

maintenance of an adequately strong standing army would have contributed to the security of the country by allowing a size of force disproportionate to the population to be raised, for short periods of time.

Pazap ceremonies that were held in the dzongs and the provinces were as much a ritual of peace as they were a show of strength and preparedness to deter aggression. Practices and performances of battle scenes were ideal training grounds for village men, young and old alike, who were introduced into the martial tradition. Thus, the pazaps are hailed as a benevolent warrior force.

2.1.3.3. The Dance of Gallant Warriors

Literally, the term *Jipai Pawo* refers to “young warriors or heroes”, who are symbolic of a bodyguard. There is no written history of the origin of Jipai Pawo. According to oral sources, when Bhutan was facing much internal strife the Paro Poenlop, Agay Haap was able to protect Zhabdrung Jigme Norbu who was his candidate for the post of 39th Desi. He escorted Zhabdrung to Thimphu safely and enthroned him as the Desi in 1850. On this occasion Poenlop Agay Haap staged Jipai Pawo for the first time. Young warriors escorted the Zhabdrung, dancing along the two sides of the ceremonial procession to prevent people from coming nearer to him and also to entertain the spectators as he was escorted to Trashi Choedzong.

The main reason for performing Jipai Pawo was externally to protect the Zhabdrung from enemies and internally to show pride and bravery.

Today the dance is performed during ceremonial receptions accorded to dignitaries, to symbolise guarding the dignitaries. The dance with accompanying song of praise is performed in front of the podium, as a mark of honour and respect to the dignitaries and to wish them good health and long life. It is a traditional gesture of welcome and good-will incorporating in it sentiments of lasting friendship, cooperation and mutual respect.

Costumes and accessories for the dance are as follows:

1. A gho of either brocade or raw silk;
2. *Tub* (Five different colours of silk scarf criss-crossed over the chest);
3. *Baekham/Khabshub* (a pouch to contain a needle) hung by the side;
4. *Phor-shub* (a pouch to contain a bullet) hung by the side;

5. *Ngueshub* (a purse hung by the side);

6. *Ri-nga* (a gold-plated silver helmet);

7. A full white mid-calf length skirt worn over the gho;

8. A sword at the back;

9. A single scarf in the left hand and a *damaru* (small hand drum) in the right hand.

2.1.4. Drama

In the 15th century, as had been prophesied by the protective deities, Thangtong Gyalpo came to Bhutan. Considered as the father of Tibetan opera, it is said that he raised money for his various bridge-building projects in Tibet through developing a dharma theatre troupe which performed operas, recited mantras and told tales meant to subdue demons and teach sentient beings. Arriving via the Chumbi valley with his followers in 1433, he went on to build temples in western Bhutan and chain-link iron suspension bridges over big rivers. It is believed that Thangtong Gyalpo brought the knowledge of the dramatic arts to Bhutan as well as introducing many songs and dances. Although no records are available to tell us how the new art form developed over the following centuries, it may be presumed that the tradition was maintained within the monastic institutions. In the 1980s the tradition was revived, with the then Semtokha Rigzhung Institute as pioneer in composition and mounting of new productions based on earlier tradition, to educate people on our cultural values and also to entertain them in an era where modernisation was already under way but television and video had yet to be introduced to provide popular entertainment. Since drama involves depicting human emotions and engaging the audience, the new art form with its staged enactment of traditional stories and legends soon gained popularity. Legends staged by Bhutanese artists included the following: Biographical legend of Khandro Drowa Zangmo, Gyalpo Norzang, Nangsa Oebum, Ling Gesar, Yeshe Tshogyal, Life of Drukpa Kuenley, Khandro Sonam Peldron, and Life of Lord Buddha. Schools offering a modern education later took up the dramatic arts, mainly staging modern dramas. In the 1990s the Dzongkha Development Commission made video recordings of most of the dramas staged in schools and other organizations.

More recently, plays by Shakespeare and other foreign dramatists of high standing have been staged for the Bhutanese audience, either in their original medium or in translation. From the Bhutanese perspective, all forms of the dramatic arts are the means of benefitting other beings and the actors are believed to be accumulating merit based on their own intentions.