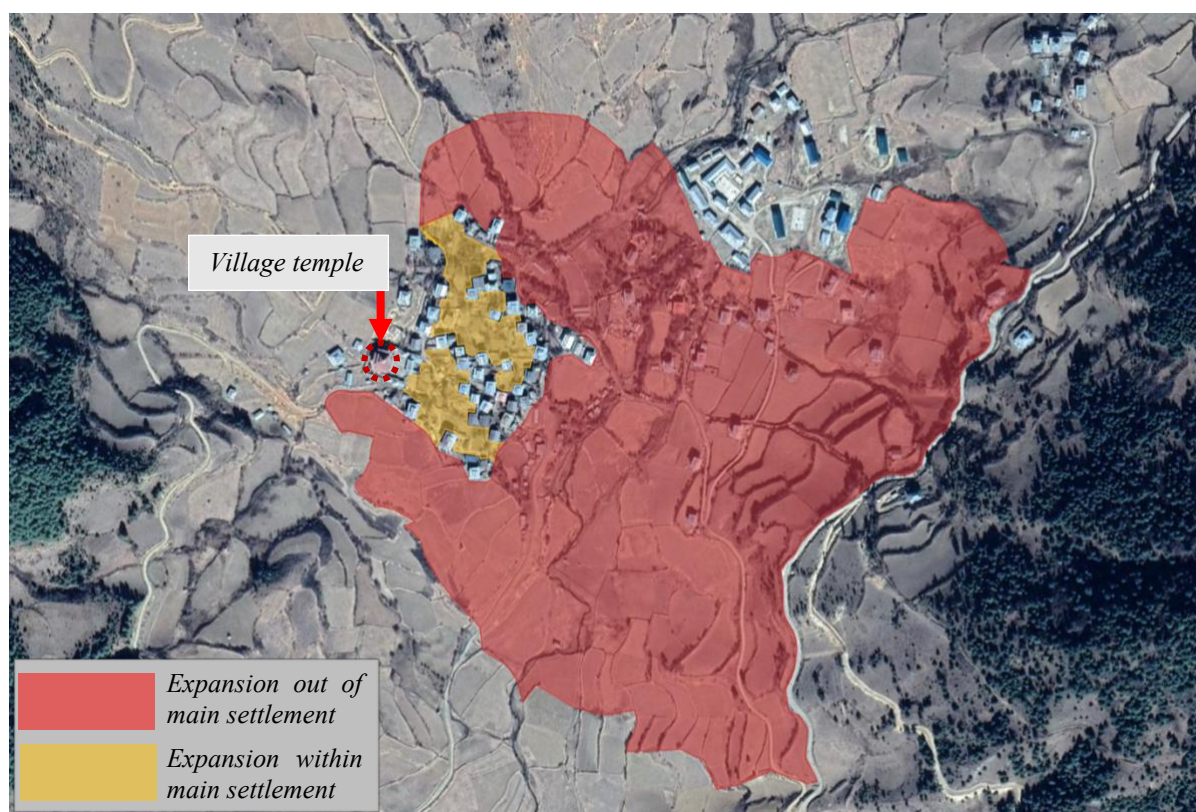


*Figure 44.  Map of the expansion plan marked on Google Earth (accessed April 15, 2023)*

The procedure for building construction and expansion practice for the local people remains the same as current practice, where the applicant initiates the application with land confirmation from NLCS and ends with a final building permit from the *Dzongkhag* through the *Gewog* office, followed by a timber permit from MoENR. However, the approval, in this case, will be based on the ''building construction and expansion plan'' described above rather than the codes and regulations from the MoIT.

## 4.4.3 Miscellaneous development

Apart from the traditional buildings, following cultural features plays a greater role in defining the harmonious evolution of settlement and its aesthetic beauty. Therefore, their role in the village must be respected and they must be preserved as follows:

### *4.4.3.1 Internal footpath system*

1. No road accessible to cars or cattle can be built inside the main settlement cluster. This is mainly to protect and preserve the inherent pedestrian use and function of the traditional internal footpath system.

2. Traditional timber stacked boundary walls along the footpath (as described in chapter one) must be protected and such a practice should be encouraged. This is mainly because the timber-stacked wall not only defines the internal footpath but also creates a private courtyard for the houses by blocking the visibility from the footpath.

3. Any modern alteration of the footpath, other than for safety reasons, such as modification of its track layout, use of materials not belonging to the local tradition, erection of mechanically produced fences, and posting of advertising signs should be carefully avoided.

### *4.4.3.2 Old Route*

1. The character of the old route as a traditional, beautiful environment protected from modern transgressions, should be maintained, as it is one of the major attraction points for walking tourists.

2. All the features of the route such as long-walled stupas, landmarks, and traditional bridges must be protected along the route.

3. Any kind of development should maintain appropriate setbacks from the old route which runs along the village.

4. Any modern alteration of the old route, such as modification of its track layout, use of materials not belonging to the local tradition, erection of mechanically produced fences, and posting of advertising signs should be carefully avoided.

### *4.4.3.3 Other cultural features*

1. Other cultural features such as *Nagas* and *stupas* must be protected.

2. The use of water mills should be continued as long as possible, and the structures must be preserved, preferably in working order.

## 4.5 Monitoring and reporting

It will be the responsibility of the *Dzongkhag* administration to ensure that any developmental activities within Ura Dozhi village are implemented within the administrative boundaries of the endorsed development and expansion plans. The *Dzongkhag* must submit an annual report of the developmental activities approved and undertaken in the village to the Department of Culture and Dzongkha Development for further review. Further, this plan will be discussed with the community to understand the practical implementation issues and challenges it poses. Based on the annual report from the *Dzongkhag* and feedback from the people, there is an opportunity to devise new strategies for future development while keeping heritage protection at its core.

