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Invoking a Warrior Deity: A Preliminary Study of *Lo-ju*

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Abstract

*Lo-ju*¹ (*blo 'gyur*) is an ancient *Pazap* (*dpa mdzangs pa*) festival celebrated every three years across the villages of Shar valley in Wangdue Phodrang. This study focuses primarily on its Chungsekha version.

This ritual of propitiating the *Dra-lha* (*dgra lha*)² is conducted for the wellbeing of the Shar community and the nation at large by invoking and appeasing the pantheon of Drukpa protective deities in the martial traditions of the yore. At a glance though, it would seem like a throwback into a warlike past with an enactment of a battle scene by the village *pazaps*.

An in-depth analysis reveals this to be a show of faith, courage and battle preparedness which, by default, is a

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¹ There are many colloquial terminologies for the festival though unfortunately how it was originally referred to as is now lost to us through verbal corruption due to a dearth of standard documentation.

² A ferocious protector (who as the narrative proclaims, likes the loud sound of warlike exclamations and howls) which in this case seems to be the deified spirit of Prince Wangchuck on whom was bestowed the dual protectorship of the religious and secular wellbeing of the Punakha valley where the Drukpa nationhood originated and to whom the people of Shar subscribed to after he miraculously survived the ordeal of being cast away in the Wangchhu river by Phajo as an authentication of his extraordinary being.

natural deterrent against possible hostilities. An attempt has been made to bear a historical perspective on this tradition which would otherwise seem like an odd cross between vainglorious machismo, anachronistic extravaganza and mindless superstition.³

The article is based on manuscript of the rituals, hagiography of eminent Drukpa ('brug pa) hierarchs and other socio-political publications though none of them directly relate to the actual rationale and period of the festival's institution. So, this work is primarily a heuristic recreation of the festival based on stray references found in these sources that are appropriately corroborated with existing myths, legends and other grapevines.

A Historical Perspective

The peace and prosperity of Bhutan today has been wrought upon endless spate of hostilities that was characteristic of the years gone by. The country was a medley of fiefdoms ruled by minor lords who were often at loggerheads with each other. Among the first to launch a process of enduring peace and unity was the vanguard of the Drukpa order, Phajo Drugom Zhigpo (Pha-jo 'brug-sgom zhig-po, 1179-1247), popularly known as Tonden Phajo (stong ldan pha-jo) by the Bhutanese. From his seat in Tibet, Lam Phajo arrived in Bhutan at the age of forty in the year 1218. He came to Bhutan through Lingzhi and settled in Dodena from where he

³ It must be stated here though that this writing is a sincere effort on the part of an insider keen on preserving and, possibly, perpetuating a legacy. As such, the work may be biased by the author's partiality for his own root, people and culture. Rigorous scholarly standards have been sidestepped in favour of a more literarily ingenious recreation, with due glorification thrown in for good measure, of a heritage poor on scholarship and tottering on the brink of an ungainly disintegration.

systemically began working towards the formation of a Drukpa state as per the prophecy of Choje Tsangpa Gyarey (gTsang-pa rGya-ras, 1161-1211).

The process began in earnest by defeating the challenge mounted by his spiritual adversary Lama Lhakpa (bla ma lha-pa), then the theocratic ruler of the heartland of Western Bhutan. People who were reeling under his exorbitant taxes readily defected to Phajo's fold, effectively breaking his resistance. After bringing Western Bhutan under the Drukpa sphere of influence, he retreated from public life and spent his time in ascetic pursuit in Tango. His bequest unto his sons included lordship over the newly found Drukpa territories with the added responsibility of its guardianship in the interest of unification, harmony and prosperity. They were to protect its premises under all circumstances and from all manners of malignant intents and pursuits.

After his advent in the year 1616, Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel (Zhabs-drung Ngag-dbang rNam-rgyal, 1594-1651) went about materializing an ecclesiocratic Drukpa state under the "Dual System of Religious and Temporal Affairs" (*chos-srid lugs-gnyis*) by unifying a stretch that was then essentially not-any-one-man's-land into a single nation-state that is now Bhutan. However, some factions saw this as Drukpa expansionism and put up armed resistance. The new Drukpa land also faced aggressions from Zhabdrung's detractors in Tibet who watched with unease as he worked himself into a position of authority in the increasingly powerful Bhutanese state to their immediate south. As a matter of fact, Tibet launched as many as seven attacks on Bhutan in that century alone.

Such a time must have necessitated the establishment of a Drukpa narrative giving much needed authority and legitimacy to Zhabdrung's quest of rallying around a people to unify and build a nation. Facing up to the odds against this

quest would have incurred nothing less than a divine intervention.

Fortunately, on both these counts, Zhabdrung would have had to look only as far back as the life and deeds of the much celebrated Drukpa Patriarch, Tonden Phajo. His divination of the Drukpa state had the authority and legitimacy of no less than the prophecies of Tsangpa Gyarey and Guru Rinpoche (Gu-ru Rin-po-che)⁴. The Drukpa state was then inevitable and Zhabdrung was the man to bring it about, the favoured subject of these saints that he was. The divine protection of the Drukpa state was readily entrusted in the supreme, albeit symbolic, authority of the Lineage Prince Wangchuck over the valley of Punakha and all causes emanating from there by the virtue of his father's empowered bequest.

Thus, the *pazap* traditions of Shar and Wang can be established as a verbatim ceremonial narrative of these developments in celebrating the nation building success under the aegis of the ultimate Drukpa hierarch Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel. Sui generis manuscripts of the *pazap*

⁴ Leadership in Bhutan is usually tied and linked by prophecies and so tracing ancestry and descent from traditional authority of power is a common practice. While depicting the highest source of influence that Phajo, pioneer of the Drukpa tradition, and his numerous scions had become, Yonten Dargay and Sorensen P.K. purport that 'For Zhabs-drung Ngag-dbang rnam-rgyal, when forced to flee Central Tibet in the beginning of the 17th century, it was obvious to seek refuge in this southern stronghold and haven of the 'Brug-pas and eventually bring the whole of the Southern Land of the Four Approaches under his sway in the years ahead.' Alternatively, Michael Aris also argues that "It is clear, then, that powerful emotions can be unleashed in Bhutanese society when precedents and justifications are invoked in favour of violent means, ritual or otherwise, to protect the state from perceived dangers. These same emotions were at work in fostering political unity in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries..."

ceremonies, analogous across the Shar and Wang valleys, indicate that Zhabdrung's nation building quest was considered a triumphant fruition of Tonden Phajo's path breaking efforts. The festival is in itself an articulate narrative of the events leading up to the formation of the Drukpa state by conquering hostile forces with the aid of the powerful *Dralha*.

The Pazap Tradition

Punakha *Domchoe* (*sgrub mchod*) was first staged to celebrate Bhutan's resounding victory over the invading Tibetan forces in the 17th century and to propitiate the tutelary deities (*dgon po*). It is marked by a three-day extended pazap festival. *Pazaps* who brandish military gears and combat accessories stage elaborate battle scenes to the accompaniment of loud trumpets, firecrackers and war songs. Though it cannot be conclusively established, elders in the villages argue that the Shar *lo-ju* is a provincial extension of the Punakha *Domchoe* following the same tradition of *pazaps*.

