



people of Chali call their language Chalipaikha (ཆལི་པའི་ཁ་སྐད་). The Chali speaking area is bordered to the north and west by the Chochangachakha speaking areas, and to the south and east by the Tshangla speaking areas.

The people have no idea of the historical origin of linguistics but there are two versions stories of origin of the Chali language in the local folklore. According to one story, people believed that the dialect spoken in Chali is one of the most difficult to understand. When Guru Rinpoche travelled across the world to distribute the languages from his sack and gave different languages to different communities and when Guru Rinpoche reached Chali, he ran out of languages. When people implored for a language, Guru Rinpoche emptied the sack of all leftovers. Thus, Chali language is said to be consisted of words from many languages including some Indian languages. People of Chali, often after a few sips of alcohol, narrate such stories of ancestry and origin with great pride.

Another story has it that once the people of Bumthang, Kheng and Kurtoe decided to meet at a place. This they did at Chali. As they lived together, they also developed a common language by mixing their original languages. The new language, later, turned out to be Chalipaikha. Thus, Chalipaikha is believed to be a combination of many languages including Dzongkha (རྫོང་ཁ་), even having a few words of English (ཨིང་ལྷན་) and Hindu (ཧིན་དྲི) built on the main base of the Khengkha (ཁེང་ཁ་ཁ་སྐད་) or Bumthangkha (བུམ་ཐང་ཁ་སྐད་). The linguists today put Chalipaikha in the same sub-group as languages of Bumthang, Kheng and Kurtoe. It is quite plausible that Chali is a relatively recent settlement and the Chalipaikha also a young language although more research needs to be done to confirm this. It is commonly accepted that the people of Chali speak a language which is a mixture of Bumthangkha, Khengkha and Kurtoepkha (ཀུར་ཏེ་ཁ་སྐད་) as their ancestors had migrated from Bumthang, Kheng and Lhuntse to this area. Given such origin, it also helps people of Chali today to master other languages without very easily.

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