

The muddy river spoils the dwellings of the fish;  
 The mouths of blood thirsty flies and leeches are more  
     painful than spears;  
 My daughter Thrinley's feet are softer than silk;  
 The melancholy voice of Pel Dzom singing wa wa song;  
 I find it uneasy to remain on this earth;  
 The heavenly geese of Tibet, the land of great mountains,  
 Unable to bear the chilly breeze of autumn  
 Spreading all over in the plains of India,  
 Now could not stay in the homes they made in the lotus  
     like plains;  
 Leaving behind their chicks with fledgling wings,  
 With my words of assurance to the Mermaid,  
 Flew back towards the mountainous country of Tibet.  
 We humans and cattle, together  
 In this land of medicinal herbs, the celestial realms of  
     Paro,  
 Let's go past the gardens of the colourful palace;  
 Let's go and enjoy the nutritious grass on the highland  
     meadows;  
 Let's go and see His Excellency Kuzho (of Paro).

### 1.2.1.2.3. Alphabetical Songs

There are also alphabetical songs composed by knowledgeable and creative country folks in various languages and dialects. An individual ka-tsom may be about hardships, happiness and love or may give valuable advice, depending on the situation. For example, I present here a ka tsom from Kheng district, which is widely sung by the people of Wamling village, Zhemgang. The “*Kawa namning lingpa*,” Ka-tsom throws light on the nature of taxation during the ancient days.

As eagle glided in the sky;  
 The hen became restless on the earth;  
 Unable to be happy or sad;  
 [Thus] I am made to cry;  
 A hen, left without anything;  
 After the falcon has taken entirely  
 Carried away towards the Indian plains;  
 And eaten voraciously and maliciously;  
 Thinking of going to see it;  
 But, couldn't finish my weaving;  
 This year, a hen has been taken;  
 Next year, the tax will be exempted.

Although there should be 30 lines, but there are hardly any elderly people who can remember the remaining 18 verses. Similarly, there are other Ka-tsoms in Dzongkha and Tshangla kha and maybe other dialects too, but these were composed later by teachers and students

after the modern education system was introduced to Bhutan. They generally have romantic themes.

### 1.2.2. Lyrical Ballad

*Lozey* (lyrical ballad or witty narratives) is a form of oral expression, appropriately described as one of the ornaments of speech. According to the accounts of elderly citizens in the western districts, the origin of lozey goes back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century coinciding with the arrival of Phajo Drugom Zhigpo (1148-1251). Often known as Togden Phajo, he was a Tibetan saint whose life and deeds are closely linked with the initial spread of the Drukpa School of teachings in Bhutan in accordance with the prophesy of Tsangpa Gyare (1161-1211), the founder of the Drukpa Kagyud Lineage. Phajo Drugom Zhigpo was followed by numerous Tibetan scholars who disseminated the teachings of the Buddha. Amongst these realised beings Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (1594-1651) was the destined leader. He instituted the traditions based on the Buddhist values of *mi-choe tsangma chudrug* (sixteen virtues for mundane practice) and reformed the old traditions, resulting in establishment of the dual system of government in Bhutan, whereby a temporal ruler coexists with the spiritual authority of the nation.

Amongst those indigenous traditions, the songs *parshing mindru gyelmo* and *Zurchen gyi sheypa* are the most popular in Bhutan and are sung especially during the construction of typical Bhutanese house made of rammed earth. These age old songs are solely sung by the people of central and western Bhutan. Parshing Mindru Gyelmo is an honorific name given to the wooden tools used for ramming earth, therefore the tools are respected and revered as an embodiment of Khandro Sonam Peldon, consort of Phajo Drugom Zhigpo. The song has many verses inviting the Parshing Mindru Gyelmo to visit from Tibet and concludes with



propitious words of seeing her off back to Tibet during the consecration ceremony for the new house. Similarly, *Zurchen gi sheypa* (song sung during the installation of four phalluses on the four eaves of the house facing the four directions) is also sung on the day of the consecration ceremony. Two groups are formed for the singing of the songs, normally separate groups for males and females. There are often verbal skirmishes between the male and female groups.