Apart from this rather theatrically ceremonial role, *pazaps* were an integral part of Bhutan's security apparatus. Given the limited resources of the country, Bhutan could not afford to keep a standing army that could defend itself, much less deter potential aggressors with its apparent prowess. So, what it did was to set up a corpus of peasant militias that could be called at short notice to fight. A British mission's note cited by Dasho Karma Ura in a paper on perception of national security states that "the Bhutanese have only six hundred men in pay as soldiers; but though their government is elective, they hold their lands by military service, and every man in their country is a soldier when called upon." Based upon a heuristic assumption of the tax-paying households, he puts the number of *pazaps* available at around eighteen thousand. Flexibility and cost-effectiveness of a *pazap* force compared to the 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.

Further, when they were not engaged in repelling the numerous foreign aggressions, the *pazaps* fought endless skirmishes between opposing clans that became a hallmark of the period which marked the decadence of Zhabdrung's dual system, two centuries' after its establishment, and the emergence of the Wangchuck dynasty.

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. To this day, becoming *lo-ju pazap* is a rite of passage that makes men out of boys. Thus, the *pazaps* are hailed as a benevolent warrior clan that is in steadfast tutelary of its adherents.

Shar Da Gay: The Eight Great Valleys of Shar

Surviving tax records from the Zhabdrung's time show Shar to be a major rice-producing province. Favourable landscape, fertile soil and salubrious climate made Shar the famous granary of multiple cereals enabling it to become the lifeline of the Bhutanese state in the years when it chose to follow a minimal trade policy.

At a time when state rewards were based on merit, Shar was favourably placed on the pecking order. A record of the investiture celebration of Zhabdrung Jigme Dragpa I (zhabsdrung Jigs med grags pa, 1725-1761) in 1747 shows that in the *Mang 'gyed* (cash gifts offered by the Desi to his subjects proportionate to their tax status), a large chunk of the *matams* handed out were for the tax-paying households of the prefecture of Wangdue Phodrang. This was in consonance

with the power vested in the Dzungpon of Wangdue Phodrang who was a member of the six member cabinet in Zhabdrung's *Choe-syid Lu-nyi* state. The Wangdue Dzungpon's tax contribution alone was comparable to the regional prefects called *Poenlop* whose jurisdictions were several districts and the Duar protectorates clubbed together.

It was natural then that in the decadent years when strives between Dzung officials vying for supremacy threatened to tear the country apart, the Wangdue *Dzungpon* (*rDzung dpon*) invariably got involved in them. One could like or despise him, but one thing was sure, he could not be ignored. This might explain why the Shar people are fond of strutting their swords, their archery prowess and continue to appease the *Dra-lha* even when one would think that peace is finally home.

Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel was always favourably disposed to his Shar adherents. Fearing for the safety of the Ranjung Khasarpani (the self-emanated image of Chenrigzi) at the height of the Tibetan hostilities, he took refuge in the safety of the Shar villages. Later he spent many years traveling between his Centre in Punakha and Wangduephodrang where he personally conceived and initiated the construction of the Dzung at the crossroad of the East and West. The people were worthy hosts during these times of trials, tribulations and subsequent celebrations, and thus, were rewarded with high honours and rights in his political set-up.

Organization of *Lo-ju*

Lo-ju is an extensive exercise of communal bond in Chungsekha. All the households come together to organize the event and contribute in varied capacities towards its successful conduct. By the relatively frugal rural standards, the two-day festival requires a substantial assortment of

material and human resources. Eighteen of the twenty households in Chungsekha make up an eighteen-men *pazap* force while the remaining two households put in utility services. Each household contributes two *drey*⁵ of rice, 1 kilogram of meat, 750 grams of butter, a bucket of *banchang*⁶ and a bottle of *ara*⁷ towards a grand feast for the *pazaps*.

The six original households of Chungsekha take turns to host the *pazaps* every *lo-ju* year as the chief patron. The patron mobilizes village resources and is responsible for the collection of the various feast ingredients. Apart from preparing the main feast, an endless stream of wine and butter tea must be served for the *pazaps* throughout the day by the host. The host also acts as the patron of the *paow* (*dpa 'bo*) and *neljorma* (*rnal 'byor ma*), the male and female shaman respectively, although their fees are collectively borne. They are separately entertained during their three-day stay in the community by the host. As the organizer and the main focal person, the host will be called upon to address other organizational niceties whenever they come up.

Supported by the *tshogs-pa*⁸, *spyi dpon*⁹ and other elders, the host will call for the start of preparation and practice at least five days prior to the day of the rehearsal. The *pazaps* train in choreographed sequence of martial drills and declamation of war songs and ritual librettos every evening on the temple lawn as the organizers discuss nuances of the organization.

⁵ A traditional measurement unit that is roughly 1 ¼ Kg.

⁶ A seasoned rice wine.

⁷ A strong rice brewed spirit.

⁸ The lowest rung of grass root leader whose office is preserved in the new administrative set-up of democracy.

⁹ Unpaid village messenger and utility personnel whose post is filled on rotation basis due to the hardship involved.

The organization of the *lo-ju* has assumed an added significance as an event that brings the whole of Chungsekha together. Chungsebs have caught on with the trend of outward migration too. Most Chungsebs live and work in urban centers today effectively severing a time-honoured bond. Therefore, the festival is a galvanizing force providing an occasion for people to come together, renew old ties and work towards communal harmony.

Primus Inter Pares: Ceremonial Pazap Leaders

There are four ceremonial leaders of the *pazaps* who are entitled to a double serving of meat and gifts (traditionally an offering of silk scarves or *dar* and possibly, money). They are collectively called *Dhar-thob* (*dar thob*) or *Nyi-kel-ma* (*gnyis skal ma*). The primus inter pares, or first among equals is the *Dar-pon* (*dar dpon*) who is the symbolic commander of the force. The *Dar-pon* performs the *bey*¹⁰. Two *Yang-pon* (*dbyang dpon*) serve as his Next-in-Command and is responsible for singing paeans of the various deities protecting the advancing *pazaps* unit. Traditionally, three leading households held these symbolic positions as a reciprocation of their contributions towards village welfare. These ceremonial leaders are supposed to be the subjects of special favours from the *dra-lha* and of late, competition for these posts have become a bone of contention.

The fourth and the last position in this category is the *paow* who leads the *dra-lha* propitiation ritual as the precentor. Contrary to the popular usage of the word *paow* to denote a possessed shaman, a *paow* in this context is an adept performer of considerable acumen who can reel off monumental volumes of excerpts from hagiographical texts

¹⁰ *Bey* (*rbad*) is a type of war dance performed with drawn swords and ferocity, invoking the protection of a particular deity by describing aspects of him in martial terms.

and colloquial verses. For this reason, the position is not claimed by traditional rights and is instead offered to a proven maestro.

Based on the performing abilities, another *pazap* is nominated for the rendition of *ley-ma*¹¹. As a minstrel in the *pazap* unit, he must show good heart and a sense of humour to maintain the spirit of the unit through a hectic day's ceremonies. However, he does not belong to the *dhar-thob* category. Instead, he solicits alms at the end of the ceremonies. At least two shamans render their services of divine augury and the exorcising of malignant spirits for a stipulated fee. These priests with the capacity of being possessed by the *Dra-lha* are usually hired from other villages as they are unavailable locally in Chungsekha.