## 4.6 Chapter summary

This chapter mainly focuses on the preparation of the set of initial plans needed to guide any kind of future development and expansion of the village as the first critical steps to manage the inevitable change in the village. It sets out concrete plans for the architectural possibilities that

can be permitted for new buildings through six acceptable types for the villagers to choose from, in order to ensure an architectural harmony within the settlement. Further, it also sets out a well-defined plan for the later addition and renovation works to buildings, as well as the ways in which the village should coordinate its future expansion. Within the limits outlined in this set of plans, I will discuss the proposal of reviving the village by converting the buildings within the village into village homestays for visitors.

# Chapter 5- Revival plan for *Ura Dozhi*: Village Homestays

The building construction and expansion plan for the management of inevitable change was prepared through careful examination of key heritage aspects of *Ura Dozhi* village. I have singled out issues of heritage significance (chapter one), settlement morphology and building typology (chapter two), and the applicable legal frameworks (chapter three). The next critical step involves the preparation of an outline for a revival plan for the village in this chapter to ensure its sustainable future. Such an initiative is aimed at improving economic activity in the village and ultimately bringing back some of the families who left the village for cities.

## 5.1 Disclaimer for village homestays proposal

The village homestays proposal described in this chapter will serve as an initial proposal document for its practical implementation post thesis. The proposal will be deliberated with relevant stakeholders such as the Tourism Council of Bhutan, local government, and the local community people prior to its practical implementation in *Ura Dozhi* village, probably in a revised form. Further, while considering relevant provisions from the Cultural Heritage Bill of Bhutan, I am anticipating the eventual enactment of Bill [108] and will be referring to its provisions as they currently stand.

## 5.2 Rationale behind village homestays conversion and possible target audience(s)

As described in chapter one, *Ura Dozhi* village has developed over time through close association with its surrounding natural landscapes and strong cultural traditions derived from

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[108] The Cultural Heritage Bill of Bhutan is not enacted and therefore, its provisions are not yet enforceable.

their complex historical origins. However, with modernization and the increasing trend of rural-urban migration, cultural continuity in this rural settlement is at stake. It will therefore be crucial, to revive this village and ensure cultural continuity by encouraging people and their families to return to the village. The only possible solution will be to create a better economic opportunity for them in the village. One way of achieving this end is to establish village homestay facilities in the village to provide an alternative, if not better, income source for the local people. Although the establishment of homestays can be achieved by constructing new infrastructures for the homestays within the village as per the expansion plan discussed in chapter four, there are several acts and regulations which forbid this kind of new construction within rural villages such as *Ura Dozhi*. For instance, the Bhutan Building Regulation 2018[109] prohibits any kind of new development in the existing village cluster. Additionally, since this village will be identified as a heritage village under the Cultural Heritage Bill of Bhutan 2016,[110] any kind of new development which disturbs the traditional settlement structure is highly restricted. Thus, the most feasible and preferred way of establishing homestays in *Ura Dozhi* village will be to convert existing empty rooms within the houses into guest rooms. All the houses in the village are two or three-storied structures with less than fifty percent occupancy and the idea of creating homestay facilities can be realized by converting those empty floors into guest rooms rather than constructing new ones. If any new infrastructural development is deemed necessary, it must be carefully assessed and constructed in accordance with the building construction and expansion plan discussed in chapter four.

This proposal for village homestays is expected to draw visitors into the village and create an alternate economic opportunity for the community. By in large, there are four identified groups of target audiences who might visit or travel through the village at different times of the year.

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[109] Ministry of Work & Human Settlement, "Bhutan Building Regulations 2018."
[110] MoHCA, Bhutan, *Draft Cultural Heritage Bill of Bhutan 2016*.

1. Local travelers: as described in chapter one, *Ura Dozhi* village lies at the midway point along the new east-west national highway with relatively heavy traffic. This area is also the place where most of the public transport stops for the night. Currently, due to the absence of good lodging places around this area, travelers must drive for one to two hours towards *Bumthang* town or other lodging facilities along the way to find a place to sleep for the night.[111]

2. Trekkers and hikers: due to its central location, *Ura Dozhi* village has served as a central location along ancient trade routes between east and west for centuries (as described in chapter one) with the route passing right through the center of the village. This route was widely used until 1960s but after the construction of motor roads in the country, these trails lost their function. However, with the initiative of the Trans Bhutan Trail,[112] these networks of old routes are being revived and transformed into popular trekking and hiking routes with identified destinations along their paths. The idea of the homestay was discussed with the Trans Bhutan Trail organization, and they have agreed to look into the possibility of making *Ura Dozhi* village one of the destinations point along the route once the proposal for homestays is realized.[113]

3. Tourists: Bhutan attracts a number of international tourists every year, and *Bumthang* in particular is known to be one of the most visited regions in the country. Currently, temples and religious sites are the main attractions for tourists in the region. However, with the preservation of *Ura Dozhi* village as a heritage village, it is expected that the village will be included in the list of must-visit places in *Bumthang* district for tourists interested in experiencing village life and spending a few nights in the village.

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[111] When the new highway was constructed, only a very limited number of lodging facilities were constructed along the way and few people prefer them compared to lodgings in Bumthang town, which is quite far away.

[112] "Tans Bhutan Trail."

[113] This proposal of converting Ura Dozhi village into one of the destinations point along the route was discussed with the Trans Bhutan Trail organization during my research field work, and the organization has given a positive response to the proposal and agreed to look into it.

