



**Meme-Perception of three Generations: A Study of Cultural and Behavioural
Transformation of *Drogpa* in Bhutan**

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Thesis Title Meme-Perception of three Generations: A Study of Cultural and Behavioural Transformation of *Drogpa* in Bhutan

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ชื่อวิทยานิพนธ์	การรับรู้ความเชื่อ และค่านิยมของคนสามรุ่น: การศึกษาการเปลี่ยนแปลงทางพฤติกรรมและวัฒนธรรมของชนเผ่า Droqpa ในประเทศภูฏาน
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บทคัดย่อ

การรับรู้ความเชื่อ และค่านิยมของชนเผ่า Droqpa ครั้งนี้ เน้นการศึกษาเปรียบเทียบการรับรู้ถึงการเปลี่ยนแปลงประเพณี วัฒนธรรม และพฤติกรรมของชนเผ่า Droqpa สามรุ่น (อายุ 15-35 ปี, 36-56 ปี และ 57 ปีขึ้นไป) โดยศึกษาในสองชุมชน ได้แก่ ชุมชน Me rag และ Sag steng นอกจากนี้ยังศึกษาผลกระทบทางบวกและลบของนโยบายและแผนในการส่งเสริมประเพณีและวัฒนธรรมของประเทศที่มีอยู่ในปัจจุบัน ใช้วิธีการวิจัยแบบผสมวิธี (mixed methods) เก็บข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณและข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพ กับกลุ่มตัวอย่าง 180 คน และ 30 คน ตามลำดับ วิเคราะห์ข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณด้วยสถิติไคสแควร์ และข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพด้วยการวิเคราะห์เนื้อหา

ผลการศึกษาพบว่า กลุ่มคนสูงวัยส่วนใหญ่ (ร้อยละ 78.4) รับรู้ว่าเยาวชนไม่ค่อยสนใจในการเปลี่ยนแปลงด้านประเพณีและวัฒนธรรม ในขณะที่กลุ่มเยาวชน (ร้อยละ 45.0) ไม่มีความเห็นในเรื่องนี้ นอกจากนี้กลุ่มคนสูงวัย (ร้อยละ 58.4) รู้สึกว่าครอบครัวไม่ได้แสดงบทบาทในการรักษาและส่งเสริมวัฒนธรรม ประเพณีให้ดำรงอยู่ต่อไป

ภายใต้สถานการณ์ดังกล่าวการดำรงอยู่ของวัฒนธรรม ประเพณีของชนเผ่า Droqpa จึงเป็นเรื่องจำเป็นอย่างยิ่งที่รัฐบาลควรใส่ใจและหาทางอนุรักษ์และส่งเสริม เพื่อให้ชุมชน Me rag และ Sag steng สามารถดำรงไว้ซึ่งวัฒนธรรม ประเพณีของตนสืบต่อไปได้

Title	Meme-Perception of three Generations: A Study of Cultural and Behavioural Transformation of <i>Drogpa</i> in Bhutan
Author	Mr.Dorji Wangchuk
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ABSTRACT

The study on meme-perception among the three *Drogpa* generations is a cultural, traditional and behavioural study. The study emphasizes on the assimilation of opinions of the three generations [respondents] on the trends of culture and traditions, and the behaviour of *Drogpa*. This study has empirically focused on to what extent the modern amenities have brought impact on the *Drogpa* of *Me rag* and *Sag steng*. It has also reviewed the pros and cons of those existing plans and policies affiliated to promoting cultures and traditions of Bhutan. This study has adopted mix methodological approach to determine the meme-perception of 210 respondents [n=180 for survey and, n= 30 for interview] of three different age groups [15-35; 36-56; 57 and above] through survey and interview. The data collected through conducting the interview and survey questionnaire were analyzed performing cross-tabulation, Chi-square test and the content analysis. The respondents of three generations of *Drogpa* have common meme-perception on modern development and the preservation and promotion of culture and traditions. The meme-perception among the three generations of *Drogpa* on modern development, and the culture and traditions are determined as their response to their cultural and traditional future. The older generation respondents [78.4%, n=47] feel that the youths are not concerned about the transforming culture and traditions and 45% [n=27] of younger generation is Not Sure of it. In addition, 58.4% of older generation also feels that parents don't play essential role in preserving and promoting culture and traditions. Under such circumstance, the endurance of *Drogpa* culture and traditions is a great concern, and therefore, the government's assistance is very critical to preserve and promote the cultural and traditional milieus of *Drogpa* of *Me rag* and *Sag steng*.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/SYMBOLS

A.D	:	Anno Domini
b.	:	Born
B.C	:	Before Christ
BCF	:	Bhutan Canada Foundation
CNR	:	College of Natural Resources
d.	:	Died
DLG	:	Department of Local Governance
DMSS	:	Dungtse Middle Secondary School
GNH	:	Gross National Happiness
GNHC	:	Gross National Happiness Commission
MAMT	:	Michael Aris Memorial Trust
MA	:	Middle Age
MoHCA	:	Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs
MS	:	Manuscript
OA	:	Old Age
r.	:	Reign
RGoB	:	Royal Government of Bhutan
RHSS	:	Rangjung Higher Secondary School
SWS	:	Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary
Tib.	:	Tibetan
YA	:	Young Age

LIST OF PAPERS AND PROCEEDINGS

1. Wangchuk, D., Dhammasaccakarn, W., Tepsing, P., Promsaka Na Sakolnakarn, T. (2013a). The Yaks: Heart and Soul of the Himalayan tribes of Bhutan. *E3 Journal of Environmental Research and Management*, 4 (2), 0189-0196.
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Semi-Nomadic people widely dubbed as *Brokpa* [Tib. ‘brog-pa] — men of pastures — (Wangmo, 1990; Chand, 2000, 2004, p. 11; Dorji, 2002; Pelgen, 2003; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 6-11; Bhattarai et al., 2011; Wangchuk et al., 2013a; Wangchuk et al., 2013b) have established their settlements in *Me rag* [pronounced as “Merak”] and *Sag steng* [pronounced as “Sakteng”] since time immemorial. According to Karchung (2011) this section of people are actually called *Drogpa* [Central Tibetan dialect: ‘drog pa]. The Central Tibetan dialect [Dbus Tsang skad or Ü-Tsang skad] is considered as the basis of the standard Tibetan dialects and therefore, it has the accurate phonology of the words (Wangchuk et al., 2013b).

Due to retroflex articulation, the Central Tibetan way of pronouncing the word “*drog*” is later pronounced as “*brog*” phonologically. Thus, people extensively commenced to name them as *Brokpa* [‘brogpa], rather pronouncing as “*drogpa*”. The general populace of *Me rag* and *Sag steng* introduce themselves as *Brokpa* and their language “*Brok skad*” although their language traces its origination in Tibet. Therefore, a conclusion can be drawn that the words, “*Dra*” and “*Bra*” have a common meaning etymologically, also considering the two different pronunciations. Such shift in the pronunciation of the word is of course a “condescending terms” as thought by Karchung (2011), but most importantly they are accepted as the two different ways of pronouncing the words in Tibetan dialects [*Bod skad*].

Drogpa are very different from all other ethnic societies in Bhutan — in terms of culture and traditions — and therefore have different myths and histories of their origination. Dompnier (2007, pp. 12-15) portrays a clear clarification regarding the mythical history and the mass departure of *Drogpa* from *Mtsho snar* [pronounced as “Tshona”], South of Tibet to *Me rag* and *Sag steng* [refer Mythological History of *Drogpa*, Paper II] (see Wangmo, 1990; Dorji, 2002; Pelgen, 2003; Wangchuk et al., 2013b). The historical researches — especially on the culture and traditions — on *Drogpa* society are entirely based on the *rNam thar* [(pronounced as “Namthar”) biography] (e.g., Wangmo, 1990; Dorji, 2002; Pelgen, 2003; Wangchuk et al., 2013b) or manuscript [MS] (Dompnier, 2007, p. 12).

Most of the researchers (e.g., Wangmo, 1990; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 12-31, 72-85; Wangchuk et al., 2013b) perceive both *rNam thar* and the *oral tradition* as an indispensable sources to understanding the *Drogpa's* origination, culture and traditions (see Karchung, 2011), because culture, customs and traditions are the key elements that bifurcate societies into various communities (Groenfeldt, 2003; Triandis, 2006; Dorji, 2008; Shankar Rao, 2012, pp. 189-204). The *Drogpa* communities of *Me rag* and *Sag steng* have distinctive culture and traditions which are found nowhere else in Bhutan. Other unique cultures and traditions — different from *Drogpa* culture and tradition — are also depicted by the tribes named *Bjops* (Gyamtsho, 2000; Chettri, 2008; Wangchuk et al. 2013a; Wangchuk et al., 2013b) and *Doya* [also called *Lhops*] (Chakravarti, 1981, pp. 18-20; Noble, 1984, pp. 12-15; Chand, 2004, pp. 24-25) of Bhutan.

However, these inimitable, indigenous cultures and traditions are diminishing due to globalization (Chand, 2000; Pelgen, 2003; Dompnier, 2007, p. 1; Karchung, 2011). Shankar Rao (2012, pp. 189-204) is of the view that such changes in social institutions are not uncommon among the globalizing societies of the world (cf. Bhawuk, 2008). In addition, transforming behaviours and therefore the loss of cultural values are the two notable consequences of globalization (Williams, 2002; Groenfeldt, 2003; Triandis, 2006; Hosseini, 2010; Leinder, 2010; Karchung, 2011; Shankar Rao, 2012, pp. 189-204). Both Groenfeldt (2003) and Hosseini (2010) assume that the hegemonic nature of Western culture will cause the future downfall of indigenous cultures in many developing countries.

On the contrary, Bhawuk (2008) argues that globalization is not associated with the conception of cultural homogeneity; rather it is a triangulation for creating diversified cultures. He has supported his argument citing an example of the existence of different religions in the globalizing world. In support of Bhawuk (2008), House et al., (2004 cited in Bhawuk, 2008) is of the opinion that urbanization and the influxion of modern technologies will rather help these cultures to become more stable.

However, Swidler (1986 cited in Bhawuk, 2008) disagrees that this impending transformation among these ancient societies will trouble their people and therefore only respective culture will help them better understand about changes happening around them. In addition, the creation of cultural diversification [multiculturalism] under globalization is unworthy (Groenfeldt, 2003; Hosseini, 2010). Groenfeldt (2003) believes that the survival of traditional values among indigenous cultures is uncertain under the influence of modernization. Furthermore, Hosseini (2010) urges the developing nations to adopt a valid and appropriate planning prior to executing the modern developmental activities.

Cultural depreciation has become a foremost concern in Bhutan recently. Transformation of indigenous social institutions — living style, food habit, dress code, language, education, communication system, occupation, and so on — is apparent even in the remote corners of the country (Chand, 2000, 2009). For instance, Chand (2009) had observed a considerable change amongst the *Monpa* tribe [pre-Buddhist settlers of Bhutan] of *Wangdue Phodrang* and *Trongsa* [refer Administrative Map of Bhutan, Paper II]. Karchung (2011) has also observed the changing behaviours of the *Drogpa* of *Me rag*. He has observed that the *Drogpa's* interest in wearing their costume is diminishing. Swift et al., (1989 as cited in Dyer & Choksi, 1998) also revealed changes in the thinking behaviours of *Rabari nomads* while studying *Rabari* literature. The *Rabari* felt insecure about their future generation's success in the modernizing world and therefore considered education an essential component for their children. The need for education was also felt by the *Drokpa* [also called *Drads*] (Jina, 2002) or *Brokpa* (Bhasin, 2008) of Ladakh.

Other indigenous cultures are also faced with the growing dilemma of modernization. For example, the lifestyles, living culture and art of *Bazigars* of Punjab: India. *Bazigars* are extraordinary singers and dancers (Singh, 2011). Even the tribes of the Andaman Islands — *Great Andamanese*, *Onge*, *Jarawar* and *Sentinelese* — are transforming while coming in contact with the foreigners visiting their areas (Sarkar, 2011). Sarkar (2011) also claims that there are a few hundred tribes around the globe who do not want to contact with the outsiders. In addition, the *Yanomamis Indian tribe* of Brazil was unhappy with the Brazilian government's propagation that drew them into the mainstream. The *Yanomamis* fought against the government for

their survival while clearing the roads that damaged their arable lands (Kellman, 1982). Another example is the *Veddas* of Sri Lanka, who are struggling to uphold their traditional lifestyles under the threat of authoritative and influencing communities like *Sinahala*, *Tamil* and Muslim, and as well as the globalization (Silva, 2011).

Similarly, the semi-nomads of *Me rag* and *Sag steng* were less receptive to modern development a decade before (Chand, 2000), however, this section of people are transforming rapidly today. Therefore, the study on meme-perception of these people is deemed essential to understand their perceptions on modern developments and their culture and traditions. This study provides a wider range of meme-perceptions among the three age generations of *Drogpa*. Their meme-perceptions would determine the future of their culture and traditions, and of course, their motives towards the modern development. Therefore, a common meme-perception would make the community more stable and enable the tribe to sustain collaboratively in any matter.

It is apparent from the cross-tabulation results that the three generation age groups of *Drogpa* are more inclined towards the modern development and they are also equally concerned about promoting and preserving their culture and traditions [see Table 1 & Table 4]. In addition, the content analysis too supports that the three generation age groups are willing to accept modern development although it could be a threat on their culture and traditions.

Even though the meme-perceptions of the respondents are supportive towards preserving and promoting their culture and traditions, yet the survival of *Drogpa* culture and traditions is questionable in the long run. Some of their cultural and traditional practices like *Brukor*, *sPu lham* and *Btsim lham* are waning off. Most conspicuously, youths are not paying attention to their costumes, in fact many includes the Old Age and Middle Age *Drogpa*. Therefore, preserving and promoting *Drogpa* culture and traditions is a difficult endurance. The deadline for the continued existence of *Drogpa* culture and traditions cannot be drawn, neither can it be fixed, but certainly it would transform gradually until these people develop a common meme-perception and develop positive attitude towards preserving and promoting their culture and traditions.

2. OBJECTIVES

This research determines:

1. the meme-perceptions of three *Drogpa* generations;
2. the extent of *Drogpa*'s cultural and traditional transformation; and,
3. the analysis of existing plans and policies related to the preservation and promotion of cultures and traditions in Bhutan.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study on meme-perception was conducted in the two villages of *Me rag* and *Sag steng*, Trashigang, Bhutan. A random sampling technique was incorporated to select 180 (60 respondents each from three generation age groups) respondents of the three generation age groups of *Drogpa* [Young Age (YA, 15-35), Middle Age (MA, 36-56), and Old Age (OA, 57 and above)]. The self administered questionnaire was used to understand the meme-perception of the three generation age groups *Drogpa* [Appendix 3, pp. 50-51]. For the interview, a semi-structured questionnaire containing five principal questions and fourteen subsidiary questions were focused to generate data from the interviewees (Appendix 4, p. 52). Interviews were conducted for 30-40 minutes to each respondent and were recorded in the tape. Dawson's (2002, p. 113) interview summary form was used to maintain the details of the interview, and for reference while conducting following interviews (Appendix 5, p. 53).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Qualitative and Quantitative Data Analyses

Content analysis method was performed to analyze the information compiled through conducting interview to 30 respondents of the three generation age groups [Young Age (YA, 15-35), Middle Age (MA, 36-56), and Old Age (OA, 57 and above)]. Each datum of the interview was processed according to its relevancy to the designed theme.

To comprehend the variance in the meme-perception of three different age groups of *Drogpa* [(YA, 15-35), (MA, 36-56), and (OA, 57 and above)] the Cross-tabulation and the Chi-square test were performed. Those tests were performed to empirically compare the meme-perceptions among the three age groups *Drogpa* generation on the following perceptions: (1) the modern development is needed; (2) the modern development is a threat on culture and traditions; and (3) the preservation and promotion of culture and traditions. Other variables are also included to study the meme-perceptions. The five point Likert scale responses [i.e., 1. Strongly Disagree; 2. Disagree; 3. Not Sure; 4. Agree; 5. Strongly Agree] was incorporated to assess the degree of perception of three generation age groups of *Drogpa*.

4.2. Synthesis and the Analysis of Mythological *Drogpa* History

The synthesis and analysis of mythical *Drogpa* history is based on the two prominence biographies: (1) “*Rang rej pha mes kye byung kungs mkha lding kyung gi gdung rbas chung brjod par bya ba ni//*”; and (2) “*dul ba lung las byung bai byai rgyal po ‘dab bzang dang Gshog bzang gi mi rbas byung tsul mdor bsdus bzhug so//*”.

The history of *Drogpa* is profoundly shrouded in mystery. Most of the Bhutanese history is indeed entirely obscure containing myths without prehistoric evidences (Dorji, 2008, p. 1). In the absence of authentic recorded history it is difficult to trace how *Drogpa* were in Tibet [*Bod*] and then at *Me rag-Sag steng*. Therefore, a few available resources [*rNam thar*] are the exclusively genuine materials to rely upon to know about *Drogpa* in the past (Wangmo, 1990; Dompnier, 2007, p. 1).

The *Drogpa*’s history of origination is also based on oral traditions, which is certainly an indispensable source of entire Bhutanese history (Wangmo, 1990; Karchung, 2011). Due to the casual and flippant attitude of *Drogpa*, their splendid oral traditions are misinterpreted and misarticulated. Consequently, revered information conveyed through oral traditions has diminished by now. For instance, Dorji (2003, p. 39) suggests that *Drogpa* trace their origin from *Ama Jomo Remanti* and *sGrub dbang grags pa rjai btsun* [(pronounced as “Drub Wang Dragpa Jutsen”) alias *sLob dpon* [pronounced as Lopen] or *Gomchen Khyi bzhis* (pronounced

as “Gomchen Khizhey”) of *rKang pa ra* [(pronounced as “Kangpara”); *rKang*: foot; *pa ra*; print] (Dompnier, 2007, pp. 72-75; Wangchuk et al., 2013b) which actually is not documented in the biographies. *sGrub dbang grags pa rjai btsun* is the reincarnation of Prince *Kintu Legpa*; son of ‘*Mkha ‘gro ‘groba bzang mo* [pronounced as “Khando Dowa Zangmo”) and King ‘*Bka la dbang po* [pronounced as “Kala Wangpo”) of Tibet. Hence, in this study the oral traditions of *Drogpa* are not taken into account. *rNam thar* were therefore accentuated to avail legitimate information on the origination of *Drogpa* [see more in Paper II].

Two biographies were referred to understand the mythological history of *Drogpa*. Those biographies were documented during the 18th century [1747] and 19th century. One was documented by *Lama Wang* entitled “*Sag steng Pai Jung Rab*” (Dompnier, 2007, p. 12; as cited in Wangchuk et al., 2013b) synonymously referred to as “*Rang rej pha mes kye byung kungs mkha lding kyung gi gdung rbas chung brjod par bya ba ni//*” [containing 22 folios] by Pelgen (2003; as cited in Wangchuk et al., 2013b). A similar type of biography is preserved in the Michael Aris Memorial Trust [MAMT] in London dated 1696 (Dompnier, 2007, p. 12); much earlier than the aforementioned year. Another manuscript was written by *Sersang Lama Gyaltsen Dorji* during the 19th century entitled “‘*dul ba lung las byung bai byai rgyal po ‘dba bzang dang Gshog bzang gi mi rbas byung tsul mdor bsdus bzhug so//*” [containing 20 folios]; meaning the origination of human race exclusively through the mythical bird [Garuda; *Byachung*] kings *Dabzang* (Pelgen, 2003; Dompnier, 2007, p. 26) and *Shogzang* (Pelgen, 2003; Dompnier, 2007, p. 26; Wangchuk et al., 2013b). Both *rNam thar* have analogous facts.

