

4.8.2. Beliefs and Superstition concerning flowers

Examples:

- When the plants or flowers are sown by children, they are believed to grow better since the budding power of the child is infused to the plants, compared to those sown by adults.
- If we plant the flowers which are stolen from others, they are believed to bloom better.
- In Bhutan, flowers represent both beauty and sacredness. So, if you grow lots of flowers and offer them at the altars, or at sacred sites, you will be blessed with beautiful children at present and you will be reborn as a beautiful person in the next birth.
- If the plants and flowers grow very well, the person who planted them is said to have “green fingers.”

4.8.3. Beliefs and Superstition on Animals

Examples:

- The generic name given to big black snake is *buemen* which literally means “no snake” but bad omen. So, seeing such a reptile is considered ill-luck and misfortune will strike the person or his/her family. It is believed to be the messenger of death which has assumed the form of snake to frighten you and scatter away your soul. The soul once scattered will have to be consolidated and strengthened. For this, a special ritual *la kug* (ref. earlier section on this topic) is performed to restore the soul and to ward off such misfortune. In this ritual, a replica of the snake is made with dough and left outside facing the direction/site of the place where the snake was encountered.
- If a dog, especially of your own, howls throughout the night or dig a hole in the ground around your house, it is considered a bad omen. It is believed that they can sense an impending disaster, which makes them cry.
- If a cat licks its front paws and then wipes its face, it announces the arrival of guest at home.
- Brawling of cats is considered bad omen as it is believed that cats fight over the spirits of dead people.
- If a black cat crosses the road when you are making a

journey, it indicates ill omen. It could be a failure of your mission or obstacles could occur.

- If an owl hoots, it is just a call to the beaver to bring food but hearing it laugh is ominous and warns of death. Again, if owl is seen in the morning or afternoon, it is believed that ill-luck will befall the family. Therefore, the Bhutanese call an owl, the bird of bad omen.

4.8.4. Beliefs and Superstition concerning Pregnant Women

Examples:

- Different kinds of food the pregnant woman dreams of are taken to symbolize the sex of the unborn child. For example, dreaming of pumpkin, turnips and peaches are believed to indicate the child as female while dreaming of radish and pear indicate the birth of a son.
- It is also believed that when a pregnant woman menstruates during her pregnancy the baby born to her will be the reincarnation of a renowned lama or a celebrant since the baby is believed to be cleaned and purified in her womb.
- If the pregnant women has made the bed wet unconsciously in her sleep for the first time, it signifies that the child born will be rich and successful.
- During her pregnancy the woman should not dye her hair as it means the mother is stealing the baby's fairness.
- Sex of a baby is felt by the movement in the womb. If the movement is felt more on the left it is a sign of a baby girl and conversely if the movement is on the right side the child will be a boy.
- If the pregnant mother loses her charms and becomes dull the baby is believed to be a girl since the mother's beauty is taken by the baby but if the mother has her glowing looks on her face the baby is believed to be a boy.

4.8.5. Beliefs and Superstition on Children

Examples:

- When the baby is born it is considered to be impure (drip) until the cleansing ceremony is performed early in the morning on the third day after its birth.

It is called *lhabsang* in the local term after which the visitors come with various gifts and cash for the long life of the baby.

- Older people believe that a baby who is in deep sleep should not be kissed on the mouth as the sleep will be disturbed by nightmares.
- If the new born baby sucks the thumb it signifies that the next birth is a baby boy but if it is an index finger then it is a sign of a baby girl.
- If the baby cries loud for days and nights without any illness it foretells the death or illness of the parents.
- Only those children who have completed eight years of life are entitled to be cremated. Otherwise their bodies are either buried in the rivers or kept in isolated caves.

4.8.6. Beliefs and Superstition concerning Human Body Parts

Examples:

- In the Bhutanese society, forehead is considered to be the most critical part of a person. It is believed that the fortune of the person is predetermined in one's forehead. When any good or bad fortune comes to a person the forehead often gets different remarks from other people. It is often believed that a person possessing a good forehead appears awesome and gains natural command over the crowd.
- When you stretch out your thumb, a hollow appears near wrist. The depth of this hollow part indicates the level of devotion to one's parents and family.
- Those who have distinct moles in the corners of the eyes are believed to shed lots of tears. It represents bowl of tears for the suffering that one goes through.
- The grinding of teeth also connects to certain beliefs. When a man grinds his teeth while sleeping it signifies victory over evils, but if a woman does the same it signifies that she is after human blood.
- If there is an unusual growth of hairs on the moles of both men and women you should not pull it out, not even supposed to be touched by their close ones because they symbolize good fortune.
- It is believed that those who have died in accidents

and their limbs went missing; he or she will not be reborn as a whole person in their next life.

4.8.7. Beliefs and Superstition on Days

Examples:

- The early hours of the morning are considered to be the most auspicious for deciding the important activities for the whole day. Therefore, it is important that the family begins the day on the positive note.
- When the morning begins with intense sunshine accompanied with light drizzling of rainfall it is believed be a "mournful day" where nature laments its own sorrow over the death of a human being as humans share a strong bond with nature.
- Among the seven days Monday is believed to be the most significant day to propose or make any important decisions and also to start any business. Even the traditional games like archery and khuru are played on this day.
- The lunar calendar is based on sign of *lokhor chu-nyi* (12 year animal cycle) like the pig, rooster, ox, sheep, dog, horse etc. Each day is associated with one of the astrological signs of animals which ultimately become its own day like the dog day or the rooster day. The significance of each day varies from others. For instance Friday is considered to be inauspicious to travel to far off places as it is believed that the journey would be tough and tiring. Likewise on Saturdays the animals cannot be slaughtered nor can their meat be cooked since the day signifies "red" colour. It is believed to bring death and cause harm to the other animals.
- *Tshe chi* (1st day of the month) is considered to be very inauspicious to cut one's hair and nails or even clothes, whereas *tshe nyi* (2nd day) is considered inauspicious to venture into any new activities, *tshe sum* or 3rd day is considered to be inauspicious to wash one's hair, take bath or wash clothes.
- The most auspicious days are the 8th, 15th and 30th during which most people visit sacred places and offer butter lamps and prayers.

4.8.8. Beliefs and Superstition about Dreams

Examples:

- When one sees bad dream filled with images of dead