4. Seasonal visitors: as discussed in chapter one, the village is known for its exuberant cultural traditions and festivals such as the *Ura Yakchoe, Ashi Lhamo* and *Ura* mushroom festivals, which are spread across one calendar year and attract large numbers of visitors including international tourists. Currently, due to the paucity of lodging facilities within the village, these visitors spend their nights at *Bumthang* town or in nearby lodges.

The proposed village homestays in *Ura Dozhi* village seem feasible and justifiable considering various groups of visitors that could utilize these facilities, thereby benefiting the community people economically.

## 5.3 Eligibility for village homestays

Conversion of traditional houses into village homestays[114] is governed by the Guidelines for the Registration of Village Homestays[115] as discussed in chapter three. As per the guidelines, village homestays should be in a rural area, housed in a traditional building with proper toilet and washroom facilities, and managed by the host family.  The houses of *Ura Dozhi* village will fulfill these requirements as there are already seven or eight houses in the village that are converted into homestays. However, regarding the management aspect, *Article 8.c* of the guideline mandates a host family to have a minimum of two physically active members living in the same house to manage the homestay, a condition that may not be fulfilled by some of the houses in *Ura Dozhi*. Most of the younger and physically active members of the population have already moved away, leaving the village in the hands of the elder generation as described in chapter one. Further, with the busy schedule of work that people must undertake, managing

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[114] As per the Guideline for Registration of Village Homestays, a village homestay is defined as ''a type of accommodation where the host family provides accommodation facilities for tourists at their home. It is generally located in rural areas or outside the municipal boundary.''
[115] Tourism Council of Bhutan, "Guideline for the Registration of Village Homestays 2019."

a homestay would mean an extra burden for them. Therefore, to ensure the smooth management of homestays, some other alternatives for homestay management must be adopted, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

## 5.4 Checklist for village homestays

Although the village in general, being a rural area consisting of traditional houses, qualifies for conversion into village homestays as per the guideline, there are a few conditions that will have to be met before the Tourism Council of Bhutan certifies it as a registered homestay.[116] Following are the lists of checklists mandated by the guideline:

## 5.4.1 Mandatory checklist

1. The surrounding environment must be pleasant, safe, and clean.

2. Access from the road point must be clean, convenient, and safe.

3. The host family must practice good personal hygiene.

4. Basic heating and cooling facilities must be provided depending on weather conditions.

5. The rooms must be clean and well-maintained with proper ventilation.

6. The mattresses, blankets, pillows, and linens are clean and comfortable.

7. Clothing hangers or hooks must be provided.

8. The Altar Room[117] cannot be converted into a guest room.

9. The toilets and bathrooms must be clean and well-maintained with proper ventilation.

10. The kitchen must be clean and well-maintained with good quality cutlery and crockery.

11. The Living and dining areas should be spacious, clean, and well-maintained.

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[116] Tourism Council of Bhutan.

[117] Every Bhutanese house has a shrine room popularly known as the Altar Room (*Choesham*) which is often the most decorated room in the house. The altar room forms the spiritual core of a home and is treated with respect because it is associated with sacred objects and images."Chösham: Domestic Shrine Rooms | Mandala Collections - Texts," accessed April 21, 2023, https://texts.mandala.library.virginia.edu/text/ch%C3%B6sham-domestic-shrine-rooms.

12. Waste segregation must be practiced.

## 5.4.2 Recommended or desirable checklist:

1. A dressing mirror and wardrobe may be provided in the rooms.

2. A wash basin and mirror may be provided in the toilet and bathroom.

3. Toilet and bathroom amenities such as soap, toilet paper, or towels may be provided.[118]

In general, *Ura Dozhi* village satisfies the above-mentioned checklists from the Homestay Guidelines. The village has a pleasant, clean, and safe surrounding environment, which is free from dust, vehicular noise or any kind of danger from wild animals as the village is situated in the center of the valley surrounded by agricultural fields. The settlement is well connected by a farm road from the highway leading to the periphery of the settlement, and each house is then connected from this point by well-defined traditional footpaths which are clean and safe as the cattle are restricted from entering the settlement. Regarding the rooms for the guests, since all the houses are traditional, ventilation inside the room is not an issue, and the rooms are well heated with traditional heating systems using firewood during the cold seasons.[119] However, since the rooms are not airtight, sufficient blankets (which are clean and comfortable) will be required to keep the guest warm throughout the night after the heating goes off. The issue of the restriction on converting the Altar Room into a guest room will not arise in the houses of *Ura Dozhi,* at least for now, as there are enough unused rooms inside each house, which can be converted into guest rooms. Further, the houses are now equipped with clean and well-maintained modern toilets and bathrooms. However, there are no separate living and dining areas as such. The people in rural areas do not practice the culture of having separate living or

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[118] Tourism Council of Bhutan, "Guideline for the Registration of Village Homestays 2019."
[119] Traditional houses have large timber opening at the upper floors which covers more than half of the elevation, while remaining faces are fitted with smaller window openings. Since the ground floors will be used by host, it is mostly the upper floors which will be converted into guest rooms.

dining areas. The kitchen always functioned as a dining room (even as a living room in some cases) while one of the bedrooms was used as a living room during the day. This is an issue that will need to be looked into later on to find acceptable alternative solutions. Finally, the recommended or desirable checklist including dressing mirrors and wardrobes in the room, a wash basin and mirrors in the toilets, and necessary amenities in the toilet can be ensured, depending on the financial capability of the host or availability of outside funds later.

Overall, the village is clean as they practice a system of waste segregation (organic wastes are fed to cattle or used as fertilizer while dry wastes are either burned or collected and stored in waste pits). The village is free from dust and noise pollution unlike urban areas. However, maintaining a good standard of personal hygiene for the individual host family can be challenging as the people are always engaged with cattle and agricultural work throughout the day. Therefore, a practical solution to address this issue of personal hygiene will be addressed in the later part of this chapter.

