



# What next for women's income generating centre?

GYEMBO NAMGYAL

Eight months ago, 10 people from the economically vulnerable background began a tailoring course at the CDG-funded Income Generation Centre for Drongsep (rural) Women Tshogpa in Gyelpobrangsa village, Pemagatshel. None of the learners had even touched a sewing machine in their life so the training course had to begin from the basics.

Today, as they enter the last week of their eight-month course, the wall of the tailoring centre is adorned with beautifully sewn thankas (appliqués). The trainees put their skills to practice sewing ghos, kiras, tegos and wongjus with relative comfort under the watchful eyes of the instructor.

But, as the first of the two batches of learners enters the final week, the main objective of the course still remains as distant as ever. The centre continues to lack a proper group formation that is expected to manage the centre and make it self-sustaining.

"The main objective of the tailoring course is to form a group that will manage the centre, offering employment to the trained tailors of the first batch and generate income. But, nothing seem to be happening at the moment," said Pema Nidup, the instructor.

He said the initial plan was to retain all the first batch trainees, who will be involved in full-time tailoring works while the second batch is being trained for another eight months.

Shumar Gup Lepo said that, while group formation remains desirable, it is not as easy as it may seem because there are several things that needed to be taken care of. "How can a group be formed without even the



This group of people, mostly women, from Pemagatshel are completing a tailoring course in a week's time

basic needs in place," he asked. "There are financial needs to be taken care of besides capacity building of those managing the group."

He, however, said that the gewog had identified some 10 potential candidates to be trained at the centre in the second batch, beginning October this year.

He said that in 2010, the centre was built primarily as a weaving centre to provide weaving skills on improved looms to the underprivileged women of the dzongkhag. A group was to be formed and trained to run the centre sustainably. Many sector heads volunteered in the presence of Lyonchen to assist the farmers in group formation. But nothing happened thereafter.

"I am interested to remain at the centre and be part of the group if it is formed. But if this group does not take shape, I am confident of making a living

by myself," said 17-year-old, Ugyen Zangmo of Shumar village.

The oldest trainee, 50-year-old Wangdi Phuntsho from Gopung village, said he had walked three hours daily for the last eight months to learn tailoring. Now that the training is completing, he is looking forward to the establishment of cooperative style group at the centre.

"We have an agreement drawn at the time of our enrollment to work for the group. If this does not happen, I will buy a sewing machine and work from home," he said.

Pema Nidup said he is a little confused with what to do next when the new batch of 10 learners join the course. According to plans, the first batch is to work at the centre and generate income when the second batch learns the basics. Pema said that, should the

tailoring course progress, the centre needs at least 10 additional sewing machines besides other necessities.

While the first 10 sewing machines have been donated by Larsen and Toubro through BAOWE (Bhutan Association of Women Entrepreneurs), Druk Satair Corporation Limited, the gypsum mining company in Pemagatshel, provides monthly stipend for the learners and trainer's salary until the completion of training for two batches.

Since its establishment as a weaving training centre using Mechi and Laotian looms, 21 rural women have been trained for two weeks each in three different batches. Since then, these women have gone back to their villages but none of them has been able to put to good use the skills they learnt at the centre. The looms are said to be expensive and beyond the reach of these marginal

women. Few looms at the centre with missing components have been lying idle at Pemagatshel town since 2011.

During the incessant rain in June this year, part of the retaining wall built to protect the two-unit centre collapsed under mudslide burying a section of one of the two structures. The debris is yet to be cleared although the gewog administration submitted the reports to the authorities concerned immediately after the incident.

Although the centre is built with noble objectives, there seem to be difficulties in meeting the objectives. Two years ago, an official from the prime minister's office said the centre is being run by a loosely formed group. Even today, the centre is in want of a group with structured plans in place that has the capacity to translate those objectives into reality.

**THE MUSEUM OF MONARCHY  
THE TOWER OF TRONGSA, TA DZONG  
(DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE)  
MINISTRY OF HOME & CULTURAL AFFAIRS  
P.O. BOX 155, TRONGSA : BHUTAN**

*"Preserving the past for tomorrow"*

TMM/Adm-13/2012-2013/922

**NOTIFICATION**

This is to notify all concern Tour Guides and Tour Operators registered with the Tourism Council of Bhutan Secretariat that henceforth the Museum of Monarchy, Ta-dzong, Trongsa will be recording the Tour Guide License numbers at the Front Desk Entrance of the museum to properly monitor the entry of each individual tourist into the museum. In this regard, this office would like to inform all concerned tour guides/operators that it is mandatory to produce his/her guide licenses without failure to the Front Desk Incharge of the museum during your visit.