The lineage of *rGyal po* [pronounced as “Gyalpo”) *Dabzang* and *rGyal po Shogzang* was further promulgated by their descendant *sPrul paḥ* [(pronounced as “Trulpa”); reincarnation] *Blon po* [(pronounced as “Lonpo”); minister] *sNa chen po* [pronounced as “Nachenpo”) who lived during the reign of *Chos rgyal Srong btsan sgam po* [(pronounced as “Chogyal Songtsen Gampo”); r. 627 A.D – 649 A.D] (Dompnier, 2007, p. 16; Wangchuk et al., 2013b). As stated by “‘*dul ba lung*”, a child was born from an egg of the *Garuda* [*Byachung*] at *Yang lae gshod* cave in Nepal [*Bal Yul*] with propitious signs (Dompnier, 2007, p. 16; Wangchuk et al., 2013b), and

it was from him the family pedigree of *Drogpa's* ancestors began [see more in Paper II].

The *rNam thar*, “*Rang rej pha mes kye byung kungs mkha lding kyung gi gdung rbas chung brjod par bya ba ni//*” postulates that when *Blama Bya ras pa* [heir of *Bya Don grub* (pronounced as “*Ja/Bja Dondrub*”)] was at *Mtsho snar* (Dompnier, 2007, p. 18) there lived a megalomaniac ruler called ‘*Gya bzang*’ ([pronounced as *Yazang*]: Pelgen, 2003) who commanded his subjects [*Drogpa*] of *sKom rLon Rogs Gsum* to level the pinnacle of the mountain that was shadowing his palace [*Mkhar gdong rdzong* (pronounced as “*Khardong Dzong*”)] from sunshine (Wangmo, 1990; Dompnier, 2007, p. 13; Wangchuk et al., 2013b). It was an enormous and exasperating task for the *Drogpa*. They worked tirelessly for a prolonged period; however, the result was not significant. Therefore, people became annoyed and were left in quandary. Biography elucidates that it was at this occasion a woman (Wangmo, 1990) carrying a baby (Pelgen, 2003) or a boy (Dompnier, 2007, pp. 16-25) — believed to be an emanation of *Ama Jomo Remanti* — appeared amongst those workers and recommended them to cut off the king’s head rather than executing the unfeasible task — “*ao lo lo, ao lo lo.....ri mgo gcaod pa las mi mgo gcaod pa bla*” — (Wangmo, 1990; Dompnier, 2007, p. 13; Wangchuk et al., 2013b). The conspiracy as suggested by *Ama Jomo Remanti* was triumphantly accomplished: the king was assassinated in his drunken stupor.

However, the *Drogpa* could not live in *sKom rLon Rogs Gsum* in peace because the Tibetan Government commenced to punish the assassins. Therefore, they made an immediate request to *Blama Bya ras pa* [pronounced as “*Lama Jarapa*”] to help them find a new home for settlement. *Blama Bya ras pa* was reluctant to guide them alone. For that reason, he recommended those people to worship and pay homage to *Ama Jomo Remanti* for obtaining her assistance. On the contrary, Dompnier (2007, p. 73) elucidates it otherwise: he states that it was *Ama Jomo Remanti* who pleaded *Blama Bya ras pa* to guide them to find a new place to settle down. Therefore, this may be misarticulated oral history because *rNam thar* mentions that it was *Blama Bya ras pa* who suggested the people of *sKom rLon Rogs Gsum* to seek help from *Ama Jomo Remanti*. However, *rNam thar* does not explain how she became the chief of deity.

According to the biography of *sGrub dbang grags pa rjai btsun* of *rKang pa ra* [*rKang*: foot; *pa ra*; print] it was he who subdued *Ama Jomo Remanti* and appointed her as chief of all deities (cf. Dompnier, 2007, pp. 72-75). *Ama Jomo Remanti* was a nun at *Ralung*, Tibet and was said to possess paranormal wisdom. She is also considered as one of the reincarnations of *'Mkha 'gro Yi shis mtsog rgyal* (pronounced as Khando Yeshe Tshogyal) [*Guru rinpo che's* (pronounced as Guru Rinpoche) spiritual consort] (Wangmo, 1990; Curriculum and Professional Support Division [CAPSD], 2011, p. 18). As a nun *Ama Jomo Remanti* had pledged to lead a celibate life. Even so, she got married and led the life of a mother (Dompnier, 2007, p.73).

Blama Bya ras pa and *Ama Jomo Remanti* determined to abscond from *sKom rLon Rogs Gsum* in unison for the welfare and happiness of the *Drogpa*. All their properties like foods, yaks and horses and also the scriptures [Buddhist cannons] printed in gold [*Gser gyi glegs bam* (pronounced as “Ser Gi Leg Bam”)] were taken along with them (Wangmo, 1990; Wangchuk et al., 2013b). This gang of *Drogpa* had toured through Tawang to *Me rag-Sag steng*. The biographies also narrate the paranormal powers of *Blama Bya ras pa* performed on the way in order to rescue *Drogpa* and their yaks from trouble. Ruins of housing walls they constructed along their course are found even today (Wangmo, 1990; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 12-15; Wangchuk et al., 2013b).

The posse of *Drogpa*, *Blama Bya ras pa* and *Ama Jomo Remanti* ultimately found their way to *Sag steng*. *Sag steng* at that moment was covered with bamboo. They cleared the bamboo and developed a settlement. Thenceforth the village was named *Sag steng* [*Sag*: bamboo; *steng*: on top]. In contrast, Dompnier (2007, pp. 15 and 74) affords divergent meaning about the term *Sag steng*; “*Sa*” [in Dzongkha (Bhutan’s national language)] means land/earth [however, “*Sag*” is poles apart from “*Sa*”] and *steng*: on top. In addition, according to the *Drogpa* language it is “*Sag*” [meaning bamboo] not “*Sa*” [meaning land/earth] (Wangchuk et al., 2013b). Commonly *Sag steng* is referred as “*plain of bamboo*” (Wangmo, 1990; Pelgen, 2003; Chand, 2004, p. 37). Also, due to the presence of plentiful rhododendrons, *Sag steng* is also named “*Bal yul Tama Jong*” [the paradise of rhododendrons] (see Dompnier, 2007, p. 8).

According to Wangmo (1990) *Drogpa* were forced to leave *Me rag* by the Tibetan rabble who also found their way to *Sag steng* (see Wangchuk et al., 2013b). The Tibetan horde was supposed to be sent by the Tibetan government to bring justice on the death of King ‘*Gyabzang*. To get into *Me rag* *Drogpa* had to cross the summit of pass [*la*] *Nyag caung la* [(pronounced as “Nyagchung”); approximately 4,500 meters above mean sea level]. Therefore, it was unfeasible for elderly, young children and all those disabled *Drogpa* to climb over the pass. Consequently *Blama Bya ras pa* and *Ama Jomo Remanti* had to ask them to return to *Sag steng* (Wangmo, 1990). Hence the place from where they returned was named “*Log ‘gro jong*” [(pronounced as “Logdro Jong”); Tib. “*Log ‘gro*”: to return; and “*Jong*”: place]. Only the physically strong *Drogpa* managed to cross *Nyag caung la* and arrived at a place covered with dwarf junipers. They set the whole area on fire to create a settlement and named it “*Me harg*” [(*Drogpa kha skad*): *Drogpa* language] — setting on fire. However due to mispronunciation and miscommunication “*Me harg*” has altered to “*Me rag*” these days, perhaps losing the real meaning of the original context (Wangchuk et al., 2013b).

The validity of those existing biographies is not trustworthy, since these biographies contradict in its narration; however, they are an indispensable source of *Drogpa* history. For instance, the biographies “*Rang rej pha mes kye byung kungs mkha lding kyung gi gdung rbas chung brjod par bya ba ni/*” and “*‘dul ba lung las byung bai byai rgyal po ‘dab bzang dang Gshog bzang gi mi rbas byung tsul mdor bsdus bzhug sol/*” clearly elucidate that *Ama Jomo Remanti* and the mob of *Drogpa* fled from *sKom rLon Rogs gsum* and eventually arrived *Me rag* and *Sag steng* via Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh. Also, there are many historical remains left behind by *Ama Jomo Remanti* and *Blama Bya ras pa* on their way to *Me rag* and *Sag steng*. On the contrary, *Blama Tharpa Gyaltshen* of *Ca gling* annotates the journey of *Ama Jomo Remanti* differently. He explains it in connection to the biography of *sGrub dbang grags pa rjai btsun*, who was dwelling in Eastern Bhutan when *Ama Jomo Remanti* arrived in Bhutan. According to *Blama Tharpa Gyaltshen*, *Ama Jomo Remanti* decided to leave for India instead of Bhutan, because she thought that Tibetans would certainly come to Bhutan looking for her. Meanwhile, *Blama Bya ras pa* left for *Shar Dhirang*, Tawang (Dompnier, 2007, p. 58).

Later, *Ama Jomo Remanti* felt that India is not suitable for her to stay and then decided to go to Bhutan. She advised her two daughters [Ani and Uni] to remain behind on two hills at *Odilingaguru*, India and even today these hills are called *Ani* and *Uni* (Dompnier, 2007, p. 58). *Ama Jomo Remanti* entered Bhutan from *Samdrup Jongkhar* and eventually arrived in a place called *Jonla*, Trashigang. It is at *Jonla* her father *Yab Thangla Gyalpo* passed away. *Ama Jomo Remanti* asked the people of *Ra sdhi* and *Tongling* to perform the death ritual of her father and in return gave all the belongings of her father to those people (Dompnier, 2007, p. 58). The ritual song “*Aola Sokha*” is sang to commemorate the death anniversary of *Yab Thangla Gyalpo*. However, this tradition of singing “*Aola Sokha*” in memory of *Yab Thangla Gyalpo* has diminished now.

5. Meme-Perception among three *Droga* Generations

5.1. Meme-Perception

The word “meme”, as mentioned here, refers to a broader empirical ideology of cultural and traditional guiding concept of the community. Like “values” considering as the guiding principle of a social group by Groenfeldt (2003) and Nanda (1994, p. 57), the term meme shares a proportionately parallel connotation (see John, 1976, p. 54; Ferraro, 1995, pp. 17-18; Scupin, 2006, pp. 51-54). The term meme includes ideas, beliefs, behaviour, norms and the cultural and traditional values that are passed down from generations to generations. In addition, perception refers to a common opinion of the people. Therefore, meme-perception collectively would mean the common opinion of the community on ideas, beliefs, behaviour and the style of practices that have descended from the elder generation to younger generation, thus maintaining the hegemony of their culture and traditions.

It is obvious that in a cultural society, a common belief and behaviour certainly will differ even though values remain intact. For instance, an idea regarding globalization varies from person to person. Bhawuk (2003) believes globalization is an arena of developing creative behaviours and on the contrary, others (e.g., Chand, 2000; Williams, 2002; Groenfeldt, 2003; Triandis, 2006; Hosseini, 2010; Leinder, 2010; Karchung; 2011; Mallikarachchi, 2011; Silva, 2011; Singh, 2011; Chophel,

2012; Shankar Rao, 2012, pp. 189-204; Wangchuk et al., 2013a) believe that globalization is a risk factor. Therefore, to understand socio-cultural transformation, meme-perceptions among people deem crucial.

Memes are an essential dimension for cultural and traditional survival and the continual progression. A common meme plays a significant role in guiding the community and determining its role in promoting the culture and traditions. The survival of culture and traditions is challenged by the meme-perceptions of people. It is, therefore, exceptionally vital to understand the meme-perceptions of people while studying the review.

5.2. Modern Development is needed

As indicated by the cross-tabulation test, 75.0% [n=45] of YA “Strongly Agree” and 23.3% [n=14] “Agree” that the modern development is needed. From the MA category 86.7% [n=52] “Strongly Agree” and 13.3% [n=8] “Agree”. In addition, 85.0% [n=51] of OA “Strongly Agree” and 13.3% [n=8] “Agree” that the modern development is needed. However, on the contrary, the Pearson Chi-square test [χ^2] value 3.981 indicated that such commonness in perception among the three generation age groups might be by chance with the *p*-value .409. Therefore, the test supports that there is no difference in opinion among the three generation age groups of *Drogpa* on the perception that the modern development is needed [Table 1 and 2].

It is concluded that most [98.9%, n=178; Strongly Agree and Agree] of the respondents from three generation age groups are in favour of modern development. Therefore, it is obvious that the less receptive to modern development *Drogpa* society as mentioned by Chand (2000) is now inclined towards modern development. Both Chand (2000) and Dompnier (2007) were not in support of modern development and argued that it would bring many changes in the cultural and traditional life of the *Drogpa* (Wangchuk et al., 2013b).

According to the observation, it is also noticed that the *Drogpa* are keen to accept the modern developments and urge government to bring more developments in their communities. The content analysis indicated that 96.7% [n=29] of the respondents [66.7%, n=20 comprise of YA and MA] are prepared to accept modern development. One of the interviewees shared that most of the *Drogpa* would

prefer modern development because they want to have easy access to the market to sell their products. Also, many *Drogpa* would leave their villages and migrate elsewhere because they don't have better source of economy for their livelihood; the management of yaks is a tedious work and needs more co-worker and fodder. Insufficient pastureland and the shortage of labour force have discouraged them and in fact some of them started to sell all their yaks to their fellow mates. If majority of the *Drogpa* sell their yaks, then the survival of yak herding culture is uncertain and all those practices related to yaks might extinct (Wangchuk et al., 2013a) [see Paper I].

Table 1: Perception of three age generations on Modern Development is needed

Age Groups	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
15-35					1	1.7	14	23.3	45	75.0
36-56					0	0.0	8	13.3	52	86.7
57 and above					1	1.7	8	13.3	51	85.0

Note: n: number, %: percentage

Table 2: The Significant test on the Perception of three *Drogpa* Generations

Variables	SD	D	NT	A	SA	χ^2	P-value
Modern development is needed	0	0	2	30	148	3.98	.409
Culture and Traditions must be preserved	0	1	3	25	152	8.65	.194
Modern development is a threat on culture and traditions	1	17	21	52	89	17.39	.026
Youths are concerned about their culture and traditions	28	45	42	43	22	77.35	.000
Parents play important role in cultural promotion	19	25	27	47	62	24.93	.002
Dungkhag and Geog try to promote <i>Drogpa</i> culture	1	1	6	67	105	21.29	.006
<i>Drogpa</i> are aware of their culture and behaviour transformation	13	19	26	50	72	55.95	.000
<i>Drogpa</i> don't prefer <i>Pulham</i> and <i>Tshemlham</i>	3	28	13	51	85	19.15	.014

Note : SD : Strongly Disagree,

D : Disagree

NT : Not Sure

A : Agree

SA : Strongly Agree

Table 1 (33.3%); Table 4 (50.0%); and Table 12 (40.0%) have expected frequency greater than 20%, therefore be aware of the data inferences related to these tables.

5.3. Modern Development is a threat on Culture and Traditions

The statistic analysis also concluded that there is a difference in the meme-perception among the three generation age groups on the perception that the modern development is a threat on culture and tradition [Table 2]. The cross-tabulation showed 55.0% [n=33] of YA “Strongly Agree” and 25.0% [n=15] “Agree”, 50.0% [n=30] of MA “Strongly Agree” and 28.3% [n=17] “Agree, and 43.3% [n=26] of OA “Strongly Agree” and 33.3% [n=20] “Agree” with the perception that the modern development is a threat on culture and traditions [Table 3]. The cross-tabulation test also indicated that only 17 [9.4%] of the total respondents “Disagree” with the perception that the modern development is a threat to culture and traditions.

In addition, 21 [11.7%] of the total respondents were “Not Sure” of it [Table 3]. The Pearson Chi-square value was 17.394 with a probability p -value of .026, which concluded that there is a significant difference in meme-perception among the three age groups of *Drogpa* on the perception that the modern development is a threat on culture and traditions [Table 2].

With the significant p -value 0.26 of the Chi-square test, it is clear that the three age group respondents of *Me rag* and *Sag steng* have different opinion on the perception that the modern development is a threat on their culture and traditions. In this case, the continual survival of *Drogpa* culture and traditions seems uncertain because 98.9% [n=178; Strongly Agree and Agree] of the respondents from three generation age groups of *Drogpa* have a common perception on the need for modern development and 78.3% [n=142; Strongly Agree and Agree] of them feel that modern development is a threat on culture and traditions [see Table 1 & Table 3].

Table 3: Perception of three Generations on Modern Development is a threat on Culture and Traditions

Age Groups	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
15-35	1	1.7	7	11.7	4	6.7	15	25.0	33	55.0
36-56	0	0.0	9	15.0	4	6.7	17	28.3	30	50.0
57 and above	0	0.0	1	1.7	13	21.7	20	33.3	26	43.3

Note: n: number, %: percentage

5.4. Culture and Traditions must be preserved

According to the crosstab result, 49 respondents [32.5%] of YA “Strongly Agree” and 16.7% [n=10] “Agree”, 52 respondents [86.7%] of MA “Strongly Agree” and 13.3% [n=8] “Agree”, 50 respondents [83.3%] of OA “Strongly Agree” and 11.7% [n=7] “Agree” with the perception that the culture and traditions must be preserved and promoted [Table 4]. The Pearson Chi-square value 8.653 and the significance p -value .194 indicated that there is no significant difference in meme-

perception among the three generation respondents on the perception that culture and traditions must be preserved [Table 2].

However, the analysis on the perceptions that youths are concerned about their culture and traditions and the parents play important role in promoting culture and traditions don't indicate a positive results on preserving and promoting culture and traditions [see Table 5 and 6]. As per the content analysis 100.0% [n=30] of the respondents are supportive towards preserving and promoting culture and traditions. However, one can also notice cultural dilution reshaping the cultural and traditional life of *Drogpa* (Wangchuk et al., 2013b).

Table 4: Perception on the Preservation of Culture and Traditions

Age Groups	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
15-35			1	1.7	0	0.0	10	16.7	49	81.7
36-56			0	0.0	0	0.0	8	13.3	52	86.7
57 and above			0	0.0	3	5.0	7	11.7	50	83.9

Note: n: number, %: percentage

6. Extent of Cultural and Traditional Transformation

The overview of the statistical analysis on the perception, culture and traditions must be preserved concluded that there is no difference in meme-perception among the three age group respondents [see Table 2]. In addition, according to the cross-tabulation result, 151 [83.9%] of the total respondents “Strongly Agree” and 13.9 [n=25] “Agree” that culture and traditions must be preserved [see Table 4]. However, this question is, to what extent the culture and traditions of *Drogpa* have transformed? According to the observation results, many changes regarding culture and traditions can be noticed amongst *Drogpa* contemporarily (Wangchuk et al., 2013a; Wangchuk et al., 2013b). In addition, it is very difficult to measure the degree of transformation insofar as modern development has on these *Drogpa* communities. Therefore, the combination of statistical analysis on meme-perceptions of the three

generation age groups, data generated through the interview and the observation method are collaborated to explain to what extent *Drogpa* culture and traditions have transformed.