## 5.5 Development of village homestays

Considering the feasibility and eligibility, and fulfillment of the checklist for homestay conversion, this proposal was developed to establish a village homestay economy in *Ura Dozhi* village. Further, it is the wish of the people to convert their empty rooms into guest rooms for extra income, and a few have already converted these rooms as mentioned earlier.

### 5.5.1 Mix of top-down and bottom-up approaches

The homestay idea is not new in this village and conversion of individual dwellings may well happen later, considering the village's suitable location (mid-way between east and west as described in chapter one) and the unique heritage of the village (various annual events as discussed in chapter one and the unique settlement pattern as discussed in chapter two).

However, in the absence of a careful study and expansion plan such as what is presented here, there is a great risk of uncontrolled development which will destroy the unique, harmonious heritage elements in the village that it is known for. To manage the change in a controlled and systematic way, a top-down approach to a development and expansion plan, with heritage protection at its core, is necessary. Nevertheless, regarding the conversion of houses into homestays, a thorough community consultation must also be carried out to come up with a bottom-up initiative of homestay management that will be suitable in the long run.

## 5.6 Homestays management system

As discussed earlier, the management of homestays was a significant challenge that needs to be addressed because of the shortage of human resources. As per the guidelines, the homestay must be managed by the host family and requires at least two active persons to manage it, which will be challenging for most of the households of *Ura Dozhi* village as the village population has already shrunk due to the adverse effects of rural-urban out-migration. Further, maintaining good standards of personal hygiene was also found to be a difficult issue. Therefore, to address such issues, a homestay management system will be established, whereby all the homestays within the village will be managed centrally by the community cooperative. This community cooperative will be established under the existing traditional governance system of the village, which was described in chapter one.

## 5.6.1 Community cooperative

The overall management and functioning of the community cooperative will be the responsibility of the sixteen elected members, apart from their normal responsibility of managing the whole village, a local system of governance that has a long tradition in this village. These sixteen representative members, four *Mangmi,* four *Chipoens* and eight *Tazas*, will form a cooperative board and will be responsible for overseeing daily operations and

making strategic decisions. The main task of the board is to formulate an effective governance model for the cooperative, outlining a decision-making process, conflict resolution, financial management, membership requirements, social and environmental responsibility, and making cooperative bylaws among other things.

A separate working team, headed by the homestay manager, will fall under this cooperative board. Members will be identified through the board's general assembly. The team will operate and run the homestays under the cooperative board. The cooperative board will identify separate common kitchen and dining room facilities for the guests, and it is the responsibility of the working team to attend to guests as required. The main tasks of this working team are as follows:

1. To ensure that the rooms, toilets, bathrooms, kitchen, living room, and dining rooms are clean and well-maintained.

2. Ensure that a high standard of personal hygiene is practiced while preparing food in the kitchen.

3. Ensure that a proper record of guest registration as well as a transparent financial account is maintained.

4. To ensure uniform distribution of the guest to all the houses.

The daily operation of the homestays will be the responsibility of this working team. Further details will be developed later after consulting with the board members and the community people. Such a cooperative will resolve all the issues raised earlier such as the shortage of active personnel in the host families to manage the homestays or maintaining a high standard of hygiene. However, since this proposal of managing village homestays by community cooperative does not fit the management strategy as described in the guideline which requires

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homestays to be managed by a host family, this issue needs to be discussed with the Tourism Council of Bhutan separately and resolved accordingly.

## 5.7 Sustainability

The main reason behind this proposal for developing homestays is to revive the village by increasing the economic opportunities in the village, which will ultimately bring back a portion of the population who has left. To retain them, it is crucial to make this village sustainable from all perspectives. In this context, with this proposal of homestays, four sustainability aspects need to be addressed as well: food sustainability, economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, and social sustainability, which are interdependent and are key elements in the revival efforts for the village. For instance, it is crucial to encourage people to return to or expand into traditional subsistence farming practices in order to provide guests with authentic traditional cuisines prepared from local produce. This not only ensures food security and self-sufficiency within the village but also provides a financial benefit to the farming community as a part of a circular economy. Moreover, it contributes towards the preservation and promotion of traditional farming methods and helps maintain local food traditions and seed varieties, which in the process can contribute to environmental sustainability. Further, it contributes towards the economic sustainability of the village as farmers will be able to market their products all year round to the cooperative, thereby growing less dependent on imported goods, which in turn stems cash outflow from the village.

All these efforts, if viewed from a holistic perspective, also help the community to achieve a measure of social sustainability. Social sustainability here is defined as the capacity of the community to maintain traditional social values in the present without risking their disappearance in the future. With an improvement in the economic prospects in the village, this proposal of homestays is not only expected to retain people in the village but also encourage

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some of those who have already left to return to the village. Currently, the primary reason why people move out of the village is to find better economic opportunities in the urban areas. If similar, if not better opportunities may be found again in the village, there is no doubt that this dying rural village will come back to life with a viable local population, thereby reviving the village and maintaining its social sustainability for years to come.

## 5.8 Monitoring and evaluation

It will be the responsibility of the working team to ensure the proper day-to-day functioning of individual homestays. At the same time, the management committee must also monitor the working team frequently. The working team must submit monthly reports to the management committee of the community cooperative and the management team must then evaluate the report and discuss what further improvements need to be made, introducing managed adaptability into the system. Further, the cooperative will be subject to monitoring and evaluation by the Tourism Council of Bhutan to check the quality and standard of the homestay facilities provided to the guests.