In the event of failure to produce the guide license, the museum management will withhold the entry of particular group/ tourist and forward such cases to Tourism Council of Bhutan Secretariat and Bhutan Guides Association for action. Therefore, in order to avoid unnecessary hindrance at the entrance of the museum, all concerned tour guides/ operators are requested to produce their licenses to enter the Museum of Monarchy, the Tower of Trongsa, Ta-Dzong,Trongsa.

*Deputy Chief Curator*

**ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN  
DZONGKHAG ADMINISTRATION  
DZONGKHAG ENGINEERING SECTOR  
TSIRANG**

*"Towards Quality Infrastructure"*

TD/DES-21/2012-2013/3045

**INVITATION FOR BIDS**

The Dzongkhag Administration, Tsirang invites sealed bids from the eligible contractor registered with Construction Development Board for the construction of works tabulated hereunder;

Sl No	Name of Work	Contractor Category	Bid Security
1.	Construction of 2 units PF toilets for boys and girls at Tsirangtoe LSS (W3)	Small	Nu. 6,700.00

Bidding documents may be purchased from the office of the Dzongkhag Engineer, Tsirang Dzongkhag from **1<sup>st</sup> October 2012 to 15<sup>th</sup> October 2012** for a non-refundable fee of **Nu. 300.00** in the form of cash warrant or demand draft payable in favour of Dasho Dzongdag, Dzongkhag Administration, Tsirang.

Interested bidders may acquire further information from Dzongkhag Engineering Sector at **+975-6-471202** during office hours.

Bids must be accompanied by a bid security of **Nu. 6,700.00** drawn in favour of Dzongdag, Dzongkhag Administration, Tsirang. The bid security must be furnished as per prescribed format with validity of **30 days** beyond validity of the bid.

Bids must be delivered to Dzongkhag Engineering Sector, Tsirang on or before **10.30 AM on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2012** and will be opened on the same day at **11.00 AM** in presence of the bidders or their representatives who wish to attend.

*Dzongrab*

**BO BULLETIN**

**RENT:**

- Ideal office space available for rent on 4<sup>th</sup> floor Opposite to Taj Tashi, Thimphu. For details please contact at **17807636**.
- Shop space with one living room, one kitchen and one toilet available immediately at Olakha. Rent: Nu.10000/- . Contact at **17603862**

**SALE:**

- 27 decimal at Taba, Thimphu @ Nu. Three Lakhs Fifteen Thousand per decimal. Contact:17807636
- 50 decimal at Rametey, Phuntsholing @Nu. Forty Five Thousand per decimal. Buyers may contact 17110072.
- 26 decimal at Gayzamchu, Thimphu @ Nu. Two Lakhs Seventy Thousand per decimal. Contact:17807636
- 21 decimal at Tshento-Shari, Paro @ Nu. Forty Five Thousand per decimal. Contact:17172037.
- 30 decimal Land at Gadana, Paro @ Forty Five Thousand per decimal. Buyers may contact 17172037.



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FOR DAILY NEWS UPDATES



# TCB inspects tour operators' office setups

CHADOR WANGMO

Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB), Association of Bhutan Tour Operators, Handicraft Association and Guides' Association of Bhutan have started inspecting whether tour operators in Bhutan have proper office setups with regular employees from where they do their business.

A notice was issued to all tour operators asking them to update their office locations with mandatory requirements on August 31 this year. According to tour operators' rules and regulations of 1999, a tour operator's office should have basic

equipment like computers, fax machine, and internet connectivity with proper contact address.

TCB, in the meanwhile, has temporarily suspended issuing new licences to travel agents. Once the inspection is completed by the end of this October, licence will be issued.

Kinley Wangdi, the officiating head of the corporate performance department of TCB, said that such inspection was necessary to make the tour operators in Bhutan more professional and to make sure that tour operators are benefiting other people by providing employment.

Many small-time tour operators are suspected to be operating their business from home.

While tourism is one of the biggest earning sectors in Bhutan, most of the operators are not operating professionally, Kinley Wangdi said.

"TCB has a mandate to benefit the economy of our country," he said. To set up an office would involve cost, of course, but tour operators have to do it because lack of proper office is going to affect the tourist flow into Bhutan, he added.

The number of tourists visiting Bhutan decreased to 23,480 in 2009 from 27,636

in 2008, which translates to Nu 94.821 million of revenue loss for TCB.

