

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)

and ends with the first letter (ka). This literary form became popular among common people to describe the world around them which is sensitively portrayed through many symbols and metaphors. Lyricists were mostly lamas, monks and scholars who had and have undergone monastic education and are highly learned persons. In the Tibetan way of definition, *nyen ngag* refers not merely to poetry in verse but to pleasant composition, a Buddhist tradition derived from ancient Indian poetic text called Kavya in Sanskrit. Normally, *Tsom* appears in any of these forms: *Tshig ched* (verse), *Tshig lhug* (prose), and *Pel ma* (the two mixed in alternating sequence).

Tshig ched simply means that each line of text has a certain number of words to it, having odd numbers starting from 5, 7, 9, 11 till 21 although longer lines are occasionally seen. Tshig lhug is text which has not been written in lines of defined numbers of words and hence which is literally 'relaxed text'. Pel ma is a type of written composition where verse and prose are alternated by turns.

1.3.9.1. Religious Poetry

Khedrup Kunga Wangpo (1505-) the heart son of Vidyadhara Padma Lingpa (1450-1521) composed with whatever emanated in his mind, at the time of gaining realisation and experience while meditating at the cave of Rangjung Pal Gyi Phodrang at the neck of a mountain which looked like a great gliding Garuda near the hidden country of Khenpa Jong in Kurtoed.

[I] supplicate to all the venerable gurus;
 May your blessings purify all my defilements;
 May I be naturally diffused with the sacred doctrine;
 In the sphere of cloudless light;
 Blessed by the essence of Sun and Moon;
 Ornamenting the four worlds beautifully;
 Clouds of the southern world are not affected by
 darkness;
 On the mountain tops rising like pinnacles;
 Dwells the carnivorous Snow Lion;
 Content with the turquoise coloured mane;
 The fierce blizzard does not cover it;
 In the deep golden Ocean;
 Lives the blessed skilful fish;
 While pursuing the pleasure of food;
 The perilous sharp hook does not harm it;
 In the exquisite mature forest;
 Live the agile, acrobatic monkeys;
 While it is their destiny to pick flowers;

Missed the hands of the hooligans;
 The centre of a vajra cliff;
 Is the blessed ground of the Garudas, King of birds;
 Whilst eating its meal, the black snakes;
 Does not disturb the ferocious mind of Vajrapani;
 In the magnificent mansion of the world;
 Kunga Wangpo has settled well;
 Practicing the Buddha Dharma by destiny;
 Is not affected by the untimely death;
 The monks who are connected by karmic destiny;
 Well settled under a Lama;
 Practicing on the sacred teaching;
 Do not embrace negative thoughts and disloyalty;
 To the knowledge of primordial purity;
 There exist sectarianism and prejudice without limit;
 To an unblemished ultimate essence;
 Do not bathe with incidental impure water;
 To all the faithful people congregated here;
 I, Ngagi Wangpo the aged one;
 While expanding the branches of realisation;
 It is an inherent nature of varied study;
 Who will dishonour to the words of Vajra;
 What certainty is there of the wrong viewed persons;
 Create mental base to practice in accordance with the
 Dharma;

1.3.9.2. Narrative Poem

A narrative poem extracted from the *sung bum* of the 9th *Je Khenpo* (chief abbot) Shakya Rinchen (1710-1759) and presented here in translation.

In the mountainous country filled with bountiful
 flowers;
 An open place where wild animals make playful
 dance;
 Where one can hear melodious songs of birds;
 In a peaceful solitude and sacred hermitage;
 A hermit, contemplating of visualization;
 From you guys, who enjoy health and wealth?
 Milk and butter along with a letter;
 Sent with pure faith and loyalty;
 I have received parcel without any damages;
 [I] the follower of Buddha, dwelling in this place;
 Without having any part of vast knowledge;
 Have been practicing just bearing the name of *Lama*;
 My life while connected with distractions;
 Just like the pond where the flow of the stream is dried
 from above;
 Without realising, it is being gradually ended;
 While the death arrives inadvertently;
 There is no solution but to suffer as destiny;
 Means the nose ring that binds you as humans;





The assembly of self without freedom;
 Whoever we see fascinates our mind;
 While you are in a hermitage comfortably;
 Like the yogis of the ancient times;
 Spending time committed towards Dharma;
 This is fruition of numerous generations;
 Of accumulation by countless virtues;
 Again towards the useless distractions in this life;
 By not involving in such meaningless acts;
 Just like the freedom gained by supreme masters;
 [If] concentrated on the success and clearing doubts;
 Fulfills the great achievements for both present and
 future;
 This is a clearly said as the heartfelt advice.

1.3.9.3. Alphabetic Poem (kha tsom)

A poem constructed in alphabetical order is known
 as a kha tsom. Each letter generates a poetic sentence
 and yet connects the essence with the other sentences.
 Translations of such a poem cannot do full justice in the
 same sequence. Given below is a praising alphabetical
 poem by khenpo (master/scholar) Tshering Dondup
 dedicated to his root master, His Holiness Drub
 Wang Pema Norbu Rinpoche, and presented here in
 translation:

May all be good and well!
 From the manifestation of ultimate emptiness of
 primordial purity;
 A physical manifestation with incandescent rainbow;
 However, [its] an excellent master that liberates all the
 sentient beings;
 It is you who knows! My only refuge Drub Wang
 Lama;
 Melodious tone of speech without noisy crowds;
 By the nectar of heartfelt instructions with
 completeness;
 To the sentient beings attracted towards the foodstuff;
 [He] takes care with love and affection like the rays of
 the Moon;
 The essence of vast and in depth knowledge of Tathgata;
 [It is] a natural condition of inseparable union of
 experience and emptiness;
 The acquired profound knowledge of the present are;
 Beyond the dualistic fixation of immature thoughts and
 expressions;
 Within the dharmadhatu sphere of cognizance and bliss
 of pramita:
 Though the guardian of sentient beings, the single father
 had already left;
 An affection of love similar to the cow herder;