## 5.9 Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have outlined a proposal for reviving the *Ura Dozhi* village by creating economic opportunities for the local people in the village through the establishment of village homestays by converting existing empty rooms within houses into guest rooms. These homestays will be managed centrally through the traditional institution of the community cooperative. It is the responsibility of the community cooperative to ensure the quality and standard of the homestay facilities and they will be monitored and evaluated by the management committee and Tourism Council of Bhutan to ensure the same.

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# Conclusion

Sustainable management of change through heritage protection of rural villages like *Ura Dozhi* village requires a detailed understanding of the historical background of each individual village as well as a comprehensive understanding of each settlement in its current form. Through the historical background, the development of the village can be understood and, accordingly, bring an appreciation of the various tangible and intangible heritage elements associated with each individual village. Understanding the settlement in its current form will help heritage professionals to grasp the changes that the village has undergone over time. In the case of *Ura Dozhi* village, these factors included the expansion pattern of the village, the appearance of different building types over time and how they are distributed within the village today as well as modern infrastructural developments within the village.

*Ura Dozhi* village underwent smooth and continuous change over time despite the resistance to the forces of modernization shown by the villages since the mid-twentieth century. However, over the last few decades, such changes began to accelerate as a result of the increased pace of rural-urban migration, shifts in agricultural practices, the introduction of modern motor roads, and access to the outside world through the Internet. Fortunately, in the case of *Ura Dozhi* village, these manifested changes are just at their beginning and now is the right time to intervene to manage these inevitable changes sensibly. Although the rich cultural heritage of the village is still retained for now, its fate currently lies in the hands of the older generations making its future continuity uncertain. A concrete plan needed to be implemented immediately in order to manage these changes and ensure some kind of cultural continuity based on the particular cultural heritage traditions of this village.

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However, before making any kind of concrete plan, a detailed survey and analysis of the settlement's topography were carried out through field visits, mapping work and data analysis. It was found that the houses of *Ura Dozhi* can be grouped into nine categories based on their most distinctive architectural features, especially their height, roof styles and window types. These house typologies follow certain similar characteristics like their general north-south orientation, location of later added extensions and the rectilinear shape of the houses. The construction of these typologies was influenced and shaped by various applicable governmental acts, guidelines, regulations, policies, and management plans. Considering all these fundamental aspects, a building construction and expansion plan was prepared as necessary preparatory work to properly manage inevitable change and ensure that the existing harmony of village building work within the natural landscape is maintained. Clear guidelines for future building work are needed to retain this harmony. The building construction and expansion plan sets out the architectural possibilities that can be permitted for new constructions or renovations within the village in the future as well as identifies the locations where the settlement can still be expanded. A revival plan for the village was prepared within the limits of this construction and expansion plan, and in accordance with the applicable legal requirements. The plan, aiming at an economically sustainable future that will bring families back to the village, will be based on establishment of a system of village homestays, managed centrally through the institution of a community cooperative based on the traditional political leadership. This homestay proposal is expected to create a kind of alternative economic activity in the village to attract those village families who have already left the village and whose return will be necessary to ultimately ensure future cultural continuity in the village.

This detailed study of *Ura Dozhi* village and careful planning for its future expansion along with the revival plan should play a significant role in preserving the rural cultural heritage of Bhutan on various levels. For instance, presentation of this sustainable management plan,

assuming the Cultural Heritage Bill will soon be enacted, will give the central government legislators a better understanding of the role the bill could play in preserving rural cultural heritage in Bhutan. A better understanding of how this bill could work on a local level will consequently increase the chances of getting the bill enacted soon. Once the bill is enacted, then the various cultural heritage protection measures within the bill can be enforced legally. Further, the example of *Ura Dozhi* village should inspire other similar villages, encouraging them to preserve the cultural heritage of their own villages. Moreover, if this proposal for village revival is successful, then the management proposal can be duplicated in other similar villages, ultimately resulting in their preservation. The hope is that the current pace of rural-urban migration can be slowed or even somewhat reversed and that socially, culturally and economically sustainable rural villages can be built in the country.

All the plans and proposals developed in this thesis should be taken as preliminary propositions that need to be finalized through consultation with various relevant stakeholders including local people and their leadership in the *Ura Dozhi* village. During my research, due to a lack of time and resources, stakeholder consultation could not be carried out apart from a few interviews of community people made during my field visit. Further, since a second visit was not possible, obtaining additional information after my field visit from the village was difficult. A few of my connections from the village proved too busy to provide me with information in a timely manner. Fortunately, however, I was still able to collect most of the important data required to complete and shape the first stage of this project for this thesis during my field visit. Effective stakeholder consultation, especially within *Ura Dozhi* village, will be carried out in the next stages of the on-going management project to create practical, implementable plans and proposals within the settlement.

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Based on the thesis research, it is evident that sustainable management of change through heritage protection will prove crucial for the preservation of cultural heritage in rural villages such as *Ura Dozhi*. The proposed plan for managing the sometimes unsightly footprints of inevitable change and ensuring cultural continuity through the establishment of profitable village homestays and expansion guidelines can serve as a model for other similar villages and contribute to building a network of socially, culturally, and economically sustainable rural villages in Bhutan.