Sangey Lhaden, TCB's visa officer, said most of the hotels and tourists are complaining about the services provided by the tour operators. It is also difficult for TCB to contact tour operator because they have no proper address.

The TCB issues licences to the tour operators without any charges, she said. However, the ministry of economic affairs charges Nu 13,000 for approval and Nu 12,000 for renewal every year.

TCB has issued 904 licences since 1974. From January 1 to June 30 this year, the government generated Nu 3,972,000 through renewing 331 licences. As of July 1, 2012, 146 tour operators renewed their licences.

According to the 2009-2010 revenue report, TCB was the fourth highest revenue earning sector in Bhutan. It contributed Nu 539.212 million to the government. Collection from TCB constitutes royalty on tourism and TDS from tourism businesses.

Dongtu, the regional di-

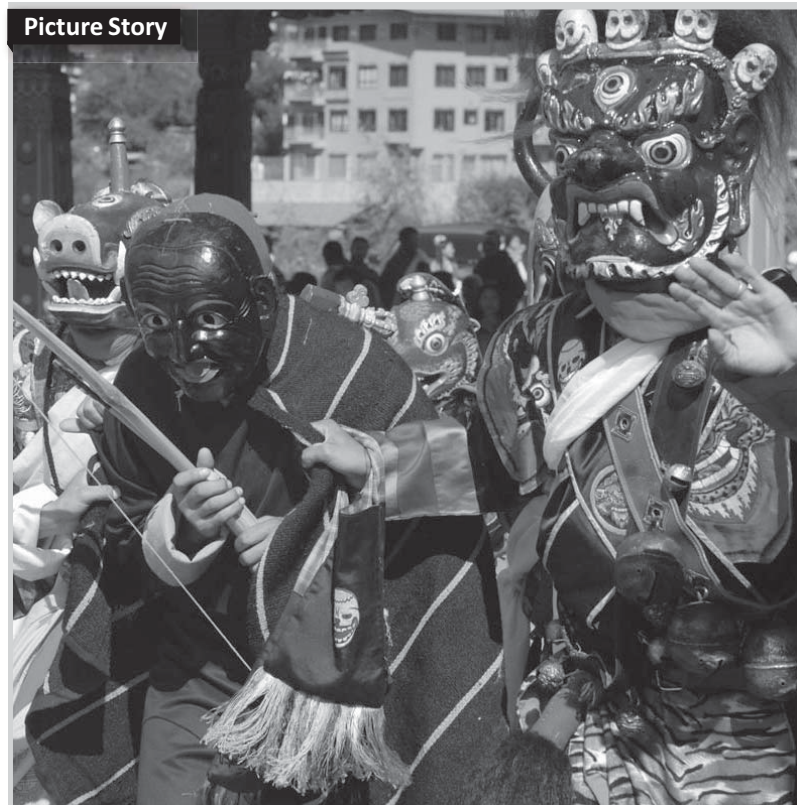
rector of the economic affairs ministry, said that an independent office is necessary for the tour operators so that TCB will know which office is located where.

Sangay Wangchuk, the director of Etho Metho Tours and Treks, said that each and every tour operator has obligation to generate income for the nation and moral responsibility to provide meaningful and gainful employment.

What TCB is doing right now will only professionalise Bhutanese tour operators. But doing inspection, he said, is just waste of time. Instead TCB should look into indirect impacts like how much the tour operators earn and pay to the government, he added.

Sangay Wangchuk said that the minimum expenditure to run the office comes to about Nu 10 million a year, which may not be much of a problem for big operators. But it is difficult for the small operators.

The inspection will be complete by tomorrow. After the inspection, TCB will convene a meeting to decide what to do with the issue.



A scene from the second day of Thimphu Tshechu. Drenagchung (right), the prosecutor of sinners after death, drags away Digchen Nyelwabum (condemned sinner) after his defendant, Lhakarchu, loses his case on the day of judgment after death. This symbolic depiction of judgement of the dead is part of every tshechu in Bhutan.

## CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATES

NOTE	BUY	SELL
US Dollar	53.45	55.20
Pound	86.55	88.95
Euro	69.15	71.10
Yen(100)	68.40	70.35
Swiss Franc	57.20	58.85
Hongkong Dollar	6.90	7.10
Canadian Dollar	54.55	56.10
Australian Dollar	55.55	57.10
Singapore Dollar	43.60	44.85
Danish Kroner	9.30	9.55
Norwegian Kroner	9.30	9.60
Swedish Kroner	8.15	8.35

Courtesy: bob.bt

As on September 21, 2012



## Forecast Broadcast

Between September 28 and October 04 the auspicious direction advised before undertaking any important activity are north and east.