There is no other companion than you, the protector of
 all the sentient beings;
 In the world of numerous sacred places of India, Nepal
 Tsari;
 Undergoing unbearable hardships of heat and cold
 weather;
 For the thriving Dharma of teaching and practice in all
 the directions;
 No monk or unachieved master can compare with you;
 Lord of ordained monks wearing red and yellowish
 robes;
 The great Yogi, who has no concept of accepting and
 rejecting of material things;
 The steersman of all desperate and helpless sentient
 beings;
 You are the definite wondrous emanation of
 bodhisattvas;
 In the world bounded by eight worldly concerns of five
 poisons;
 Even traveling all over the directions throughout days
 and nights;
 As you are the only personification of love and
 kindness;
 Please! Hold on till the attainment of the land and the
 path of Buddha;
 Extremely amazing the qualities of you, the protector;
 [It is] beyond our knowledge being the principle of *ati*
yoga;
 Nevertheless, as propelled by my unwavering faith;
 [I] make offering of your great qualities, my Lord, in this
 melodious song.

1.3.9.4. Ode of Advice

Ode of advice of His Eminence, Lama Norbu
 Wangchuk alias Tshangkha Rinpoche to his nephew,
 Choeki Dorji:

Listen here! [My] nephew *Choe dor* (short form of
 Choeki Dorje);
 As I (maternal uncle) become heavy, burdened by age;
 Even though the time of singing has passed;
 Some kind words are offered here for you;
 As a sign of mastering the knowledge of general
 science;
 Words as beautiful as lotus plants,
 Decorated by the ornaments of poetry,
 Should enchant the hearts of scholarly masters;
 As a sign of mastering the unique internal science;
 The great and astounding skandhas as the basis;
 By the might of realising the ultimate nature;

Should fascinate the heart of scholars who realised the essence;
 As a sign of mastering the vital Sutra and Mantra;
 The essence of Buddha nature as the basis;
 Knowing all the cyclic existence and transcendence;
 Should charm the heart of all supreme teachers;
 As sign of mastering the four reflections of mind;
 Even the well-being of celestial realms;
 Seeing the suffering of heat and cold of the hell below;
 Should strike their desiring mind;
 As a sign of mastering the three perfect qualities of refuge;
 Even if you are asked to select between state affairs and death;
 By not abandoning the Triple Gem which liberates our souls;
 Should captivate the hearts of people with no faith;
 As a mark of training the mind to be compassionate;
 As you cannot bear the suffering of your parents in this life;

By benefiting even the perpetual enemies;
 Should transform the minds of bigoted people;
 As the sign of knowing the nature of cyclic existence and transcendence;
 By giving away the present well-being to the wind;
 And making great effort to attain the ultimate bliss;
 Should appeal to the hearts of people leading purposeless lives;
 You, Choekyi Dorje [my] youthful nephew;
 Examine meaning of the seven points of realisation above;
 No need to advise if you see their meaning;
 If you have not, stimulate yourself again and again;
 [Thus] from Tshangkha monastery;
 By an old man of dog year cast aside from the mist of mankind;
 Composed a poem of what came to mind.

Written quickly while in the bed of my retreat.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Dzongkha/Choekey References

Ap Dregang (2014). *bLo ze dga' ba'i zlos gar*. Thimphu: Ap Dregang. [This is a self-published collection of Lozey (lyrical ballads) of different moods, all composed by the author.]

Chang Dorji (2008). *bZo rig kun bsdus me long*. Thimphu: KMT Publishers.

Chokey Dhendup (1999). *'Brug gi blo ze rdzong kha'i snyan tshig gzhi gtan*. Bhutan: Dzongkha Development Commission.

Dept. of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan (n.d. probably 1970s). *sLob deb lnga pa*. Thimphu: Dept of Education, Royal Government of Bhutan. [This is a Dzongkha textbook for grade five.]

Dungkar Lobzang Thinley (2002). *Dung dkar tshig mdzod chen mo*. (*Dungkhar Tibetological great dictionary*) Beijing: Tung go bod rig pa pey tun khang (China Tibetology Publishing House). [Available from Tibetan Cultural & Religious Publication Centre, New Delhi.]

Gedun Chopel (2001). *dGe 'dun chos 'phel gyi gsung*

rtsom (A Collection of Miscellaneous Writings). Bir, India: Siddhartha's Intent Publication for Dzongsar Institute.

Jamgon Lama Mipham (2005). *Nyams len tsin ta ma ni snying po'i skor*. Produced by the Yeshe De Project under the direction of Tarthang Tulku. Cazadero, CA: Dharma Publishing.

Kunley Gyaltsen & Namgyal Phuntscho (n.d.). *dPye gtam, dpYE gtam lag len 'thab thangs ki lam ston*. Thimphu: Dzongkha Development Training Institute.

Kunzang Thinley (2002). *rDzong kha'i tshig mdzod chen mo*. Thimphu: KMT Publishers.

Kuenga Wangpo. *Rig 'dzin pad ma gling pa'i thugs sras mkhas grub kun dga' dbang po'i bka' 'bum*. [Manuscript copy, written in Umed]. This very rare manuscript of Kuenga Wangpo, the Heart Son of Tertön Padma Lingpa was acquired by the National Library & Archives of Bhutan in 2012. Contents comprise miscellaneous writings of Kuenga Wangpo, including correspondence, spiritual songs and other records of his daily life.