

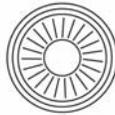
# **Portrait of a Leader**



# **Portrait of a Leader**

**Through the Looking-Glass of His Majesty's Decrees**

**Mieko Nishimizu**



**The Centre for Bhutan Studies**

**Portrait of a Leader**  
Through the Looking-Glass of His Majesty's Decrees

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*To Three Precious Jewels of the Thunder Dragon,*

*His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, Druk Gyalpo IV,*

*His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, Druk Gyalpo V*

*and*

*The People of Bhutan,*

*of whom Druk Gyalpo IV has said,*

*“In Bhutan, whether it is the external fence or the internal wealth,*

*it is our people.”*





The Author of Gross National Happiness, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Fourth Druk Gyalpo of the Royal Kingdom of Bhutan



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## **Preface**

On 14 December 2006, His Majesty the King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Druk Gyalpo IV, shocked the nation by announcing his abdication. The transfer of power to His Majesty the King Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, Druk Gyalpo V, had already taken place on 9 December 2006 – simply between the two Kings, in the small office of the Druk Gyalpo at Tashichho Dzong.

If the people of Bhutan were stunned by the announcement, so was the rest of the world that heard the news. Whether or not they knew anything of the country, the abdication surprised all, and put Bhutan squarely on the map. The world, after all, had never known a monarch who not only spearheaded political reforms to democracy, but also chose to abdicate the throne on his own terms – at the peak of popularity, in the fullest of his time.

The original idea for this book belongs to Dasho Karma Ura, Director of the Centre for Bhutan Studies. He asked me to write a book “in tribute to the reign of Druk Gyalpo IV, to illustrate how His Majesty’s decrees embodied thoughts and actions that were, in an international context of nation building, ahead of the times.” To be entrusted with such an assignment was a great honour, which I felt I could not refuse.

When I read through the entire collection of His Majesty’s decrees for the first time, however, I realized that I had accepted the task too hastily. It became plainly obvious that I could neither do justice to Dasho Karma Ura’s vision of the book, nor to His Majesty’s decrees themselves. But, as I kept reading through the collection over and over again, the decrees began to paint a portrait of His Majesty as a leader. And, that portrait revealed what was truly

*ahead of the times* – the character of His Majesty's leadership itself.

The 51 royal decrees reproduced in this volume, in Bhutan's national language Dzongkha and in English translation, are from Dasho Karma Ura's private collection. There are many other decrees, which were issued to individual citizens, giving land grants for instance. Dasho Karma Ura's collection consists of those that were issued on matters of national significance or of public policy.

Nearly all the decrees are dated, but they are not presented chronologically. Instead, they are organized according to eight dimensions of leadership, into which the decrees sorted themselves out naturally. On one fine summer day, when the first draft of this book was beginning to take shape, a notion stuck me as if by some divine intervention – each leadership dimension corresponded to one of the eight auspicious symbols of Buddhism. An auspicious symbol thus adorns each section, accompanied by its meaning in the tradition of Bhutan.

The eight leadership dimensions are the following, in the order of the book's sections: foresight, humility, head-and-heart conviction, good management, emotional intelligence, sensing the closure, empowering the people, and the perfect departure. Each section is self-contained, so that the readers may begin anywhere, and choose to peruse only those sections that interest them. It goes without saying that my own narrative is kept as brief as possible, since it is His Majesty's decrees themselves that speak volumes.

I have already said that this book could not have been written without the vision and goodwill of Dasho Karma Ura. To him, I am immeasurably indebted. Lyonpo Sonam

Tobgye, Chief Justice of Bhutan, took the trouble of reading the draft manuscript and provided me with insightful comments. I am most grateful to his wisdom and encouragement.