A quick-witted and verbally eloquent person may compose appropriate verses of response on the spot based on the nature of the opponents' song. It is said that the verses of these songs are so long, "if sung till the end, it is believed that it could last for almost a day" as told by a few elderly citizens. There have been incidents in the past when the host family had to place a large *palla* (bamboo container) of *ara* (distilled home brew) down and request the verbally warring songsters to reconcile. However, these songs are actually a type of ballad or narrative poem to which a melody was added later. The recitation of lozey is still widely practised in the western part of Bhutan and is regarded as an entertainment and enjoyment by one and old alike.

There are variants of given names for lozey, sometimes it is also written as *Losel*, but, there is no clue why, since both terms have their separate sets of definitions. According to Lophon Kunzang Thinley, chief researcher at KMT Press, Thimphu, lozey is an art of speech which requires a unique skill in making rapid response. It requires constant flow like the hair on a horse's neck, thus, the term 'lo' means statement and 'ze' refers to the neck hair, and in this context to the brilliance of the bantering back and forth. Lozey is defined as brilliant, intelligent, clever and bright. In both Dzongkha and Tibetan dictionaries, lozey is defined as any prompt statement constructed in verse well decorated with rhetorical qualities of similes and metaphors according to the situation. Such qualities can only be attributed to intelligent, quick-thinking and witty persons.

Lozey is an exceptional oral expression of Bhutan and very popular among the people of western Bhutan, namely Ha, Paro, Thimphu, Gasa, Punakha, Wangduephodrang and Dagana, and in the northern part of Trongsa district. However, the lozey of each district has its own unique characteristics in style, language tone and recitation tune.

Lozey is not sung merely to entertain the crowd. It is also a platform to showcase inborn talents in the art of speech and also acts as a medium for transmission of the

tradition to the others. Lozey is of three kinds: popular *lozey* (which consist various subject and episodes occur depending on the moods and feelings), *lojue lozey* (a narrative, usually of epic dimension), and finally *lozey labja* (lozey associated with advice and guidance). Therefore, most often lozey dwells within these episodes; *che toed* (praising), *nyen lu* or *zalu* (romantic), *dralu* (odium), *medlu* (disgrace), *trolu* (joyful), *cholu* (sad), *tse tshol* (debating/challenging), *trashimonlu* (supplication) and *lozey labja* (advice/guidance). *Lozey labja* is sometimes identical to *kortam* (innuendo or indirect statement).

Lozey has no fixed length, but may be long or short, which entirely depends upon the depth of knowledge of a person, but generally the shortest will vary from three lines to fifteen. Short lozey are called *lozey do thum* while long ones are called *lozey jun-ringm*. However, loju lozey are historical accounts and regarded as the longest and some lojue lozey are accounts drawn from oral tradition of how the fortresses were constructed by Zhabdrung Nawang Namgyal.

These days long lozey can be found mainly as lyrics written in books, but some are still being kept alive through oral recitation, of which the following are examples:

A lozey recited by one Kakuru, secretary to Zhabdrung Jigme Norbu (1831-1861), lozey on *Garp* (attendant to a high official) Lung Gi Khorlo's journey to Punakha and Wangduephodrang districts to distribute official letters of Choetse penlop, *Gelong* (monk) Sumdha Trashi of Sha Nyisho, *Zimpon* (chamberlain) Tshewang Trashi of Sha Kazhi, *Jam* (maidservant) Tshewang Pedroe of Shar Phangyuel and finally the lozey of *Choep* (religious practitioner) Sangag Dorje, Chungdue Gongshed and Akhe Gyem of Ha district. These are stories centred on characters whose experiences tell us a great deal about social and economic conditions during their times.