The Day of the Rehearsal

On the day of the Bhutanese winter solstice (*ngin-log*) every three years, people of Chungsekha converge on the lawn of its village temple for the first of the two days of *lo-ju*, marking a rehearsal of sorts. Dressed in their best clothes, they sample an array of Shar's culinary delicacies and watch as the *pazaps* emerge from the inner sanctums of the village lhakhang and strut across its lawn singing paeans of the various protector deities, both national and natal. *Pazaps*, mostly young boys and some village elders put up a medieval martial ceremony. *Pazaps* wear traditional robes perfectly fitted with silk scarves reminiscent of medieval battle outfits. They flaunt traditional Bhutanese swords which are symbol of a hero. After offerings of wine, the *pazaps* perform the ritual of propitiating the *Dra-lha*. A vigorous martial drill is staged to the rhythm of the *paow's* declamation of excerpts from Phajo's biography punctuated with folk verses. An

¹¹ *Ley-ma (glen-ma)* is a particular type of ceremonial folk verse sung in glorification of the village and its deities.

unmistakable air of combat pervades the hamlet as *pazaps* let out heart wrenching war cries and the *paow's* fiery narrative becomes increasingly warlike to browbeat the evil spirits into submitting before the *Dra-lha's* wrath.

Ceremonial Proceedings for the Day

The second day's (on which the actual propitiation takes place) proceedings start at the break of dawn and ends late in the evening after the host holds a reception for the *pazaps* and everybody else in the community amidst much fanfare. Choicest foods and drinks are served all along in time honoured tradition as the *pazaps* march through the village. This tradition of troops being felicitated on their way is best illustrated in the acclaimed ballad of one of Shar's famous sons, Pemi Tshewang Tashi whose eastbound detachment is received ceremoniously at various points on the road to Trongsa.

Setting off from the Village

As the dawn break on Chungsekha the day after *Nyin-lo*, eighteen *pazaps* are ceremoniously sent off by their respective patrons after being subjected to a fumigation ritual with a combination of holy fire, smoke and water. They then storm the piece of ground at the base of an old cypress tree believed to be the offshoot of Lam Drukpa Kuenley's (blam 'brug pa kun legs 1455-1529) walking stick who had come to visit Chungsey Azhi Gyalzom (khung se a zhe rgyal 'dzom). They are greeted by a shaman who would then go on to augur each of the eighteen patrons' fortune. The *pazaps* leave the shaman as he is possessed by his deity's spirit and leave for an hour's hike up a steep hillside to the Dargay Goenpa (dar rgyal dgon pa) monastery.

Blessed Formation from the Goenkhang

Around 1531, Tenpai Gyaltshen (bstan pai rgyal mtshan, 1506-1538), the son of Lam Ngawang Chogyal (blam ngagd bhang chos rgyal, 1465-1540) built a *lhakhang* called Dargay Goenpa (dar rgyal dgon pa) on a hill overlooking the three great valleys which is revered as the seat of Lung Sup Dorje Legpa (lung srung rdorje legs pa). He is the tutelary deity of Chungsekha, Domkha and Wangpoenkha. The *pazaps* come to pay their homage and seek his protection. There is a more mundane reason for this visit too. The battle helmet and the *Tsendar* (the ceremonial insignia of the deities) of the *pazaps* are kept in the *Goenkhang* of the *Goenpa*. The *pazaps* perform a rite called the *pazapoi chog-ga* and offer gifts and *khaddar* (kha dar). The *Dhar-pon* dons the ceremonial hat, heave the *tsendar* (btsan dar) over his shoulder and perform a *bey* invoking the Patriarch *Lung-sup*.

The *pazaps* then triumphantly leave the *lhakhang* in battle formation with the two *Yang-pon* singing paeans offering their unequivocal allegiance to the Drukpa protective deities. The principal monk of the *Goenpa* host a *marchang* (wine ceremony). One of the two *yang-pon* recites the *chang-choe* (chang mchod) verse (a wine libation hymn)¹².

In the ceremony, the important deities invoked are Mahakala and Mahakali, the guardian deities of Bhutan. The glorious teacher, the four assemblies of deities, the Daka and Dakanis of the three worlds, the dweller of the carnal grounds and the guardians of four directions are also significantly mentioned in the prayer. Beside the prayer is an appeasement of the deities residing in strategic locations across the country.

¹² Although the *Chang-choe* ceremony is widely performed, the text of the *lo-ju* version is different and is called *bje-pai chang-choe* (*byis pa'i chang mchod*), literally a young man's verse. It is a narrative expressing a man's faith in the tutelary of his deities and his confident outlook on his own prowess and value as a man, ready and able to serve a righteous cause.

The Battle Procession of the Pazaps

After the hike down to the village, the *pazaps* take a rest just as they come in sight of the first house. A *marchang* (*mar chang*) ceremony is performed followed by a round of *bey* and *ley-ma*. After they have sorted out their outfits and accessories, the long battle march to the ceremonial ground in the heart of the village begins. At the vanguard, the two *Yang-pon* lead signing paeans while the rank and file reciprocate, jubilantly singing their refrain in unison. With drawn sword and the *tendar* heaved over his shoulder, the *Dhar-pon* pulls along the other *pazaps* in a battle parade. At the rear of the *pazaps*, the minstrel follows boisterously holding aloft a quiver. Two *bje-pai paow* (*byis pa'i dpa'bo*) perform with gusto.

They are received on entrance by the two shamans, their patrons and other members of the community with lowered *kabneys*. They stop en route for offers of wine and food by the patrons of households falling along the way¹³. They reciprocate by way of *marchang* ceremonies, *bey* (*rbad*) and *ley-ma* (*gleng ma*), symbolically showering bountiful fortune and protection upon these patrons.

Taking Charge of the Hamlet

As noon approaches, the *pazaps* finally manoeuvre their way through the winding village footpath flanked by long lines of well-wishers and patrons who besieged them with their oblations. The *pazaps* are received upon reaching the *lhakhang* by monks and other functionaries in a ceremony

¹³ The epicurean taste for fine tea and wine is a fact that is illustrated best by Pemi Tshewang Tashi and his troops who show much appreciation for the hospitality of their well-wishers while a sense of disgust overwhelm them when they are made no such oblations as the fateful battle draws close.

called *chibdrel* (*chibs gra*). As exhilarating sounds of religious drums, cymbals and trumpets mixed with jubilant exclamations rent the air, the *pazaps* symbolically take charge of the village and its people as their unequivocal guardians. The *pazaps* circumambulate the *lhakhang* thrice as they keep up the jubilant paeans for grace and protection. They then perform another *marchang* ceremony hosted by the main patron of the day. A *bey* and a *ley-ma* are performed. Depending upon the availability of time, some more *bey* and *ley-ma* are performed by the other *pazaps* followed by some rounds of joyous dances.

Midday Hiatus and Lunch

At around midday, the *pazaps* break for the feast in the patron's house. The seating arrangement reflects the symbolic hierarchy of the *pazap* order. The *Dhar-pon* sits at the head on a raised seat. The two *Yang-pon* flank him on either sides. The *paow* seats next to one of the *yang-pon* and the rest of the *pazaps* complete the arrangement by sitting in two rows. The serving follows the traditional Bhutanese etiquette. The *pazaps* are served traditional nutriment including rice, vegetables, tea, beef and other meat servings. The *dhar-thobs* receive double servings of pork slices befitting their appellation of *Nyi-kelma*¹⁴.