Neither could the book have been written without Lhindrup Zangpo of Thimphu District Court, who translated most of the decrees from Dzongkha to English, and Lham Dorji, Thinley Jamtsho, Dorji Penjore and their colleagues at the Centre for Bhutan Studies, who provided able research assistance. To all, I offer my heartfelt thanks. Last but not the least, I thank *Kuensel* and particularly Dasho Kinley Dorji, Editor-in-Chief, for the permission to reprint two articles and one editorial that accompany His Majesty's final decree in the last section of the book.

It is the inspiration radiating from the reign of Druk Gyalpo IV (r. 1972~2006) that gave birth to this volume. His Majesty inspired countless many both at home and abroad throughout the 34 years of his glorious reign. World leaders and heads of state were so moved that they would change the way they think and where they stood on issues of global consequences. School children were so motivated and villagers in remote hamlets so touched that they would raise their sights high, for the good of the nation. Leaders of Bhutan who have served to build the nation were also inspired, energized and groomed by His Majesty in all sorts of ways.

It is my wish that the people of Bhutan and of nations beyond, both of today and of morrow, would look to His Majesty as their role model so that they too can exercise their own leadership. What we do at home or at work may remain unchanged. Yet, the character of His Majesty's leadership will shed light on why we do what we do, change how we think about what we do, and help us tap

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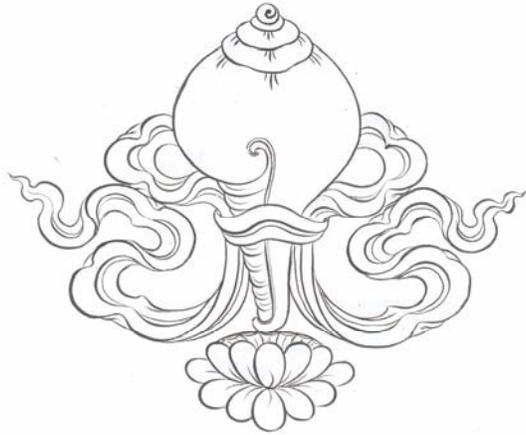
the power within to act without – to transform each of our spheres a better place for our families, friends, neighbours, colleagues, fellow citizens, and thus for the humanity.

If this book can aid in some measure even one citizen of our world to exercise her or his leadership, in as sterling a manner as His Majesty has done, I will be most humbly content.

Tashi Delek!

17 December 2007  
Punakha, Bhutan

Mieko Nishimizu



*The White Conch that coils to the right represents*

*Buddha's Voice.*

*It symbolises deep, far-reaching and powerful sound*

*of the Dharma, which*

*frees all sentient beings from predispositions and aspirations,*

*awakens them from slumber of ignorance, and*

*urges them to accomplish enlightenment and others' welfare.*

## ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

If there is to be a singular character that sets apart outstanding leaders from the rest, it is foresight. Not necessarily the ability to predict future events, but the capacity to envision the future in its alternative manifestations in relation to actions or situations of the present.

Indeed, whether in business, politics, or military, outstanding leaders make sensing the future their central undertaking. As such, their work frequently bears the hallmark of being *ahead of the times*.

Foresight is a golden thread that runs through His Majesty's decrees. It is a particularly noteworthy feature of decrees in this section, especially the decree addressed to "The Planning Commission" (1986), and ones on "Special Commission" (1985), and on "Religion" (1988).

The decree issued to the Planning Commission warrants attention, especially by economists and development practitioners. On fundamental principles that frame the sixth five-year plan, His Majesty instructs the Commission that *"the basis for the evaluation of the achievements of the sixth plan is to see whether the people enjoy happiness and comfort"*. It is a relatively recent thinking that socio-economic development plans must be evaluated according to their outcomes, as opposed to counting outputs and inputs. Even to this day, such a practice has not taken roots.

It is by now well known that His Majesty coined the term, Gross National Happiness. To regard people's happiness as the outcome of public policy and investment is only just beginning to gain acceptance in economics and other branches of social science.

While its practice in governments has not taken hold anywhere around the world, developments akin to Gross National Happiness now define the frontier of business. Leaders of foresight are taking “corporate social responsibilities” (often referred to as CSR) seriously in their corporate strategy, because it is good for the sustainability of their business in the long term.