### FRIDAY-SEPTEMBER 28

**Auspicious for:** Propitiating god and deities, conducting cha-gug yanglen, entering a new house, handing and taking over anything, holding discussion, starting a construction of new house, sowing seeds and planting flowers but it is sheza (unfavorable day) for the people born in the year of rat and hog. **Inauspicious for:** Hoisting prayer flag and taking out new born baby.



### SATURDAY-SEPTEMBER 29

**Auspicious for:** Propitiating god and deities, conducting cha-gug yanglen, conducting gin-seg, holding discussion, calling upon superior, starting business, organizing and celebrating event, making and taking medicine, starting education and shifting house. **Inauspicious for:** Conducting consecration and empowerment ceremonies, conducting ritual rites for dead, taking out dead body and paying grain debt.



### SUNDAY-SEPTEMBER 30

**Auspicious for:** Conducting consecration and empowerment ceremonies, propitiating god and deities, handing and taking over anything, sowing seeds and planting flowers, starting business, making and taking medicine, welcoming and seeing off guest, learning astrology and grammar, entering a new house and calling upon superior. **Inauspicious for:** Conducting gin-seg and sri-nen and celebrating wedding.



### MONDAY-OCTOBER 01

**Auspicious for:** Making incense-offering and conducting purification rituals and making daily offerings. **Inauspicious for:** Construction of new ten-sum, conducting consecration and empowerment ceremonies, propitiating god and deities, conducting cha-gug yanglen, making offering to naga, starting business, holding discussion, sowing seeds and planting flowers, starting construction of new house, making and taking medicine, shifting house, conducting ritual rites for dead and paying grain debt.



### TUESDAY-OCTOBER 02

**Auspicious for:** Making incense-offering and conducting purification rituals and making daily offerings. **Inauspicious for:** Construction of new ten-sum, conducting consecration and empowerment ceremonies, arranging marriage, conducting gin-seg, shifting house, starting construction of new house, taking out dead body, starting business, making and taking medicine, calling upon superior, holding discussion, seeking divination.



### WEDNESDAY-OCTOBER 03

**Auspicious for:** Construction of new ten-sum, propitiating god and deities, conducting gin-seg, making offering to naga, arranging marriage, shifting house, starting construction of new house, sowing seeds and planting flowers, starting business, making and taking medicine, calling upon superior, joining monastic body and holding discussion but it is sheza (unfavorable day) for the people born in the year of ox, sheep, dog and dragon. **Inauspicious for:** Conducting consecration and empowerment ceremonies and conducting tor-zor.



### THURSDAY-OCTOBER 04

**Auspicious for:** Making incense-offering and conducting purification rituals and making daily offerings. **Inauspicious for:** Propitiating god and deities, making offering to naga, starting construction of new house, shifting house, handing and taking over anything, undertaking long journey, making and taking medicine, welcoming and seeing off guest, organizing and celebrating event, calling upon superior, paying grain debt and conducting ritual rites for dead.

## From the Bodhi tree



### EVERYONE CAN CRY AND LAUGH

The tradition of Shambhala is like the rising of the sun. When the sun rises, everybody is able to see it. The fundamental or ultimate sun lies in the hearts of all people. Therefore, everyone possesses fundamental well-being, brilliance, and purity, Whoever a person is, he or she is capable of crying and also capable of laughing. That is the indication that everyone has the Great Eastern Sun within them.

-Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche



### THE BIOGRAPHY OF ZHABDRUNG NGAWANG NAMGYAL

#### CHAPTER 9: PROPHECY FOR FOUNDING A STATE

*A state to uphold the teachings*

Not long after, Zhabdrung Rinpoche again remembered the deeds and accomplishments of great Kagyu masters like Milarapa and Gyalwa Lorepa. This inspired him to consider undergoing meditative retreat again. It was then that in a vision Yab Tenpai Nyima revealed a prophecy concerning the need to establish a state based on the dual system of spiritual teachings and secular undertaking. The image of Yab Tenpai Nyima also spoke about the need for establishing a state.

While seeking guidance for Rangjung Khasarpani, it indicated that establishing a state then was far better than entering meditative retreat. He saw many dreams in which Sri Mahakala (dpal ye shes mgon po), Palden Lhamo (pal ldan lha mo) and the Raven-Headed Protector (mgon po bya rog gdong can) as well as other protective deities implored him to establish a state vowing their support and undertaking any task entrusted to them.

