

They killed the peacock and enjoyed the dinner. A week later, an announcement was given about the lost peacock, stating that the finder would receive an impressive reward. The King's army was spread all over the country in search of the peacock. His friend kept the secret even when he was interrogated, but the greedy wife approached the King and revealed the secret thinking she would be rewarded. Then the King called him and asked "Why did you kill my peacock?" He replied, "I killed it because Your Majesty has not shown any special kindness to me for saving your life from the tiger."

The King became very angry and said "There is no custom of the King showing appreciation to a servant." The King then commanded to his guards, "Take him out of my sight and kill him." At that time, he realised that the King was mean, so he admitted that he had not killed the peacock and he gave it back. So the King released him and he parted from his disloyal wife and left to live in a neighbouring kingdom which was ruled by a benevolent King.

There he served under the benevolent King but stayed with a bad companion. One summer day, the King set out on a long walk and the boy was also accompanying the King along with other attendants. They arrived at a place where there was no water. The water that attendants had been carrying was exhausted. The King was about to die of thirst. Surprisingly, when the boy checked his pocket he found three *Chu-ru-ra* (fruits of emblic myrobalan, commonly called Indian gooseberry) and offered them to the King to help quench his thirst. Later, he kidnapped the Crown Prince and kept him in his house secretly and left the Prince's clothes and ornaments with his friend. An announcement was given out all over the country to find the lost Prince. There was a reward of precious gems to the person who would report the whereabouts of the Prince.

Immediately, the boy's evil friend went to the King and revealed the secret and showed all the belongings of the Prince as proof. The King called the boy and questioned. "Have you murdered my son? The boy replied "Your Majesty, I have indeed murdered the Crown Prince." The King questioned again, "What debt did I owe you that you have to murder my Prince?" The boy replied, "I offered three *Chu-ru-ra* to you and saved Your Majesty earlier, but you did not show me any appreciation. That is why I killed the Crown Prince."

The kind King remembered the unforgettable deed and said, "If you were not there with me, I might have died

and because of your help, now I stand here again to serve my people. Therefore, for the first *Chu ru ra* offered to me, I release you from imprisonment for murdering my son, for the second, I offer you my beautiful daughter as your wife and for the third fruit, I offer half of my kingdom to you for saving my precious life from the deadly thirst.

The boy realised the truth of his father's final words and developed a deep sense of faith and trust in the noble activities of the King. Then, he prostrated many times before the King and submitted, "Your Majesty! Actually, I was testing the truth of the advice my father gave me on his deathbed. I don't want anything in return, but I offer you the Crown Prince, unharmed." The King was very pleased and realised that the boy was an intelligent, wise and devoted son and could make enormous contributions to the country. Thus, he appointed him as his Prime Minister. Due to the wise rule of the benevolent King and his wise minister, the kingdom experienced increased development, peace, tranquillity and happiness.

1.3.2. Religious Oral literature

1.3.2.1. Refuge

To describe the term refuge, one needs to understand this. If anyone is born in one of the three realms of sufferings, namely the hell, the hungry ghost and the animal realms, there is the suffering of extreme heat and cold in the hell realm, there is the suffering of starvation and thirst in the realm of hungry ghosts, and there is the suffering of having to work for others and being consumed as food in the animal realms. Awareness of these sufferings cause constant fear in the mind, which



leads us to have belief in and understanding of the teachings of the Triple Gem (the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha) and therein seek refuge.

“The people of Bhutan, bearing the fruition of their virtuous deeds in the past life and that their strength still unexhausted; both the country and the people, firstly explored and blessed as a hidden land by the second Buddha Ogyen Guru; having been bestowed with the teaching of Vajrayana Tradition by masters and teachers who came in innumerable numbers and caused it to mature through transmission and realisation; the country was named Druk Yul and the people living here were named Drukpa.” (Paraphrased from the *Lhoi Choejung*, the famous history of Bhutan written by the 10th Je Khenpo, Penchen Tenzin Chogyal.)

Starting from the King above, down to the humble citizens in the village, children, and elderly people seeking refuge in the Triple Gem, the thoughts and actions of all are in line with the precepts of the teachings of the Buddha. This has been made possible by the existing harmony between the King, the officials and the citizens. That is why in this increasingly interdependent global community, Bhutan is viewed with love, respect and appreciation.

Owing to their unstinted devotion and confidence there are few Bhutanese of mature years who have not received empowerment and instructions in the teachings or have taken no vow from a spiritual teacher. Moreover, in the morning as soon as they wake up and in the evening before going to bed, our older generation never fail to pay homage and gratitude to their tutelary deities, to their root gurus, to their forefathers and to the King in

their humble words. This rich tradition is, however, on the verge of disappearing, just as the sun sinks over the western horizon, leaving only a dark shadow behind.