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# Appendices

Housing typology details

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Type 1: <em>Jamtho</em> roofed houses with a standard window opening at ground floor level (both <em>Boego payab</em> and <em>Horgo payab</em>)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Location</td><td>• Located mostly within main settlement and partly spread across other side of valley.</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Number of houses</td><td>• 33 houses (House no. 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 28, 31, 33, 34, 37, 38, 41, 42, 44, 45, 46, 47, 55, 57, 58, 61, 64, 66, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Plot</td><td>• Irregularly shaped.</td></tr>
<tr><td>i</td><td>Plan</td><td>• Rectangular<br>• Later added extension for House no. 12, 22, 23, 44, 55, 57, 58, 61 & 64<br>• tends to enlarge towards north south direction along the contour except for house no. 18 which enlarges along east west perpendicular to contour line.<br>• dimensions of the houses range from 6 x 8 m to 10 x 12 m</td></tr>
<tr><td>ii</td><td>Main facade</td><td>• Mostly faces towards the valley except for house no. 18, which faces towards the house no. 19; and house no. 66, 73 & 77 which faces towards the road above.</td></tr>
<tr><td>iii</td><td>Primary Opening (opening at the main façade)</td><td>• Mostly <em>Rabsel Gochham-thognyim</em> except for house no. 18 & 34 with <em>Horgo payab;</em> house no. 31 & 74 with <em>rabsel gocham; and</em> house no. 47 with <em>lobur rabsel</em></td></tr>
<tr><td>iv</td><td>Openings at ground floor</td><td>• <em>Boego payab</em> and <em>Horgo payab</em></td></tr>
<tr><td>v</td><td>Location in relation to other houses</td><td>• houses locate randomly in relation to other houses except houses 19 & 20 which are closed to each other</td></tr>
<tr><td>vi</td><td>Number of floors</td><td>• Mostly 2 levels except for house no. 19, 20, 22, 41, 42, 45, 74 & 76 with 3 levels</td></tr>
<tr><td>vii</td><td>Roofing</td><td>• Mostly <em>Jamtho</em> roof except for house no. 18, 73 & 77 with simple gable roof</td></tr>
<tr><td>viii</td><td>Roofing material</td><td>• Mostly iron sheets except for house no. 18, 28 & 55 with timber roof</td></tr>
<tr><td>ix</td><td>Access to each floor</td><td>• Accessible from level 1 only for house no. 12, 15, 17, 21, 23, 31, 33, 37, 44, 46, 47, 64 & 73<br>• Accessible from level 1 and 2 for house no. 18, 19, 20, 22, 28, 34, 38, 41, 42, 45, 55, 57, 58, 61, 66, 73, 74, 75, 76 & 77</td></tr>
<tr><td>x</td><td>Toilet</td><td>• Mostly attached to southern or northern façade</td></tr>
<tr><td>xi</td><td>Painting</td><td>• Mostly <em>dring</em> painting except for house no. 26, 33 & 41 with <em>thama</em> painting; and house no. 18, 19, 23, 28, 34, 37, 38, 47, 73, 76 & 77 with no painting</td></tr>
</table>

| xii | Usage | • Mostly residential purpose except for house no. 12 which is used as homestay as well (few rooms converted into guest room). |
|-----|-------|------|
| xiii | Age | • between 1 to 45 years |

Type-1 pictures (Picture by author)

| 12 | 15 | 17 | 18 |
|----|----|----|----|


| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
|----|----|----|----|


| 23 | 26 | 28 | 31 |
|----|----|----|----|


| 33 | 34 | 37 | 38 |
|----|----|----|----|


| 41 | 42 | 44 | 45 |
|----|----|----|----|


| 46 | 47 | 55 | 57 |
|----|----|----|----|


| 58 | 61 | 64 | 66 |
|----|----|----|----|


| 73 | 74 | 75 | 76 |
|----|----|----|----|

| 77 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | | | |

| Type 2: *Jamtho* roofed houses with basic window opening at ground floor (*Geykar payab*) | | |
|---|---|---|
| Location | | • concentrated towards southeastern corner of main settlement |
| Number of houses | | • 4 (House no. 24, 27, 32, 53) |
| Plot | | • Irregularly shaped. |
| i | Plan | • Rectangular<br>• tends to enlarge towards north-south direction along the contour line.<br>• dimensions of the houses range from 7 x 8 m to 10 x 16 m |
| ii | Main façade | • faces towards the valley |
| iii | Primary Opening (opening at the main façade) | • *Rabsel Gochham-thognyim* |
| iv | Openings at ground floor | • *Geykar payab* |
| v | Location in relation to other houses | • houses locate randomly in relation to other houses |
| vi | Number of floors | • 2 levels (24, 27, 53)<br>• 3 levels (32) |
| vii | Roofing | • *Jamtho* |
| viii | Roofing material | • Iron sheets |
| ix | Access to each floor | • Accessible only from level 1 for house no. 27, 32 & 53<br>• Accessible from level 1 & 2 for house no. 32 |
| x | Toilet | • Mostly attached on Southern façade |
| xi | Painting | • Mostly *thama* painting except for house no. 24 with *dring* painting |
| xii | Usage | • Residential except for house no. 32 which is used as homestay (few rooms converted into homestay) |
| xiii | Age | • 20 to 35 years |

| Type 2 pictures (Picture by author) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 24 | 27 | 32 | 53 |
|  |  |  |  |

| Type 3: *Drangim* roofed houses with a basic window opening at ground floor level (*Geykar payab*) | |
|---|---|
| Location | • located towards northwestern and southeastern corner of the settlement |
| Number of houses | • 7(House no. 13, 14, 29, 30, 39, 48, 56) |
| Plot | • Irregularly shaped. |
| a   Houses | |
|   i  Plan | • Rectangular<br>• tends to enlarge towards north south direction along the contour line.<br>• dimensions of the houses range from 7 x 9 m to 8 x 10 m |
|   ii  Main facade | • faces towards the valley |
|   iii  Primary Opening (opening at main façade) | • *Rabsel Gochham-thognyim* |
|   iv  Opening at ground floor | • *Geykar payab* |
|   v  Location in relation to other houses | • houses locate randomly in relation to other houses |
| b   Number of floors | • 2 levels (14, 29, 30, 56))<br>• 3 levels (13, 39, 48) |
| c   Roofing | • *Dangrim* roof |
| d   Roofing material | • Mostly timber roof except for house no. 13 & 48 with iron sheets |
| e   Access to each floor | • Accessible from level 1 only for house no. 14, 29, 30 & 56<br>• Accessible from level 1 and 2 for house no. 13, 39 & 48 |
| f   Toilet | • Mostly attached to southern facade |
| g   Painting | • Mostly *thama* painting except for house no. 14 with *dring* painting |
| h   Usage | • Mostly residential except for house no. 13 & 39 (few rooms are used as home stay. |
| i   Age | • between 30 to 47 years) |

| Type-3 Pictures (Picture by author) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | 14 | 29 | 30 |
|  |  |  |  |
| 39 | 48 | 56 | |
|  |  |  | |