According to the content analysis, 60.0% [n=18] of the total sample [n=30] is of the view that especially youths are not concerned about the culture and traditions. In the continuum, the observations also concluded that many young *Drogpa* are not keenly interested in their culture and traditions. In fact, many educated youths don't prefer their costume, even MA and OA to some extent. The cross-tabulation result concluded that 5.0% [n=3] of YA of the total sample "Strongly Disagree", 18.3% [n=11] "Strongly Agree" and 45.0% [n=27] of YA is "Not Sure" on the perception that the youths are concerned about their culture and traditions. On the contrary, 36.7% [n=22] of OA "Strongly Disagree", 41.7% [n=25] "Disagree" and only 13.4% [n=8] "Strongly Agree" and "Agree" that youths are concerned about their culture and traditions. In addition, 11.7% [n=7] of MA "Strongly Agree" and 43.3% [n=26] "Agree" on youths' concern in preserving and promoting culture and traditions. Whereas, 5.0% [n=3] of MA "Strongly Disagree", 23.3% [n=14] "Disagree" and 16.7% [n=10] is "Not Sure" of youths' concern regarding the cultural promotion and preservation [Table 5]. The statistically significant p -value .000 of the Chi-square test indicated that there is a difference in meme-perceptions among the three age groups respondents on the perception that the youths are concerned about their culture and traditions [Table 2].

The continuity of *Drogpa* culture and traditions also depend on indisputable concern of the youths. However, according to the opinion of youths, 45.0% [n=27] of them are "Not Sure", 5.0% [n=3] "Strongly Disagree" and 10.0% [n=6] "Disagree" with the consensus of youths on their culture and traditions [Table 5]. The survival of *Drogpa* culture and traditions is controversial because the youths are not aware of their role in cultural promotion and preservation and moreover, their negligence behaviour towards culture and traditions is a great threat on the survival of *Drogpa* culture and traditions (see Wangchuk et al., 2013a; Wangchuk et al., 2013b).

The role of parents in preserving and promoting culture and traditions will also determine the extent of cultural and traditional transformation. The cross-tabulation analysis concluded that YA and MA are with the views that parents play an

important role in preserving and promoting the culture and traditions [Table 6]. However, the perception contradicts within the group OA. As per the crosstab 58.4% [n=35] of OA feel that the role played by parents in cultural and traditional promotion and preservation fall under the categories “Strongly Disagree” [n=13], “Disagree” [n=12] and “Not Sure” [n=10]. Besides that, 26.7% [n=16] of OA “Strongly Agree” and 15.0% [n=9] “Agree” that the parents play active role in preserving and promoting culture and traditions. In addition, 46.7% [n=28] of MA “Strongly Agree”, 30.0% [n=18] “Agree”, 8.3% [n=5] “Disagree” and 15.0% [n=9] “Not Sure” with the role of parents in preserving and promoting culture and traditions. The 30.0% [n=18] of YA “Strongly Agree” and 33.3% [n=20] “Agree” that parents are concerned about culture and traditions. Additionally, 36.6% of YA “Strongly Disagree” [n=6], “Disagree” [n=8] and “Not Sure” [n=8] with the parent’s role of preserving and promoting culture and traditions. However, 30.0% [n=18] of YA “Strongly Agree” and 33.3% [n=20] “Agree” that *Drogpa* parents play significant role in preserving and promoting culture and traditions [Table 6].

According to the result of Pearson Chi-square test, $\chi^2 = 24.934$, it is statistically significant with the *p*-value of .002 that the occurrence of such variation in the values of meme-perception on the perception that the parent’s role in preserving and promoting culture and traditions among the three generation age groups by chance is less than .002 [see Table 2]. Therefore, there is a difference in meme-perception among the three age groups respondents *Drogpa* on the opinion that parents play important role in preserving and promoting culture and traditions.

According to the content analysis and observation results, 86.7% [n=26] of the respondents suggested that parents play an important role in promoting culture and traditions, however, 41.7% [n=25] of the respondents from older category stated that most of the parents are not concerned about their culture and traditions, and 16.7% [n=10] of the respondents are not aware of it. Even 36.7% [n=22] of the youths felt that parents do not play crucial role in preserving and promoting culture and traditions. One of the respondents from Middle Age category shared that most of the Old Age *Drogpa* say “*there is no reason to work on cultural and traditional preservation and promotion, since we are too old and die soon*”. Although, it is an unconstructive perception of the OA, however, it may be the result of illiteracy and

lack of awareness. Otherwise, it is observed that the OA is more attached to their cultural and traditional practices than the YA and some MA *Drogpa*.

Another factor that might determine the extent of cultural and traditional transformation is whether the *Drogpa* are aware of the cultural, traditional and behavioural transformation in their daily life or not. The cross-tabulation result concluded that 43.3% [n=26] of YA “Strongly Agree” and 25.0% [n=15] “Agree” with the perception that the *Drogpa* are aware of their cultural, traditional and behaviour transformation. 25.0% [n=15] of YA is “Not Sure” about it. From MA age group, 43.3% [n=26] “Strongly Agree” and 43.3% [n=26] “Agree” with it. A wide range of variance can be seen within the OA age group. Precisely 33.3% [n=20] of OA “Strongly Agree” and 20.0% [n=12] “Strongly Disagree” and 25.0% [n=15] “Disagree” in the continuum with *Drogpa*’s awareness on cultural, traditional and behavioural transformation [Table 7]. The probability of such variation in the meme-perception among the three generation age groups is less than .000, which is statistically significant indicating that there is a difference in perception among the three generation age groups on *Drogpa* are aware of their cultural, traditional and behaviour transformation [see Table 2]. In addition, the content analysis supplemented that 83.3% [n=25] of the total [n=30] respondents were of the view that the *Drogpa* are aware of their cultural, traditional and behaviour transformation.

A few *Drogpa* customs are not practiced these days. Marriage customs like *Chung-gnyen* [childhood engagement] and *’khor sdeb pa* [fraternal polyandry and polygamy] are not a priority of marriage practices among *Drogpa* at present. Around five fraternal polyandry cases were listed in *Me rag* and three in *Sag steng*, and could be the last of such type of marriage, since neither of Young Age and Middle Age is married as *Chung- gnyen* and *’khor sdeb pa*. *Chung- gnyen* custom doesn’t exist in *Drogpa* communities anymore even though it was of greater significance in the past (Wangchuk et al., 2013b) [refer Paper II for marriage customs]. Fraternal polyandry custom was practiced extensively by the people of *Me rag* and *Sag steng* in the past to overcome the labour shortages and prevent land fragmentation [see Table 9]. However, the meme-perception on *’khor sdeb pa* is otherwise at present. The cumulative count of 82.8% [n=149] of the three generation age groups “Strongly Disagree” [n=90] and “Disagree” [n=59] with this type of marriage custom [see Table

8]. The content analysis concluded that the reasons for discontinuing with *'khor sdeb pa* marriage custom are; (1) the children of polyandrous family don't want to practice it; (2) polyandrous marriage is not an appropriate marriage custom since it creates misunderstanding within the family; and (3) such custom is against the marriage act of Bhutan (see Wangchuk et al., 2013b).

The cross-tabulation indicated that 71.7% [n=129] respondents of the three generation age groups “Strongly Agree” and 16.1% [n=29] of them “Agree” that *'khor sdeb pa* marriage creates misunderstanding within the family members; especially between the co-brothers. In addition, 25.0% [n=15] of YA is “Not Sure” of it, which means YA is not aware of *'khor sdeb pa* as much as OA and MA do [Table 10]. This could be because the *'khor sdeb pa* marriage custom commenced to decline during the time of OA and MA eventually. That is why, the existing *'khor sdeb pa* marriage is only from OA category, and the number is comparatively less. The Pearson Chi-square *p*-value .000 indicates that there is a significant difference in meme-perception among the three generation age groups on *'khor sdeb pa* marriage custom [see Table 2].

sPu lham [woolen boots], *Pag lham* [leather boots] and *Btsim lham*, which is also called *Mo lham* [woolen boots] are one of the most essential components of *Drogpa* culture and traditions that has an origination from the Bird Kings *Dabzang* and *Shogzang* [believed to be the ancestors of *Drogpa*]. However, such valuable cultural and traditional asset of *Drogpa* has become mediocre priority today. The biographies clarify that these boots represent the legs of the bird *Garuda* [Byachung: pronounced as *Jachung*]. Most [95.6%, n=172; “Strongly Agree” and “Agree”] of the respondents feel that these boots are an important components of their culture and traditions [Table 11]. However, meanwhile, they also feel that these boots would not be considered a part of their culture soon, since people are more comfortable to use other shoes. One of the respondents said “*it is not that the Drogpa are interested in other shoes, rather they are not interested in our prestigious culture and traditions. In this case, I think we will not remain as what we are*”. This statement clearly states the extent to which the *Drogpa* culture and traditions have transformed [see Paper II for *Drogpa* Costume].

The cross-tabulation analyses concluded that 47.2% [n=85] of the total respondents “Strongly Agree” and 28.3% [n=51] “Agree” with the perception that *Drogpa* don’t prefer *sPu lham* and *Btsim lham*, and 13 [7.2%] respondents of the three generation age groups were “Not sure” with the perception. In addition, 28 [15.6%] of the total respondents “Disagree” and 1.7% [n=3] “Strongly Disagree” with the perception that *Drogpa* don’t prefer *sPu lham* and *Btsim lham* [Table 12]. The chi-square value of 19.148 confirmed that occurrence of such variations in the perception of meme-perceptions among the three age group respondents by chance is less than .05 [*p*-value .014; see Table 2].

Drogpa’s preference over *sPu lham* and *Btsim lham* was further tested with the perception that whether *sPu lham* and *Btsim lham* are important or not. From the total of 180 respondents 128 [71.7%] of them “Strongly Agree” and 44 [24.4%] respondents “Agree” with the perception that these boots are important part of their costumes [Table 11]. Although *Drogpa* feel that these boots are important, on the contrary, they also don’t prefer to wear them. There is no causal linkage between the perception of preference and the perception of the importance of boots.

Some of their customs are not practiced at the present time [childhood engagement and fraternal polyandry] and a few are transforming as a result of modern development. It is becoming a big challenge for the *Drogpa* to uphold their culture and traditions and therefore their dire attention is required. Especially, it is difficult to come across a *Drogpa* who has the detail knowledge on their own history of origination, however with a few exceptional cases with those who possess biography (Wangchuk et al., 2013b) [see Paper II for *Drogpa* History] the culture has chance to continue. The knowledge awareness on *Drogpa* history is seldom amongst the Young and Middle Ages, even among Old Age to some extent. Most of the *Drogpa* therefore narrate their history in the form of so called the oral tradition which is different from the written documents. The researcher has come across many older *Drogpa* who has different background on their costume origination. Most of them narrate the history of their costume differently from what is documented in the biography [see Paper II for the historical origination of *Drogpa* Costume]. The *Drogpa* history is in a state of confusion even within the Old Age, and apparently major transformation on *Drogpa* history may be noticed during the time of Middle and Young Ages. Therefore, to

maintain the continuity of their history it is important to let Middle and Young Ages know what is written in the biography.

Another controversial issue that might be a potential threat on *Drogpa* culture and traditions is the waning off of yak herding culture [see Paper I for Yaks and *Drogpa*]. Yaks are the main source of economy and livelihood of this highlander. People of *Me rag* and *Sag steng* started to sell their yaks entirely and most of them are doing business. Those *Drogpa* who sold yaks said that it is very difficult to manage with a few family members; and secondly, they don't have sufficient pasture for the yaks to feed on. In the past, children were not sent to schools and meanwhile the polyandry marriage custom added sufficient labourers at home. Later *Drogpa* have understood the value of education and therefore they sent their children to schools and moreover, the polyandry marriage custom was seldom practiced by these people. Therefore, under such circumstances, the survival of yak herding culture and traditions seem uncertain. Only that may sustain is the "Yak Chham", the dance related to yaks (Wangchuk et al., 2013a) [see Paper I for Yaks Chham].

It is fortunate that all the three generation age groups are devoted to their deity *Ama Jomo Remanti* and her pilgrimage sites. *Ama Jomo Remanti* is one of the escorts who guided *Drogpa* safely all their way from Tibet to Bhutan. If these people discontinue worshipping her, then all those culture, traditions and customs related to the deity will wane off. Therefore, the unfailing faith of people towards *Ama Jomo Remanti* might at least help to preserve some aspects of cultural and traditional practices; especially those practices related to her [more in Paper I and II].

Table 5: Perception on the consensus of Youths on Culture and Traditions

Age Groups	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
15-35	3	5.0	6	10.0	27	45.0	13	21.7	11	18.3
36-56	3	5.0	14	23.3	10	16.7	26	43.3	7	11.7
57 and above	22	36.7	25	41.7	5	8.3	4	6.7	4	6.7

Note: n: number, %: percentage

Table 6: Perception on the Parents role in Cultural Promotion and Preservation

Age Groups	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
15-35	6	10.0	8	13.3	8	13.3	20	33.3	18	30.0
36-56	0	0.0	5	8.3	9	15.0	18	30.0	28	46.7
57 and above	13	21.7	12	20.0	10	16.7	9	15.0	16	26.7

Note: n: number, %: percentage

Table 7: Perception on the awareness of Drogha on Culture, Traditions and Behaviour Transformation

Age Groups	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
15-35	1	1.7	3	5.0	15	25.0	15	25.0	26	43.3
36-56	0	0.0	1	1.7	7	11.7	26	43.3	26	43.3
57 and above	12	20.0	15	25.0	4	6.7	9	15.0	20	33.3

Note: n: number, %: percentage

Table 8: Perception on the Promotion Khor-sdepa Marriage

Age Groups	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
15-35	20	33.3	21	35.0	13	21.7	2	3.3	4	6.7
36-56	34	56.7	18	30.0	1	1.7	1	1.7	6	10.0
57 and above	36	60.0	20	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	6.7

Note: n: number, %: percentage

Table 9: Perception on the Khor-sdepa Marriage Prevents Land fragmentation

Age Groups	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
15-35	2	3.3	1	1.7	11	18.3	12	20.0	34	56.7
36-56	0	0.0	1	1.7	0	0.0	22	36.7	37	61.7
57 and above	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	15.0	51	85.0

Note: n: number, %: percentage

Table 10: Perception on the Khor-sdepa Marriage creates Misunderstanding within the Family

Age Groups	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
15-35	1	1.7	3	5.0	15	25.0	12	20.0	29	48.3
36-56	0	0.0	3	5.0	0	0.0	13	21.7	44	73.3
57 and above	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	6.7	56	93.3

Note: n: number, %: percentage

Table 11: Perception on the Importance of *Pulham* and *Tshemlham*

Age Groups	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
15-35	1	1.7	1	1.7	0	0.0	10	16.7	48	80.0
36-56	0	0.0	2	3.3	0	0.0	22	36.7	36	60.0
57 and above	0	0.0	3	5.0	0	0.0	12	20.0	45	75.0

Note: n: number, %: percentage

Table 12: Perception on the *Drogpa*'s Preference of *Pulham* and *Tshemlham*

Age Groups	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
15-35	3	5.0	7	11.7	8	13.3	14	23.3	28	46.7
36-56	0	0.0	13	21.7	2	3.3	23	38.3	22	36.7
57 and above	0	0.0	8	13.3	3	5.0	14	23.3	35	58.3

Note: n: number, %: percentage

7. Preservation and Promotion of *Drogpa* Culture and Traditions

Drogpa are aware of the cultural and traditional transformation and the changing behaviour. Most importantly we can notice in Table 7 that most of the MA [n=52, 86.6%; “Strongly Agree” and “Agree”] and YA [n=41, 68.3%; “Strongly Agree” and “Agree”] are in support of the perception that *Drogpa* are aware of their culture and behaviour transformation than the OA. The OA [n=27, 45.0%: (“Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree”)] feels that the *Drogpa* are not aware of their changing behaviour and culture, and 25.0% [n=15] of YA is “Not Sure” of this perception. Therefore, if *Drogpa* have to preserve and promote their unique culture and traditions, the *Drogpa* should be aware of the transforming culture, traditions and behaviour. If their perceptions towards culture and traditions change, it would be than difficult to sustain the *Drogpa* culture. Indeed, *Drogpa* are optimistic in preserving and promoting their culture and traditions. Table 4 portrays that 97.8% [n=176] of the three generation age groups “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” with the perception that culture and traditions must be preserved even though chi-square test concluded that such distribution in values has happened by chance with the *p*-value .194 [Table 2]. The content analysis suggests that *Drogpa* should work collaboratively in enhancing their culture and traditions and everyone should be responsible for it.

The total respondents of 95.6% [n=172] “Strongly Agree” and “Agree” with the perception that *Dungkhag* of *Sag steng* and *geogs* play an important role in cultural promotion of *Drogsa* [Table 10]. These offices have made mandatory for all *Drogsa* to be in their formal dress in any public gatherings and during special occasion. Even Sakteng Lower Secondary School has made compulsory for all the students to come in their own traditional dresses. They are even punished if they fail to come in their traditional attires. One of the respondents from *Sag steng* shared that it is very difficult to get *rKub ‘thing* and *Pi shub* for their children because these parts of attires are not available and most of the people don’t use them.

Bhutan government has an empirical significance on its diversified cultures and traditions. Her policy is to preserve and promote cultures and traditions to maintain the diversification. There are many agencies [Gross National Happiness Commission, Department of Cultures, National Museum, Dzongkha Development Commission, and the National Library] in Bhutan whose responsibility is affiliated with preserving and promoting cultures and traditions through various measures.

Some of these agencies have started documenting those cultural and traditional practices, especially those that are waning off. Such initiatives from the government side would enable people to realize the value of their traditions and customs. Even though, cultural and traditional practices may transform every day, the essence would remain intact in documents for the future references. Most importantly, it is *Drogsa* who should be responsible for preserving and promoting their culture and traditions. The study on meme-perception can conclude that the *Drogsa* are not aware of the importance of their culture and traditions, which is very unique in Bhutan.

Table 13: Perception on the role of Dungkhag and Geogs in Promoting *Drogpa* Culture and Traditions

Age Groups	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Not Sure		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
15-35	1	1.7	1	1.7	6	10.0	26	43.3	26	43.3
36-56	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	23	38.3	37	61.7
57 and above	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	18	30.0	42	70.0

Note: n: number, %: percentage

8. CONCLUSION

Drogpa's culture and traditions are one of the most noteworthy cultures and traditions of Bhutan. Although similar type of tribe is also seen in Arunachal Pradesh, India, yet they have some major differences. Perhaps, they may trace a common origination. This section of people is believed to have come from Tshona, South of Tibet, accompanied by *Ama Jomo Remanti* [secular head] and *Blama Bya ras pa* [spiritual head]. Most of the *Drogpa* are not aware of their history; those who know have vague ideas. This could be because the biography that contains their history is not accessible to all. Only a few *Drogpa* possess such biography and they are not willing to share unless they are paid in cash not in kind. Such behaviour would hinder others to know about them.

The statistical tests have confirmed that the three generation age groups of *Drogpa* have a common meme-perception regarding the acceptance of modern development and preserving and promoting culture and traditions. The respondents are willing to accept modern developments and meanwhile they are also looking forward to preserve and promote their culture and traditions. However, the question is why their culture and traditions are transforming although they have a common meme-perception, and also they were found to be less receptive people to modern developments. It is apparent that these people are transforming culturally and behaviourally irrespective of their common meme-perception. Hence, the continual endurance of *Drogpa* culture and traditions is not certain in the pace of modern

development. Also, the three generations age groups of *Drogsa* have different opinions on the perception that modern development is a threat on culture and traditions.