1.3.2.2. Morning Prayer

Verse for taking five precepts:

[I] seek refuge in the Lama, the Spiritual teacher;
 [I] seek refuge in the Buddha;
 [I] seek refuge in the Dharma;
 [I] seek refuge in the Sangha
 I seek refuge in the excellent objects of refuge (Buddha, Dharma and Sangha (*recited a hundred times or more*).

“Root Lama, who is all-knowing! Today due to the everlasting blessings of the Three Jewels and the aspirations of my beloved parents who watch over me with compassion, without any obstacles in my path I am able to see the morning light once more in my life. Please grant me blessing to succeed in my plans and actions today and prevent me from indulging in negative deeds. Please bless me so that I can engage in virtuous deeds that are beneficial both to self and others and accomplish them without any obstacles.” (*These words are followed by the recitation of Mani, Vajra Guru, and end with the prayer of aspiration to liberate all sentient beings from the realm of suffering in this mundane world.*)

1.3.2.3. Evening Prayer

“Yah! By the benevolence and blessings of the Precious Three Jewels and the graciousness of my King, and in particular by the immeasurable love and kindness of my parents, all my activities that I have carried out have been accomplished due to the strength of your enormous wishes. To everyone I offer my deep gratitude. In addition, to my root teacher, tutelary deity and the Three Jewels who have been the sole guardians and source of inspiration to my parents, and to all the sentient beings existing underneath the vast stretch of the sky, I pray for your protection until the breaking of dawn.” (Subsequently, they recite the same mantras cited in the morning as instructed by their Gurus and conclude with prayers of dedication of merits to all the sentient beings.)

1.3.2.4. Empowerment

Within Tibetan Buddhism, an empowerment is a prerequisite stage allowing the practitioner to engage in certain practices in order to benefit others. The term





“empowerment” is the translation of the Tibetan word wang, which literally means “power”. In this context “transmission of power” is more accurate. It refers to the transmission of power from master to disciple, in particular the power of wisdom. Tibetan Buddhism is based on the premise that every being has the potential to attain supreme happiness (also called Enlightenment) and the empowerment is part of the process allowing this potential to fully manifest.

The Buddhist term *wang* means ‘power’ and in this context means ‘empowerment’ that is, the transferring of power from spiritually realised master to disciple. The principal power to be transmitted is the power of wisdom which, with realisation of one’s full potential, leads on to attainment of supreme happiness. The conferring of the empowerment has the effect of preparing the ground (one’s mind stream) for the seed (the teachings) to ripen within. Eventually the seed becomes a shoot, then there is a bud and finally, a flower. That flower is the flowering of the enlightened mind. The empowerment is part of the process allowing the mind’s full potential to be revealed.

Generally, the term *Wang* refers to the power, authority and influence of a person. In the present context of use of the three words *Wang*, *Lung* and *Thri*, the meaning of *Wang* is a wholesome approach to awaken the essence of Buddha Nature in sentient beings and ripen the nature

of mind and to destroy any delusion in our minds so that they become as clear as the immaculate mirror. In other words, *Wang* is a force for destroying afflictive emotions and for making mind as clear as its true nature, pouring the power of wisdom into a clean vessel. By means of rituals, we attain fruition in the form of blessings of the four kayas (dimensions) on our impermanent state and help ripen the true Buddha nature that lies within us.

The empowerment initiates a student into a particular tantric deity practice. By receiving the empowerment the student enters into a samaya connection with the teacher. The ritual for performing an empowerment can be divided into four parts:

1. *Bum pai wang* (Vase empowerment)
2. *Sang wai wang* (Secret empowerment)
3. *She rab yeshe kyi wang* (Wisdom empowerment)
4. *Tshig wang rinpoche* (Precious word empowerment)

The qualities of the empowerments:

1. The Vase (Bumpa) empowerment symbolises purification of the body, senses, and world into the body of the deity and may include a vase filled with water, or washing.
2. The Secret empowerment involves receiving nectar to purify the breath and speech (of the negative

karma accumulated through negative speech) into the speech of that deity.

3. The Wisdom Empowerment cleanses away the impious elements committed through negative thoughts of the mind. It grants the blessing of the Vajra (adamantine hard and clear) mind and enables ascent to the dharmakaya (truth body, or reality body) level of realisation.
4. The Precious Word Empowerment eradicates cognitive obscurations including defilements of body, speech and mind and grants the blessing with the Vajra wisdom and achieves the quality of svabhavikakaya (body of the essential nature of a Buddha) level of realisation. This fourth level can be seen as the sum of the other three levels.