Sometimes lozey can be used as means of debate or verbal skirmishes between people of different communities or villages, and between male and female. At least two participants are required for a lozey. After one has recited the initial verse, the other responds depending on the gist of the preceding verse. This is called *Lozey khaejew* (lozey competition) in Dzongkha. While reciting lozey, the rules are very simple. Depending on the type, if the opponent has good knowledge, he/she must respond with the same similes and metaphors that were used by the other. The challenge will continue until a winner or a draw is declared. In both cases, messages will be conveyed through eloquent usage of metaphors and symbols. The

responses are never direct. Nevertheless, lozey can be used for both entertainment and wish-making in every aspect of life such as: *Parshing gi she pa*, *Zurchen gi she pa*, *Dha she* (description of Arrow), *Gishey* (description of Sword), *Zo she* (description of an Art), *Shog da kuelwa* (encouraging words while dragging large logs or boulders), *Lang key* (Praising words to the Oxen while ploughing), *Che sho* (making wishes while sowing seeds) and *Bab she* (wish-making while threshing rice) etc. A person who has the knowledge and skills is known as *kham khe gyep* (King of eloquence or an articulate person) in Dzongkha.

The following are some examples of lozey recited to fit different moods and occasions:

#### 1.2.2.1. Praising

Bearing the fruit of virtuous deeds of numerous eons,  
The two protectors Dharmakaya and Sambhogakaya,  
Having realised and credence of none other than self,  
[I] prostrate with due respect to Guru Padmasambhava.

Emanation of a thousand protective Buddhas,  
Gracious to the entire southern universe,  
The glorious Dharma King, Thuchen Ngawang  
(Zhabdrung),  
I pay homage with my three doors (body, speech and  
mind).

This day of the auspicious month,  
Youthful, I feel at ease to recite a ballad.  
Though I don't have a melodious voice and words,  
[I] make this offering of melody to the Glorious Drukpa  
(Zhabdrung).

All the people! Please, lend me your ears,  
To make an earthen house of southern Drukpa;  
One has to prepare the means of auspiciousness right  
from the beginning;  
One has to initiate the parade of songs and dances.

Towards the northern side of Bodhgaya, India,  
In Nepal, the land of sumptuousness,  
Between the elevated sky and clouds;  
Dwell the five Tshering sisters, the deities of wealth;

These five Tshering sisters, Vasudevas,  
Are the war deities, if powerful officials seek blessings of  
power,  
Are the gods of wealth, if people seek blessings of wealth,  
Are the gods of speech, if youth seek eloquence and a  
pleasing voice.

Amidst the gathering of people,  
Let me plant the doctrine of songs and dances.

#### 1.2.2.2. Romantic Songs

Having visited all the magnificent fortresses, boe garpa  
(court attendant)

Committed to return after three years.

Not returning after three years,

Does the mighty lord own his body?

Or is his heart possessed by a lady of the country?

I, the maiden of the village,

Have to decide for myself.

The cool breeze having explored the Tibetan country

Promised to return after three years.

Not returning after three years,

Is the body now owned by the Dharma King,

Or attracted towards a deceiver?

Even though captivated by the emanated Dharma King;

Or attracted towards the deceiver;

These leaves of the cypress of the south;

Have to decide for myself now.

You, mighty river, have been to the land of India,

Assured to come back after three years.

Not returning after three years,

Is your body controlled by the King of India?

Or fascinated by the Indian girls?

Whether he is controlled by the Indian King,

[Or] fascinated by the Indian girls,

I, the golden eyed fish,

Have to decide for myself now.

#### 1.2.2.3. Odium

*(Provoking statement)*

Drinking from Dangchu River will not cause melodious  
voice;

If it becomes melodious after drinking from Dangchu,

The watermill owner of Sha Dangchu,

Her voice might have changed into a flute.

Consuming milk and curd will not make the face  
charming;

If it becomes charming by consuming milk and curd,

You, the highland lady wearing *taari* (tiger-striped)

kira,

Your face would have a celestial appearance.

