

1.3.6.2. Kheng Speakers (central Bhutan)

Brother Moon!
 Give me the leftover food;
 It was kept on a shelf;
 Where is the shelf?
 It was burnt in a fire;
 Where is the fire?
 It was put out by water;
 Where is the water?
 It was drunk by an ox;
 Where is the ox?
 It fell down a cliff;
 Where is the cliff where the ox fell?
 A flood washed it away;
 Where are the remains washed away by the flood?
 Artemisia plants have grown over it;
 Where are Artemisia plants?
 An ox has eaten them;
 Where is the ox?
 It was taken for ploughing;
 Where is the ploughed land?
 Maize has been grown;
 Where are the maize crops?
 It has been cooked;
 Where is the cooked maize?
 It was kept on a shelf;
 Where is the shelf?
 It was burnt by a fire.

1.3.6.3. Tshangla Speakers

Oh Brother Moon!
 Where do you sleep?
 On the bank of Kuri (chu);
 What do you eat?
 [I] eat rice;
 What is your curry?
 Fish from the Gongri (chu);
 Where is your leftover food?
 [Left] on the manual grinding stone;
 Where is the manual grinder?
 It was burnt by fire;
 Where is fire?
 It was put out by water;
 Where is water?
 It was drunk by *ja tsha* (a hybrid ox);
 Where is the ox?
 The ox was taken to the field for ploughing;
 Where is the field?
 It was scratched up by the chicken.
 Where is the chicken?
 It is on the man shing (name of a tree);

Where is the man shing?
 It was cut down by the axe;
 Where is the axe?
 The axe was thrown in the blacksmith's workshop with
 a clang.

1.3.7. Moral Instructions

Moral instructions deal with skills and qualities that should be learnt, secured and practised that have been formulated by thinkers, leaders, teachers and elders and other wise beings in accordance with the needs of worldly living. Sometimes they are also known as the oral instructions of spiritual teachers, who have created them as the guiding precepts for their followers and other lay people. As such, they are called *lab ja* (*bslab bya*) or *zhal dam* (precious words) in Dzongkha.

Once born into this world as human beings, it is most important that both the spiritual and temporal aspects of our lives be conducted in accordance with the dharma and with the law. Therefore, it is important to learn the meaning and implications of moral instructions so that we understand the difference between good and bad acts, so that can avoid bad thoughts and acts just as we reject poisons, and can embrace good thoughts and acts just as we cherish medicines. In this way it is possible to be of service in our beautiful mountain kingdom, just as the sun in a cloudless sky is able to send its light and warmth to all parts of the world in equal measure.

Moral instructions are given in order to guide others in their thoughts and acts. Therefore such instructions should be provided with a calm but assured approach, sometimes with great humility, sometimes with feeling, and often outwardly in a remonstrative manner. But



inwardly the goal should be to help others to be true to their fundamentally good and compassionate natures.

Moral instructions are of different types as given below:

1. Instructions related to dharma given by lamas and saints,
2. Guidelines of our forefathers to steer their young people and children along the right path,
3. Affectionate and Reassuring;
4. Reproach or Rebuke,
5. Encouragement, and
6. Indirect advice.

1.3.7.1. Religious Precepts

Koen chog sum (the Three Jewels) including the root teachers are the ultimate guardian, protector and refuge for all Bhutanese who have faith in the Buddha Dharma. For Buddhists, there are three obligatory instructions to follow. These comprise three abstentions, three adoptions and three general instructions.

a. The three abstentions

- i. After taking refuge in the Buddha, do not take refuge in mundane gods.
- ii. After taking refuge in the Dharma, refrain from harming any sentient beings.

- iii. After taking refuge in the Sangha, do not rely on people who oppose the sacred doctrine.

b. The three adoptions

- i. Having taken refuge in the Buddha, do not neglect or destroy old images or any material pieces found from damaged images.
- ii. Starting from a single letter which contains the meaning of sacred doctrine, meditate on this and take it as the Buddha Dharma.
- iii. Pay respect not only to monks but also to those who wear red, yellow and orange and even to a piece of cloth lying on the ground.

c. The three general instructions

- i. After taking refuge in the Buddha, one should have the same regard and respect for an image resembling the Buddha or one that is damaged as for a true image of the Buddha.
- ii. After taking refuge in the Dharma, one should regard even a single syllable that is related to the Dharma as the precious Dharma of the Buddha.
- iii. After taking refuge in the Sangha, one should avoid abusing anything that bears the sign of the member of Sangha or carelessly disposing of any cloth that is red, orange or yellow in colour.



1.3.7.2. General Instructions

Having settled in the community of worldly beings, no matter how superior you may be in terms of your social class, knowledge and rank or how humble you may be, it is very important to observe and live in accordance with the cultural and traditional norms inherited from our forefathers. Therefore, all good and positive activities that benefit not only ourselves but even all the humanity are to be followed and practiced in accordance with the instructions of the enlightened beings. The following instructions are translated from the works of Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltzen (1182-1251) written in the *“leg she thruel gi dra wa”*.

Alas!

The fortunate ancient time has gone;
 The wise and knowledgeable elders have passed away;
 Stupid people are now born;
 The knot of sacred Dharma has loosened;
 The fragile rope of human traditions has been disconnected;
 The golden yoke of secular law is broken;
 The ocean of basic negotiations has dried;
 The Tiger pattern of heroic courage has disappeared;
 The essence of prosperity and shame has been vanished;
 The soul of nobilities is unprotected;
 While the behaviour of immoral human beings is allowed;
 Ignoring the future advantages;
 Counting only for temporary existence;
 Neglecting the noble culture;
 Adopting the deluded cultures;
 Not following the advice of eminent beings;
 But following the foolish people;
 Not equalizing the noble acts;
 Seeing numerous people engaging in unwholesome acts;
 Instead of following the noble ones.