Put in very simple terms, the purpose of receiving Empowerment is to be led safely and surely on the path towards spiritual betterment as a human being so that one may eventually attain the ultimate bliss. Group wangs held by various spiritual masters remain extremely popular in Bhutan. Held usually in the winter months in southern Bhutan, or in summer in the heartland, they are attended by thousands of devotees who have come from far and wide to avail of the opportunity of participation in such an important spiritual event.

1.3.2.5. Oral Transmission

The term *Lung* or *jag lung* means an oral transmission or reading transmission which is passed down from master to student and general devotees without missing any words and without making any commentaries. Nonetheless, simply listening to reading and studying the canons and scriptures is also considered an

empowerment. The student listens to the teacher while reading the text by the master who holds a transmission, ultimately going back to the author of the text. In this way, the student receives the blessing of the lineage without which he or she will not be able to understand the text in depth. Some teachers even consider it inappropriate to read a Dharma text for which one has not yet received a transmission.

As it is said that, “acquiring oral transmission is prodigious learning,” the knowledgeable and learned people are those who have studied from different masters and elder citizens having knowledge of culture. We become knowledgeable by acquiring the following qualities:

Getting an opportunity of learning various fields of knowledge.

Single discipline but learned many times.

Single discipline but learned from different masters.

Learned together with many friends in the institutes.

Gaining these qualities, one becomes knowledgeable and well educated and even clears the doubts and finally acquires the quality of one with profound learning. Therefore, listening and receiving oral transmissions from eminent personalities and even from our parents is very important to become perfect human being.

1.3.2.6. Discourse/Instructions

Thrid literally means to lead or guide or take along the path. In the context of teaching, its meaning is to lead the sentient being to the Buddha land away from the swamp of samsara, or the guiding of sentient beings towards the path of enlightenment away from the vast ocean of worldly sufferings. *Thrid* can be further categorised as



- 1) pedoen lop thrid (guidance according to examples and meanings in the texts and commentaries;
- 2) mar thrid (guidance according to the absolute exposure of the meaning of a subject);
- 3) zub thrid (instruction by focus on detail within the subject)
- 4) sem thrid (mind guidance);
- 5) gom thrid (meditation guidance); and
- 6) thrid zab mo (profound guidance).

However, thrid also provides instruction and sometimes practical guidance in acquainting oneself with and gaining in-depth knowledge and understanding of the Buddha's words and discourses, as taught in detail by the spiritual teachers and masters.

1.3.3. Tuneless Oral Narration

As mentioned earlier, there are oral narrations, called khashey, that require a melody and other khashey that do not. Previously elderly people and people with good oratory skills used to make these narrations according to the situation and their level of knowledge and experience. Narrations could be long and rambling or else presented succinctly in the form of properly arranged prose based on teachings. However, there is no record of established standards in these matters.

1.3.3.1. Departure Salutation or Words of Farewell

Yah! Now you are leaving your home and going to live in places that are far away. You must not engage in activities that are evil and harmful to you as well as to the society. Avoid telling lies, stealing and acting against the laws and always do things according to the principles of dharma. Avoid company of evil people but indulge in acts that are beneficial to yourself and others. Always come to the aid of those who are in dire need of help. Attitudes like these will eventually help you achieve your goals. May you not be left behind so that people look back at you; May you not do things that become their gossip. Be alert in all your plans and actions and be respectful and devoted to the King and your superiors and your colleagues at all times.

This salutation statement is normally made while seeing off any relatives or friends, our children and sometimes even our parents. The content of the statement comprises advice shared with heartfelt purpose, and thus it is called *Lamju-labja* in Dzongkha. Lamju means at the time of separation, and labja means advice.

1.3.3.2. Mourning Statement (narration for the deceased)



Re kab (narration for the deceased) is a traditional custom in Bhutan and increasingly being practised by everyone in the country. The statement is normally made actually for the spirit of a dead person as a parting gift to him/her.

Yah! (Insert name) “Hereafter, you have already left the physical body and today it has been *(Insert days)* since you have abandoned the world. I make this offering (of money) to take with you (symbolically) as a gift to your spiritual Guru. Do not linger around in the intermediate world, but maintain faith in your master and go along the path that will lead you to the Buddha Field.”

In certain parts of eastern Bhutan, an eloquent person amongst family members and neighbours at the cremation recalls the activities of the deceased. After every one or two sentences from the narrator, the others weep. This unique tradition is called *Ngu toed (rngu bsotd)* – weeping praise or a type of elegy.

1.3.3.3. Statement of Condolence

Statement of Condolence, called *Sem-so*, is constructed depending upon the situation (usually at the loss of parents, children, spouses or relatives). An example of a statement made to the bereaved family is given below.

This event has been unfortunate and I know you find it very hard to bear the loss. Nonetheless, it is only a matter of time as we are all destined to end in this way. After having been born in the realm of existence, as the saying goes, “there is no calling back after death and there is