He consulted Yongzin lhawang Lodro who said that he must practice the Yidam deity Bhairava in order to gain control over all gods, demi-gods and humans. So he again took to the Dudul cave Chagri monastery to conduct the retreat for the sadhana of Vajra Bhairava. After all the outer, inner and secret signs of meditative accomplishment were realized, he subdued all the non-human spirits, and eight classes of gods and demons of Lhomon bound them to a perpetual oath to protect the teachings.

It was then that the new Tsang Desi Karma Tenchong Wangpo summoned all Tibetan tantrikas to Shigatse in order to revenge the death of his parents caused by Zhabdrung Rinpoche's sorcery. He instructed that their sorcery must achieve the objective of harming Zhabdrung Rinpoche. Although the tantrikas said it wouldn't be possible to harm the Drukpa family lineage-holder, one of them insisted that unless sorcery in making preparations such as pouring blood in a triangular metal container and summoning Zhabdrung's life-force magically to their presence.

*to be continued...*

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### HAPPINESS

"Dad, everyone is looking for happiness. But what is meant by happiness?" This was one of the questions a wise boy in India, Svetaketu, put to his father many centuries ago.

"One of the signs of happiness, son, is that a person who has it becomes active. A person who does not find happiness does not feel like being active. His mind is cramped, his will is weak. What is vast and in-

finite brings happiness. There is no true joy in what is small or finite. I can tell you that the infinite alone is happiness; but you must desire to understand this infinite, my son."

"I want to understand it, dad," said Sveta-ketu. "Good," said his father. "Then you must listen carefully to what I say and think deeply about it: "When a person sees that nothing and no one is sep-

arate from him, that he is one with all the people, animals, and objects in the universe, when a person sees and hears and knows nothing else that is the infinite.

"But, if one sees or feels some other thing, obstructing him, separating him, then that is the finite. He has not yet found the infinite. "The infinite never passes away; it lasts forever; but what is finite will pass away."



## CAMPUS

### RIHS rediscovers its socio-cultural life

The students and teachers of Royal Institute of Health Sciences (RIHS) in Thimphu went for a picnic on May 25 to Kuenselphodrang, commonly known as Buddha Point.

As dawn broke on the picnic day, the counsellors and some students were busy arranging things and transporting them to the picnic spot. Director, lecturers and supporting staff, along with their families, joined the institute family to celebrate the day.

The students said that picnic was a good event for classmates and teachers to catch up with one another and to celebrate the day like one big family. For them, it was also a break from their usual routine in the institute.

Amid whispering pine trees and refreshing soft breeze, there were cultural and dance items by the students. As the whole family indulged themselves in music, refreshments flowed in abundance.

In a city that has few social spac-



RIHS family chill out in the pine forest of Kuenselphodrang

es like parks, Kuenselphodrang, which overlooks the sprawling Thimphu city, serves as a refreshing spot for people to gather and socialize. For an institute family like RIHS, it's important to meet informally beyond the campus.

At 1:30 pm, the grand lunch was served. On the menu were some of the favourite Bhutanese dishes served in generous amounts.

After the lunch, the highlight of

the programme was couple dances, solo songs from final year students and group dances with the lecturers.

When the celebrations ended at 4:30 pm, everybody had rediscovered their social and cultural life long lost to the bustle of academic activities.

*Chimi Lhamo  
GNM 2<sup>nd</sup> Year, RIHS*

## KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION

### ILCS starts Bhutan and Himalayan Studies

Institute of Language and Culture Studies (ILCS) in Taktse, Trongsa, has introduced a new undergraduate programme called Bhutan and Himalayan Studies (BHS).

The course will mainly focus on an in-depth study of the culture, history and traditions of Bhutan in context of other Himalayan cultures. The course will enhance the students' research knowledge in cultures and traditions of the Himalayas. The course is expected to enable the students to interpret, compare, describe and narrate historical and cultural background of Bhutan and other Himalayan countries.

BHS is a three-year general programme. Students will be offered the honours programme in the fourth year if they fulfill the minimum requirement marks. The course will have five modules every semester.

"This course is the first of its kind in the RUB system and in South Asia. Being the pioneer,



The new ILCS campus in Taktse, Trongsa

the institute will develop linkages between RUB and universities abroad to attract foreign students and scholars in the future," said Lopen Ngawang, the programme leader and developer.

The course is also expected to address contemporary issues and challenges facing the Himalayan societies as they will be grounded in the development philosophy of Gross National Happiness. The BHS graduates will be expected

to have complete knowledge on the Himalayan history and culture of Bhutan and other Himalayan countries.