The world’s capital markets are also responding. Leading financial houses are rating corporate performance according to CSR, influencing companies’ fund-raising capacity. Financial institutions are also offering new instruments for “socially responsible investments”, thus linking CSR companies with those investors who seek long-term security, as opposed to mere short-term gains, of their money.

Indeed, His Majesty was quite *ahead of the times*.

Collectively, this section’s decrees convey a unique message on national security: It is ultimately the people’s sense of identity with their nation’s distinct heritage that safeguards sovereignty.

Just as the late Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, Druk Gyalpo III (r. 1952~1972), “*made it possible for Bhutan to get all the entitlements of independence, which other countries get as of right*”, the future envisaged in these decrees is one where sovereignty cannot be taken for granted. Sovereignty is considered as something to be worked on, consciously and continuously, by everyone.

Happiness of the people – the outcome to be sought in social, economic, and political development – is deemed impossible without the security of sovereign Bhutan. And, it is the “*distinct identity of our county*”, and not the nation’s “*wealth, weapons and armed forces*”, that becomes the vital instrument to secure the sovereignty.

To be sure, there are two points reflected in these decrees that are commonly not well understood, even within Bhutan itself. First, the decrees do not regard the identity with expressions of culture (such as dress, language, and etiquette) as having to preserve the heritage unchanged. Rather, that heritage is seen as a dynamic and evolving one. Second, the cultural heritage of Bhutan is not contemplated as that of monoculture, but one that embraces religious and ethnic heterogeneity. What is deemed essential is its distinct character that makes Bhutan obviously different from the rest of the world.

The thinking embodied in these decrees was quite alien to the mainstream of human knowledge, in the 1980s when they were issued. It is only in recent years that they would find the like-minded, with critics of globalization prominently among them. Just as His Majesty lamented, *“I am saddened by the fact that our people copy the culture of other countries”*, those critics are troubled by imported culture supplanting local ones. They fear the erosion of cultural diversity of humanity, under the influence of globalization.

When these decrees were issued, in fact, the concept of globalization itself had not yet entered the realm of popular discourse, the domain of public policy and international affairs, or even the corridors of academia. Thus, it could be said that His Majesty is the world’s first critic of globalization – quite *ahead of the times*.

Today, people of nations both large and small, or rich and poor, are beginning to experience the loss of their cultural identity. They are sensing various risks to the human bond of community and nationhood, which they have long taken for granted. Anti-globalization activists of varying convictions continue to voice these concerns. But, no other national leaders have emerged to harvest the sense of their people, reflect on it as a matter of national security, and translate their fears into positive and constructive actions –

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safeguarding sovereignty and valuing cultural diversity as their nation's wealth, at the same time.

## **1. To the Director of Health**

Though our country is very small in size, there is no problem of over-population as our population growth and birth rate are very low. We understand the problems other countries face due to over-population. There is no doubt that over-population will retard our developmental process. We, therefore, need to think of solutions from now only. For example, our government currently can provide food, education and healthcare as our population is very low and we need to import only few things. This helps us in saving foreign currency. The growth of population will definitely impede our country's development and reduce per capita income one day, and create problems for the Department of Planning and Development. Thus, we need to control our population henceforth.

Since couple of years back, the death rate has drastically decreased while the birth rate has increased. Besides the development of our country, it is important to properly plan childcare and find ways of controlling birth rate.

Therefore, all our youth should collectively help and support the family planning programme. You should promote and implement the family planning programme to ensure that our people are happy with maximum development in the country while at the same time controlling population explosion.

Issued in the 7<sup>th</sup> Month of the Wood-Rat Year (1984).

**Druk Gyalpo**

## **2. To Special Commission**

Our leaders and ancestors have considered our religion and etiquette as the backbone of our country and we have been enjoying peace and happiness with Mahayana Buddhism as our religion.