Phallic Power

After a hearty meal, the *pazaps* go to a spot famous for its panoramic view and gentle breeze. They straighten their clothes and fix their accessories after all the excitable performances. The afternoon's ceremonies begin with the

¹⁴ Traditionally officials in the court and state services were differentiated by the size of their servings during formal meals with the seniors receiving the most. Usually, commanders receive double servings, a tradition still preserved in this ceremony.

adorning of a phallus, the symbol of virility and fertile prowess usually associated with Wangchu Chengpo (dbang phyug cheng po). *Pazaps* are supposed to be an enlightened warrior clan above the mundane emotions of this world like greed, prejudice, sloth, treachery, insecurity, attachment, shame, et al. Being able to parade a brazen penile projection in a crowd of close relatives reinforce their capacity for victory. The Wangchu Chengpo, as the carved phallus is reverently called, is attached to a bamboo cot and covered in silk scarves. It is carried aloft by young boys ahead of the procession of *pazaps*. The *pazaps* move in for the final assault of the day on the back of the phallic power as paeans entrusting their victory to the divine protectors of the Drukpa order are sung.

Shar's Beauty Pageant

To receive the heroic warriors, young women and girls line up the pathway bearing rejuvenating wine and rice snacks called *sho*. The contrast is striking as the gallant *pazaps* meet the fine ladies. The ladies offer the men their aliments as the men oblige by reciprocal gifts of money and small tokens, usually beetle nuts. If *lo-ju* is a rite of passage for young boys into virile adulthood, it is an occasion for the young ladies to sashay their budding beauties and announce their coming of age. Loving mothers deftly adorn their daughters with fine silk materials and precious family heirlooms because at stake is the fame of *lay-key* (*legs skyel*) which effectively makes a woman the toast of the valley.

Tokens of Appreciation

The *pazaps* are the symbolic defense mechanism of the community in the proud tradition of the Drukpa warriors. They invoke and appease the deities with their prowess and gallantry. For these reasons, the grateful community felicitates its heroes with monetary token of appreciation

called *dhar*. The ceremonial leaders called the *dhar-thobs* are entitled to receive *dhar* individually while the general *pazaps* receive the *dhar* collectively. It often happens that the people who go to offer the *dhar* have their small changes snatched away by the cheeky *pazaps* who would then thank them profusely by way of placating.

Invoking the *Dra-lha*: The Narrative¹⁵

After the *dhar* ceremony, the battle of exorcising the malignant spirit by invoking the powerful Warrior Deity begins in earnest. The *pazaps* let out terrifying war cries and a firework ensues as the *dra-lha* is invoked. The *paow* takes centre stage as the *pazaps* ceremoniously circumambulate the ground around the grand cypress. A prowling rhythm is set as the *paow* begins his exuberant declamation of the *dra-lha* script.

The propitiation begins by describing the *dra-lha*. He is benign in his outlook, amicable in disposition and gracious to his adherents as he is a Bodhisattva incarnate. He is the son of the triumphant Drukpa order and is its professed protector. The order of Drukpa hierarchs are then enumerated in some details and the south-bound mount of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel is mentioned¹⁶. In his wrathful form though, which he can assume on provocation of his self and the adherents under his protection, he can unleash

¹⁵ The narrative on the formation of the Drukpa order is a fine blend of classical and colloquial Dzongkha.

¹⁶ This reference not only shows that the festival was a visionary handiwork of Zhabdrung and/or his adherents, but it also goes on to implicate that Zhabdrung's grand design and adventures in the Southern Land as a fulfillment of a destiny with the able aid of his retinue of deities and the *dra-lha* that will be subsequently born for this very purpose in the course of the narrative.

untold destruction on the offenders. He is deadly to his foes as his prowess stands unmatched.

Then the *paow* goes on to describe the birth of the *dra-lha* which made the Drukpa destiny possible. At this point, the declamation resonates with episodes from the life of the almighty Tonden Phajo. He came to the southern ravenous land of four passages to fulfill the destiny of the Drukpa state and bring order in the fractious land. Upon his advent, he systematically instituted the Drukpa order by winning over the people with his benevolence even as he prevailed over his enemies. To perpetuate the lineage of the Drukpa holders, he copulated with his extraordinarily gifted consort Sonam Palden from the valley of Wang. The process is described in graphic details adding a blatantly bawdy folk element to a saintly biography.

The narrative at this point dwell on subjects that are usually considered taboos. The narrative points to the worldly preoccupation of Tonden Phajo and how he is accosted for it by the people who naturally see his sensual engagements as going against his spiritual ideals. On his parts, Phajo defends himself by arguing the need to spread the Drukpa race, in unabashed terms. He says that to beget a great progeny, one needs great appetite and prowess at intercourse, and he got just those qualities¹⁷.

Of the seven sons born to Phajo by Sonam Palden, only four went on to prove their Bodhisattva mettle. The *Dra-lha* is thus born. He is identified as the Lineage Prince Wangchuck who

¹⁷ The *Dra-lha* must be conceived and born. For that purpose, a worthy parents must be besieged. Thus, the *Dra-lha* is born to Tonden Phajo and his consort Sonam Palden. The narrative identifies the child born thus as the persuasive Prince Wangchuck who is ultimately appointed as the combined lama and administrator of the Punakha region.

was entrusted with the tutelary of the Wang, Punakha and Shar valleys as their combined spiritual and temporal head. Thus in times of need, Prince Wangchuck is defied and called upon to come as the *dra-lha* and asked to take charge of the *pazaps* fighting to defend and propagate the cause of the Drukpa establishments.

As the *dra-lha* is symbolically invoked, he is made oblations of wine, water, flour and meat of the finest vintage. The declamation goes into great details describing how each of these offerings are prepared with diligence, dexterity and absolute good fate. They are nourishments befitting the highest order. Then the *dra-lha* symbolically dawns on the ground and the assault begins on the malignant forces impinging upon the Drukpa order and the village of Shar Chungsekha.

Exorcising the (Malignant) Spirit

The *paow* begins with an offer of magnanimous pardon for anybody willing to submit before the wrath of the *dra-lha*. With his pure scarf, he then symbolically brings to bear the full force of the *dra-lha* on those still harbouring evil intents and designs against the Drukpa order and the hamlet of Shar Chungsekha. At around this time in the narrative, the spirit of the *dra-lha* possesses the shaman and he breaks into the *pazap* rank. As the tension heightens, the prowl of the *pazaps* give way to a full-blooded assault drill following the *paow*'s fiery elocution of the *dra-lha*'s strong-arm strategies. A virtual battle pervades as the *paow* exorcises every potentially malignant source. Flashing swords, piercing war cries, jubilant exclamations and fireworks rent the air.