*(Answer)*

If drinking the Dangchu River doesn't cause melodious  
voice,

By the Sha Dangchu watermill owner

Having offered the first share of water to the gods above,



Then Tsheringma divine goddess of music  
 Will bestow the blessing of a tuneful voice;  
 If the blessings of speech are bestowed,  
 There will be no control over the sweetness of the voice.  
 If having milk and curd, doesn't make the face fair,  
 Of the highland lady wearing her taari,  
 Having offered the first share of the milk to the gods  
 above,  
 Then Tshringma the divine goddess of music,  
 Will bestow the blessing of charm.  
 If the blessing of charm is bestowed,  
 Fairness of appearance cannot be measured.

#### 1.2.2.4. Discreditable

To hoist prayer flags on the meeting of three ridges,  
 Both the ridges and wind are in disharmony;  
 From where can [I] hoist the prayer flags?  
 The hoisted flags are not fluttered by the wind;  
 Even the blowing wind is of no help;  
 Better not hoist the prayer flags there in the first place.  
 With this as an example,  
 To make a bridge at the confluence of three rivers below,  
 But the rivers and valley are in discord;  
 Where should the bridge be situated?  
 Neither is there traffic once the bridge is made,  
 Nor does it benefit the flow of traders,  
 Better stop building the bridge from the start.  
 Keeping this as an example,  
 You the maiden of the village,  
 Love is not in harmony with being a spouse,  
 Due to lack of fidelity inwardly,  
 The destiny to be together has perished outwardly.  
 With you the maiden devoid of faith,  
 Better it is to give up before we start loving;

(This is also spoken by a girl to a hopeful suitor)

#### 1.2.2.5. Rhapsody

A hill that provides a clear view,  
 A hill that is much taller,  
 Looking from the lofty hill  
 On the path of circumambulating the divine Indian  
 tree.  
 Heard of a tree being grown,  
 Thinking what the tree was like,  
 It is none other than wish fulfilling pagsam joenshing. (a  
 mythical tree)  
 On that tree there is a bird perched.  
 Thinking what is that bird?  
 It was none other than the handsome a-ley buthri (a  
 migratory bird from the south)

It sits with its right wing towards the east,  
 Inviting the Sun from the east.  
 Facing its left wing towards the west,  
 Appealing to the Moon from the west,  
 Its tail is pointed to India,  
 To invoke prosperity from India.  
 Its beak pointing towards Tibet,  
 To receive dharma teaching from Tibet;  
 Its back pointing up towards the Sky,  
 Welcoming bountiful precipitation from the Sky,  
 Its claws pointing towards the earth.  
 By collecting harvest from the soils,  
 [I] shall make offerings to the precious Buddha above,  
 Distribute alms to the beggars and  
 To relish a sumptuous party in pleasant mood.

#### 1.2.2.6. Sentimental

The Sun that dwells in the Sky,  
 Sad behind the mountains before rising,  
 Unhappy in the middle of the Sky after rising,  
 Sad in the eternal the journey round the universe.

Similarly;

The river that descends towards the plains;  
 Depressed underneath the earth before appearing;  
 Cheerless while in the centre of the stream;  
 Miserable always while touring the Indian plains;

Likewise;