The plans and policies on preserving and promoting cultures and traditions have a critical role to function in this modernizing world. Bhutan has fundamentally focused on preserving and promoting cultures and traditions as an integral part of her identity. However, individual meme-perception is deemed crucial even though cultures and traditions have received utmost significance in Bhutan. Without studying the perception of the people it would often be difficult to understand their willingness to preserve and promote cultures and traditions. In fact, the individual perception of people on their respective culture and traditions would help government to understand the situation of those cultures and traditions that are progressively waning off.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

GLOSSARY

Aka	:	The tribe of Arunachal Pradesh.
Ama Jomo Remanti	:	The chief deity of Drogpa.
Ani	:	Daughter of Ama Jomo Remanti.
Aola Sokh	:	The song sung by the people of Radhi to commemorate the death of Yab Thangla Gyalpo [more at Yab Thangla Gyalpo].
Ara	:	Brewed whisky of grains [especially from maize].
Bagma Tonglen	:	It is the third stage of marriage custom of Drogpa whereby, bride will be finally sent off to groom's house.
Bal Todung	:	Woolen sTod dung.
Bal Yul	:	Nepal.
Balyul Tama Jong	:	Another name of Sag steng meaning the paradise of rhododendrons.
Barchang	:	The second stage of marriage custom of <i>Drogpa</i> .
Bazigars	:	Tribal people of Punjab, India renowned for dancing and singing within their region.
Bjop	:	The semi-nomadic yak herders of Thimphu, Gasa, Haa and part of Chhukha.
Lama	:	An Abbot/a Priest.
Lama Jarapa	:	Son of Bya Don Drub [descendants of Bird kings] who later became the Spiritual head of <i>Drogpa</i> .
Lama Wang	:	A monk from Mön Tawang who authored the biography "Rang re'i pha mes kye byung kungs mkha lding kyung gi gdung rbas chung brjod par bya ba ni//".

Lonpo	:	Minister.
Lonpo Nachenpo	:	The reincarnation of Bird Kings who lived during the reign of Chos rgyal Srong btsan sgam po.
Bod	:	Tibet.
Bod ked	:	The Tibetan Language.
Btsim lham/ Mo lham	:	Boots made of either yak or sheep hair.
Buddhism	:	The teachings of Siddhartha Gautama Buddha
Bumthang pa	:	The people of Bumthang district, central Bhutan.
Byachung	:	Mythical bird Garuda.
Chang pa ama	:	Wine waitress
Chogyal Songtsan Gampo	:	A Buddhist king who ruled Tibet from 627 A.D to 649 A.D.
Chhukha	:	Southern district of Bhutan
Chung-gnyen	:	The Childhood engagement
Chu pa	:	Woolen jacket worn by male <i>Drogpa</i> up to the height of mid thigh.
Dabzang	:	The ancestor of Bird lineage.
Dagana	:	Southwestern district of Bhutan.
Dar	:	A scarf
Daw	:	A close friend of bride chosen by an astrologer whose responsibility is to sit with her bride friend during the marriage ceremony.
Ü Tsang skad	:	The central Tibetan Language
Desi	:	Secular head of the dual system of government of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal.
Dkarchang	:	White brewed whisky.
Doya/Lhop	:	The tribal people of Dorokha, Samtse.
Padar	:	Ritual scarves given to bride's parents by groom's parents during Barchang.

Drads	:	Also called Brokpa the tribe of Ladakh, India.
Dramtoep	:	Tribal people of Samtse district.
Dri	:	A Knife in Drogha language.
Drogha	:	The people of Me rag and Sag steng. They are also called Brogha in Tibetan dialect meaning men of pastures.
Drogha kha ked	:	Drogha language.
Druk	:	Bhutan.
Dungkhag	:	Sub division of the main district.
Dungpa	:	Head of the sub district.
Dzongkha	:	Bhutan's national language.
Gamri chu	:	River that passes through the entire valleys of Sag steng and Phongmed.
Garpa Dongsu	:	A matchmaker
Gasa	:	Northernmost district of Bhutan sharing the border with Tibet-China.
Glud	:	Scapegoats believed to be possessing evil curse.
Glud tor/ Glud gong	:	A ritual performed to get rid of scapegoats.
Glu pa	:	Male singers who sing during marriage ceremony of Drogha.
Glu pa	:	Male singers who sing during marriage ceremony of Drogha.
Nagpo Bjachung	:	Black Garuda, a descendant of Bird Kings.
Nyer pa	:	Storekeeper.
Gomchen	:	Hermit.
Great Andamanese	:	Tribes of Andaman, India.
Drig chang	:	It is similar to Krung chang. "sGrig" means to unite young groom and bride.

- Drub Wang Dragpa Jutsen : Reincarnation of Prince Kintu Legpa born in rKang pa ra.
- Sergi Legbam : Buddhist cannons written in gold.
- Guru Rinpoche : The precious master. He is also considered as second Buddha in some Mahayana Buddhist countries. He brought Tantric Buddhism [Vajrayana] in Bhutan.
- Gyab chang : The return drink given to groom's parents by bride's parents when bride refuses the proposal of marriage.
- Yazang : The megalomaniac King of Mtsho snar who commanded his subjects to level the summit of mountain that was shadowing his palace Mkar gdong rdzong.
- Gyalse Tenzin Rabgyal : The fourth Druk Desi of Bhutan.
- Gid thag : A rope like belt made of yak hair to fasten the Pags tsa.
- Jukar : It is a group of stars [constellation].
- Zugthing Todung : Mostly silk is use to weave this cloth with full of brocades.
- Bura Todung : Silk sTod dung.
- Jarawar: : Tribes of Andaman, India.
- Jor zhamo : Tibetan hat.
- Kaegyn : A necklace [coral and turquoise] worn by female *Drogpa*.
- Kanggho : Woolen open shorts worn by male *Drogpa* up to the height of knee.
- Khengpa : People from Kheng regions of Zhemgang district.
- Khor Debpa : Polyandry or polygamy type of marriage.
- Kintu Legpa : Son of 'Mkha 'gro 'groba bzang mo and King 'Bka la dbang po of Tibet who later ruled Padmacan [now it is called Ca ling].

Kom Lon Rog Sum	:	Three <i>Drogpa</i> settlements under Mtsho snar region.
Kothkin	:	Father's sister's son or mother's brother's son or brother in law (sister's husband).
Trung chang	:	First stage of marriage custom of <i>Drogpa</i> whereby Garpa gdong bsu will propose the bride's parents on behalf of groom's parents.
Kubthing	:	A piece of leather placed at mid-buttock and tied around the waist to prevent dirtying of cloths.. "rKub" means buttock and " 'thing" means a mattress. It is widely used by male Nag rdze.
La	:	Mountain Pass.
Laya	:	A village under Gasa district.
Layap	:	People of Laya.
Lham rog	:	A cord made of either wool or yak hair to tie up sPu lham, Pag lham and Btsim lham/ Mo lham below the knee.
Lhem pa	:	It is a red square piece of cloth placed at the back tied around the neck.
Lopon Khizhi	:	Name given to [alias] sGrub dbang grags pa rjai btsun.
Logdro jong	:	It is a Tibetan word meaning to return from a particular place. "Log 'gro": to return and "jong" means place.
Mad kyem	:	A piece of black cloth [of either wool or yak hair] placed around the back of buttock is worn by female <i>Drogpa</i> . The Monpas of Arunachal wear red sMad dkyigem.
Me harg	:	It is a <i>Drogpa</i> term which means setting on fire. The word "Me rag" has its origination from "Me harg".
Me rag	:	<i>Drogpa</i> settlement located at an altitude of \pm 4,500 meters above mean sea level.
Metog Zemo	:	Daughter of Ama Jomo Remanti.

Gon Su pa	:	Guest Master
Khardong Dzong	:	The fortress of a megalomaniac king ‘Gya bzang of Mtsho snar.
Khandro Yishis Tsogyal	:	Spiritual concert of Guru Rinpoche who possessed supernatural wisdom.
Monpa	:	People of Mön Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh. The early inhabitants of Bhutan are also called Monpa.
Mo Glud	:	Female scapegoat.
Tshona	:	A region located in South of Tibet.
Nagchang	:	Black brewed whisky.
Nagas	:	The underworld deities possessing special power to wreak sickness to humans.
Na ze	:	“Nag” is a Tibetan term which means any bovine species [here it refers to yaks] and “rdze” means herder.
Namcaog Yudang proj	:	An earring made of turquoise.
Namthar	:	Biography/text narrating the story of a person.
Nga zor	:	A pen-knife tied at right waist by a chain made of coins that reaches up to the mid thigh.
Nyagchung la	:	A mountain pass of approximately 4,500 meters above mean sea level located between Me rag and Sag steng. Nyag caung literally means “exhausted”.
Nyera Amo Chu	:	River that passes by Me rag village.
Onge	:	Tribes of Andaman, India.
Padma Lingpa	:	One of the 5 great tertons born in Tang, Bumthang.
Pag lham	:	Boot made of either yak’s or sheep’s skin.
Pagtsa	:	Tanned leather of animals like calf, deer, antelope and even wild goats.

Pakaling	:	A Sharchop settlement located between Phongmed and Radhi.
Palang	:	A wooden jar with the capacity to hold 2-3 bottles of arag. Palang is usually supplied by the community of Kengkhar of Mongar district.
Pangkhep	:	Woven scarves gifted by groom's parents to bride's parents during Barchang.
Pho Glud	:	Male scapegoat.
Phongmed	:	Sharchopa settlement located at West of Me rag and Sag steng. A few Brami communities also reside in parts of Phongmed.
Pi shub	:	Leather leggings.
Trul pa	:	Reincarnation of an eminent one.
Pu lham	:	Boot made of yak's hair.
Radhi	:	One of the Sharchopas settlement situated in West of Me rag and Sag steng. It is believed that Ama Jomo named this place after she has come across a group of goats grazing at this place.
Ralung	:	One of the provinces in Tibet where Drukpa Kagyu set of Buddhism originated.
Sag steng	:	Droga settlement situated at an elevation of \pm 3,000 meters above mean sea level.
Samtse	:	Southwestern district of Bhutan.
Sentinelese	:	Tribes of Andaman, India.
Sergamathang	:	Golden cousin (daughter of uncle and aunt).
Sherdugpen	:	Tribal people of Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh.
Shing ka	:	A loose white and pink striped silk cloth worn by female Droga. Plain white Shing ka is also worn informally.
Shogzang	:	The ancestor of Bird lineage.
Sinhala	:	A group of inhabitant of Sri Lanka.

Taba	:	Tribal people of Samtse district.
Tamil	:	A group of inhabitant of Sri Lanka.
Tau ngama	:	A copper vessel for storing arag.
Tawang	:	One of the districts of Arunachal Pradesh state where Monpas have settled.
Terton	:	Special heirs of Guru Rinpoche who are bestowed with the responsibility of discovering treasures and spreading Buddhism whenever need arise. According to Guru Rinpoche's prophesy 5 great tertons, 108 major tertons and 1,002 minor tertons would be born.
Thabtshang pa	:	A cook.
Todung	:	Long sleeved shirt worn by Female Droghpa.
Toktop	:	Tribal people of Samtse district.
Trongsa	:	One of the central districts of Bhutan.
Tsid pa zhamo	:	Black hat with 5 long tufts made of yak's hair.
Tsipa	:	An astrologer.
Uni	:	Daughter of Ama Jomo Remanti.
Veddas	:	Aboriginal group of people living within Sri Lanka.
Wangdue Phodrang	:	A district located in Western part of Bhutan.
Yab Thangla Gyalpo	:	Ama Jomo Remanti's father.
Yanglaeshod	:	A cave in Nepal in which Guru Rinpoche did meditation.
Yanomamis	:	Indian tribal people residing in Brazil.

APPENDIX 2

PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 1 : Sag steng Village, Trashigang, Bhutan
Source : Author, May 14, 2013



Figure 2 : Me rag Village, Trashigang, Bhutan
Source : Phuntsho, September 20, 2012



Figure 3 : Drogha men wearing Turquoise Earrings
Source : Phuntsho, September 20, 2012



Figure 4 : Drogha women adorned with beautiful Ornaments
Source : Phuntsho, October 10, 2013



Figure 5 : Drogha Youths in their Traditional Costumes at Sag steng
Source : Author, February 7, 2013



Figure 6 : Research Team (Researcher in the center) and the Drogha Youths
Source : Author, February 7, 2013

APPENDIX 3

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE



Survey questionnaire to evaluate the Meme-Perception of three Drogpa generations in Bhutan

The pivotal purpose of distributing the set of questionnaire is to study the transformation of the Drogpa culture, tradition and behaviour as a result of the influxion of modern development in the regions of Me rag and Sag steng. Your views will not be disclosed and thank you for participating.

Respondent No:

Date:..../..../...

Time:

Village:

Geog:

Personal Information

1. Gender:
 - Male
 - Female
2. Age:
 - 15-35
 - 36-56
 - 57 and above
3. Educational background
 - None
 - Non Formal Education
 - Primary level
 - Secondary level
 - Diploma
 - Bachelor degree
 - Master degree
 - Others (Please specify)
4. Occupational status:
 - Herder (Na ze)
 - Farmer
 - Layman
 - Student
 - Businessman
 - Others (Please specify)

Read the following questions/statements and rate them accordingly.

Rating Details:

- 5 : Strongly agree
- 4 : Agree
- 3 : Not sure
- 2 : Disagree
- 1 : Strongly disagree

No.	Questions	Ratings				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	Modern development is important for promoting the socio-economic status of Drogsa.					
2	Culture and tradition play an important role in promoting socio-economic status of Drogsa.					
3	Modern development is a great threat on the survival of Drogsa culture and tradition.					
4	Drogsa are looking forward to preserve and promote their culture and tradition.					
5	Modern development is progressively devaluing Drogsa culture and traditions.					
6	Drogsa are aware of their cultural and traditional transformation.					
7	Dungkhag and Geog are encouraging Drogsa to uphold their culture and tradition.					
8	Young Age Drogsa is concerned about their transforming culture and tradition.					
9	Old Age Drogsa encourage their youths to preserve and promote culture and tradition.					
10	Brukor culture will continue even if Drogsa pay attention to modern development.					
11	Young Age Drogsa hardly goes for Brukor.					
12	<i>Chung gnyen</i> and <i>khorsdepa</i> are still practiced by Drogsa.					
13	<i>Chung gnyen</i> and <i>khorsdepa</i> are better way of getting married.					
14	Drogsa are not interested in <i>Pulham</i> and <i>Tshemlham</i> (boots)					
15	Young Age Drogsa is more interested in modern technologies (e.g., Cell phones, television, internet etc...) than Old and Middle Ages.					
16	Facilities such as roads and cell phones will help Drogsa in trading their dairy products.					
17	Yak herding culture may disappear due to modern development and the shortage of pastureland.					
18	Drogsa costumes are gradually waning and especially youths are not interested to wear them.					
19	Traditional funeral customs of Drogsa has transformed within a few years.					
20	It is certain that the values of Drogsa culture and traditions will fade away if they don't take care.					

APPENDIX 4

SEMI-STRUCTURED QUESTIONNAIRE

Principal Questions	Supplementary Questions
1. The <i>Drogpa</i> costumes are very unique amongst other tribes in Bhutan. So, could you share the significance of your costume in your society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is your opinion regarding the <i>Drogpa's</i> interest in wearing their costumes? - Could you suggest a few strategies to how to preserve and promote <i>Drogpa</i> costumes?
2. <i>Drogpa</i> culture and traditions are enriched with various precious festivals and songs. Could you share the importance of <i>Drogpa</i> festivals and songs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What differences do you see amongst the people regarding their interest in festivals and songs? - How <i>Drogpa</i> are trying to promote and preserve such traditions? - Is there any reverse impact if <i>Drogpa</i> do not practice such traditions?
3. Could you share your opinion on the status of the <i>Khor-sdepa</i> and <i>Chung-gnyen</i> marriage customs of <i>Drogpa</i> ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How and why these marriage customs might have commenced in <i>Drogpa</i> society? - Is there any benefit practicing these marriage customs? - What is your perception on the preservation and promotion of these marriage customs?
4. According to the literature the <i>Brukor</i> and <i>Nepo</i> customs are noted as the most fascinating cultural practices. How consistently <i>Drogpa</i> practice such cultural norms?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why <i>Drogpa</i> go for <i>Brukor</i>? - In what ways <i>Nepo</i> benefit <i>Drogpa</i>? - What is your perception on the survival of <i>Brukor</i> and <i>Nepo</i> practices under the influencing modernization?
5. Modernization is a great threat on your culture and traditions. Could you share your opinion on it?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the reaction of <i>Drogpa</i> towards the modernization? - How <i>Drogpa</i> are planning to promote and preserve their culture and traditions? - How do you think <i>Drogpa</i> should minimize the influence of modernization?

APPENDIX 5
DAWSON'S INTERVIEW SUMMARY FORM

Interviewee Code:	Date of Interview:
Place:	Time of Interview:
	Duration of Interview:
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where did the interview take place? Was the venue suitable? Does anything need to be changed for future interview? 2. How easy was it to establish rapport? Were there any problems and how can this be improved for next time? 3. What were the main themes which arose in the interview? Did any issue arise which need to be added to the interview schedule for next time? 4. Is the interviewee willing to be contacted again? Have I promised to send any information or supply them with the results or a copy of the transcript? 	

Source: Dawson, 2002, p. 113

PAPER I

The Yaks: Heart and Soul of the Himalayan tribes of Bhutan

Full Length Research Paper

The Yaks: Heart and Soul of the Himalayan tribes of Bhutan

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The Himalayan tribes, the *Bjobs* of Western and *Brokpa* of Eastern Bhutan depend on the yaks and consider this bovine species their heart and soul. These animals provide their livelihood and economy. Bounded by harsh geographic and climatic conditions, these tribes' agricultural practices are merely for subsistence, and thus the yaks remain indispensable for the survival of the Himalayan tribes. Looking to the future, it is very uncertain how long these tribes can continue to rely on the yaks for their survival since they are confronting numerous problems: insufficient pastures, prevalent diseases, climate changes, management of herds, and a shrinking market economy. To understand these problems, we have reviewed most reliable papers and analyzed them in depth. We eventually suggest that the government of Bhutan should promote animal husbandry for the sustainable and continual support of the *Brokpa* and *Bjobs*. The governments must also create a better market for these people and encourage them to sell yak products at the regional and national levels. Finally, the government should look into the rangeland problems and offer alternatives to promote the fragile livelihood of these Himalayan tribes.

Keywords: Bhutan, yaks, Himalayas, Bjobs, Brokpa, tsamdro

INTRODUCTION

Like the importance of pigs to the Yali tribe in Papua (Sorokowski et al., 2012), the yaks are the heart and soul of the Himalayan tribes of India, Bhutan, Nepal, and Tibet (Gyamtscho, 2000 as cited in Wangchuk, 2000; Tshering, 2004; Dong et al., 2007; Chettri, 2008; Karchung, 2011; Bam et al., 2012). These tribes reside within the extreme climatic conditions of the Himalayas and have no other alternatives than to rely on the yaks for food, shelter, and income (Chettri, 2008). The practices of agriculture are difficult; however, at the lower altitudes small-scale agriculture is practiced by the tribes of Bhutan (Chand, 2000). Nonetheless, most of the tribes in the Himalayas depend on animal husbandry, with the utmost priority given to raising yaks, sheep, and goats (Sherpa & Kayastha, 2009; Karchung, 2011; National Research Centre on Yaks: NRCY, 2011, p. 1).

The history of yaks is deeply shrouded in the land of

the ancient people of Tibet (now China). Even the term yak has a fascinating origination. The Chinese called this bovine species *ya niu* and the Tibetans used *yag* (Wiener et al., 2003, p. 8). The Chinese *ya niu* was constantly modified and eventually became *li niu* and *mao niu* (ibid). According to Wiener et al. (2003, p. 8), Li Shizhen a great Chinese herbalist and acupuncturist made a clear distinction between *li niu* and *mao niu* and stated that *li niu* refers to wild yaks and *mao niu* the domestic yaks (Wiener et al., 2003, p. 8). Records state that the majority of the yaks, approximately 13 million, [92.8%], dwell within the rangeland of China (Haung, 1996, as cited in Dong et al., 2007).

