

Ngawang Namgyal, arriving from Tibet, was received with a zhugdre ceremony by Lam Druk Namgyal of the Obtsho family at a place called Lebnathang in Gasa District. Then at the consecration of Punakha Dzong, an elaborate zhugdre phunsum tshogpa was performed and the ceremony gained immense popularity thereafter. In order to receive what is being served during the occasion, participants are expected to bring their own *phop* (bowl) and *tora* (small piece of cloth, usually white, to receive food items) to the ceremony to receive what is being served during the occasion.

The final stage of the zhugdre ceremony, known as *trash* *moelam*, is a prayer for the good health, wellbeing and prosperity of the dignitaries and those present on the occasion. It is designed to help guests accumulate merits in order to attain the highest qualities of which man is capable, in this way benefiting not only those present on the occasion but also all sentient beings.

3.1.4. Consecration Ceremony

It is a custom that any significant structure or item is appropriately consecrated to grant a divine blessing. This is called *rabney*, which means to seal firmly. The ceremony is performed upon completion of a new or renovated structure, in order to assure its durability and resilience against natural and manmade disasters. It is a very special ceremony whereby constructions (such as temples, stupas and/or statues) are consecrated with wisdom energy bestowed from the Enlightened Ones, which is then absorbed into the construction

or object. This wisdom energy is sealed with prayers and meditations and the energy will remain alive and active until or unless requested otherwise. The *thangka* (religious scroll pictures), statues and stupas, which have been consecrated in this way, are considered effective in granting blessings and protection, and thereby fulfilling the wishes of the devotees. A lama or local priest performs this *rabney* ceremony. The most popular structures that are generally consecrated comprise private or public building structures or infrastructure, monasteries and temples, stupas, and statues. The ceremony is also carried out for the installation of prayer flags and prayer wheels. Besides these, Buddhist wall hangings, murals, and even new or second-hand vehicles are also consecrated.

3.1.5. Milk Libation

Cattle or yak owners perform milk libation to appease their local deities and livestock gods. Right after the milking, the person faces the direction of the local deities, holding the milking-pail in the left hand and a twig or leaves in the right hand. Dipping the twig into the milk, the person sprinkles a few drops of milk in the direction of the deity. During the act of sprinkling, the person says some propitious prayers. There are no standard written verses for the prayers: people just say some propitious words appealing to the deities that their animals be free from illness and animal predators, and that their produce be bountiful. The main prayer will be dedicated to the gods of livestock. It is in fact a thanksgiving to the gods for ending the previous day successfully and seeking their support in the days to follow.

3.2. TRADITIONS & CUSTOMS

3.2.1. Religious Traditions and Customs

In the 7th century when the Tibetan King Songtsen Gampo began building temples, Bhutan also saw the light of Dharma. In the 8th century, Guru Rinpoche visited Bhutan at least three times, gave the teachings and blessed the land.

During the 9th century, when King Langdarma and his Bonpo ministers were harassing the Buddhists and causing destruction of both monasteries and scriptures, many of the learned lamas came to Bhutan to practise in safety. In the 13th century, Phajo Drugom Zhipo established the root of Drukpa Kagyud tradition in Bhutan followed by his sons who continued the lineage after his death. Many other teachers followed him to strengthen the tradition. There were also Nyingmapa