It has been 24 years since we began our development plans and programmes for the public welfare, and it has benefited our people enormously. But I am saddened by the fact that our people copy the culture of other countries despite the existence of our distinct culture and etiquette, which is better than any other country's. If we do not think well at this juncture, we cannot preserve our religion and culture. This, as you know, would certainly affect our sovereignty.

If we are to remain sovereign for all times to come, it is important for us to serve our country with loyalty and dedication. Our government and public should think as one and protect our identity, culture and etiquette. Therefore, our National Assembly has decided several times that our government must promote our etiquette and culture as was done in the past. But our government has not identified any agency for that matter, and existing departments are not able to take on the responsibility due to many planned activities.

Therefore, in order to find ways of promoting our identity, culture and etiquette, and solve the problems relating to the above matter, I hereby establish the Special Commission with Minister Tamzhing Jagar as the head of the Commission, which will work as per my specific orders.

Issued on this 6<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Month of the Wood-Ox Year (23 July 1985).

**Druk Gyalpo**

### **3. To Punakha Dratshang**

On this 3<sup>rd</sup> Month of the Fire-Tiger Year, I acknowledge the receipt of your letter, which states that the continuous entry of foreign tourists into sacred places like dzongs, lhakhangs, goendheys etc., which are abodes to our guardian deities, is not based on faith or devotion but for entertainment purposes. I agree that it poses a risk of defilement of sacred and distinct places, and it would hinder our preservation efforts. The Dratshang expressed the same concern in the previous year as well. Therefore, I am ready to accept the prohibition as proposed by the Dratshang and Dratshang Lhentshog in consultation with the Department of Tourism, for the benefit of our country and religion. The sacred places depict our true identity, our sovereignty, our unique tradition and culture. Henceforth, it is important to conserve the consecration and blessings of our relics and make them the roots of future security and insurance rather than concentrating on temporary revenue generation. Since our religious ethics and discipline are degrading due to development projects of our country, I have no objection to whatever steps you take.

Issued on the 7<sup>th</sup> Day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Month of the Fire-Tiger Year (16 May 1986).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**4. To the Thrompon, Thimphu City Corporation**

We have been living in scattered and spacious villages since immemorial times. But when a city crops up in a small area like in other countries, problems might arise in the communal environment, and there is also a risk of fire accidents. As there is enough space for development of the city from north to south, the houses in Thimphu town should not be congested and adjoined as of today, but should be constructed on vacant land by properly spacing them. Further, it is decreed that you should think of developing the town by planting flowers in the vacant government land. The government land above the Motithang Hotel must be retained for promoting the flora and fauna.

Issued in this 4<sup>th</sup> Month of the Fire-Tiger Year (1986).

**Druk Gyalpo**

## **5. To the Planning Commission**

In the year 1960, my late father, His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck broke the isolationist policy of our country and introduced planned development activities in the country. He initiated a new era of community and economic development, strengthened our sovereignty, and made it possible for Bhutan to get all the entitlements of independence, which other countries get as a right. Therefore, looking at the improvement in the living standard of our communities, which were never heard of before, we are reassured without any doubt that our goals will be achieved well in future just as in the past. We now understand more about our incomplete works, our inabilities and the problems that arise with development activities.

Besides, we all know that the number of people who think they should not be too greedy but should strive to lead a life just without problems and hardships is increasing. Further, because of the existence of good religion and discipline from the times of our parents in our country, we enjoy perennial peace and happiness. Today, during my reign too, firstly with the blessings of our *Kencho sum*, secondly by the grace of our committed government and thirdly because of our luck, there is adequate improvement in the living standard and public welfare. However, we should endeavour more in future for the betterment of the country and people. If there is any one contravening the objectives of our country by going against the interests of our country or if anyone disobeys the orders of leaders, they will be given whatever punishment they are liable for, without any exemption.