Centuries ago, all yaks were wild until some were domesticated by the Qiang people about 5,000 years ago during the *Longshan* cultural era (Wiener et al., 2003, p. 3; Rhode et al., 2007). Domestication of yaks by the ancient Qiang inhabitants of the Tibetan Plateau dates to the Pleistocene period, and it is believed that the yaks were then disseminated to other parts of the world

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(Wiener et al., 2003, p. 3; Rhode et al., 2007). Qiang, which literally means ‘shepherds’, (Lattimore, 1940, cited in Rhode et al., 2007) are the true ancestors of the yak-herding tribes in the Himalayas and still possess a very rich yak-herding culture. They are also believed to be the ancestors of the Tibetan tribes Qiang, Naxi, and Yi (Rhode et al., 2007).

The Himalayan tribes of Western and Eastern Bhutan depend heavily on their herds of yaks and sheep (Chand, 2000; Gyamtsho, 2000; Wangchuk, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 32–37; Chettri, 2008; Karchung, 2011). Eventually, these tribes — popularly categorized as the *nomads* or *semi-nomads* — started to practice subsistence farming to support their livelihood (Chand, 2000; Gyamtsho, 2000; Chettri, 2008). These tribes are known by different names such as *Bjops* in Western Bhutan, *Brokpa* (Wangmo, 1990, Chand, 2000, 2004; Dompnier, 2007, p. 1) or *Brogpa* (Pelgen, 2003) in Central and Eastern Bhutan, *Lakhaps* in West-Central Bhutan, and *Dakpas* in the remote hamlets of Merak (Wangmo, 1990, Chand, 2000, 2004; Dompnier, 2007, p. 1) or *Merag* (Dorji, 2002; Pelgen, 2003; Karchung, 2011) and Sakteng (Gyamtsho, 2000; Tshering, 2004; Chettri, 2008). Among these nomads or semi-nomads, the *Brokpa* and *Dakpas* of the Merak and Sakteng villages are believed to have fled from Tibet during the fifth and sixth centuries and settled within the rugged terrain of Eastern Bhutan about 14th and 15th Centuries (Dompnier, 2007, pp. 12–15).

Like other tribes in the Himalayas, particularly those of Nepal, Tibet-China, and Northern and North-Eastern India, and tribes around the world who depend on yaks for living, the nomads or semi-nomads of Bhutan are facing numerous issues (Gyamtsho, 2000; Wiener et al., 2003: 62; Chettri, 2008). Some of these issues are (1) insufficient pasture, (2) climate change, (3) occurrence of diseases, (4) management of herds, and (5) shrinking markets for selling yak products (Gyamtsho, 2000). Therefore, in this paper, we will briefly discuss the issues of the yak herders of Bhutan with special emphasis on the *Brokpa* and *Bjops*. In addition, we will discuss the measures deemed necessary to overcome these issues. Finally, we will look into the immediate role that must be played by the government to support the Himalayan tribes of Bhutan.

Significance of Yaks to the Tribes of Bhutan

The *Brokpa* and *Bjops* live 3,000 meters above mean sea level under harsh climatic conditions, so their agricultural practices are primarily for subsistence (Gyamtsho, 2000; Tshering, 2004; Chettri, 2008). Consequently, the yaks are considered essential amongst most Himalayan tribal cultures and are indispensable for the nomads or semi-nomads (Winter & Tshewang, 1989; Chand, 2000; Dorji et al., 2003, p. 277; Rhode et al.,

2007; Dompnier, 2007, p. 32; Sherpa & Kayastha, 2009; Singh, 2009; Karchung, 2011). They depend entirely on yaks for food, clothing, housing (their tents [*bjā*] are made of yak hair) and earning cash (Chand, 2000; Gyamtsho, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, p. 32; Chettri, 2008). Many nomads in Tibet and other Himalayan tribes use yak dung as cooking fuel (Rhode et al., 2007). However, the dung of the yaks is seldom used as fuel by the *Bjops* and *Brokpa*; instead, they use it as manure (Dorji et al., 2003, p. 277). Chettri (2008), taking into consideration the numerous roles played by the yaks in supporting and sustaining the lives of these tribes, aptly named this bovine species the “*camel of the snow*” (cf. Gyamtsho, 2000). In addition, the yaks are known by various other splendid names such as *mountain machine*, *the bison of Tibet*, *coconut of animals*, *ship of the plateau*, *beast of burden of tribes*, and the *gold of Tibetans* (NRCY, 2011, p. 1). The tribes use yaks to distinguish between rich and poor. A person having more yaks is considered very rich in a tribal society and vice versa (NRCY, 2011, p. 2).

The fundamentalism of the yaks is seen in the rich cultures of the nomads of Bhutan (Dorji et al., 2003, 277). Therefore, yaks are not just the source of livelihood and economies of these tribes, but they are also an indispensable part of their culture (Chand, 2000; Gyamtsho, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, 47; Chettri, 2008). The myth of *Thoepe Gali* is an astonishing anecdote of how he discovered yaks from three different coloured eggs. Similarly, the *namthar* [biography] (Wangmo, 1990; Pelgen, 2003; Dompnier, 2007, p. 1) of *Thoepe Gali* also notes his amazement and curiosity while looking at yaks. It is said that he managed to catch one of the female yaks [*dri*] born from one of the eggs and then tamed it. Eventually, to his surprise, the *dri* gave birth and the yaks’ number increased, thus providing *Thoepe Gali* with sufficient milk, butter, and hair (see Dompnier, 2007, p. 47). The myth of *Thoepe Gali* is told to people through *Chham* [mask dance] popularly called the *Yak Chham*. Through this mask dance, the splendid pastoral life of the nomads is vividly displayed (Dompnier, 2007, p. 58).

Bjops, on the other hand, have a fascinating cultural history related to weaving *bjā* [tents of a hundred pegs] out of yaks’ hair. Weaving *bjā* is not an ordinary task and is not done by everyone. The responsibility of weaving tents is done by *zow* (skilled weavers, Chettri, 2008) upon the recommendation of a *tsib* [astrologer] (Pelgen, 2003). The *tsib* determines the right time and date to commence the weaving of *bjā* (ibid). Approximately 6 to 15 days is needed to complete the weaving of a *bjā* and it has the durability and strength to last 20–25 years even under harsh climatic conditions (Chettri, 2008). Initially, all *Bjops* were not yak herders. In fact, the *Bjops* put more emphasis on cultivation of buckwheat than rearing yaks (Gyamtsho, 2000). According to Gyamtsho (2000), the *Bjops* bought yaks

from those Tibetans fleeing from the Chinese invasion. Furthermore, some of the *Bjops* from *Lunana* [one of the *Bjops*' villages] also travelled as far as *Sephu* in *Wangdue Phodrang* to buy yaks. (ibid) They also bought from the neighbouring village of *Laya* (Gyamtsho, 2000). Since then, this tribal group concentrated on yaks and is now dependent on them for their livelihood. Yaks are also used for transporting luggage in the rugged topology (Sherpa & Kayastha, 2009; NRCY, 2011, pp. v, 1).

According to literature, yaks are of considerable value to the highlanders. Among these people, almost 90% (Dompnier, 2007, p. 32) rely on yaks for their livelihood. However, the recent developmental activities have made the future of the yaks uncertain. The changing climate is another factor which is affecting the futures of yaks and their herders. There is also a probability that the children of the *Bjops* and *Brokpa* may not continue with the traditional yak herding culture for three reasons: (1) most children are receiving modern education and may try to find jobs away from home; (2) the herders are struggling for sufficient pastureland and, their successors are likely to withdraw from such practices; and (3) with the modern development reshaping Bhutan, many people, particularly the youths from remote villages are drawn towards the urban life. Amongst these three primary reasons, the most significant is the problem of pasturelands. If the traditional yak herding is to be continued, then the problem of pastureland must be resolved immediately.

Products of Yaks and Economy

Most of the tribes in Bhutan occupied the Northern part of the country where the climate is very harsh (Tshering, 2004; Chettri, 2008). As it is not feasible for the tribes to practice extensive agriculture, they therefore rely upon animal husbandry particularly on yaks (Gyamtsho, 2000; Ura, 2002; Wiener et al., 2003, p. 237; Tshering, 2004; Chettri, 2008).

Yaks have multi-dimensional benefits for the inhabitants of cold and extreme climatic regions (Chettri, 2008; NRCY, 2011, p. 1). Yaks provide people with food, clothing, and shelter (Gyamtsho, 2000; Ura, 2002; Wiener et al., 2003, p. 237; Tshering, 2004; Chettri, 2008; Sherpa & Kayastha, 2009; NRCY, 2011, p. 1). Some of the tribes, especially the Tibetans and Mongolians, use the dung as fuel (Rhode et al., 2007). However, the *Bjops* and *Brokpa* rarely use dung as fuel, choosing instead to use it as manure (Dorji et al., 2003, p. 277).

The *Bjops* and *Brokpa* earn cash by selling their yak products and then buy necessities like salt, sugar, rice, and so on (Gyamtsho, 2000). To some extent, even today, some *Bjops* and *Brokpa* practice a barter system like the *Brokpa* of Arunachal Pradesh from the Northeast

India (Chand, 2000; Gyamtsho, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, p. 33; Singh, 2009). Milk, hair, and meat are the chief products of yaks (Gyamtsho, 2000; Dorji et al., 2003, p. 277; Sherpa & Kayastha, 2009). A special vessel made of cane called *zum* is used while milking and the milk is churned in a wooden churner (Gyamtsho, 2000). Butter, cheese, and ghee are obtained from the milk. The cheese is further processed into dried cheeses: *chugo* and *hapi ruto*. The *chugo* is made by slicing the hard cheese into sections that are two to three centimeters long and the *hapi ruto* is sliced into eight-centimeter squares about one centimeter thick (Gyamtsho, 2000). *Bjops* sell *chugo* to local people of *Punakha* and *Thimphu* and the *hapi ruto* to the vendors from Indian border towns (Gyamtsho, 2000).

The *Brokpa* of Merak and Sakteng process cheese by compressing it in leather bag and letting it ferment for a year or more (Chand, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, p. 33). The *Brokpa* fermented cheese [called *brokpa yead pa* by local people] is popular in the eastern part of Bhutan and costs 300–400 Ngultrum [Bhutan currency: Nu. which is at par the Indian currency] per kilogram. The *Brokpa* sell their fermented cheese to their *Shar chopas* friends in the lower altitude and sell it in Arunachal Pradesh (Chand, 2000).

Both the *Bjops* and *Brokpa* usually dry the yak meat before selling it. The yak meat is considered an essential part of their diet (Chand, 2000; Gyamtsho, 2000; Bhattarai et al., 2011). When the meat is well dried, they bundle it into a kilo with bones and without bones. The meat bundle with bones is cheaper than without bones. Price of the meat depends on demand; however, on an average, the meat with bones cost Nu 250–350 per kilogram and the one without bones cost more than Nu 400 per kilogram (cf. Dompnier, 2007, p. 33).

The skin and hair of yaks are used for various purposes by the *Bjops* and *Brokpa* of the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan. The tribes dry the skin by stretching it with the help of wooden pegs (Gyamtsho, 2000). The skin of the yaks is used as floor mats, glue, and as *kosha* [leather meat] by the *Bjops* (Gyamtsho, 2000), whereas the *Brokpa* make jackets [*paktsa*] and leather bags (Dompnier, 2007, p. 38–39). Generally, the yaks' hair can be put into two categories: hard [*tsipa*] and soft [*khuloo*] (Gyamtsho, 2000; cf. Karchung, 2011). The *tsipa* is used for weaving tents, ropes, bags, and rugs, and the *khuloo* is used for weaving dresses and blankets (Gyamtsho, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, p. 29).

These yak products are likely to gain considerable attention in the future owing to its intrinsic value and uniqueness (Gyamtsho, 2000). Today, only certain products like meat, cheeses [*chugo* and *hapi ruto* and fermented cheese], and butter are available in a few local markets. To enhance the sale of yak products, it is essential that the government should create markets from

them. Also, it is necessary that the yaks are cross-breed for more milk production. To do this, the government could get better-quality bulls from other countries like India and Tibet [China].

Bjops and Brokpa: How Are They Different?

Although these two typical tribal people depend on yaks for survival, they are different in many ways. *Bjops* are those tribes residing in the Western part of Bhutan. Most of them have settled in Laya, Lunana, Lingzhi [*shi*], Soe, and Naro, with a few in Wangdue Phodrang (Gyamtsho, 2000; Dorji et al., 2003, p. 277). The *Bjops* speak a dialect similar to the national language of Bhutan [*Dzongkha*]. The *Bjops* men wear *gho* [national dress of Bhutan], and women wear a very unique dress woven out of yak hair and put on a conical hat woven using cane (Tshering, 2004). Polyandry/polygamy is not practiced by the *Bjops*, neither is the system of love marriage (Gyamtsho, 2000; Tshering, 2004).

Brokpa dwell in the Eastern part of Bhutan in the villages of Merak and Sakteng (Chand, 2000; Tshering, 2004; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 6–11). Unlike *Bjops*, the *Brokpa* speak the Tibetan-Burmese language (Tshering, 2004). The men wear jackets called *chuba* [usually red and black] and the *rtsidpa zhamo* [spider-web-like hats made of yak's hair] (Wangmo, 1990; Chand, 2000; Tshering, 2004; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 38, 41; Karchung, 2011). The women wear a pink woolen cloth with white stripes called *shingka*, *medkhyem*, and varieties of *toedungs* [thin coats] (ibid). The women also put on *rtsipa zhamo* (Wangmo, 1990; Chand, 2000; Tshering, 2004; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 40–41; Karchung, 2011).

There are also some common features between the *Bjops* and *Brokpa* besides rearing yaks. Both the tribes wear leather boots popularly called *pulham* [men] and *tshemlham* [women] by the *Brokpa* (Wangmo, 1990; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 38–41; Karchung, 2011). Both tribal groups practice a barter system and go for *drukor* [a tradition of exchanging yak product with grains particularly with people from lower altitudes] especially in winter (Chand, 2000; Gyamtsho, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 35–37). Also, they are very polite and hospitable to strangers (Dompnier, 2007, p. 10).

Problems Faced by the Yaks and the Tribes

The problems of yaks and their herders are increasing every year. The challenges of the herders are insufficient pastures, impact of climate change, fighting against diseases, managing herds, and finding markets for selling yak products. Amongst these problems, insufficient pasture is severe, particularly at the high-altitude habitats of the semi-nomads. Literature says that the government has implemented measures to solve these problems and

promote the livelihood and economy of the tribes; however, the problems are persistent.

1. Insufficient Pasturelands and Overgrazing

Bhutan has a total rangeland of 0.34% (Miller et al., 1997, cited in Ura, 2002); nevertheless, according to Ura (2002), the figure seems highly underestimated and is not accurate. Even if the figure is above 0.34%, it is still less than what is required. The National Land Commission Record [NLRCR] has estimated the pastureland as about 1,236,017.8 acres and animals, both domestic and wild, graze on it throughout the year (Gyeltshen et al., 2010).

The need for sufficient pastureland and overgrazing are the major concerns of the Himalayan tribes because they cause fodder shortages in winter (Gyamtsho, 2000; Behnke, 2003; Kerven, 2003; Kerven et al., 2008 cited in Cerny, 2010; Chettri, 2008). Gyamtsho (2000) has mentioned that the overgrazing is not caused by the yaks only, as blue sheep, domestic sheep, and horses graze over the same pastureland throughout the year (also see Tshering, 2004). Yaks need large areas to graze, and so sufficient pasture is crucial for their survival (Gyamtsho, 2000; Ura, 2002; Wiener et al., 2003, p. 193; Chettri, 2008; Zangmo, 2012, p. 21).

Pasture is known by different names in Bhutan. The semi-nomads of Eastern and Central Bhutan call their pasturelands as *tsadrok* [*rtsa drog*] and *tsabrok* [*rtsa brog*], while the tribe people of Western Bhutan call their pasturelands as *tsamjo* [*rtsa mjo*] (Gyamtsho, 2000; Ura, 2002; Chettri, 2008). All these names still mean one common thing: pasturelands, which have been a problem in Bhutan for a long time. Tshering (2004) mentioned that the land act of 1980 provides only the grazing rights to the people under the prescribed *Tsadrok* [*rtsa brog*]; however, the pastureland still belongs to the state. This was misunderstood by the people and they considered the *Tsadrok* [*rtsa brog*] with their registered name as their own and this misinterpretation has led to conflicting ownership rights and mismanagement of pasturelands today (Tshering, 2004).

Pastureland is a necessary resource for the survival of the yaks as these animals provide continual support to the semi-nomads of the higher Himalayas (Gyamtsho, 2000; Ura, 2002; Chettri, 2008). Many yaks die of starvation in winter due to insufficient grass (Gyamtsho, 2000). In the studies conducted by NRCY (2011, p. 3), it is shown that, on an average the yaks lose approximately 25%–30% of their total body weight in winter, putting them at risk. For instance, the dire shortage of fodder in winter takes a toll of two to seven yaks every year at *Soe* in *Thimphu* (Zangmo, 2012, p. 21). The study by Gyamtsho (2000) also revealed that at *Laya* 6 [20%] yaks die from an average herd of 30 animals, and at *Lunana* 4 [50%] yaks die from an average herd of 8

animals. High mortality rate of yaks is associated with the 1994 flood that destroyed the pastureland of *Bjops* (Gyamtsho, 2000).

According to Ura (2002), the grazing lands in Bhutan are categorized as follows: (1) privately owned pastureland [*sger dbang gyi rtsa brog*], (2) Group pastureland [*mThoem Mong gyi rtsa brog*], (3) Community pastureland [*dmang spyirup gyi rtsa brog*], the Royal family's pastureland [*sKu Khor gyi rtsa brog*], (4) Monastic communities pastureland [*sDra tshang mgon sde gyi rtsa brog*], and (5) Summer and Winter pasturelands [*dGun brog dbyar brog*] (cf. Tshering, 2004). The pasturelands on which the yaks graze belong mostly to the government with a few exceptional cases (Dorji et al., 2003, p. 282). In addition, the ban on traditional methods of controlling shrubs and bushes by the government worsened the condition and area of pasturelands (Gyamtsho, 2000; cf. Ura, 2002; Dorji et al., 2003, p. 283; Tshering, 2004).

Literature shows that the issue of insufficient pasturelands aggravated after they were declared as the state property and, to some extent, converted into community forests. There is an immediate need for the government to revisit the land act of 2007 and conducted research to find the pros and cons of this land act. Also, the concerned ministry has to take into consideration some of the feedback and recommendations put forward by researchers (e.g., Gyamtsho, 2000; Dorji et al., 2003, p. 284; Tshering, 2004, and Gyeltshen et al., 2010) for the welfare of herders.

2. Climate change

Climate change is posing a significant problem for the Himalayan herders (Chettri, 2008; NRCY, 2011, p. v). As Khadka (2007; cited in Sherpa & Kayastha, 2009) stated, the mountain ecology is very fragile and so climate change would pose a hindrance on it easily. Eventually, the changing climate would alter the migration cycle of the herds; pose a threat to plant and animal species, and change the breeding and development patterns (Sherpa & Kayastha, 2009). Yaks normally thrive better in Alpine climate and the climatic conditions have an immense role, especially in terms of milk production (Gyamtsho, 2000; Dong et al., 2007). According to Dong et al. (2007), yaks yield more milk under cold climatic condition and relatively less milk yield at high temperatures. Therefore, climate has an essential role in the yak milk production system.