The possessed shaman and the *paow* break the line and charge towards the fringe end of the village in pursuit of the evil spirit that is by now in full flight. A barrage of people prevent these men from self-annihilation and hold them back

ceremoniously in the nick of time. As some sense of order is restored, a rice effigy symbolizing all that is evil is placed at the feet of the shaman. Then the final rite begins by the shaman commanding the fleeing evil not to bother the community and the Drukpa order again. He says that the force of the Drukpa guardians blessed by the triple gem, Buddha, Sangha and Dharma will level the mountains and churn the ocean should ever such a need arise, effectively deterring any potential designs in the future. With a swift kick, the effigy is floored and the *pazaps* pounce on it in a coup de grace. A final *bey* is performed by the *dhar-pon* who assigns the malignant spirit to the limits of the world where it will be safely sequestered, browbeaten as it is by this show of strength.

Retaining the Bounty of the Ceremony

The jubilant *pazaps* and the community then prepare for the celebratory reception at the house of the chief patron. The boys carry the Wangchuk Chengpo as the booty of the day's efforts and take the lead on the march back to the house. The women sing the song of joyous fruition called *Tashi Leg-pay* (*bkra shis legs pas*) and follow suit. The *pazaps* gloat over their day's exploits and sing songs of joyous gratitude with prayers for enduring peace and prosperity¹⁸.

As the women continue their cheerful songs and dances, the men prepare to receive the talismanic Wangchuck Chengpo into the house. Much like the ceremony of *zur chen* elevation

¹⁸ The *Ley-so* as the paeans are called, here, offers thanksgiving to the seat of Zhabdrung in Punakha. This not only establish *Lo-ju* as a post Zhabdrung ritual but also as an extension of his deeds. The *Ley-so* are beautiful verses in praise of the Drukpa hierarchs. At one point, these verses were standardized across the valleys of Shar and Wang. However, much of the standards are lost now as no text exists.

for a newly constructed house, the Wangchuck Chengpo is tethered to a rope and pulled through the oriel of the altar room to the accompaniment of its paeans. The *pazaps* are hierarchically seated in the room and felicitated with wine, tea and other aliments. The ceremonial headgears of the *pazaps* are then presented to a member of the household as a token of their appreciation for a period of three days. The *tendar* is also kept in the safekeeping of the patron. The patron thus effectively reaps the bounty of the festival. On the fourth day, the *tendar* is returned to the *Goenkhang* (*mgon khang*) and the patrons of the *pazaps* take back the headgears. This tradition of lavishing bounties on the patron may be an indication of the appreciation and gratitude that the community had for the patron in a hard pressed economy. The patron receives the fortune of peace, stability and prosperity for the whole community.

Expunged Existence: A History of Poor Documentation and Scholarship

It is almost impossible to establish conclusively when the festival of *lo-ju* came into existence. There is no record to that effect. Inferences drawn from a manuscript of the rituals that had been appropriately corroborated by oral sources suggest that the *lo-ju* must have been established around the same time as the Punakha *Domchoe*, the more illustrious of the two *pazap* festivals. Many aspects of the *lo-ju* are based directly on the *Domchoe* and the *Dra-lha* propitiation ritual is the same as the one conducted in the Punakha and Thimphu Dzongs.

Punakha *Domchoe* and the *Dra-lha* propitiation ceremony are believed to have been instituted as a celebration of Zhabdrung's victory against the Tibetan aggressors and other internal factions based on verbatim accounts of the series of battles and the grand invocations of the protective deities. Along with the *pazaps* of the eight great regions of Wang, the Shar people contributed to the force raised by the Zhabdrung in ensuring the Drukpa triumph. While the people of Wang

must have led the celebration of the *Drubchen* as they were the natives of the Punakha region, the Shar people must have replicated the national celebration across their villages with their own version of the ritual.

These festivals are essentially folk in nature unlike the more ecclesiastical *Tsechu* (*tshes bcu*) that is a largely monastic exercise. At a time when literacy was low among the lay population, it could possibly have happened that the need for proper documentation of this important historical development must have been overlooked. Like every folk pursuit, a set of traditions passed down the generations must have served for the need of paper works. Even for the *Drubchen* which has been an important national event, the documentation is rather poor. Apart from a precept guiding the *pazap* code of conduct, hardly any other record of significance are available today, notwithstanding some stray references. Even though the *Dra-lha* propitiation is an artistic mix of colloquial verses and hagiographical accounts, a standard text has not been maintained. Its survival hinged on the ingenuity of the *paows* to be able to recite them by heart and pass them onto apprentices from succeeding generations.

The apparent lack of archival source makes it impossible to standardize the spelling of the ceremony, named and pronounced in different ways across different villages. It is variedly called *Lo-ju* (*blo 'gyur*), *Shar gi Lo-chok* (*shar gyi glog skyor*) and in some instances, *Bon-kor*. *Lo-ju* (the Chungsekha version) would probably mean an articulate expression of a deep-seated consciousness, commonly associated with the people of Shar who are attributed with the authorship of the two best known ballads in the national language Dzongkha. This would imply that the ceremony is an articulate colloquial expression of thanksgiving and propitiation following the victory of Zhabdrung. This would seem to fit in with the argument that *Lo-ju* is a national narrative of Zhabdrung's state formation based on supposed divination of Phajo and the other great Drukpa Hierarchs.

If we take the standard pronunciation as *lo-chok*, as is the case elsewhere in Shar region, then it would imply a protective enclosure safeguarding a people, place or an entity. This would mean that it is an appeasement ritual for the tutelary of a particular region or a nation, in this instance of the Shar valley and the nation of the Drukpas. *Bon-kor* with its Bon connotations may seem out of place and probably just an aberration as the narrative itself is about the Drukpa order. However, the concept of the *Dra-lha* is itself borrowed and adapted from the Bon naturalist tradition, as are many traditions in Buddhism including the customary death rituals. It seems then that the festival is essentially Bon¹⁹, though the narrative and its format have been adapted to form a Drukpa expression of nation formation by creating and invoking deified spiritual protectors who symbolically safeguard the people caught in issues of survival and legitimization.

While the two former appellations would suggest that it is a ceremony of celebration, gratitude and appeasement, we may never know what the exponents of the festival actually had on their minds. Some even suggest the festival might have been called *lue-tor* after the ritual of casting a sacrificial ritual cake called *lue*. The varying names of this festival arise from onomatopoeic corruptions of the original name that is unfortunately lost to us. There exists a vast gap between the well versed exponents who articulated the Drukpa epoch in creative ceremonial narratives and their ill-informed descendents who hang on to the tradition more out of habit than for a true appreciation of its intrinsic wisdoms.

¹⁹ The name *Bon-kor* is thus suggestive of the origin of the festival in the Bon tradition of invoking *Dra-lha* as a living entity which becomes an object of respect and refuge. The long colloquial segment on the sacrificial animal and offering of the various parts of its anatomy can be seen as remnants of the animist belief.

What does the future hold?

In a nihilistic world where too often things are numerated on their monetary value alone, people may eventually decide to sidestep this festival as a detritus of an arcane past that is anachronistic at best and redundant at worst. Lack of a concerted preservation effort has already made the ceremony an exotic and arcane pursuit. It prevents us from seeing the festival as an extension of a watershed moment in our history when Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel successfully overcame the challenges of unification and formed the Druknyul (Land of the Drukpas).