Since it is time to begin the work for our Sixth Plan, I am commanding the Planning Commission to frame policies, and plan our programmes in such a way that we can achieve our goals. The policy should be compiled to include all the systems of community and economic development, and our political system. Moreover, our policies should be made according to the need of time and we should think deeply

about the future activities that are important for our country. Moreover, it was decreed that we should frame such policies, the execution of which will not affect our political system, our traditional etiquette, culture and religion.

Having thought of our country's objectives and interests, it is hereby decreed that our policies and plans should be made according to the following orders.

Our policies should altogether support the economic development, culture, religion and political system in order to achieve the objectives of our country and to strengthen and safeguard our identity.

We should find ways of improving the per capita income from the internal resources to achieve the objective of self-reliance.

We should endeavor to work harder for the public welfare and the development activities should be distributed according to the needs of all the villages.

The objective should be to increase the revenue according to the percentage of revenue received as expenditure for the development works within the planned period by the Planning Commission.

We should protect our intact environment in order to enjoy a better health.

Every individual must understand the need and importance of the objectives of the government and bear equal responsibility to promote the system of co-operation between our people and government.

Our government should be able to bear the responsibility of executing the functions for the benefit of the people and the country, and our people also should support in creating a strong and trustworthy government.

*Portrait of a Leader*

Further, it has been decided that the basis for the evaluation of the achievements of the objectives of the Sixth Plan is to see whether the people are happy and live a comfortable life.

This policy decree clearly shows our government's endeavour for economic development and the peace of our country. It indicates what our government should do, what development path our country should take and how impartial laws and security of our country should be maintained.

Issued on this 15<sup>th</sup> Day of the 7<sup>th</sup> Month of the Fire Tiger Year (27 September 1986).

**Druk Gyalpo**

## **6. To the Dzongdas, Gups, Chimis and the People**

Our noble leaders and benevolent parents have served the prophecy of the Buddha and built dzongs, lhakhangs, chortens, etc. for the prosperity of our posterity. Till today, the culture of renovating and protecting those monuments by carrying out philanthropic activities in their concerned villages, through co-operation between the private and government organizations has remained intact. It is known to everyone that our country, as a sovereign nation, has developed economically and intellectually, and has remained peaceful and prosperous with the children maintaining the legacies of our parents.

Despite our prayers to Lam Kencho Sum during the dangerous period of anti-nationals, the people who were carried away by the desire to be rich in this life have stolen the relics of 74 lhakhangs and 230 chortens within the past few years. This act is beyond reason and the number of such persons is increasing yearly. Therefore, we need to prevent such acts from the very beginning. If we fail to do so, all the relics in our country will be stolen and sold to foreign countries, which will render our country devoid of any relics. Since Bhutan is a Buddhist country, there is a great risk that such activities would retard Buddhism.

Therefore, the concerned lopens, koenyers and donors should perform timely rituals and offerings continuously in order to protect lhakhangs, goendheys, chortens, etc., and the statues, scriptures and stupas of the Buddha.

The proper methods of protection should be discussed in the Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogchungs. A security guard should be appointed for the important lhakhangs. The caretakers and security guards are hereby exempted from Goongdrang Woola. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogchung to monitor them.

*Portrait of a Leader*

Issued on this 30<sup>th</sup> Day of (illegible) Month of the Water-Female Bird Year (1993).

**Druk Gyalpo**

## **7. To the Home Minister**

Our dedicated and religious forefathers and our parents have maintained the legacy of the Buddha, which is the root of our happiness. They have built dzongs, lhakhangs, goendheys and religious objects of the Body, Speech and Mind of the Buddha with invaluable relics within them for the prosperity of the posterity. This system of safeguarding these monuments has remained intact till today.

However, it is said that 'where there is Dharma, there are devils too', and today with the change of time, some people, driven by their desires, have started stealing the invaluable nangtens from our lhakhangs and goendheys.

With the annual increase in the number of such people, it has reached a very critical stage, where they go to the extent of taking the lives of caretakers too. Moreover, due to the shortage of human resource and weapons, and the location of most of our lhakhangs and goendheys at different places, armed security guards cannot be arranged.