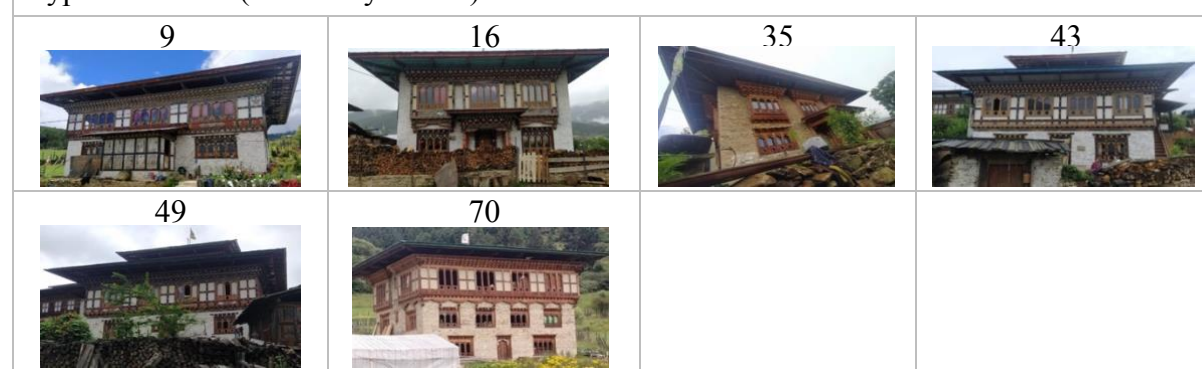| Type 4: *Drangim* roofed house with standard window opening at ground floor level (both *Boego payab* and *Horgo payab*) | |
|---|---|
| Location | • Scattered across the valley |
| Number of houses | • 5 (House no. 25, 50, 51, 60, 65) |
| Plot | • Irregularly shaped. |
| a     Houses | |
|    i    Plan | • Rectangular<br>• tends to enlarge towards north south direction along the contour line.<br>• dimensions of the houses range from 7 x 10 m to 8 x 12 m |
|    ii    Main facade | • faces towards the valley |
|    iii    Primary Opening (opening at main façade) | • *Rabsel Gochham-thognyim* |
|    iv    Openings at ground floor | • *Boego payab* and *Horgo payab* |
|    v    Location in relation to other houses | • houses locate randomly in relation to other houses |
| b     Number of floors | • 2 level |
| c     Roofing | • *Dangrim* |
| d     Roofing material | • Mostly iron sheets except for house no. 51 with timber roof |
| e     Access to each floor | • Mostly accessible from level 1 & 2 except for house no. 25 which is accessible only from level 1 |
| f     Toilet | • Mostly attached on southern or northern façade |
| g     Painting | • Mostly *thama* painting except for house no. 50 with *dring* and house no. 25 with no paint |
| h     Usage | • Residential |
| i     Age | • 15 to 30 years |

| Type-4 pictures (Picture by author) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 25 | 50 | 51 | 60 |
|  |  |  |  |
| 65 | | | |
|  | | | |

105

| Type 5: *Jabzhi* roofed house with *Rabsel gocham* | |
|---|---|
| Location | • mostly concentrated within main settlement except for house no. 9 which is located towards west of main settlement and house no. 70, which is located on other side of valley. |
| Number of houses | • 6 (House no. 9, 16, 35, 43, 49, 70) |
| Plot | • Irregularly shaped. |
| a    Houses | |
| i    Plan | • Rectangular<br>• tends to enlarge towards north-south along the contour line.<br>• dimensions of the houses range from 8 x 10 m to 12 x 14 m |
| ii    Main facade | • faces towards the valley |
| iii    Primary Opening (opening at the main façade) | • *Rabsel Gochham* |
| iv    Opening at ground floor | • *Boego payab* |
| v    Location in relation to other houses | • houses locate randomly in relation to other houses |
| b    Number of floors | • 2 levels (9, 35, 43, 49)<br>• 3 levels (16, 70) |
| c    Roofing | • *Jabzhi* roof |
| d    Roofing material | • Iron sheets |
| e    Access to each floor | • Accessible from level 1 only for house no. 9 & 49<br>• Accessible from level 1 and 2 for house no. 16, 35, 43 & 70 |
| f    Toilet | • Mostly attached on southern facade |
| g    Painting | • Mostly *dring* painting except for house no. 35 & 70 which are not painted |
| h    Usage | • All residential |
| i    Age | • 2 to 26 years) |

| Type-5 Pictures (Picture by author) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 16 | 35 | 43 |
|  |  |  |  |
| 49 | 70 | | |
|  |  | | |