Only a cursive manuscript of the ceremony survives today. Much of the original expertise on scriptures and choreography hangs on the senile acumen of a few stalwarts who traditionally depended on the availability of ready apprentices willing to partake of their reservoir of knowledge as a vehicle of transmission. This has naturally led to an adulteration of the rituals by ill-informed people who make shoddy work of them. The text of the *dra-lha* propitiation, with an artistic mix of colloquial expressions and versified historical accounts, runs into hundreds of pages and could easily take upwards of five hours to be fully recited. Today the *paows* render them ineffectually in a couple of hours.

The conduct of the *lo-ju* depended on an abiding communal bond along traditional division of responsibilities and reciprocal entitlements. However, with the introduction of modern development and an accompanying proliferation of foreign influences, organization along traditional lines is becoming difficult. The organization of the 2011 edition of *lo-ju* hit rough weathers when disputes ensued between the organizers. They could not agree on a few organizational niceties, with the nomination of the candidates for the ceremonial positions being chief among them. Traditionally, three of the four ceremonial posts, a *Dar-pon* and two *Yang-*

pons, were held by three leading households as a reciprocation of their contribution to village welfare.

In recent times, some segments of people have challenged this tradition and wanted to be able to partake of these posts for the blessing and fame that come with them, real or perceived. On the other hand, the households who hold these traditional rights are unwilling to relinquish them for the contributions that their ancestors made. Rifts are beginning to show and they are made worse by the fact that the traditional working relations are beginning to disintegrate in the face of people leaving their ancestral homes and with it, their values.

Conclusion

For umpteen generations, people of Chungsekha (as with every person in the great regions of Shar and Wang) would look forward to the year of the *Lo-ju* when they would congregate amidst much fanfare and festivity on the lawn outside their village temple to celebrate the formation of the Drukpa state and the proud tradition of the *pazaps* who helped in bringing it about. Apart from being an occasion to invoke the protection of the pantheon of Drukpa deities for the perpetuation of peace and prosperity, the festival is an expression of gratitude where it is due. At a stretch, it is also a show of strength and preparedness against hostile designs and pursuits, symbolic, as well as, real.

Although, this paper cannot conclusively establish the exact year of the festival's institution, it does manage to suggest that the *lo-ju* was an extension of Zhabdrung's state building process that included, but not limited to, the inculcation of a sense of national identity in the Bhutanese psyche. From the ceremonial social order of *Zhugdrel Phunsum Tshogpa*, to the national code of etiquette *Driglam Namzha* and the other socio-religious landmarks like *Tsechu* and *Domchoe*, Zhabdrung has entrenched traditions of the high and popular

culture in our society which went a long way in strengthening the Bhutanese nation and its sovereignty. *Lo-ju* celebrates the formation of these epochs in our evolution as a nation.

Lo-ju is a festival for peace to ward off all manners of misfortunes leading to social unrest. For a nation fixated on the tutelary of its deities, *lo-ju* serves to fill a special spiritual need. It gives us the strength of knowing that our fates are in the safe hands of a power higher than ourselves. Our lives will continue to revolve around the ritual prayers of *lo-ju* so long as we continue to believe in the wisdom and grace of our forefathers to keep us secure in our homeland. Even in the unlikely event of turbulence and warfare, the people will be better off with the martial exposure of *lo-ju*.

The rationale for the institution of the festival continues to hold good to this day. Firstly, it is the need to keep unrest at bay. Then it is the need to be prepared should such a situation arise. If anything, there is a need to strengthen this security masterstroke. For if maintaining a huge standing army was difficult in the past, it is no easier now with our economic potential still largely unrealized. The pragmatism and efficacy of the *pazap* force whose tradition has been kept alive in this festival will be an answer to much of our security needs in the future.

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don grub zhes pas sa mo lug lor shar mtsho brgyad kyi khral
zhing [|khra[l] khyim gyi deb gter gsal ba'i me long zhes
bya ba bzhugs so//

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Appendix I: The Lo-ju verses

The *legs-so* paeans are colloquial compositions in glorification and gratitude of the order of Drukpa institutions, iconic figures and deities who are invoked. Variations are introduced to suit different occasions.

This *legs-so* is sung as the *pazaps* emerge from the *Goenkhang* of Dargay Goenpa submitting their beings to the various kinds of protective deities.

༄༅། །སྲོ་སྲོ་ །སྲོ་པ་མཉོ་བར་བསམ་གྲུབ། ཨ་ལས་མེ་ལོ་མོ།
 དགའ་སྦྱིད་མཉོ་བར་བསམ་གྲུབ། ཨ་ལས་མེ་ལོ་མོ།
 དགའ་སྦྱིད་བསམ་གྲུབ་ཕྱུན་ཚོགས། དཀོན་མཚོག་ལ་འབྲུལ་ལོ།
 བདེ་སྦྱིད་དཔལ་གྱི་མཚོད་པ། ཡི་དམ་ལ་འབྲུལ་ལོ།
 དམ་ཚོག་གཙང་མའི་མཚོད་པ། མཁའ་འགྲོ་ལ་འབྲུལ་ལོ།
 དག་དཔུང་འཛེམས་པའི་མཚོད་པ། དག་ལྷ་ལ་འབྲུལ་ལོ།
 ཤ་ཆང་ཕུད་ཀྱི་མཚོད་པ། དུལ་ལྷ་ལ་འབྲུལ་ལོ།
 དགའ་སྦྱིད་ཕྱུན་སྲུང་ཚོགས་པའི། དངོས་གྲུབ་གཅིག་ལྷ་ན།
 ད་་་་དགའ་བ་ཡིན། སྦྱིད་བ་ཡིན།

This *leg-so* is sung as the *pazaps* make their entrance into the village. The order of Drukpa deities and iconic figures are invoked for protection as the *pazaps* symbolically goes into battle.

ལེགས་སོ་ལེགས་སོ་.....བརྒྱད་པ་ལས་ལྷན། རྗེ་འཆང་ཆེན་ལས་ལྷན།
 དྲུག་པོ་བཀའ་བརྒྱུད་ལས་ལྷན་པའི། ལྷ་རྒྱུད་མི་མེད་ཡ།
 ལྷ་མ་ལས་ལྷན། དག་དབང་རྣམ་རྒྱལ་ནས་ལྷན།
 ལྷོ་གཏད་གཞན་ནས་རེ་དགོས་པའི། ཤེས་རབ་སྤྲོད་སྤུང་ཚོགས་མེད་ཡ།
 ཡི་དམ་ལས་ལྷན། འཁོར་ལོ་སྤོང་པོ་ལས་ལྷན།
 དངོས་གྲུབ་གཞན་ལས་རེ་དགོས་པའི། ཤེས་རབ་སྤྲོད་སྤུང་ཚོགས་མེད་ཡ།
 དམ་ཚོས་ལས་ལྷན། ལྷག་རྒྱུ་ཆེན་པོ་ལས་ལྷན།
 འབྲས་བུ་གཞན་ལས་རེ་དགོས་པའི། ཤེས་རབ་སྤྲོད་སྤུང་ཚོགས་མེད་ཡ།
 གདམས་དག་ལས་ལྷན། རྒྱ་རོ་ཚོས་རྒྱལ་ལས་ལྷན།
 ཐབས་ལམ་གཞན་ལས་རེ་དགོས་པའི། ཤེས་རབ་སྤྲོད་སྤུང་ཚོགས་མེད་ཡ།
 ཚོས་སྐྱོད་ལས་ལྷན། ཡི་ཤེས་མགོན་པོ་ལས་ལྷན།
 ལྷགས་རྩལ་གཞན་ལས་རེ་དགོས་པའི། ཤེས་རབ་སྤྲོད་སྤུང་ཚོགས་མེད་ཡ།
 གང་འདོད་དངོས་གྲུབ་ལྷན། རྣམ་ཐོས་སྤྲས་ལས་ལྷན།
 འོར་ལྷ་གཞན་ལས་རེ་དགོས་པའི། ཤེས་རབ་སྤྲོད་སྤུང་ཚོགས་ཚོགས་མེད་ཡ།
 དབྲ་ལྷ་ལས་ལྷན། རྒྱ་པ་མེ་ལེན་ལས་ལྷན།
 ལྷག་སྐྱོར་གཞན་ལས་རེ་དགོས་པའི། ཤེས་རབ་སྤྲོད་སྤུང་ཚོགས་མེད་ཡ།
 པོ་ལྷ་ལས་ལྷན། ལྷུང་གསུམ་རྗེ་ལེགས་པ་ལས་ལྷན།
 དབྲ་ལྷ་གཞན་ལས་ལྷན་དགོས་པའི། ཤེས་རབ་སྤྲོད་སྤུང་ཚོགས་མེད་ཡ།
 དཔོན་པོ་ལས་ལྷན། དཔལ་ལྷན་འབྲུག་པ་ལས་ལྷན།

