

through emesis using herb infused with oil, provided by Lay Nga Khechok, Khedzin and Rabjam.

Najong (sna sbyong): A process of nasal cleansing using medicated warm oil introduced through nasal cavity, provided by Lay Nga Khechok, Khedzin and Rabjam.

Jamtsi ('jam rtsi): Another form of enema prescribed

for cleansing the bowel using medicated warm oil introduced through anal route, provided by Lay Nga Khechok, Khedzin and Rabjam.

Niruba (ni ru ha): Another form of enema prescribed for cleansing the bowel using medicated decoction introduced through anal route, provided by Lay Nga Khechok, Khedzin and Rabjam.

4.2. LOCAL HEALING PRACTICES

Before the introduction of modern medical treatment, illness, misfortune/ill luck were usually attributed to demonic causes. Local deities, demons and spirits of all kinds were considered to be responsible for certain illnesses. To heal these diseases, it was necessary to practice certain rituals where only the great lamas, monks, gomchens, and shamans were in a position to do so. This healing practice, thus involved much divination in the means of diagnosing and recognizing the spells causing the illness and exorcism as the way of treating the patient.

The local healing practices are categorized under the following themes:

4.2.1. Healers Treating through Physical Observation

Bone-setter

Bone-setters (Dz. *ru to btsug mi*) treat dislocations and fractures of the limbs, hip traumas, joints and limbs sprain. Local bone-setters are not formally trained but rather claimed to have generated the skills through practical experience usually gained by treating animals while some of them have learnt from their fore fathers. They resort to gentle handlings, and bringing back the bones into position, then steadying them with the help of wooden or bamboo splints (sometimes tree bark or by soaking the bandage cloth in clay) and cloth bandages.

Most of the healers give the patients some alcohol prior to the treatment in order to reduce the pain and to "warm the muscles". Some do apply oil or butter massage as a remedy on the injured part, stimulate with boiled leaves; or administer orally a remedy supposed to enhance the healing process either by decoction of leaves or bark or mixing grounded lac with water, or remedy using a mineral called *doshal* (*rdo mtshal*), which probably is cinnabar. Most bone setters recommend the intake of rich food (fresh meat, butter,) for speedy recovery.

Dug Jibmi (Poison-sucker)

The healers, as the name indicates – poison suckers (*dug lakhan* in Tshangla language) – are supposedly known to extract substances like poison (*dug*) locally from various parts of the patient's body. The beliefs and fears related to those affected by poison are mostly found in Eastern Bhutan. Poison in this context is very vague, and does not clearly define the substances or agents. It is rather believed to have been contracted through the intake of food especially rancid butter, meat, cheese and alcohol warmed with fried eggs, and also believed to be given by certain families.

Further, it is believed that a person can contract poison without any material penetration into the body:

- by sitting in certain places especially in a cold or wet places in the forest (*ron dug*);
- through wind, and by being hit by the invisible arrow of a *tsan*-spirit (*tsan dug*);
- through a quarrel with another person (*khon dug*);
- by being looked upon by certain women, or the frustrated desire of a woman (in case of a man falling ill).

There is a belief that sometimes the curse of the poison stays in the family which is involuntarily passed on from mother to daughter. The poison then affects people from outside one's family circle. It is also believed that the poison is contracted when one's fortune-vitality is low (negative *lungta* or *wangta*). The notion of evil also comes close to that of poison in certain areas. In certain places of Western Bhutan, drip (pollution) is also viewed as a cause for coming closer to poisoning (*dug*) and therefore extracted in the same way.

Just as for 'poison' afflictions in general, poison-suckers are consulted by patients arriving with an already established diagnosis. Those people residing especially in the remote parts of the country are known to have strong belief and faith in the healer in their locality. That is why they prefer to contact the healers before consulting a medical doctor or health worker. There is a general belief that if there is poison in the body, modern medicine can react adversely with it. The poison-sucker checks the pulse of the patients to ascertain the diagnosis and suck the blood from the affected part of the patient's body.

There are different methods of treatment. Healers cut the affected part of the body with a blade to extract the impure blood. Some healers use horn with a hole at the tip. The broader end of the horn is placed over the cut and blood is sucked out from the other end. Some healers claim to have spiritual power so that their *mantra* can cause miracles prior to the application of their method. If a few drops of blood come out while sucking, the poison is supposed to have been completely removed from the patient's body which would help the patient recover from the sickness.

Tshachu and Menchu (Hot Spring and Hot Stone-bath) Therapy

Tshachu and *menchu* are quite popular in Bhutan. There are a number of them in various parts of the country. People dip their bodies in the tshachu and menchu because they believe that the medicinal properties of the

water can cure various ailments ranging from arthritis to body aches and sinuses. During winter we find a number of people visiting the popular tshachu. The five most well known tshachu are: the Gasa Tshachu (Gasa District), Koma Tshachu (Gon Shari), Chubu Tshachu (Punakha District), Dur Tshachu (Bumthang District), Duenmang Tshachu (Zhemgang District), and Gelephu Tshachu (Gelephu Drungkhag).

In menchu, water is heated by submerging red-hot stones into the bath in which the patients dip their bodies and stay as long as they can, adding more hot stones when the water gets cold. This is also a popular curative method and is used throughout the country.

4.2.2. Healing based on Textual Sources

Tsip/tsipa (astrologer) is known for their divination and healing rituals in the country. Literally known as "calculators", the tsipas are supposed to have studied a wide range of treatises and practical manuals dealing with divinatory calculation, which is one of the five major Buddhist sciences. The vast majority of them are *gomchen* (lay religious practitioners), *gelong* (monks) or *getre* (defrocked monks).

Based on the request of the people in various circumstances, the *tsip* usually consults an astrological manual called *datho* (*zla tho*) and search for connections between one's birth marks, the connectivity between various elements and so on and determine what and in which manner a ritual should be performed. For instance,