| Type 6: *Jabzhi* roofed house with *Rabsel gocham-thognyim* | | |
|---|---|---|
| Location | | • Scattered across either side of the valley |
| Number of houses | | • 6 (House no. 11, 36, 52, 62, 67, 72) |
| Plot | | • Irregularly shaped. |
| a | Houses | |
| i | Plan | • Rectangular<br>• tends to enlarge towards north-south direction along the contour line.<br>• dimensions of the houses range from 8 x 10 m to 8 x 12 m |
| ii | Main facade | • faces towards the valley |
| iii | Primary Opening (opening at the main façade) | • *Rabsel Gocham-thognyim* |
| iv | Opening at ground floor | • *Boego payab* |
| v | Location in relation to other houses | • houses locate randomly in relation to other houses |
| b | Number of floors | • 2 level (11, 52, 67, 72)<br>• 3 level (36, 62) |
| c | Roofing | • *Jabzhi* |
| d | Roofing material | • Iron sheets |
| e | Access to each floor | • Mostly accessible only from level 1 except for house no. 72, which is accessible from level 1 & 2 |
| f | Toilet | • Attached mostly from southern or northern facade |
| g | Painting | • *dring* painting |
| h | Usage | • All residential |
| i | Age | • 5 to 32 years |

| Type 6 pictures (Picture by author) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 11 | 36 | 52 | 62 |
| 67 | 72 | | |

| Type 7: Temporary houses | | |
|---|---|---|
| Location | | • Tend to locate at the center of the valley |
| Number of houses | | • 2 (House no. 54, 63) |
| Plot | | • Irregularly shaped. |
| a | Houses | |
| i | Plan | • rectangular<br>• tends to enlarge towards north south direction along the contour line.<br>• dimensions of the houses range from 4 x 6 m to 6 x 17 m |
| ii | Main facade | • faces towards the valley for house no. 63 and faces towards house above for house no. 54 |
| iii | Primary Opening | • Simple window |
| iv | Secondary openings | • Simple window |
| v | Location in relation to other houses | • houses locate randomly in relation to other houses |
| b | Number of floors | • 1 level |
| c | Roofing | • Gable roof |
| d | Roofing material | • Timber roof for house no. 54 and iron roof for house no. 63 |
| e | Access to each floor | • Accessible from level 1 |
| f | Toilet | • Built separate from house |
| g | Painting | • *Thama* painting for house no. 54 while house no. 63 is not painted |
| h | Usage | • Residential |
| i | Age | • 5 to 10 years |

| Type-7 pictures (Picture by author) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 54 | 63 | | |
|  |  | | |

| Type 8: Exceptional Buildings (Picture by author) | | |
|---|---|---|
| Location | | • Scattered across the valley |
| Number of houses | | • 6 (House no. 8, 40, 59, 68, 69, 71) |
| Plot | | • Irregularly shaped. |
| a | Houses | |
| i | Plan | • Random shaped<br>• dimensions of the houses range from 5 x 8 m to 12 x 16 m |
| ii | Main facade | • faces towards valley |
| iii | Primary Opening (opening at ground main façade) | • Mostly *rabsel gocham-thognyim* except for house no. house no. 8 & 59 with *rabsel gocham* and house no. 68 with simple window |
| iv | Secondary openings (at ground floor) | • *Boego payab* |
| v | Location in relation to other houses | • Randomly located in relation to other houses. |
| b | Number of floors | • 1 level (house no. 8, 69)<br>• 2 level (house no. 68, 71)<br>• 3 level (house no. 40, 59) |
| c | Roofing | • Gable roofing system (68)<br>• *Jabzhi* roofing system (8, 40, 59, 68, 71) |
| d | Roofing material | • Iron sheets |
| e | Access to each floor | • Accessible only from level 1 for house no. 8, 59 & 69)<br>• Accessible from level 1 & 2 for house no. 40, 68, 71) |
| f | Toilet | • Mostly attached towards southern or northern facade |
| g | Painting | • *Thama* painting for house no. 8, 68 & 71; *dring* painting for house no. 59 & 69; and house no. 40 without paint |
| h | Usage | • Mix use (residential for house no. 8, 68 & 71; House no. 69 used as kindergarten; house no. 40 & 59 is used as homestay (few rooms converted into homestays) |
| i | Age | • 11 to 30 years |

| Type-8 Pictures (Picture by author) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8 | 40 | 59 | 68 |
| 69 | 71 | | |

| Type 9: Religious and community houses | |
|---|---|
| Location | • located at the top of main settlement (western corner) |
| Number of houses | • 5 (House no. 1, 2, 3, 4, 7) |
| Plot | • Irregularly shaped. |
| a Houses | |
| i Plan | • Random shaped<br>• dimensions of the houses range from 6 x 12 to 19 x 23 m |
| ii Main facade | • house no. 2 & 3 faces towards the temple courtyard; house no. 4; faces towards courtyard of house no. 3; House no. 1 and 7 faces towards valley |
| iii Primary Opening (opening at the main façade) | • *Gomang rabsel* (house no. 1); *Rabsel Gocham* (house no. 3 & 7); *Boego payab* (house no. 4) |
| iv Secondary openings (at ground floor) | • *Boego payab & Geykar payab* |
| v Location in relation to other houses | • houses locate close to each other (1, 2, 3, 4) |
| b Number of floors | • 1 level (house no. 2, 4, 7))<br>• 2 level (house no. 1, 3) |
| c Roofing | • Gable roofing system (2, 3, 4)<br>• *Jabzhi* roofing system (1, 7) |
| d Roofing material | • Iron sheets |
| e Access to each floor | • Accessible from level 1 |
| f Toilet | • separate toilet constructed |
| g Painting | • Mostly *thama* painting for house no. 2, 3 & 4 except for house no. 1 with *rab* painting & 7 with *dring* painting |
| h Usage | • Community usage |
| i Age | • 1 to 40 years |

| Type-9 pictures (Picture by author) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|  |  |  |  |
| 7 | | | |
|  | | | |