The Academic Board of the RUB approved BHS programme during its meeting on May 3 and 4 this year. The board in the same meeting approved B.Sc in Sustainable Development in College of Natural Resources.

*Kunzang Pem  
3<sup>rd</sup> Year, ILCS*

## PERSPECTIVE

### Documenting our fish diversity



Based on the collections made during William Griffith's Bhutan expedition in 1835, McClelland in 1839 reported the existence of Gray's stone loach (*Balitora brucei*) and Snow trout (*Schizothorax richardsonii*) in Bhutan. However, actual field survey of ichthyo-fauna in Bhutan started only in 1976, when G.P. Dubey was assigned by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of United Nations to assess the potential of fishery development in Bhutan.

Subsequently, in 1978 Dubey reported 42 fish species from Bhutan, eight of which were exotics. Brown trout (*Salmo trutta fario*) made its entry into the country in 1930. In 2005, based on the survey of rivers in the Bomdeling Wildlife Sanctuary, Bhattarai and Thinley extended the fish diversity of Bhutan to 52 species. In 2007, the list increased to 53 species when Dema (in Kuensel) reported the existence of the Tibetan Stone Loach (*Triplophysa stoliczkae*) in Bhutan.

A total of 520 species of fish have been reported from the Eastern Himalayan region and 213 taxa from Arunachal Pradesh in Northeast India. But the diversity of the ichthyo-fauna of Bhutan remains underexplored.

With the aim to fill the existing knowledge gap, a survey of the fish diversity of Bhutan was conducted in 2011 by two B.Sc. students of College of Natural Resources in Lobesa. The survey reported a preliminary checklist of 85 species of fish found in Bhutan. Of these, 12 were introduced species, brought in deliberately or unintentionally.

Some of the prominent exotic species worth mentioning here include the Brown trout, Rainbow trout, and Walking catfish (*Clarias* sp.). Reports from around the world often indicate ecological impacts where these species are introduced, due mostly to their carnivorous feeding habits.

In Bhutan, while the Brown trout and Rainbow trout were introduced through government programmes, other species like the Walking catfish were introduced unintentionally, mainly through tshethar (compassionate release of live animals) in the water bodies of the southern border towns. Introduction of exotic species is among the factors that affect the conservation of native ichthyo-fauna diversity in Bhutan.

Habitat fragmentation and climate change also affect the conservation of ichthyo-fauna in Bhutan. Fragmentation of river ecosystem is mainly attributed to the construction of hydropower dams that form barriers to fish migration. Migratory species like the Golden mahseer (*Tor* spp.) are likely to be at higher risk from such barriers. Likewise, small changes in river water temperatures due to climate change are likely to affect the seasonal behaviour of many fish species.

For example, species which use water temperature as an environmental cue (e.g. as migration or spawning trigger) are likely to respond to the changing water temperature early in the season.

Considering the inadequate knowledge of fish diversity in Bhutan, a nationwide survey and documentation of the country's ichthyo-fauna diversity is critical. Such surveys could cover areas that have not been explored yet.

*By D. B. Gurung (PhD), Dean of Academic Affairs  
College of Natural Resources, RUB*



# Looking to Bhutan for activating Mid-East peace talks

Mostafa Vaziri

Given the global issues at stake, an unconventional set of options and approaches are perhaps needed more than ever. Today, tensions between the US, Iran and Israel continue to peak. And yet few humane and wise options have been explored, particularly by compassionate and non-partisan parties, even as these countries are in the process of imploding and are walking the path of a regional and global chronic quandary. A compassionate and non-partisan intervention is exactly what's needed, and Bhutan and its former king seem to be the perfect option. Bhutan is a small, lesser-known Buddhist country that is not an active entity in international peace talks. However, Bhutan's track record over the last thirty years in their domestic politics, development, preservation of culture and most importantly, respect for human values, suggests that this non-partisan country could be the perfect mediator between countries whose agendas have led them to repeated deadlocks, considering few options besides war. In this context it is important to see why the Fourth King of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, who guided his country into a democratic and fast developing state and then relinquished his palace life to retreat into forest life despite the wishes of his people who wanted him to stay in charge, is the best choice to bring these angry and power-oriented parties to the table and share with them a lasting wisdom – to bring them to peace in the beginning, without waiting for the brutal end.