Thereby, in order to bear good fruition, whatever you undertake first, build confidence and trust in the Three Jewels. Though success depend entirely on the previous karma and accumulated merits, cautious acts at present times is important. Enthusiasm and vigour are important tools to accomplish your dreams and wishes. Attaining the heights will be difficult for those that lack counselling and forward moving. Knowing one's limit of the present is the ultimate sign of a courageous man.

1.3.7.3. Heartfelt Advice

Do not show too much softness even to your child,
 He/she cannot adjust with the customs later;
 Never hate too much even to your enemies;
 One will bear the karmic consequence even if you are victorious;
 Do not be too dependent even to your beloved ones,
 You may be hostile to each other later;
 Do not explode too much even to your servant;
 There will be no one around you later;
 Do not suppress too much on your subject;
 They will keep in their mind;
 Do not act partially even to your friends;
 It will create wound in their heart;
 Do not instruct odd customs even to others;
 It will harm even to you later;

The kindness of a person is dependent on his/her character;
 Be humble,
 Humbleness depends on how talkative you are;
 Do no talk nonsense.
 The distinction of intelligence and stupidity depends on how one understands the wisdom in others;
 Take time to judge,
 Cleverness and foolishness depends on how independent one is;
 Be independent.
 Do not talk too much,
 Do not forget whatever you said,
 Do not accept everything that is offered;
 Accomplish whatever you have accepted.
 Do not admit any questions;
 Be absolutely sure what you have admitted
 A bad person is unfit in society
 Be wholesome person
 A garrulous person is unfit among friends
 Do not talk too much.
 A bad person by nature is unfit for company;
 A person without the knowledge of tripitaka is unfit as a Buddha's follower;
 A person not afraid of defilements is unfit among dharma practitioners.

[Translation ends here.]

Being born as human beings we become susceptible to degenerate actions. Despite our understanding of the consequences of virtues and non-virtues we are often influenced by the lure of ignoble thoughts and refuse to take heed of the guidance and advices of the root lamas, teachers, parents and siblings. As the saying goes, “those

who love us sound harsh as beneficial medicines taste bitter,” though we consider them as harsh, scolding and physical punishments are intended to divert us from the paths of wrong doing.

1.3.8. Proverbs and Aphorisms

In Bhutan, proverbs and aphorisms are widely used both in general conversation and talks, and also in more structured settings. This is popularly known as *Pche tam* or *Pe tam* and also considered as one of the ornaments of the art of speech. Literally, *Pche/pe* means example, simile, illustration and *tam* means speech, conversation, talk or an account. Thus, *Pche tam* is a figure of speech which appears often in a phrase or short verses. *Pche tam* are composed by intellectuals and wise people, based on after based on experiences and truths and often used to show the right direction to youths. Some proverbs are extracted from lozey and it appears in verse, prose and sometimes in mixture of both verse and prose.

The terms *Pche tam*, *Pe tam*, *Kha tam*, *Leg she*, *Lung drang* and *Lab ja* are synonyms and used by different people in their respective languages. They are considered the ornaments to the way of speaking and important part of our speech.

As “*proverbs are the ornaments of speech*” without the use of some proverbs our conversations are like dead plants without leaves and flowers, while a speech decorated with proverbs is well received by listeners. Proverbs are classified as two types:

1.3.8.1. Religious proverbs

Any proverbs that convey the concept of sacred Dharma and are told by spiritual masters, parents and elders to guide their followers on the path of virtue are called *choe drel gi pche tam* (religious or spiritual proverbs).

For example:

- It is one thing if you are blessed by the wisdom eye, but the rest of us ordinary people must make our own fortune.
- The consequence of mischief done to a nun is more severe than the benefit of circumambulating the sacred place of Tsari (said to be the most difficult of all pilgrimages).
- Making pilgrimage to India and Tibet just by dreaming will not help purify the bodily defilements. Being good at teaching will not remove defilement, being good at crying, cannot remove the sorrow.

- Peace and suffering are like the sun in the summer season; it shines and then disappears a moment later.

1.3.8.2. Laity Proverbs

Jig ten pai pe tams (secular proverbs) are mostly associated with the daily activities of ordinary people. These are mostly composed by experienced and learned elders and by the enlightened beings to direct our actions along the right path.

- The bird on top of the tree and the sun on top of the pass. Sow the seeds in spring, rear livestock in summer, store the grain in autumn and conduct rituals in the winter season.
- The normal traditional life of the village, even the mighty King cannot change.
- If you want to feed on a boneless fish and reap fruits without undergoing hardships, you must be born a fortunate person.
- Eat what is acceptable to your body, attire yourself in accordance with time and tradition, speak as appropriate for the occasion, do your work at the right time and make your best effort, bear burdens according to your strength, and make plans according to your ability.

1.3.9. Poem

A literary work written in a meter, verse, prose or in a mixture of both verse and prose with various types of speech used is called *Nyan tsom* or just *Tsom* (ode, a poem or poetry). These are written according to the level of education and knowledge of the writer with the purpose of communicating to the readers or listeners the intended messages in poetic sentences.

These written pieces can either be sung or just narrated and mostly written in Chokey. The subject of *Tsom* covers all genres such as narratives for example legends, stories, human dilemmas, relationships, descriptions, commentaries and elegy, satirical and verse fable etc. Beside these, *Ka-tsom* (alphabetical poetry), is a unique poetry genre and it is as popular among farmers as among literate and/or articulate people. It is a type of acrostic poem whose first line begins with the first Dzongkha letter (ka), follows alphabetically and ends with the last letter (A). Thus it will have 30 lines. Similarly, there is an ode called *a Tsom* (reversed alphabetical poetry) it starts with the last letter (A)