ཁ་དབང་གཞན་ལས་རེ་དགོས་པའི། ཤེས་རབ་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་མེད་ཡ།
 གཞུང་ཡུལ་ལས་ལྷན། རྒྱུ་ཡུལ་གྲོང་ཁྱེར་ལས་ལྷན་ཡ།
 ཡུལ་ཕྱོགས་གཞན་ལས་རེ་དགོས་པའི། ཤེས་རབ་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་མེད་ཡ།
 ལྷག་ཤར་ལས་ལྷན། ལྷོ་བས་ལྷན་དཔའ་བོ་ལས་ལྷན་ཡ།
 དངོས་སྲུབ་གཞན་ལས་རེ་དགོས་པའི། ཤེས་རབ་ཕུན་སུམ་ཚོགས་མེད་ཡ།
 ད་.....དགའ་བ་ཡིན། རྒྱུད་བ་ཡིན།།

This paean is sung as the *pazaps* come back after lunch and head towards the ceremonial ground for the *dra-lha* propitiation rite. It is a composition glorifying the Drukpa order and is a source of pride for the *pazaps* to be associated with it.

།།ཐོད་དཀར་ལས་ལྷན་གངས་ལས་ཉི་ཤར་ཅིག་འདྲ་ཡོད།།
 གྲི་མོ་ལས་ལྷན་གནམ་ལྷགས་དབང་པོའི་རལ་གྲི་འདྲ་ཡོད།
 གཞུ་མོ་ལས་ལྷན་ལྷ་དབང་གཞུ་རིང་ཅིག་འདྲ་ཡོད།
 མདའ་མོ་ལས་ལྷན་ཟབ་རྒྱས་ལས་ལྷགས་ཅིག་འདྲ་ཡོད།
 ཁམས་གསུམ་ལུས་ལ་ཚང་ཚོ་ལྷ་མའི་དམག་དཔོན་འདྲ་ཡོད།
 དཔའ་རྩལ་ལུས་ལ་ཚང་ཚོ་དྲུངས་སེང་དཀར་མོ་འདྲ་ཡོད།
 ལྷོ་བས་ནས་ཡོང་བ་ཡོད།
 དཔའ་རྩལ་ལྷན་འབྲུག་པའི་བྱ་བརྒྱད་སོགས་ལྷོ་བས་ནས་ཡོང་བ་ཡོད།
 ལྷ་མ་བཟང་པོ་གྲུ་བཅུན་སོགས་ལྷོ་བས་ནས་ཡོང་བ་ཡོད།

དཔོན་པོ་བཟང་པོ་སྟོབས་ལྡན་སོགས་སྐྱབས་ནས་ཡོང་བ་ཡོད།
 དམ་ཉམས་དག་པོ་བཤན་པོའི་ཚོགས་སྐྱབས་ནས་ཡོང་བ་ཡོད།
 དག་ཤམ་བའི་སྲིན་པོའི་ཚོགས་སྐྱབས་ནས་ཡོང་བ་ཡོད།
 དག་ཁུ་འཕྱུང་པའི་རྒྱ་སྲིན་ཚོགས་སྐྱབས་ནས་ཡོང་བ་ཡོད།
 དག་པོ་བསྐྱལ་བའི་བཤན་པོའི་ཚོགས་སྐྱབས་ནས་ཡོང་བ་ཡོད།
 དམ་ཉམས་བཤན་པ་དམར་ཁའི་ཚོགས་སྐྱབས་ནས་ཡོང་བ་ཡོད།
 ད་.....དགའ་བ་ཡིན། རྒྱུད་པ་ཡིན།།

This paean is sung at the end of the day as the *pazaps* proceed to the patron's house for the final reception. This composition is a prayer for peace and harmony offered to the institutions, iconic figures and deities of the Drukpa order.

གདན་ས་སྤུངས་ཐངས་བདེ་ཆེན་ལ། བརྟན་བཀུགས་གཅིག་འབྲུལ་ན།
 མི་འགྲུར་གཡུ་རླུང་ལྟ་བུའི། བཀ་ཤིས་སྟོན་ལམ་ལྷ་གོ།
 འགྲུག་པ་ལྷ་ཡི་གདུང་བརྒྱུད་ལ། བརྟན་བཀུགས་གཅིག་འབྲུལ་ན།
 ཁམས་གསུམ་དབང་དུ་འདུས་པའི། བཀ་ཤིས་སྟོན་ལམ་ལྷ་གོ།
 དཔལ་ལྡན་འགྲུག་པའི་ཚོགས་ལ། བརྟན་བཀུགས་གཅིག་འབྲུལ་ན།
 ཁམས་གསུམ་ཟིལ་གྱིས་གནོན་པའི། བཀ་ཤིས་སྟོན་ལམ་ལྷ་གོ།
 ཡི་དམ་མཁའ་འགོ་འི་ཚོགས་ལ། བརྟན་བཀུགས་གཅིག་འབྲུལ་ན།
 དེས་སྐྱབ་གདུ་འདོད་པའི། བཀ་ཤིས་སྟོན་ལམ་ལྷ་གོ།

ཚོས་སྐྱོད་སྤྱང་མའི་ཚོགས་ལ། བརྟན་བཟུགས་གཅིག་འབྲུལ་ན།
 བ་ཚོ་བར་ཆད་མེད་པའི། བཀའ་ཤིས་སྲོན་ལམ་ལྷ་གོ།
 འཁོར་ཚོགས་ལྷ་ཡི་ཚོགས་ལ། བརྟན་བཟུགས་གཅིག་འབྲུལ་ན།
 བདེ་སྐྱིད་ཚོ་རིང་ནད་མེད། བཀའ་ཤིས་སྲོན་ལམ་ལྷ་གོ།
 ལུང་གསུམ་དག་ལྷ་འི་རྒྱལ་པོ། བརྟན་བཟུགས་གཅིག་འབྲུལ་ན།
 ས་སེར་ལྷ་གོར་མེད་པའི། བཀའ་ཤིས་སྲོན་ལམ་ལྷ་གོ།
 ད་དགའ་བ་ཡིན། སྐྱིད་བ་ཡིན།

This is a wine libation hymn called the *bje-pai chang choe* recited by the *Yang-pon* on offers of wine by the patrons. This composition propitiates the various tutelary deities of the Drukpa order and the other minor deities who protect strategic locations across the country.