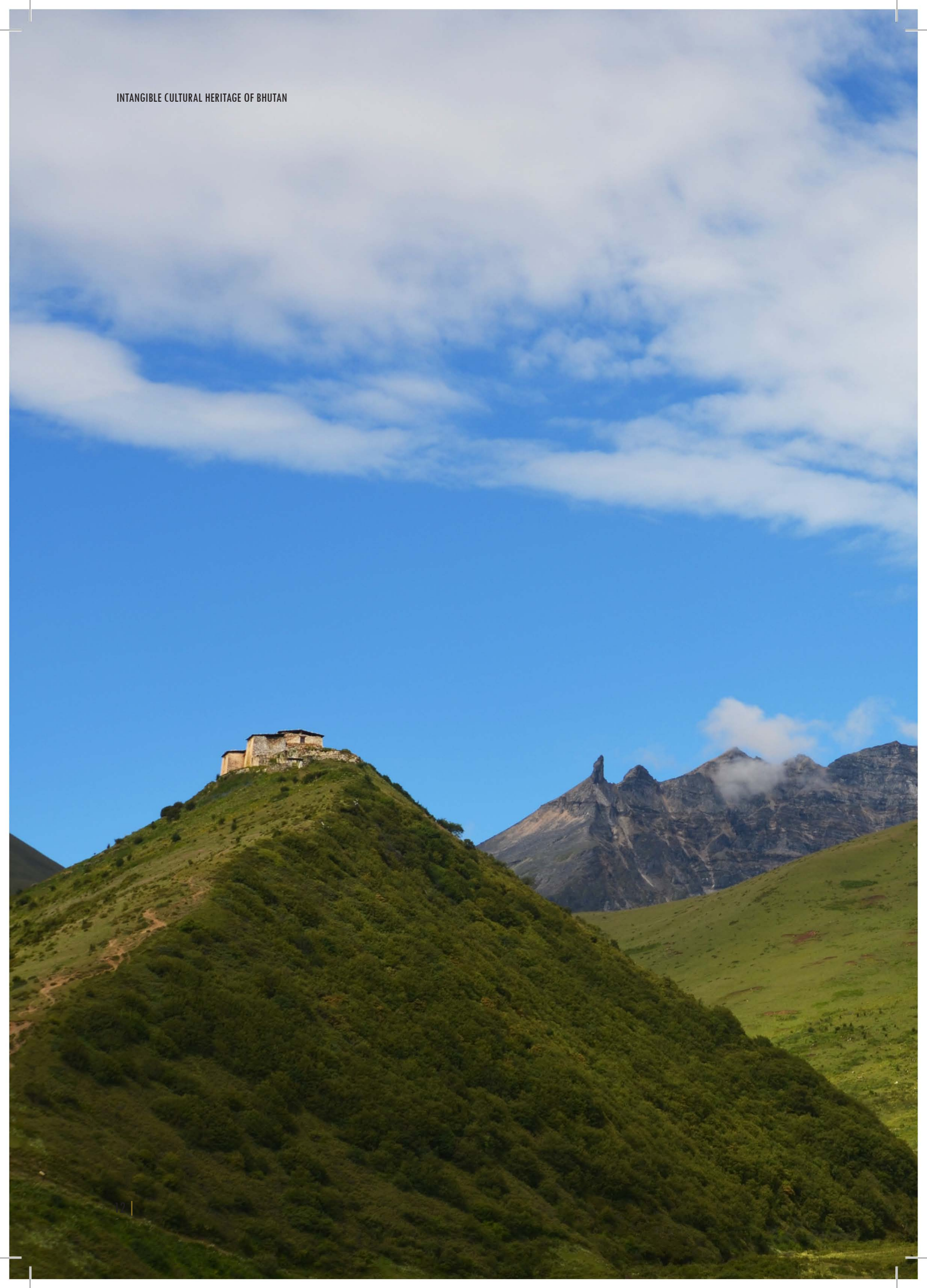
The Snow Lion of the mountain tops;  
 Saddens the heart of mountains if unexplored;  
 The mountain peaks and foothills are sad when exploring  
 the inner ranges;  
 Always saddened going round Mt Kailash;

Like the examples above;