According to Sherpa and Kayastha (2009), the impact of changing climatic patterns resulting from global warming would be immense on the indigenous yak breeds. With changing climatic patterns, there is a paramount risk of disease occurrence, water shortages, insufficient fodder, and multiplication of pests; all disrupting the habitats of the yaks and putting them into

stress (Gyamtsho, 2000; Sherpa & Kayastha, 2009). The Glacial Lake Outburst Flood [GLOF] of 1994 along the *Pho Chu* [*Pho* – male; *Chu* – river] destroyed the pastures of the *Bjops* (Gyamtsho, 2000).

Climate change is the most threatening factor for the yak herders living in the rugged mountainous terrains of Bhutan. Climate is also related to the prevalence of various diseases and the growth of grasses on which the yaks feed (Gyamtsho, 2000; Sherpa & Kayastha, 2009). The climate also has impact on the milk production of the yaks as stated by Dong et al. (2007). Therefore, the government should examine the problems of the herders in the context of climate change.

3. Diseases

Occurrence of diseases has become very prominent along with the changing climate (Sherpa & Kayastha, 2009; NRCY, 2011, p. 3). Some diseases like the Foot and Mouth Diseases [FMD], Brucellosis, Infectious Bovine Rhinotracheitis [IBR], Hemorrhagic Septicemia [HS], Chlamydiosis, Salmonellosis, Gid, and Tick-borne diseases are causing death of yaks and minimizing yak productivity (Gyamtsho, 2000; NRCY, 2011, p. 3). According to Gyamtsho (2000), gid and tick-borne diseases are very common in Bhutan, which kill yaks when they are very weak in spring (see Dorji et al., 2003, p. 281). The government of Bhutan provides free veterinary services, but owing to long distance between yak herds and veterinary hospitals, it is very difficult for herders to access the facilities (Dorji et al., 2003, p. 281).

4. Management of herds

Yak herd management is a cumbersome task as they wander into a large and distant area (Gyamtsho, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, p. 37). *Bjops* and *Brokpa* usually follow two patterns of migration: summer and winter. In summer, they take their herds to higher elevations in the mountains and stay there for a few months and then climb downhill for winter pasture (Gyamtsho, 2000; Tshering, 2004; Dompnier, 2007, p. 37). *Bjops* and *Brokpa* have similar techniques for naming the animals and the names are mostly based on the color and coats of the animals (Gyamtsho, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, p. 32). The male yaks are commonly called by names like *Nado*, *Dawa*, *Chung-due*, *Jukar*, *Zekar*, *Khampa*, and so on. Similarly, the female yaks are *Yangchen*, *Nalem*, *Jugchen*, *Dongtham*, *Zangjen*, and so on (Gyamtsho, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, p. 32).

According to Dompnier (2007, p. 32), the male yaks are free to graze throughout day and night. They are brought together during the time of salt feeding. Female yaks are rounded up towards evening for milking and are then set free to graze. The herders often watch over the yaks to keep them safe mainly from predators

(Dompnier, 2007, p. 32). More attention and care are provided to the young calves (Gyamtscho, 2000). Calves are tied up near the huts to protect them from predators (Gyamtscho, 2000).

With the government declaring the pastureland as state property and the prohibition of setting fire to regenerate grass, the herders are facing the problem of pastoral inadequacy (Gyamtscho, 2000; Gyeltshen et al., 2010). Conversion of some pasturelands into community forests has stirred up conflict between the herders and the community forest members (Wangdi, 2012a, p. 9). With this development, the herders have to either round up the yaks throughout day and night or keep them within fences.

5. Markets for selling products

Although yak herders produce an ample supply of yak products each year, they are not able to make them easily accessible to people. *Bjops* and *Brokpa* produce yak products like cheese, butter, *chugo*, *hapi ruto*, ropes, bags, meats, and fermented cheese (Gyamtscho, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, p. 33). Both the *Bjops* and *Brokpa* are unable to sell their products to people in far-off places, so they sell mainly to local people or barter with them (Gyamtscho, 2000). According to Dompnier (2007, p. 33), the herders of Merak and Sakteng barter 70% of their products and sell only 30%.

Yak products could earn more income and sustain the product supply, and so the government should find good markets where the herders can store and sell their products (Gyamtscho, 2000). Especially during summer, the herders find it difficult to preserve butter and meat (Dompnier, 2007, p. 35). This could be one of the reasons on why not much of meat is sold during summer.

Since there is small market in the country, *Brokpa* have started selling their products in Tawang [Arunachal Pradesh]. They get better prices there. Therefore, the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests has to create markets for these tribes and encourage them to sell the products without hindrances. In addition, it would be better if the herders are taught on how to preserve the products for a longer period of time, especially in summer. It is also essential to teach new techniques and measures for storing yak products since these tribes take more than two days to reach the nearby markets. Such initiatives from the government would be a boon to the economy of the herders in the long run.

Discussion

Yaks are fundamentally associated with the social, religion, and cultural aspects of the herders (Dorji et al., 2003, p. 277; Wiener et al., 2003, p. 12). Above all, this bovine species is the source of life and the economy of the tribes living in the high altitude regions of the world

– particularly that of the Himalayan region (Winter & Tshewang, 1989; Chand, 2000; Gyamtscho, 2000; Dorji et al., 2003, p. 277; Rhode et al., 2007; Dompnier, 2007, p. 32; Sherpa & Kayastha, 2009; Singh, 2009). The problems that are impinging upon these tribes' that depend on yaks are likely to evoke changes in the yak-herding culture (Gyamtscho, 2000; Wiener et al., 2003; Dorji et al., 2003, p. 284).

As Chettri (2000) stated, it is essential to realize and know "why people do what they do." Therefore, it is appropriate for the government to conduct thorough studies before implementing development the policies including the isolated tribes into the mainstream. For instance, the *Rangeland to Grassland* policy in China has resulted in many social and ecological issues, although the intension of the policy was to reviving the lost pastures. Consequently, the practice of traditional-seasonal migrations of herds declined, which is a crucial component of the Tibetan pastoralism (Forggin, 2008).

Similarly, with the amendment of the Land Act in 2007, numerous problems were countered by the yak herders of the Western and Eastern Bhutan (Wangdi, 2012b, p. 2). According to Wangdi (2012a, pp. 1–2), as reported in the Bhutan newspaper [*Kuensei*] dated November 6, 2012, the herders of Merak-Sakteng are in conflict everyday over *tsamdros* (cf. Gyeltshen et al., 2010). On November 8, 2012, another problem, yet not a new issue, broke out between the herders of Merak and the localities of *Phongmed* at *Cheberling* (Wangdi, 2012a, p. 9). *Cheberling* is a winter pastureland and the herders stay there for almost eight months (Dompnier, 2007, pp. 32–33; Wangdi, 2012a, p. 9). Herders say that there were about 1,000 acres of pastureland at *Cheberling* in the past, but most of the area has been converted into community forest eventually reducing the *tsamdros* size (Wangdi, 2012a, p. 9). The shortage of pasture is also a significant problem in the Western Bhutan: *Soe* and *Naro* villages (Zangmo, 2012, p. 21). The need is urgent whereby the government has to look into the pros and cons of the Land Act of Bhutan and resolve the issue of pastures for the benefit of the highlanders.

The ban on the traditional method of burning bushes was another controversial issue between the government and yak herders. The semi-nomads practiced traditional bush burning to control the growth of shrubs like rhododendron and junipers and regenerate pastures (Gyamtscho, 2000; Ura, 2002; Dorji et al., 2003, p. 283; Tshering, 2004; Gyeltshen et al., 2010). Although the aim of the government to protect the environment has tremendously increased the mountain vegetation, the consequences are devastating challenge faced by many yak herders (Gyamtscho, 2000; Gyeltshen et al., 2010). However, to a certain extent, the government has authorized the herders to set fires on provided rangelands under cautious supervision (Gyeltshen et al., 2010).

Therefore, it is perhaps worth a try to respect the traditional practices and cultures of the highlanders in managing the pasturelands for better.

The economies of the *Bjops* and *Brokpa* depend entirely on the yak products (Chand, 2000; Gyamtsho, 2000; Chettri, 2000; Dorji et al., 2003, p. 277) since their rangelands are not agriculturally friendly. Therefore, to promote yak products in the markets, the yak herders must be supported with market facilities at regional and national levels. Also, new techniques of food storage are necessary for preservation of yak products, especially the cheese, butter, and meat (Chand, 2000; Gyamtsho, 2000).

It is necessary to improve the yak genetic resources to enhance and advance the living standards of the highlanders (NRCY, 2011, p. 5). The change in climate has put massive pressure and challenges on the survival of the yaks and herders (Sherpa & Kayastha, 2009; NRCY, 2011, p. v). The occurrence of diseases has increased the problems of the by the Himalayas tribes (Gyamtsho, 2000; Sherpa & Kayastha, 2009; NRCY, 2011, p. 3). Therefore, the government should encourage cross-breeding of yaks and improve animal husbandry facilities to sustain the livelihood and enhance the economic benefits of yak herders. Without such interventions from the government, the culture and tradition of yak herding may be lost forever (Chand, 2000; Chettri, 2000; Gyamtsho, 2000; Dorji et al., 2003, p. 284; Gyeltshen et al., 2010).

Conclusion

Yaks are the main sources of livelihood for those tribes residing in the harsh climatic conditions where agricultural practices are unsustainable. The *Bjops* and *Brokpa* are the two distinctive tribal groups who rely on yaks. Yaks are their heart and soul. Without yaks, there will not be any *Bjops* or *Brokpa*. These tribes have a very rich traditional culture that adds to the unique culture of Bhutan.

The lifestyle of the *Bjops* and *Brokpa* is very complicated as they continue to live in isolation on the rugged Himalayan topography. The Royal Government of Bhutan has already started to engage these tribal people into the mainstream developmental activities of the nation. The herders continue to face the shortage of pasturelands and the risk losing yaks every year. Both the government policies and climate are increasing the vulnerabilities of the yaks and yak herding culture making their future uncertain.

The sustainability of the traditional tribal culture of yaks relies on how well the government's policies are implemented. Consequently, prior to implementing any developmental work within the periphery of the semi-nomads, the government has to thoroughly research the impacts of such activity on the future of the yak herders.

Considering the current situation of the yaks and their herders, the risk of abandoning the tradition of the semi-nomadic lifestyle by the tribes of the Bhutan Himalayas, especially by the educated youths is imminent. Therefore, a holistic approach to sustaining the traditional culture of yak herding should be explored by the government.

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PAPER II

**Survival of Drogha Cultural and Traditional Memes and the Threat
of Modern Development**

Survival of Drogor Cultural and Traditional Memes and the Threat of Modern Development

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of modern amenities such as roads, electricity, cell phones, television, and tourism on the two Drogor communities of Me rag and Sag steng. It also aims to study the misinterpretation of ancient Drogor history. The paper concludes that the endurance of Drogor culture is uncertain and thus, loss of their identity is imminent in the near future. Therefore, the future of Drogor culture and their hospitable behaviour will depend on how well they perceive and respond to the modern developments. Finally, this paper concludes that the government of Bhutan and Drogor should proceed collaboratively to sustain their valuable culture and traditions. Furthermore, government should also examine methodically prior to executing any development activity to make certain that tribal cultures be endorsed and more tribal youths be encouraged to acclimatize to their cultures and traditions.

Keywords: Bhutan, biography, culture, Drogor, modern development

1. Introduction

Should Drogor (Tib. 'brog pa) (Wangmo, 1990; Chand, 2000, 2004, p. 1; Dorji, 2002; Pelgen, 2003; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 6-11; Bhattarai et al., 2011; Wangchuk et al., 2012) or Drogor (Central Tibetan dialect: 'drog pa) (Karchung, 2011) uphold their unique culture and hospitable behaviour along with the modern developments? Drogor have access to modern amenities such as roads, electricity, mobile phones, television, and cooking appliances, marking the commencement of acculturation. Therefore, the sustainability of Drogor culture and behaviour is an enormous challenge in this technologically advancing world whereby the influential cultures of West are being adopted by the people and eventually modifying the existing age-old cultural and traditional memes (White, 1959; Bowler, 1990; Banerjee, 1998; Groenfeldt, 2003; Chand, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, p. 1; Karchung, 2011).

Among the various ethnic groups of people residing in Bhutan-e.g., Monpas of Wangdue Phodrang, Trongsa, Zhemgang and Dagana regions, Toktops of Chhukha district, Doya (Lhops), Taba and Dramtoep of Samtse district, Khengpa of Zhemgang district, Bjop of Gasa district and Drogor of Me rag (pronounced as Merak) and Sag steng (pronounced as Sakteng) regions (Chakravarti, 1981, p. 18; Noble, 1984, p. 12; Gyamtsho, 2000; Chand, 2004, pp. 24-25, 2009; Chettri, 2008; Dorji, 2008, p. 5; Karchung, 2011; Wangchuk et al., 2012) are culturally distinct. Drogor constitutes indubitably a unique tribe of Eastern Bhutan (Wangmo, 1990; Chand, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 6-11). They possess exclusive and inimitable cultures, traditions and behaviour that have cradled all the way through their successive generations of the mythical bird (Garuda (Byachung)) kings Dabzang ('dab bzang) and Shogzang (Gshog bzang) (Chand, 2000; Pelgen, 2003; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 12-15) and Ama Jomo Remati (Pelgen, 2003) or Ama Jomo (Wangmo, 1990; Dompnier, 2007, p. 1), also referred to as Khamsang Ama Jomo (Karchung, 2011). They depend on the herds of yaks and sheep for their livelihood. Drogor are categorized as semi-nomads/pastoralist because the herders (Nag rdze; pronounced as "Na ze")-each house has 1 or 2 Nag rdzes depending on herd size-practice seasonal migration (Wangmo, 1990; Chand, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, p. 36) and rest of the people have permanent settlements in various parts of Me rag and Sag steng geogs (a block level administrative unit).



Figure 1. Administrative map of Bhutan

Source: Phuntsho (2013)

The significance of this paper is that, it discusses on the culture, traditions and behaviour of Drogpa that are changing hastily along with the globalizing world. Therefore, we will present the successive changes of Drogpa culture, traditions and behaviour as a result of modern developments, and we expect that it would provide a wider depiction of Drogpa transformation to the readers concerning how indigenous cultures, traditions and behaviours are overwhelmed and endangered by the global culture (see Groenfeldt, 2003; Triandis, 2006; Hosseini, 2010; Karchung, 2011).

To comprehend the influence of globalization on Drogpa culture, traditions and behaviour we browsed adequate journal papers concerning about the tribes in the world. We have analyzed those papers in-depth to examine the impact of globalization on Drogpa and other tribal people and ultimately portrayed their future consequences. To understand their history we referred available rNam thar (biographies: pronounced as Namthar) viz. (1) “Rang rej pha mes kye byung kungs mkha lding kyung gi gdung rbas chung brjod par bya ba ni//”; (2) “‘dul ba lung las byung baj byaj rgyal po ‘dab bzang dang Gshog bzang gi mi rbas byung tsul mdor bsodus bzhug so//”; (3) “Me rag blama Bsten pei sgron mi yi mdzad nams dang dgron gnas chags tsul a sam rgyal po nas khrl dang sa cha dbang baj hjon yig dor hdus bzhugs so//” and (4) the epic of King Geser (Ge gser) of Ling.

2. Methodology

For this study, we have emphasized a lot on those existing biographies of the Drogpa to understand their true history. Those biographies were translated in English to review in depth. We also browsed adequate papers on Drogpa studies to understand their past. An observation method was also applied to understand Drogpa behaviour and their reaction towards the modern amenities.

3. Drogpa Commentary (A History as Narrated in the Biographies)

It is difficult to generalize when Merak (Wangmo, 1990; Chand, 2000, 2004, p. 1; Dompnier, 2007, p. 1; Bhattarai et al., 2011; Wangchuk et al., 2012) or Me rag (Dorji, 2002; Pelgen, 2003; Karchung, 2011) and Sag steng were peopled. In fact, it is uncertain when Drogpa left Tibet for Bhutan. In order to draw adequate and legitimate information on Drogpa history, one has to consider the biography of various kings of Tibet and eventually trace causal linkages with Drogpa rNam thar. The assumption on the date of departure of Drogpa from sKom rLon Rogs gsum can be traced through a brief account of Mongol assault in Tibet during the reign of Chogyal Pelzang (Bya Chos rgyal dpal bzang) (Dompnier, 2007, pp. 12-15). This Mongol invasion is referred to the maneuver of Chengiz Khan or Genghiz or Jenghiz or Jengiz Khan (1155 A.D-1227 A.D) (Nehru, 2004, pp. 250-254) of 13th century (Dompnier, 2007, pp. 12-15). Taking into the account of the Mongol incursion of 13th century, King ‘Gya bzang and Blama Bya ras pa might have lived in Mtsho snar either during 14th or 15th century (Dompnier, 2007, p. 14; as cited in Wangchuk et al., 2013). According to the chronological pedigree, Blama Bya ras pa (pronounced as Lama Jarapa) is considered as the fourth successive generation of Chogyal Pelzang (Great great grandfather of Blama Bya ras pa).

The history of Drogpa is based on both the written documents (rNam thar-biographies or manuscripts) and oral

According to Dompnier (2007, p. 73) Ama Jomo Remanti was a nun at Ralung (Tibet) who had profound wisdom and also took an oath to lead celibacy life. However, she got married and became a mother. According to the biography of sGrub dbang grags pa rjai btsun (pronounced as Drubwang Drakpa Jitsun; alias sLob dpon Khyi bzhis: pronounced as Lupon Khizhey) of rkang pa ra (rkang: foot; pa ra; print) it was he (sGrub dbang grags pa rjai btsun) who subdued Ama Jomo Remanti and appointed her as the chief of deity (cf. Dompnier, 2007, pp. 72-75). sGrub dbang grags pa rjai btsun is the reincarnation of Prince Kintu Legpa; son of 'Mkha 'gro 'gro ba bzang mo (pronounced as Khando Drowa Zangmo) and King 'Bka la dbang po (pronounced as Kala Wangpo) of Tibet.

Blama Bya ras pa and Ama Jomo Remanti decided to leave sKom rLon Rogs gsum for Drogpas' wellbeing. They brought all their properties-food, yaks and horses-including the scriptures (Buddhist cannons) written in gold (Gser gyi glegs bam) with them (Wangmo, 1990). These people travelled through Tawang to Me rag-Sag steng searching for new homeland. The ruins of settlements they developed along their routes can be seen even today (Wangmo, 1990; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 12-15).

The band of Droga led by Blama Bya ras pa and Ama Jomo Remanti eventually arrived at Sag steng. Sag steng was covered with bamboos and people settled in the valley. Accordingly, the village was named Sag steng (Sag: bamboo; steng: on top). Due to the abundance of rhododendrons, Sag steng is also referred to as Bal yul Tama Jong (meaning the paradise of rhododendrons) (see Dompnier, 2007, p. 8). On the contrary Dompnier (2007, pp. 15 & pp. 74) provides different interpretation; 'Sa' (in dzongkha (Bhutan's national language)) meaning-land/earth (however, the word "Sag" is different from the word "Sa") and steng: on top. Generally, Sag steng is referred as "plain of bamboo" (Wangmo, 1990; Pelgen, 2003; Chand, 2004, p. 37).

