The Endless Knot (pelgbeu) symbolizes the infinite wisdom of the Buddha, compassion, the ongoing nature of time, and the web of life.

Bhutan is an agrarian society where most people eat what they grow. Rural Bhutanese continue to process virtually everything they cook, including oils from a variety of seeds.

Most Bhutanese are not vegetarian, but they do not slaughter the animals they eat, so they import most of their meat. Tea, traditionally churned with salt and butter, is offered as a sign of hospitality. Many Bhutanese households also make their own *ara*, a distilled drink with a 20 percent alcohol content made from a variety of grains.

Nearly all meals are planned around rice. Buckwheat, made into pancakes or noodles, is another important staple. Dishes using semi-soft cheese (*datsi*) in combination with mushrooms, fiddlehead ferns, spinach, potatoes, meat, and eggs are characteristic of Bhutanese cooking. Chiles are the defining ingredient in Bhutanese cuisine; chiles and cheese is Bhutan’s national dish, *ema datsi*. 