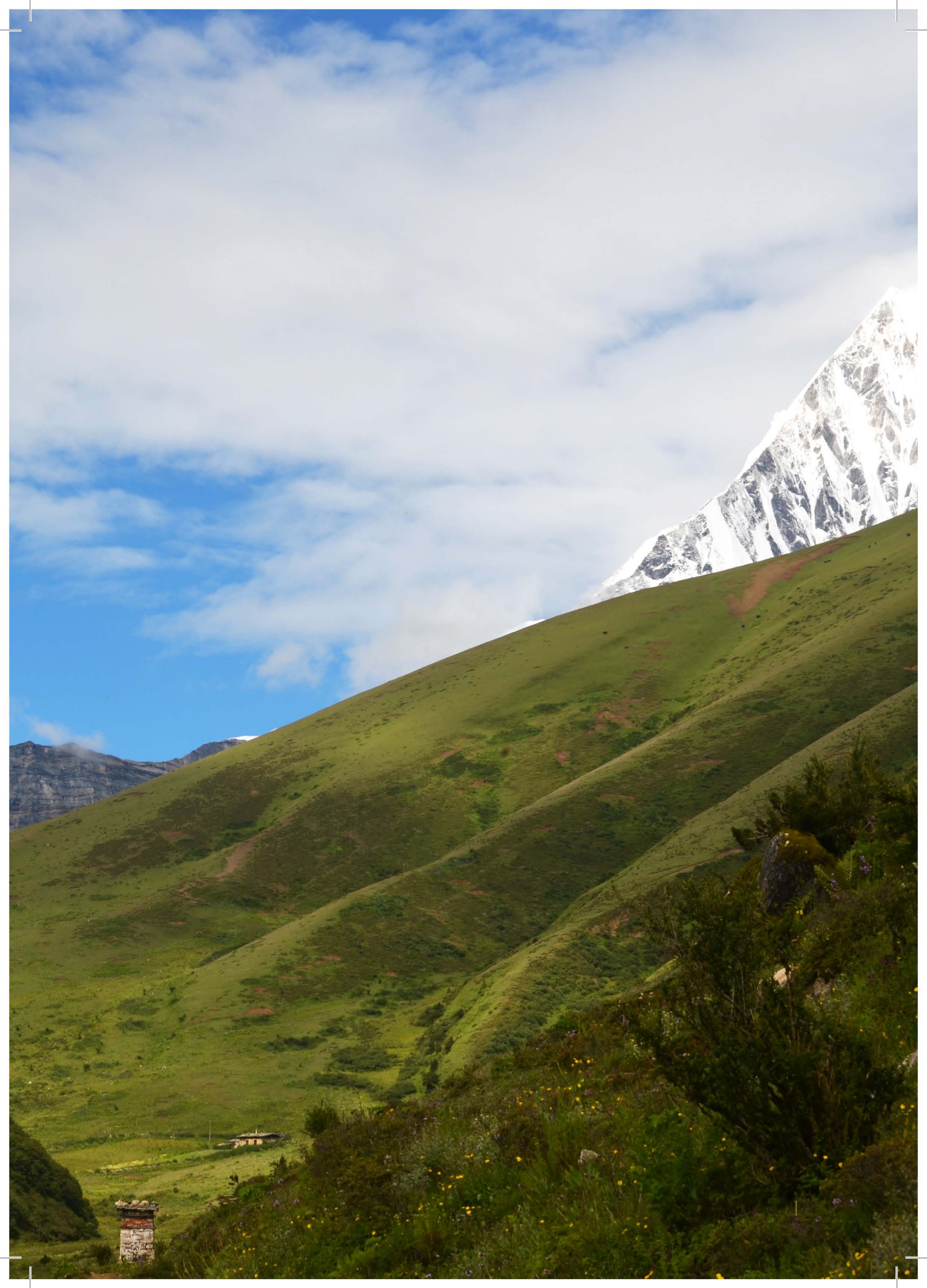
The many-striped Indian Tiger of the dense forest;  
 Depressed in the comforts of the lair before wandering  
 out;  
 Gloomy in the jungle and meadows once wandering;  
 Always upset roaming cypress forest;

Similar to that;

The life of *tsho ma garpa* (attendant);  
 Has been gloomy while in the womb;  
 Remained dismal in the mother's lap after birth,  
 Always staying hopelessly staying in the great fortress.







### 1.2.2.7. Debating

*Question:*

My father is likened to a great mountain;  
 Can you embrace the great mountain?  
 My mother is likened to the great river;  
 Do you measure the river?  
 My uncle is likened to the white stupa;  
 Can you whiten the white stupa?  
 My friends count as the flowers in the meadows;  
 Can you collect all the flowers?  
 Offer them at the colourful shrine.  
 And, chime the melodious Dharma bell?