## The Fourth King of Bhutan Can Lead Us Out of Political Darkness

The harmony of humanity and its pursuit of peace and security must come from within, not from without. It is a short-sighted illusion to seek external answers that will lead to peacefulness. The core meaning of these phrases is found in the notion of "Gross National Happiness" (GNH) introduced by the Fourth King of Bhutan in the 1970s. The notion and implementation of GNH should not be misunderstood: it is not about the happiness of individuals, it is about the policies of a country being focused on the well-being of the society as a whole. The king encouraged the Bhutanese people to find balance and move forward by depending on core values already available to them without depending on outside illusory materialism, while also avoiding the conventional, selfish attitude of becoming wealthy and powerful at the cost of exploiting one another. On the philosophical and spiritual level, in fact, this is the central teaching of

the Buddha, who found that the key was to unlock the inner workings of the mind in which all solutions and final liberation from confusion, greed and aversion could be found.

Gross National Happiness is based on four crucial pillars for fullest meaning. These four pillars are: the promotion and preservation of culture, preservation and protection of the environment, good governance, and sustainable and just socioeconomic prosperity for all. By basing its society on the health of these four pillars, Bhutan is saying that you cannot save yourself at the expense of others. For those countries that are in conflict, the corresponding message is: you can't become mighty and domineering without it being at the expense of others. And when this happens, there will always be unwanted consequences.

On the political level, the Bhutanese scenario seems to embody what Plato conceptualized in his description of an ideal society. In the same vein, the Islamic philosopher of the 10th century, al-Farabi, expounded on the creation of an ideal city, or a city of awareness (madinat al-fadila), in which a Sufi or enlightened philosopher becomes king. The Fourth King of Bhutan seems to have become a philosopher-king, fulfilling the platonic and farabian notions that philosophers are the most suitable leaders in order to actualize the highest ideals for their subjects. One could also say that the Fourth King represents a bodhisattva in Mahayana Buddhist context. A bodhisattva is a Buddha, a being who is born to assist others in finding the path for their well-being. This king in reality walked in the footsteps of the Buddha when he gave up his kingdom, thus setting the wheel of wisdom and liberation in motion.

As a non-conventional politician, the king retreated into the forest after introducing the momentous and powerful concept of Gross National Happiness to guide the development of his country. He relinquished greed, power and domination in a manner that has no classical or modern political precedent. He is a king revolting against the idea of dictatorship with persistent defiance against the medieval mode of beliefs among his own people. He is perhaps a mirror image of whom we wish would govern our world. The fourth king of Bhutan may stand as the ideal "king of the world", or a role-model for the world governments.

It is too narrow to call his approach to the policy of well-being as Gross National Happiness but should instead be expanded to Gross Global Happiness. Can this king serve as the philosopher-king of the world to guide its global citizens to a meaningful and promising

future? And can he start this work by offering counsel to the three countries, the United States, Iran and Israel? Can he convince the leaders of these countries that power-politics, geo-politics, military strategies, and all other technical calculations will be useless and immature if the population of one country enjoys security at the cost of other peoples and nations?

## The Debacle of Middle East and the US Deadlock

The three clever countries in conflict, namely the US, Israel and Iran, have large educated populations, and yet their leaders and policy-makers fail to recognize that a military plan to save their people is an oxymoron which in fact leads them into more insecurity and unwanted violence. It is easy to condemn one country or another for having a rogue militaristic and political attitude, seeking to dominate or not be dominated. Yet each one has reason enough to defend individual arguments while discarding other options. The world can no longer operate in a post-world-war II mode by just pushing buttons and dropping bombs on our enemies. 'Our' enemies are parents and children who are loved by their families and friends and are those who could be shown gestures of kindness and equanimity rather than just military superiority and threat. Such gestures determine the direction of common sense which is one step away from taking either the path of reason or violence; the resulting path depends on which one we focus on and stimulate. The king can perhaps be a reminder of the path of reason and GNH, happiness and well-being for the people of all nations. not just selected ones with high political incentives enforced by a military might. The two relentless wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the war-mongering towards a potential third war in the region between Israel and Iran show that war continues to be false solution.

The US and Israel allegedly claim that Iran's nuclear projects are intended to dominate the region and suggest that Iran plans to attack mighty Israel. However, intelligent people know that it is impossible for Iran to think of attacking Israel with its assumed future nuclear arsenal because the inferno of nuclear retaliation by the two nuclear powers will in fact turn on Iran itself. So this is not the problem, nor can it be the viable reason to go to war. The US and Israel simply wish for Iran to disappear as a power contender in the region. Iran also wants the US and Israel, despite their differences, to close their calculating eyes and accept Iran as a player in the regional and global



## Looking to Bhutan for activating Mid-East peace talks

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politics. Certainly the complexity of these politics and the tension in the Middle East does not make it easy for any party to be a peace broker, even the United Nations.