གྲིས་པ་འཆང་མཚོད་ནི།

མཚོད་མཚོད་མཚོད་གནས་འོག་མིན་ཚོས་དབྱིངས་པོ་བྱང་ནས།
 ཚོས་སྐྱོད་མེད་འཆང་ཆེན་མཚོད། བསྐྱབ་སྐྱོར་གངས་ཀྱི་རིའོ་ནས།
 བཀའ་བརྒྱུད་གསེར་གྱི་སྤེང་བ་མཚོད། སྤིང་ག་ཚོས་ཀྱི་འཁོར་ལོ་ནས།
 ཡི་དམ་དཔལ་ཆེན་ཏུ་མགྲིན་མཚོད། ཡུལ་ཉི་ཤུ་བཞི་གནས་མཚོག་ནས།
 གནས་གསུམ་དཔའ་བོ་མཁའ་འགྲོ་མཚོད། སིལ་བ་ཚལ་གྱི་དུར་ཁྲོད་ནས།
 དཔལ་མཐོན་མཚུ་ཀལ་མཚོད། དུར་ཁྲོག་ལུས་པ་ཏུ་རིན་ས།

མ་ཅིག་དཔལ་ལྷན་ལྷ་མོར་མཚོད། གནས་ལུང་ལོ་ཅན་གྱི་ལོ་བྱང་ནས།
 འོར་ལྷ་རྒྱལ་ཆེད་རྣམས་སྤྲུལ་མཚོད། རྒྱ་བོད་གཉིས་ཀྱི་ས་མཚོམས།
 ལམས་གནས་ས་གཉིས་ཀྱི་བདག་པོ། གངས་མཐོན་མཐོང་རིམ་ལྗོངས་ལྟེ་ནས།
 ལྷ་དབྱངས་ཅན་ཇོ་མོ་བྱིས་ཆོ་རིང་མཚོད། ཐིམ་ལུལ་བདེ་ཆེན་ཕྱག་ནས།
 སེར་མཁའ་རྒྱལ་པོའི་ནང་ནས། བམ་རོ་བརྟེན་པ་པའི་ཁྲིལ།
 ལྷུང་མཚོ་གསུམ་ཏུ་དམར་ཚེབས་ནས། མདུང་དམར་དགའ་ལ་བསྐྱོས་ཞིང།
 དག་པོའི་གྲོ་སྤོག་སྤུལ་ནས། ལྷིང་ཁག་ཞལ་དུ་གསོལ་མཁའ་ན།
 རིག་འཛིན་གྲོ་མའི་བཀའ་སྤྲུང། ལྷག་ཤར་ཡོངས་ཀྱི་དགའ་ལྷ།
 དཔའ་པོ་ཇག་པ་མེ་ལེན་མཚོད། གངས་རི་གསུམ་འཛོམས་པའི་ཕྱེ་ལས།
 འཇམ་མགོན་གྲོ་མའི་བཀའ་སྤྲུང། ས་སེར་ལྷ་གོར་བརྗོག་པའི།
 ལྷག་ཤར་རྣམས་ཀྱི་དགའ་ལྷ། ལྷོ་མོ་ལྷགས་ཀྱི་རལ་པ་མཚོད།
 དབྱེས་པའི་མཚུམ་ཞལ་ལྷན་ནས། གང་འདོད་དཔོན་གྲུབ་སྤྱོད་ཞིང།
 རི་གསུམ་འཛོམས་པའི་ཕྱེལས། ལྷ་ཆེན་རྒྱལ་གསུམ་མཚོད།
 རྒྱལ་ལྷ་བརྗོད་སྤྲ། བོད་ལུལ་རྗོད་ལེགས་པ།
 ཅོ་རི་གནས་ཀྱི་ཞིང་སྤོངས། ལྷོ་བ་དཔོན་པད་མའི་བཀའ་སྤྲུང།
 ཕོ་ཐོག་ཡོངས་ཀྱི་ལྷ་སྤྲུལ། ལུང་པར་སྤྲུན་ལྷོངས་འདིལ།
 གཡུ་ཐོད་རིམ་ལྗོངས་ལྟེ་ནས། ཞོན་གཏོར་ཕྱག་འགྲིམ་ཞིང།
 ལུང་ཆེན་གསུམ་གྱི་མངའ་བདག། ལྷག་གདོང་ཅན་གྱི་དགའ་ལྷ།

ན་རྒྱུད་ཡོངས་ཀྱི་དབྱངས་ལྷན། རྒྱུད་པར་ཡུལ་ལྷོངས་འདིལ།
ལོ་ལེགས་དངོས་གྲུབ་གཏེར་མཁན། ས་སེར་ལྷ་གེར་ཁས་ལེན།
མི་ནད་ཕྱག་ནད་བརྗོད་མཁན། ལུང་གསུམ་དག་ལྷ་འི་རྒྱལ་པོ་མཚོད།
ཉེད་དང་རྗེ་མིའི་མཚམས་ནས། དག་ལྷ་མ་སངས་རྒྱུད་འདུད་མཚོད།
གདན་ས་བྱིན་རླབས་ཆེབའི། རྒྱུད་གནས་གནས་ཀྱི་བདག་པོ།
དཀར་ཞིང་མཚུམ་དང་ལྷན་པའི། ཉ་དཀར་སྟེང་ལ་ཆེབས་མི།
དར་དཀར་ཕྱག་ལ་བསྐྱམས་མི། བསྐྱེད་སྐྱོངས་འཕྲིན་ལས་བཟང་པོ་མཚོད།
གཞུང་ཡུལ་གྲོང་ཁྱེར་གནས་པའི། གནས་བདག་གཞི་བདག་ཐམས་ཅན་མཚོད།
དག་དཔྱད་ཟེལ་གྱིས་མཐོན་ཞིང་། བྱམས་ལྷན་གདུང་སེམས་ཆེབའི།
ཡུལ་ལྷོངས་བཟང་པོའི་སྟེག་མཁན།
སྟོབས་ལྷན་གྱི་དཔའ་པོ་རང་ཡང་མཚོད་ཟེར་ལྷ་ནི་ཡིན་ལགས།།

Appendix II: Lo-Ju Photos



Photo 1: The pazap procession at Dargay Goenpa



Photo 2: The shaman leads the pazap procession after he receives them



Photo 3: The Yang-pon presides over the marchang ceremony



Photo 5: Boys carrying the Wangchu Chengpo



Photo 4: Girls receive the pazaps with wine and rice nutriments



Photo 6: A patron offers money as dar



Photo 7: A fiery scene from the dra-lha propitiation ceremony



Photo 9: The shaman performs the final exorcising rite



Photo 8: The Dar-pon performs the final bey



Photo 10: Pazaps receive the talismanic Wangchu Chengpo.