*Answer:*

So your father resembles the great mountain;  
 I transform myself into a pair of vultures;  
 And hold the great mountain in my arms;  
 Is your mother like the flowing river?  
 I transform myself into a pair of otters;  
 And measure the length of the river;  
 Is your uncle likened to the white stupa?  
 I manifest myself into pair of pigeons;  
 And I will repaint the stupa white;  
 Are your friends as many as flowers of the open field?  
 On the eight, thirtieth and fifteenth day;  
 From the pleasurable meadows;  
 Gathering the beautiful flowers;  
 Shall offer them at the adorable shrine;  
 If [I] chime your Dharma bell by its loop;  
 What words would you have for that?

### 1.2.2.8. Supplication

The cuckoo of the forest of lofty mountains;  
 I come from the wild jungles;  
 Roaming in the rich fields of the valley;  
 Having become addicted to the white rice *sham bja*;  
 [I] forgot to return to my woody abode on high;  
 Thanks to the king of birds;  
 I must return before I forget;  
 You the white rice *sham bja kar chu*, my feast;  
 Please remain undestroyed by hailstorms;  
 If I, the Cuckoo am fortunate to live long;  
 An aspiration to enjoy your taste again and again;  
 Here at this rich field, I will make.

In the same manner;

I, the gentle *garpa* of the village;  
 Hailing from the auspicious village;  
 I wander along the big towns;  
 Having fallen in love with the charming girl;

I forgot to turn back to my village;  
 Due to the tall order of my parents;  
 I must return before I forget;  
 You, the lady with clear vision;  
 If I, the gentle *garpa* live long;  
 An aspiration to reunite at the send;  
 [I] shall make to the magnificent mason;  
 Homage and the most gracious;  
*Lama*, the body emanation of the Buddha;  
 The coming year will as happy as this year;  
 In the happy times of the coming years;  
 [I] make this wish to see you time and again.

### 1.2.2.9. Narratives

A historical ballad is an account of one's experiences told in the form of prose or verses. Lozey on Gelong Zhonpai Dawa, Gelong Sumdar Trashhi, Pemi Tshewang Tashi, Tshewang Peldron (the maid servant) are good examples of the stories of their life and deeds passed down orally in the form of ballads. Furthermore, the secret practitioners of Tantra teachings have also used lozey in order to disseminate their methods of practice, experiences and important topics. An example of a pilgrim retelling his pilgrimage to sacred sites is given below.

The realised astrologer of Tibet;  
 Recollected the Dharma whilst still in the mother's womb;  
 Learnt the alphabets at the age of five;  
 Sat in retreat at the age of six and seven;  
 Went on pilgrimage at eighteen years;  
 Visited the thirteen districts of Tibet;  
 Had seen the towering pinnacle of (Maitreya) Buddha of Lhasa;  
 Also saw the self-risen Kharsapani (image of Avalokiteshvara);  
 Saw the eminent eight lineage holders of India;  
 Carrying a *kelzang khur shing* (rucksack) on the back;  
 Wearing a *gomde pezha* (meditation hat) on his head;  
 Holding a stick of renunciation with three joints;  
 Visited Pelphu temple of Paro Taktshang;  
 Visited Kyerchu temple of Paro;  
 Journeying along the path to Darchagang (in Punakha);  
 Saw the sacred site of the deity Chakrasamvara;  
 Underneath the jabzhi roof of Punakha Dzong;  
 Received audience from the *Khenchen* (chief abbot) of monastic body;  
 Saw the sixteen sublime Arhats;  
 Saw the golden and silver statues of Punakha;  
 Saw the self-rising Kharsapani;  
 The most stunning deity is the deity of Nyizer temple;