As mentioned by Wangmo (1990) Droga had to run away to Me rag when a mob of Tibetans approached Sag steng. While escaping from the Tibetan horde Droga had to cross a pass (la) named Nyag caung la (approximately 4500 meters above mean sea level). For old, young children and those disabled Droga it was difficult to climb over the pass and therefore Blama Bya ras pa and Ama Jomo Remanti had to send them back to Sag steng (Wangmo, 1990). The place from where they were sent back came to be known as Log 'gro jong (Tib. Log 'gro: to return; and Jong: place). Eventually, only those physically strong Droga managed to cross Nyag caung la and arrived at a place covered with perchance by dwarf junipers. To convert it into settlement they set on fire the whole area and named it "Me harg" ((Droga kha skad): Droga language)-set on fire. Due to mispronunciation "Me harg" is called Me rag or Merak these days.

4. Significance of Droga Culture

Cultural perpetuation in Bhutan is sustained through a distinctive epistemology. The country upholds its dynamic cultures adopting one of the pillars-Preservation and Promotion of Culture-of the development philosophies of the Gross National Happiness (GNH) of Bhutan (Groenfeldt, 2003; Zangmo, 2004, p. 629; McDonald, 2005; Karchung, 2011). Also, the article 4 of the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan considers culture as an indispensable element to enrich socio-cultural values (Kuensel, 2008, p. 8; cf. Karchung, 2011). Thus, culture in Bhutan is of high priority (Karchung, 2011). On the other hand, traditional cultures seem less acceptable in other parts of the world due to its hindrance on development (Mancall, 2004, p. 25). For instance, Chinese Cultural Revolution posed threat on age old traditions and culture and formed new one much appropriate to the contemporary development (ibid).

Bhutan is considered as the home of an assortment of indigenous cultures (Chand, 2009; Karchung, 2011), and the Droga culture is one of the most prominent cultures nowhere else to be seen in Bhutan. Cultural practices in Bhutan are principally associated with Buddhist memes (Dorji, 2008, p. 6; Karchung, 2011). Therefore, cultural norms are of utmost significance without which the true essence of the individual identity seems indistinguishable.

Droga culture has its origination from the Bird Kings Dabzang and Shogzang-the Droga ancestors. It is further transmitted through their successive generations. Later on Droga culture was also strengthened by deity Ama Jomo Remanti. Hence, most of traditional and cultural ethics are associated to Ama Jomo Remanti.

Distinctive Droga culture has immense potentiality to earning revenue for the country and themselves through the development of eco-tourism (cf. Gurung & Seeland, 2008). Similar to the history of other tribal people dwelling in various parts of Bhutan, Droga have mesmerizing culture and traditions, such as valuable rNam thar, festivals, songs and dances, marriage customs-chung-gnyen (childhood engagement) and 'khor sdeb pa (pronounced as Khordepa: polyandry/polygamy)-bartering of goods ('bru skor: pronounced as Bukor), prayers and offerings devoted to Ama Jomo Remanti. The values of Droga history, culture, and traditions are magnificently prescribed in the works of Wangmo (1990), Chand (2000), Dorji (2002), Dorji (2003), Dompnier

(2007, pp. 6-11) and Karchung (2011). Their diversified culture and tradition speak a volume of ancient history from Tibet to Bhutan and even some parts of India (Dompnier, 2007, pp. 12-15). Pelgen (2003), on the other hand, has elucidated the rituals and pilgrimage devoted to the deity Ama Jomo Remanti and also the myth of Drozpa. In the continuum, Pelgen (2003) has also emphasized on the fading traditions of Drozpa. Recently, Karchung (2011) has discussed on the diminishing costumes of Me rag pa (people of Me rag) in which the author has questioned about the sustainability of Drozpa attires. Furthermore, Wangchuk et al. (2013) have shared their concern regarding the continued existence of yak herding cultures of the Himalayan tribes-particularly the Drozpa and Bjops.

Drozpa culture is emphasized a lot in the studies of Wangmo (1990), Chand (2000; 2004), Dorji (2002), Dorji (2003), Pelgen (2003), Dompnier (2007) and Wangchuk et al. (2013). Many of these researchers referred to the available rNamthar of the Drozpa. Mostly, the biography of Ama Jomo Remanti is used to refer Drozpa history. However, a few like Dompnier (2007) and Wangchuk et al. (2013) have referred other biographies besides Ama Jomo Remanti's biography, such as (1) "Rang rej pha mes kye byung kungs mkha lding kyung gi gdung rbas chung brjod par bya ba ni//"; (2) " 'dul ba lung las byung bai byai rgyal po 'dab bzang dang Gshog bzang gi mi rbas byung tsul mdor bsdus bzhug so//"; (3) "Me rag blama Bsten pei sgron mi yi mdzad rnam dang dgron gnas chags tsul a sam rgyal po nas khrl dang sa cha dbang bai hjon yig dor hdus bzhugs so// and (4) the epic of King Geser (Ge gser) of Ling.

5. Exclusive Drozpa Culture and Traditions

5.1 Drozpa Costumes

The uniqueness of Drozpa costumes perhaps is the only sole reason categorizing them as a distinctive group of people in Bhutan (Wangmo, 1990). The tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh, India-Monpa, Aka and Sherdugpen-also wear similar brand of attires although there are slight differences in clothes and methods of wearing (Chand, 2004, p. 70; Karchung, 2011). Therefore, it is possible that the Drozpa and the tribes of Arunachal Pradesh share a common history of their costume origination or have completely different source of origin. In the available biographies of Drozpa the detail information of their costumes origination is not narrated. A brief account on Drozpa costumes can be seen in the text " 'dul ba lung las byung bai byai rgyal po 'dab bzang dang Gshog bzang gi mi rbas byung tsul mdor bsdus bzhug so//". Karchung (2011, pp. 37-38) has also described briefly on the history of Drozpa costumes based on some texts, however, he hasn't mentioned the name of the biographies. According to the biography " 'dul ba lung las byung bai byai rgyal po 'dab bzang dang Gshog bzang gi mi rbas byung tsul mdor bsdus bzhug so// and a few village pundits the Drozpa costumes were instigated by the bird kings Dabzang and Shogzang.

However, there are also a few Drozpa who narrate the history of their costumes conversely. They say Drozpa costumes are the dress of Glud (scapegoat) (see Chand, 2004, p. 35). Glud (scapegoat) are those humans believed to possess evil curse and therefore to get rid of a ritual called-Glud gong-, Chand, 2004, p. 35 or Glud gtor is performed using their effigies made out of dough or clay. Some scholars (e.g., Choden, 1997, pp. 3-4; Chand, 2004, p. 35) believed that the people of Laya are descendants of female (Mo) Glud and Drozpa as the descendants of male (Pho) Glud. Such elucidation on Drozpa costumes origination is considered invalid and illogical as per the 18th folio of the rNam thar. The rNam thar explains that the descendants of great eminent bird kings whose generations are all great saints (Blama) can't be sent as Glud in the form of human beings. Drozpa and Layap (people of Laya) of course trace their origin from Tibet but certainly not the descendants of the scapegoats.

As per the biography, rTsid pa zha mo (pronounced as Tsidpa zhamo: black hat made of yak's hair) symbolizes the head of black (Gnag po: pronounced as nagpo) Byachung (Garuda, mythical bird), an assortment of sTod dung-in various colours-signify those sleeves worn by the descendants of bird kings (Karchung, 2011), sPu lham (woolen boots), Pag lham (leather boots) and Btsim lham or also called Mo lham (woolen boots) are considered as feet of Byachung. Lhem pa (see Figure 4) is believed to be the wings of mythical bird. Listening to those oral traditions and going through the rNam thar, it is apparent there must be some texts containing ample details on Drozpa costumes.

Drozpa can be easily distinguished from other tribes of Bhutan by their costumes which are exceptionally distinct. The clothing materials (wool, silk & yak's hair) indicate that Drozpa costumes are typically designed to help them adopt in the harsh geographical environment (cf. Karchung, 2011). Men wear a jacket called Chu pa (pronounce as ba) in general (Wangmo, 1990; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 38-41; Dutta, 2011)-mostly maroon in colour (rTsha khams Chu pa, formal) and in black (sPu j Chu pa, informal) (Karchung, 2011) tauten around the waist by a sash up to the length of mid-thigh (Chand, 2004, p. 70; Karchung, 2011). Along with Chu pa they put on

garments such as the Pags tsa (tanned leather of animals like calf of yaks, deer, antelope and even wild goats), rTsid pa zha mo (five long tufts (\pm 15-20 centimeters) hat made of yak's hair), rKang bgho (alike shorts made of wool), Pi shub (leather leggings), sPu lham and Pag lham (Chand, 2004, pp. 70-74; Karchung, 2011), and of course Dri (knife) tied on left waist is an essential component of their costume. Men are also adorn with earrings (rNam zao proi) made of precious stones (Wangmo, 1990; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 38-41; Karchung, 2011). However, about 90% of Droghpa do not put on earrings now. Predominantly, it is young Droghpa who seldom wear earrings due to their bashful behaviour.

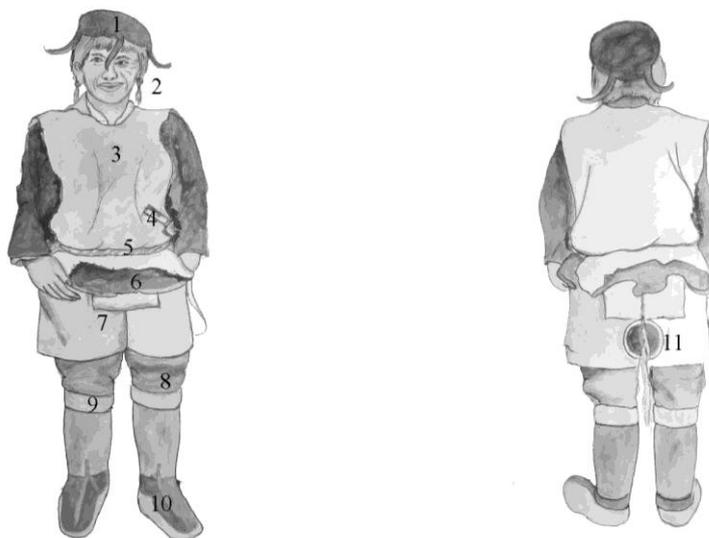


Figure 3. Male Droghpa costume

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. rTsid pa zha mo | 7. rKang bgho |
| 2. rNam zao proi | 8. Pi shub |
| 3. Pags tsa | 9. Lham togs |
| 4. Dri | 10. sPu lham / Pag lham |
| 5. sGyid thag | 11. rKub 'thing |
| 6. Chu pa | |

Source: Tenzin Dorji, Teacher Duntse Middle Secondary School, Trashigang.

Like men, women also have their own set of costume. They wear mostly pink and white striped Shing ka (silk cloth) fastened with sash at waist. Plain white Shing ka is also used by few. Shing ka is formally lifted up to the height of shin or mid of calf (Chand, 2004, p. 72; Karchung, 2011) covered at buttock by sMad dkyigsm (a piece of plain woolen cloth usually black in colour attached over buttocks tied along with Shing ka up to knee). Other attires like sMad dkyigem, rTsid pa zha mo, and variety of sTod dung (thin jackets) such as; 'bu ras stod dung (thin jacket made of silk), Gzugs thing stod dung (fabric brocade), and Bal stod dung (woolen jacket). Over those sTod dungs, a piece of red square cloth (Lhem pa) woven of yak hair is worn to protect rain from seeping. Boots made either of wool or yak hair (Btsim lham or Mo lham) tied with Lham rogs (thin cord made either of animal skin or yak hair) are also used by women. They also put on magnificent ornaments to indicate their splendid beauty (see Wangmo, 1990; Chand, 2004, pp. 70-74; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 38-41; Karchung, 2011).

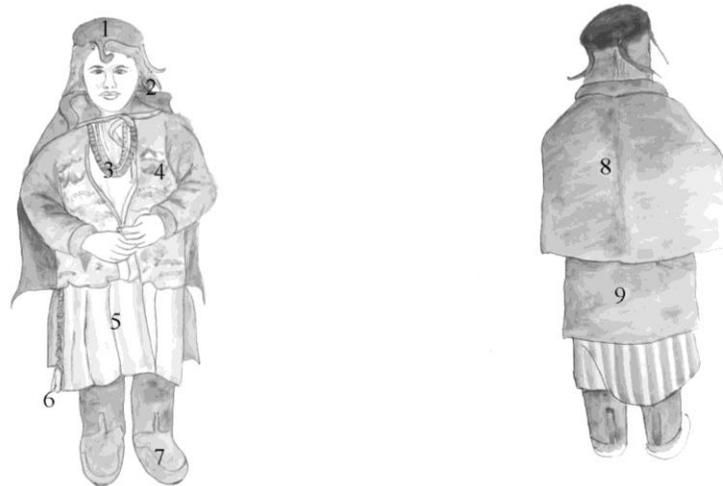


Figure 4. Female Drogha costume

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. rTsid pa zha mo | 7. bTsim lham / Mo lham |
| 2. rNam zao buma | 8. Lhem pa |
| 3. sKae rgyn | 9. sMad dkyigsm |
| 4. sTod dung | |
| 5. Shing ka | |
| 6. Nga zor | |

Source: Tenzin Dorji, Teacher Duntse Middle Secondary School, Trashigang

5.2 'bru skor: An Antecedent Trading Custom

'bru skor, meaning "moving around for grains" (Chand, 2000, 2004, pp. 93-96; Dorji, 2003, p. 38; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 32-37), is an enthralling trading custom that take place between Drogha and their Nepo (winter hosts) from lower villages like Phongmed, Radhi, Ca gling, Bidung, Galing, Saling, Bartsam, Kanglung, Shingkar and Lauri. Drogha usually visit those villages that produce grains. The trading relationship between the Drogha and their friends, the Shar chop Nepos last for almost three months whereby the Drogha go around the villages by October to exchange their dairy products for food grains (Wangmo, 1990; Chand, 2000; Dorji, 2003, p. 38; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 32-37). 'bru skor is not just an economic necessities, rather it is their social tradition that is deemed crucial. Such social tradition has also brought them together with their Nepos and further promoted their trading custom.

5.3 Festivals

Various types of festivals are being held in the two Drogha communities of Me rag and Sag steng every year. Some of the most popular festivals are: (1) Ache Lhamo, (2) Jomo Kora, (3) Mang Kurum, (4) Thoepa Gali, (5) Yak Cham, and (6) Tercham (Wangmo, 1990; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 56-69). A few of these festivals are considered of utmost significant because they happen only every three years. For instance, the Tercham of Sag steng, which is performed only every three years; it took place in the year (2012), and the next scheduled event is in 2015.

5.4 Marriage Customs

Marriage is another unique feature of Drogha culture and traditions. The marriage custom of Drogha is believed to have descended from the deity Ama Jomo Remanti (Dorji, 2002; Dorji, 2003, p. 39; Pelgen, 2003; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 42-44; Karchung, 2011). Dorji (2003, p. 39) believes that marriage customs of Drogha originated from the wedding ceremony of Ama Jomo Remanti and Gomchen Khijey (later he was reborn as Blama Byara pas

Horong). It is certain that Ama Jomo Remanti married and had three daughters and a son but with whom she married is still a mystery. sGrub dbang grags pa rjai btsun of rKang pa ra (rKang: foot; Pa ra; print) (Dompnier, 2007, pp. 72-75) is also popularly known as sLob dpon Khyi bzhis (alias) in eastern Bhutan who existed when Ama Jomo Remanti arrived in Bhutan. It is unclear whether Dorji (2003, p. 39) is referring sGrub dbang grags pa rjai btsun (alias sLob dpon Khyi bzhis) as Gomchen Khijey (Khyi bzhis) or he is talking about a different person. As per Dompnier (2007, pp. 72-75), sGrub dbang grags pa rjai btsun is the reincarnation of Prince Kintu Legpa; son of 'Mkha 'gardo 'grdo ba bzang mo and King 'Bka la dbang po of Tibet. In Dorji's monograph (2003, p. 39) one would also come across Gomchen Khijey who was later reborn as Blama Byara pas Horong.

All the available biographies mention only one Blama Byara pas who is also believed to be the reincarnation of Prince Kintu Legpa. This Blama Byara pas was the one who accompanied Ama Jomo Remanti and Droppa to flee from Mtsho snar, Tibet. Therefore, a conclusion can be drawn that Gomchen Khijey referred by Dorji (2003, p. 39) is no other than sGrub dbang grags pa rjai btsun (alias sLob dpon Khyi bzhis) who also held the responsibility of converting Ama Jomo Remanti as the chief of all local deities. Therefore, there is no account that this sLob dpon Khyi bzhis married Ama Jomo Remanti (for details see Wangmo, 1990; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 72-75.).

Marriage custom of Droppa is more of economic expediency rather than being a traditional dogma only (Wangmo, 1990; Chand, 2004, pp. 66-67). In this semi-nomadic society, parents and relatives play a vital role in arranging young couples to marry and to examine the couple's kinship relation, because it is considered culpable to marry parallel cousins (Wangmo, 1990). Cross cousin marriage is common in Eastern Bhutan (Dorji, 2002; Dorji, 2003, p. 39; Karchung, 2011) including in Me rag and Sag steng. Childhood engagement (Chung-gnyen) is also part of their marriage custom which is also practiced in lower Kheng of Zhemgang district (Dorji, 2003, p. 1; Karchung, 2011). Childhood betroth happens when a child attains the age of eight or sometimes more (Dorji, 2002; Dompnier, 2007, p. 42). The parents of both children accept and encourage them to be married as adults, thus enhancing the family tie.

'khor sdeb pa (fraternal polyandry and polygamy) is another feature of marriage custom practiced among the Droppa whereby a woman will marry more than one brother (husband) (Wangmo, 1990; Dutta, 2011; Wangchuk et al., 2013). Polygamy happens when a family has several daughters. Polygamous marriage system is rare in Me rag and Sag steng. 'khor sdeb pa is practiced to prevent the outflow of wealth, fragmentation of the pasture land and need for more man power-aptly referred to as "getting a husband to support a husband" (Sommer, 2005, p. 29)-(Wangmo, 1990; Chand, 2004, p. 67; Dutta, 2011).

The existence of 'khor sdeb pa system within the Droppa society of Me rag and Sag steng is little known to the people even though it is widely practiced in other parts of the world. However, such kind of marriage customs-Chung-gnyen and 'khor sdeb pa-have diminished by now because youths prefer love marriage (cf. Karchung, 2011). Also, Droppa are aware that childhood engagement is against the law. Fraternal polyandry and polygamy is also not proving a successful marriage in Me rag and Sag steng. In fact it is not doing well-tensions among the co-husbands-amongst the polyandrous societies (Carrasco, 1959, p. 36; Ekvall, 1968, p. 27; Goldstein, 1971; Cassidy & Lee, 1989; Levine & Silk, 1997; Willett, 1997; Haddix, 2001) whereby probability of partitioning is imminent.

Marriage customs of Droppa are celebrated in three different phases (stages) (Wangmo, 1990; Dorji, 2002; Dorji, 2003, pp. 39-44; Chand, 2004, pp. 67-68; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 42-45). Matchmaker (Garpa gdong bsu) (Dorji, 2003, pp. 39-44; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 42-45) is chosen by the groom's parents (usually elders are selected considering their skills of communicating) to convey the proposal to bride's parents (cf. Wangmo, 1990; Karchung, 2011). Similarly, in the Ngenzhung marriage custom of Kheng regions of Zhemgang, matchmaker (Blon po Garwa tongthrab) plays a significant role. The custom of appointing Blon po Garwa tongthrab might have descended from the marriage of Chos rgyal Srong btsan sgam po (r. 627 A.D-649 A.D). Chos rgyal Srong btsan sgam po appointed his minister Gar Tongtsen (as matchmaker) to go to China and find him a bride (Dorji, 2003, p. 3). Thence, any matchmaker in Kheng regions is called Blon po Garwa tongthrab. Therefore, the title of matchmakers (Garpa gdong bsu) of Me rag and Sag steng might have come from the minister's name Gar Tongtsen. However, both Blon po Garwa tongthrab and Garpa gdong bsu have one common principle that is functioning as a matchmaker.