The missing link is that everyone with natural reason would like peace, not war, but no one knows how the illusory peace can be obtained. Do average people of these three countries support domination of another, or even wish for a war? It is unreasonable to assume that threat and subjugation are the only options, considering the universal human values of peace and dignity. So what is it that perpetuates this cycle? What is lacking to take us one step further towards achieving a peaceful negotiation in the beginning, instead of a ceasefire at the end? Is it a personal and global wisdom crisis? Is it the stubbornness of politicians who fatally fail to see the views of the other side and thus continually lead their countries and young soldiers into a war? Are we seeing material dominance at the cost of losing our collective sanity and well-being?

Why do we like to punish others instead of analyzing ourselves? Ego, greed, aversion, jealousy, competition, and ignoring consequences, are the distasteful poisons at the root of our conflicts. It seems there is nothing new in human history; the reality of war has remained, while peace seems to be a cloud-like fantasy in our daily conversations unless shifts in our attitude and behavior begin to be reinvented. Someone has to stop the vicious madness of war in the name of security, engaging in a vengeful attitude and deadly competition for domination. Conventional conflict-resolution which has been solely centered

on power-politics has proven to be *démodé*, obsolete and undignified. The peoples of the US, Israel and Iran have yet to use their utmost wisdom and life experiences as human beings in order to take greater responsibility in slowing down their fast-calculating politicians in the unwise wars for domination and containment. Someone from outside the twisted logic of war is needed to bring in the logic of peace and awaken the reality of our coexistence and survival as a species.

### An Appeal to Bhutan's King to Sponsor Peace

The philosopher-king of Bhutan could be this person of wisdom and peace. It is the perfect match: a neutral country with a well-accomplished wise king bringing the three countries together for real talks of peace and a better world. Isn't this the aspiration of Plato and Farabi? Isn't this what every wise person wants for the world? The Fourth King's karma has brought him the grace to prevent his country from blind materialism and dark dictatorship; it is perhaps in his karma to be the counselor for global peace and security as well.

Let us propose that the leaders of the three countries come to the clear, pollution-free mountain air of Bhutan, with its practical and concrete implementation of GNH, to learn about the wisdom of global happiness, self-awareness and self-control. These educated and powerful leaders could become more humble, listening and accepting the wise counsel of the Fourth King of Bhutan. Together they could create a Gross Global Happiness philosophy with the strong consideration of

preserving our human diversity, cultures, and environment, bringing sustainable prosperity to the people of the Middle East and the world, rethinking their religious, global and strategic ambitions.

If, however, the US, Israel and Iran refuse to come together for the sake of wise peace, or if the king wishes to stay away from Middle East politics, let us at least keep in mind that the ultimate destiny lies not in vicious domination and competition, but rather in the wisdom of awareness of self and respect for others.

### Conclusion

The substance of political debate will at the end have to give in to a higher order of values, which will lead us to a platonic ideal society in which we can live in peace with one another. This may seem idealistic but at last there is a functional model that we can look to, the Bhutanese model. The premise of this article shows that our philosophers, poets and peace-loving dreamers should be given a say, since the power politicians have had their chance. Therefore this is a call to reach out to King Jigme Singye Wangchuck for his assistance as well as a call to the leaders of the US, Israel and Iran to come together, not just to avoid a war but to pioneer a new set of laws and practices for peace, prosperity and understanding in the world.

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## Lyonchhen to address UN General Assembly in New York, the USA



PM with the President of the Republic of Albania

Lyonchhen Jigmi Y Thinley, who is in New York this week, will address the United Nations General Assembly today.

Lyonchhen met former president of Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Gjorge Ivanov, prime minister of Somalia, Abdiweli Mohamed Ali, president of Republic of Albania, Bujar Nishani, foreign minister of Algeria, Mourad Medelci, and minister of foreign affairs and trades of republic of Korea, Kim Sung-Hwan, in New York, the USA.

Lyonchhen is in New York, leading a delegation for the 67<sup>th</sup> Session of General Assembly of United Nations. Lyonchhen and the leaders discussed bilateral relations and potential areas of cooperation, including cooperation at the UN.

The high-level segment of the General Debate opened today under the Presidency of Vuk Jeremic of Serbia.

Minister-in-charge of foreign affairs, Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, met Nebojša Kaludjerović, minister of foreign affairs and European Integration of Montenegro.