The biggest statue is the image at Bajo temple;  
 The most blessing deity is the deity at Chime Temple;  
 Indeed, I have visited all these but;  
 Missed out the Stupa of Great Purity from India;  
 When I went to see the Indian Stupa of Great Purity;  
 Locked with a padlock engraved with a tiger;  
 A flexible metal latch of serpent's head fitted from  
 inside;  
 Thus, failed to see the Stupa of Great Purity;  
 Then, the realised Tsipa of Tibet;  
 Made offerings to the Triple Gem dwelling above;  
 Gave away alms to the beggars;  
 Made propitiations to *Ogyen Padma* (Guru  
 Padmasambhava);  
 The outer lock engraved with a tiger disappeared;  
 The flexible metal latch of serpent broke from inside;  
 The base was surrounded by eight mighty rivers;  
 The base that is encircled by eight mighty rivers;  
 Whether it is seen by Mermaids;  
 Or by the golden fish making circumambulation;  
 Everyone else is forbidden to see;  
 Yet, I have seen it now;  
 Its waist is held by a vajra cliff;  
 The reason it is embraced by the vajra cliff is;  
 Whether it is seen by the cliff's deity or not  
 Whether it is encircled by buzzing bees or not;  
 It is forbidden for everyone else;  
 I, the realised Tsipa have seen it.  
 The tip is embraced by the sun and rainbows;  
 The reason it is embraced by the sun and rainbows is;  
 Whether the tip is seen by the sun or not;  
 Or circumambulations by the moon;  
 Everyone else is forbidden to see it;  
 Yet, I have now seen that.  
 One, I, realised Tsipa of Tibet;  
 Two, the parents who gave birth to me;  
 Three, the teachers who taught me letters when young;  
 An aspiration prayer to attain enlightenment together;  
 [I] make here while making circumambulations of the  
 stupa;  
 May the father Guru grant his blessings?

#### 1.2.2.10. Advice: Lozey as a Precept

**Lozey associated with religious and laity activities;**

##### *Astrological guidance in constructing a house:*

Seek the right spot on the day of the Mouse;  
 Install the foundation rock on the Ox day;  
 Erect the entrance door on the day of Tiger;  
 Put the staircase on the Dragon day;  
 Mount the rain gutter on the day of Snake;  
 Place house roof on the day of Bird;

##### *Superstitions and beliefs:*

A crow is crowing indicating the coming of guests;  
 Prosperous guest arrives at the door;  
 The flame of fire in oven is speaking;  
 The guest may appear then there is meat;  
 The mewling cat is wiping its face;  
 There may come an excellent and pious visitor.

##### *Advice:*

Don't make a warm fire out of straw;  
 If you ever make a fire out of straw;  
 Instead of being gratified by warmth provided;  
 You cannot later bear the suffering from cold;  
 Don't drink the cold water of the mountains;  
 If you ever drink the cold water of the mountains;  
 Instead of appreciating its cool effect;  
 You cannot later bear the distress of thirst;  
 Do not seek a lover from distant place;  
 If you ever seek a lover from distant place;  
 Instead of cherishing the present happiness;  
 You cannot withstand the test of despair in the end.

#### 1.2.3. Ode

An oral game, *tsangmo* or *tsam-mo* is short and melodious poetry normally sung for entertainment by people of all ages in all the regions. It is also considered as one of the ornaments of speech. There are several very similar names for the game, with each having its own meaning and definition, according to the elderly village people; *tsam* is a short poem either composed on the spot or learnt from elders or friends, which is recited to a melodious tune. *Mo* means divination or test. Therefore, it is a song sung to test the feelings of another person. In another version, it is also a song sung by individuals in a group, to make the same divination of feelings as above by a stick (*tsang*) pointing to the personal items already collected from each of the participants, guided by the rhythms of the song. Another very similar name to that for the stick *tsangmo* indicates that this tradition may have been derived from U-tsang province of Tibet. However, some elderly villagers interviewed about the game thought that the terminology had nothing to do with U-tsang at all. Taking their local knowledge into account, it seems likely that the slight difference in nomenclature might just reflect a local dilution of the term which has crept in over time. Although there are different names given according to how the game is played, Bhutanese commonly refer to it as *tsangmo*. Performance of the game is indigenous and unique to Bhutan, with the