Garpa gdong bsu will confer with astrologer (rTsis-pa) and fix the ceremony day for Trungchang (krung chang; drinks of acceptance) (Dorji, 2003, pp. 39-44; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 42-45), also known as Drichang (sGrig chang) (Wangmo, 1990). Duenchang (Mdun chang) used by Chand (2004, p. 67) to naming this ceremony is not a proper term. Of course it happens in big gathering; however it doesn't convey etymological meaning of first

phase of marriage (Trungchang).

With Dkarchang (brewed grains filled in Tau ngama; copper vessel) and 2-3 palangs of Nagchang (arag, brewed grains filled in wooden jar; palang) Garpa gdong bsu and groom's parents will approach the bride's parents for matrimonial negotiation (Wangmo, 1990; Dorji, 2003, pp. 39-44; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 42-45; Karchung, 2011). While drinking Garpa gdong bsu performs his role (proposing bride's parents) through reciting verses. Refusal of marriage proposal is rare however with some exceptional cases. If the bride's parents are not satisfied as expected they decline the proposal. Refusal of proposal by the bride has to be compensated with rGyab chang and even foods (return drinks) (Wangmo, 1990; Dorji, 2003, pp. 39-44; Chand, 2004, p. 67; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 42-45). When bride's parents recommend groom's parents to arrange for the wedding it is an indication of acceptance.

Trungchang is then followed by another drinking ceremony, the Barchang (bar: middle; chang: drinks). This ceremony is the most significant one in which groom's parents commence to prepare plenty of brewed grains (arag: pronounced as ara), scarves and gifts (Dorji, 2003, pp. 39-44; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 42-45). The program starts with Dpah dar ceremony whereby groom's parents offer woven scarf (Pangkhep) to bride's parents and close relatives and white scarves are given to distant relatives (Dorji, 2003, p. 42; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 42-45). Groom's parents also offer white scarf to Garpa gdong bsu and Chang pa ama and drinks are provided to all. Garpa gdong bsu too offers scarves to bride's parents followed by reciting verses containing advices for bride and her parents. The advices conveyed through by Garpa gdong bsu are accepted by them (Wangmo, 1990; Dorji, 2003, pp. 39-44; Chand, 2004, p. 67; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 42-45).

Eventually, groom's and bride's parents prepare for the grand ceremony: Bagma gtong len, sending bride off. It takes place after two weeks or sometime even more depending on the convenience and readiness of groom's parents. Bagma gtong len is celebrated for three days commencing from bride's house and concludes at groom's house (Dorji, 2003, pp. 39-44; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 42-45).

For smooth functioning of the Bagma gtong len, the groom's parents make necessary arrangements like, Mgron bsu pa (guest master), two male Glu pa (singers), Gnyer pa (storekeeper), Thab tshang pa (cook), and Chang pa ama (drinks waitress). Glu pas sing songs for prosperous and happy marriage life and also eulogize Ama Jomo throughout three days of nuptials (ibid). Correspondingly, the rTsis-pa also performs ritual for the wellbeing of new couple.

Meanwhile, bride's parents prepare to send their daughter to groom's house. They give her gifts such as Btsim lham or mo lham, Jorzha mo (hat), Shing ka, and sTod dung (Dorji, 2003, pp. 39-44; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 42-45). At that time one of the bride's childhood friends will be sitting near to her as an assistant (Daw). She dresses up akin to bride. When the bride is taken off her home, it is a culture that she should cry and pretends to be sad (Wangmo, 1990; Dorji, 2003, pp. 39-44; Chand, 2004, p. 67; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 42-45).

5.5 Migration and Herds

Migration is one of the prominent traditional practices of Drogpa. However, one must bear in mind that all Drogpa do not migrate; only the herders (Nag rdze) migrate along with their herds of yaks and sheep (Chand, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, p. 36). Their livelihood depends entirely on these herds (Wangchuk et al., 2013). Generally, Drogpa follow two patterns of migration cycle-summer and winter (Gyamtsho, 2000; Tshering, 2004; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 36-37; Moktan et al., 2008; Wangchuk et al., 2013). In summer, they take their herds to high mountain pasturelands (above 4,500 meters) by May and let herds graze till end of October (±4 months including autumn pasturing period). By September, they climb down for winter pasture where snowfall is exceptional and remain there for about 8 months until next migratory cycle (Gyamtsho, 2000; Chand, 2004, pp. 85-93; Tshering, 2004; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 36-37; Wangchuk et al., 2013).

Approximately 90% of the nomads living in the high mountain villages of Me rag and Sag steng depend on the pastureland for their livelihood, and the remaining people depend on those who have bigger herds (Dompnier, 2007, pp. 32-37; Wangchuk et al., 2013). Yaks and sheep are, therefore, the main sources of income (Chand, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 32-37; Moktan et al., 2008; Wangchuk et al., 2013) for all the Himalayan tribes in Bhutan. The young and energetic men and women of the family usually become Nag rdze (herders).

6. The Drogpa Nature

Drogpa are unique in appearance. They look rough and trace their origin from Tibet (sKom rLon Rogs gsum) (Chand, 2000, 2004, p. 29; Dompnier, 2007, p. 6). This ethnic group is very fond of their lifestyle, and they are of course very humorous. Consuming alcohol is part of their life, and people often become wild after getting drunk and get into quarrels (Dompnier, 2007, p. 6). Nonetheless, Drogpa never forget to be polite when they

encounter people both known and unknown (Dompnier, 2007, p. 6). Droghpa are innocent in nature and, therefore, are not likely to change from what they are. They try to remain isolated to maintain as a homogeneous society (Chand, 2000). Generally, Droghpa are rigid and hardly accept the views of outsiders. They are also good at telling lies (Wangmo, 1990; Chand, 2000, 2004, p. 59).

Droghpa are also egotistic in nature. Therefore, compared to the past decades Droghpa behaviour is comparatively different at present (see Chand, 2000). Droghpa in the year 2000 were less receptive of modern development but now they demand roads to be constructed up to their villages regardless of government's repeated denial. They used to run away upon seeing visitors in the past.

Discourteous Droghpa behaviour is another challenging hindrance. For instance, under the initiative of Sag steng Wildlife Sanctuary (SWS) the Mac Author Foundation provided Corrugated Galvanized Iron (CGI) sheet to them. Almost all the Droghpa of Sag steng got the sheet and Droghpa of Me rag are getting it now. In order to maintain the traditional composition of the villages (Me rag & Sag steng) one of the personnel of Mac Author Foundation recommended to roof houses with shingles (wooden planks) on top of CGI sheet. Droghpa initially agreed and also signed memorandum that is still intact in the office of SWS. However, now, when Droghpa are asked to abide by the memorandum they refuse and are appealing to government stating that it is very expensive to roof with shingles on top of CGI sheet. Deliberations on this issue are still going on. It is aptly mentioned by Wangmo (1990) and Chand (2000) that Droghpa always say 'laso' (ok) in front and never comply with what they said.

Another example be, whenever some Droghpa (not all) make gaffe they apologize stating 'we are people living in the forest and don't know anything' but on the contrary if any non Droghpa (especially civil servants) commits blunder they try to deal with them as per the laws.

7. Effects of Globalization and the Undeniable Droghpa's Apprehension

A negligible transformation within Droghpa society was observed by Chand (2000) when conducting research along with a few students of Sherubtse College, Kanglung, Trashigang. At the time, perhaps development had hardly reached Me rag and Sag steng, but Chand (2000) had noticed some changes already (see Dompnier, 2007, p. 1). By then the government of Bhutan has been putting in an effort to drag them into mainstream (Chand, 2004, p. 121).

Droghpa depend on herds of yaks and sheep for their livelihood (Chand, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 32-37; Moktan et al., 2008; Bhattarai et al., 2011; Wangchuk et al., 2013). They earn cash by selling the products of yaks and sheep such as woolen woven materials, cheese, butter, meat, and fermented cheese (Chand, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, pp. 33-34; Moktan et al., 2008). They trade their goods with the Droghpa of Tawang (Arunachal Pradesh, India) and the Sharchop friends (Wangmo, 1990; Chand, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, p. 37; Wangchuk et al., 2013). The mode of exchange then was mostly barter system (Chand, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, p. 37), and now, more paper money is being used (Moktan et al., 2008).

Today, the people of Me rag and Sag steng have access to various modern amenities such as electricity, television, cell phones, roads, and so on. As a result their culture, traditions, and Behaviour are changing profoundly every year. Therefore, the cultural and traditional homogeneity of the Droghpa is under a major shift. Williams (2002) shared his opinion in Bhutan Cultural Tours and Treks regarding the menace that Bhutan might encounter in the future as a result of modernization. He highlighted the cultural disintegration with the influx of television and the internet. Hosseini (2010) mentioned that most countries have lost their local cultural values with the intrusion of the mass media. He noted that the main factors of change are industries distributing cultural materials such as films, television, and news media.

Many changes can also be seen in the costumes of the Droghpa. The youths do not take much interest in wearing their own traditional costumes (Chand, 2000); rather, they like to wear pants and shirts, and very few school-goers wear Gho and Kira (national dress). In fact, even older Droghpa are seen in pants (Dor ma) and jackets. This is really an accelerating period of change caused by modern socio-economic development whereby the connection between the past and present is varying (Bhawuk, 2008). For instance, the Chu pa and Shing ka are being replaced by pants and shirts, and very few wear Gho and Kira. The shunning of traditional dress and culture by the young Droghpa is mentioned in the work of Chand (2000). Similarly, Pelgen (2003) encountered a Droghpa father who was on his way to meet his son studying at what was then the Radhi Lower Secondary School and today it is a middle secondary school. The father stated, "My son was ashamed to see me when I paid him a visit at Radhi Lower Secondary School, and I was received better by the teachers than my own son. I don't think he will ever come back to see me if he ever gets a job in the future" (Pelgen, 2003). This statement clearly indicates that the youth are not interested in their parents' culture and are looking for change. Many Droghpa youths today have developed bashful Behaviour and do not prefer to practice their rich and valuable culture and

traditions.

The most striking and well-made leather boots known as sPu lham, Pag lham and Btsim lham or mo lham are being replaced by gum boots and other footwear imported from various countries. Indeed, these leather boots are not worn by Drozpa at all today with a few exceptional cases: mask dancers use them during festivals and a few older people continue to use. Therefore, the remarkable history of Drozpa costumes is diminishing along with their vanishing interest to wear their own attires (Karchung, 2011).

Me rag and Sag steng are integrated as tourist site in September 2010, thus exposing themselves to foreigners (Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB), 2012, p. 10). Many foreigners come to Me rag and Sag steng to witness their pristine culture and traditions, especially the festivals. When more outsiders visiting every year, there is a potential risk that the environment might get polluted (Gurung & Seeland, 2008). In continuum, Gurung and Seeland (2008) have mentioned that the Royal Government of Bhutan has an utmost concern about the promotion of culture and environment despite tourism development.

In addition, a few scholars viewed tourism also as a potential risk factor of acculturation (e.g., Groenfeldt, 2003; Chand, 2009). Chand (2000) stated that “the future of Drozpa society is in the hands of new generation Drozpa”; however, he observed that the young school-going Drozpa are not keenly interested in their own traditional costumes (Chand, 2000; Karchung, 2011). It is an early sign indicating that young Drozpa have changed behaviorally, and many changes can be seen today within the Drozpa society.

Although Bhutan has adopted various strategies (e.g., one of the GNH pillars; Preservation and Promotion of Cultures, Article 4 of the Constitution of Bhutan, National Library, Department of Culture) to promote and preserve its antecedent dynamic cultures and traditions, however, most of the indigenous cultural and traditional values are even more daunting, especially the Drozpa culture and traditions. Today many Drozpa children are fond of modern developments and perhaps they are very little or not at all aware of their own culture and traditions. For instance, one would hardly come across a youth who has a morsel of idea on their historical background (e.g., Drozpa origination). Even elderly Drozpa misinterpret their own history (e.g., Drozpa provide different interpretation on their costume origination). Indeed Drozpa history is preserved overwhelmingly in the manuscripts that are rarely available among the Drozpa. If these biographies are either lost or damaged than I am confident the Drozpa history will disappear and be manipulated.

Looking at the present transforming of the Drozpa, it is apparent that their dynamic culture and traditions losing its values. Both males and females are wearing pants and jackets instead of Chupa and Shingka. Youths on the other hand do not prefer to wear their costume at all. Therefore, the sustainable of Drozpa culture and traditions are not promising.

8. Discussion

The recent developmental activities in Me rag and Sag steng have brought changes in the lives of Drozpa. Such transformation is a likely threat to the culture and tradition of this semi nomadic people. Today, all the houses are being given access to electricity, and people have access to television and cell phones. People have started using electronic appliances to cook their meals, leaving behind their traditional methods of cooking. The construction of roads to Me rag and Sag steng is underway, which might bring more development and changes in these remote areas of Bhutan.

Tourism was also introduced in September 2010 by the Tourism Council of Bhutan under the recommendation of the 34th Session of Lhuengye Zhungtshog (Council of Ministers/Cabinet Ministers) held on March 17, 2009 (TCB, 2012, pp. 7-9) to help people generate income through various means such as selling animal products, transporting luggage, and serving as labourer (Wangdi, 2012). According to TCB report (2012, p. 9) about 42.3 % of the total people feel that animal husbandry is more beneficial than the tourism. In continuum, as of now less than 35 % (65 % did not take part) of the people took part in tourism activities and eventually, majority of the respondent were of the view that tourism doesn't benefit their community (TCB, 2012, p. 14). Therefore the motive of TCB to benefiting the community is not felt same by the people. This might be because TCB is not providing equal opportunities to those communities who take part or either people don't want tourism at all. The report also says that people have understood the values of their own culture and traditions including heritages through the introduction of tourism in their region (TCB, 2012, p. 20). However, on the contrary, about 65 % of the total population did not participate in tourism activity and indeed most of the respondents feel tourism as inefficient agent to their community (TCB, 2012, p. 14). This indicates that the people are not aware of what tourism is and for what purpose it is launched in Me rag and Sag steng. Eventually, we suggest that prior to commencing any new program in a region it would be better to seek the perception of those people first and let them understand the pros and cons of the program.

Many Drogpa send their children to schools for higher studies, and some of them even send their children to pursue education in private schools within the country. On the other hand, in the study of Chand (2000), it was noted that many Drogpa parents were unwilling to send their children to school because they needed their children to look after the herds and support them. For instance, due to reluctance of Drogpa Sag steng Primary School (upgraded to Lower Secondary School in 2011) was closed for a decade. As a result, Dungpa Jigme Tenzin had to frame policy whereby children above seven years of age had to go to school compulsorily (Chand, 2000, 2004, p. 54). Thus, one can note here a sudden paradigm shift in the educational perception of the Drogpa. Jina (2002) also noticed similar changes in the habits of the Drogpa of Ladakh. To improve their children's future, these people are willing to provide higher education at different colleges in India.

The fear of losing Drogpa traditions and culture was noted in the works of Chand (2000) and Dompnier (2007, p. 2). They mentioned that, if proper planning is not undertaken, then the Drogpa culture may not survive in the future. With the intrusion of modern development, survival of the culture and traditions is difficult, although Bhutan has adopted an unusual system of developing the nation: Gross National Happiness (GNH; Groenfeldt, 2003; Karchung, 2011). Among the four pillars of GNH, one of them is the preservation and promotion of the culture (see McDonald, 2005; Karchung, 2011). Culture is, therefore, an indispensable element of identity among the communities of Bhutan (Dorji, 2008; Chopel, 2012). Chopel (2012) stated that change in cultural practice is associated with modern technologies; however, it depends on how one perceives those resources and how people use them. Development is subjected to both creating opportunities as well as change and thus induces risks to the cultural and the traditional values (Groenfeldt, 2003; Hosseini, 2010). In addition, Hosseini (2010) suggested that developing nations must emphasize better planning while adopting modern technology; otherwise, it will be difficult to maintain the unique culture and traditions.

The main factor pertaining to changing of the Drogpa culture and Behaviour is the modern development: (1) roads; (2) electricity; (3) modern education; (4) mobile facilities; and (5) television. Subramanyam and Moham (2006) concluded in their study that the mass media has played an important role in shaping the lives of tribal people. Of the various types of mass media, they found that television and film were very effective. They also noticed that tribal habitats exposed to road facilities are changing faster than those without it (Subramanyam & Moham, 2006; Chand, 2009).

Therefore, an immediate holistic study should be carried out to determine and understand the impact of modern developments on the lives of Drogpa, their reaction, their concern about their cultural identity, and the measures implemented to promote and preserve the unique and vulnerable culture and traditions of Drogpa.

9. Conclusion

Future continuity of the Drogpa culture and traditions is uncertain if proper planning is not undertaken (Chand, 2000; Dompnier, 2007, p. 1). However, the fact is, with the recent intrusion of modern development, Drogpa have started changing steadily (cf. Karchung, 2011; Wangchuk et al., 2013). They have access to modern influencing facilities such as roads, television, cell phones, electricity, and electronic cooking appliances. Although the developmental planning in Bhutan is deeply associated with the philosophy of Gross National Happiness (Groenfeldt, 2003; McDonald, 2005; Karchung, 2011), the cultural hegemony of the Western world is uncompromising, which most of the developing countries find it difficult to avoid (Groenfeldt, 2003; Hosseini, 2010).

The present problems of Drogpa transformation (culturally and behaviorally) are not a complete distortion; however, it is an alarming issue for Drogpa themselves and for the nation. It is an enormous challenge for the country and Drogpa to preserve and promote their culture and traditions when globalization is underway. To a certain degree, the government of Bhutan is trying to maintain the continuity of the Drogpa culture through programs such as broadcasting Drogpa cultural practices on television and encouraging them to partake in and perform their traditional songs and dances on special occasions-e.g., National Day Celebration, 17th December (Karchung, 2011).

Consequently, a need has arisen to study the perception of the Drogpa regarding modern development and the gross impact of development on the people of Me rag and Sag steng. Accordingly, then, the government can plan for development activities as deemed necessary to bring them into mainstream. Also, the government should initiate to purchase their dairy products and sustain the livelihood of these people (Chand, 2000; cf. Wangchuk et al., 2013).

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VITAE

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Educational Attainment

Degree	Name of Institution	Year of Graduation
Bachelor in Education (History & Geography)	Samtse College of Education Royal University of Bhutan	2008

Scholarship Awards during Enrolment

Contributory Grants for International Students of Faculty of Liberal Arts

Work – Position and Address

Teacher at Duntse Middle Secondary School

Phongmed: Trashigang

Ministry of Education

P.O. Rangjung: Bhutan

List of Publication and Proceeding

Wangchuk, D., Dhammasaccakarn, W., Tepsing, P., Promsaka Na Sakolnakarn, T. (2013a). The Yaks: Heart and Soul of the Himalayan tribes of Bhutan. *E3 Journal of Environmental Research and Management*. 4 (2), 0189-0196.

Wangchuk, D., Dhammasaccakarn, W., Tepsing, P. (2013b). Survival of *Droga* Cultural and Traditional Memes and the Threat of Modern Development. *Asian Social Science*. Vol. 9 (15), 142-155.