The idea of collecting all the Ku Sung Thuk Ten and guarding them will not work either for the reason that the sanctity of the lhakhangs and goendeys at different places would diminish or hesitating that something may happen to our people in villages. Our people too do not like the idea. However, for continued peace and prosperity in our country, it is very important to safeguard and protect our valuable relics.

Therefore, to protect them from burglars and fire, the government should install fire extinguishers for relics at places where there are valuable relics. It is hereby decreed that the work of installing fire extinguishers in lhakhangs and goendeys with valuable relics be immediately started.

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Issued on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of the 4<sup>th</sup> Month of the Earth-Rabbit  
Year (18 May 1999).

**Druk Gyalpo**



*The Precious Parasol represents*

*Buddha's Crown,*

*a canopy protecting his head from rain or sun.*

*It symbolises protection from harmful forces,*

*negative energy and heat of evil desires, and*

*signifies the enjoyment of benefits under its cool shade.*

## JUSTICE BORN OF HUMILITY

Like other nations without the history of colonial rule, Bhutan possesses a rich legal tradition that has evolved over centuries. Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal, Father of the Nation, laid the foundation for the contemporary Bhutanese legal system (codified in 1652). Principles of Buddhism and natural justice were embodied in the Zhabdrung Code, and have since remained at the heart of the nation's legal philosophy.

In Bhutan's judiciary system, the monarch has long served as the supreme court of appeal. It is not surprising, therefore, that His Majesty issued a large number of decrees on matters of various laws and the judiciary. Most of them are gathered in this section.

The present section, however, is not about justice as a legal principle, but is about justice as the core leadership value. Without admirable values that make a leader trustworthy in the eyes of the people, foresight – however distinguished – does not make a leader of any consequence. A sense of justice, born of humility, is the core value that is paramount for leadership.

*“The peace and happiness in a country depend on how properly, strongly and impartially the laws are governed. Therefore, it is important to select capable, impartial and good persons as the Judges ...”*, notes His Majesty, in the decree on “Appointment of the Judges” (1989). Indeed, good governance is impossible without a judiciary people can trust. As in all organizations, public or private, the source of that trust is the leadership of the judiciary.

Whether vested in a monarch or in anyone else, the supreme judiciary function demands legal substance, wisdom and good judgment, and most of all impeccable values. It can be surmised, however, that the responsibility would be far

weightier for the monarch than for Chief Justices of Supreme Courts elsewhere, simply because the nature of checks and balances is different.

To be sure, the National Assembly has the power to cast a vote of no confidence on a monarch (enacted at the initiative of Druk Gyalpo III in 1969, repealed unilaterally by the National Assembly in 1973, enacted again at the initiative of Druk Gyalpo IV in 1998, and now retained in the draft Constitution to be ratified in 2008). But, political realities that would cause the Assembly to resort to this power, and ensuing impeachment proceedings themselves, could spell an alarming instability of the nation itself.

Regardless of the throne's contestability, therefore, the supreme judiciary function would demand, in the very person of the monarch himself, values that are plainly above reproach. Put bluntly, it must surely be a humanly impossible duty.

Albeit not as extreme, people in leadership positions often face similar "holier than thou" expectations. How leaders manage them sets outstanding ones apart. Invariably, they do not shun, but speak directly to such expectations. They demonstrate openly that they are human beings after all, like everyone else. In the decrees of this section, His Majesty has done so at least in two ways.

One is to subject the monarch, and the royal family, to the same rule of law as all others. This is most explicitly seen in the decree addressed to the Home Minister (1986), which imposes the land holding ceiling on the royal family, "*as per the general laws of the land in the same manner*" as everyone else. Similarly, the decree on the matter of "The Judges of the High Court" (1996) begins by a strong reminder on equity: "*All the people in Bhutan, be they the royal family, civil or armed officials and the citizens, whether rich or poor, are equal before the law*".

The other is stating frankly that the monarch is not infallible. In the decree on “Charter Pertaining to Land” (1978), His Majesty does precisely that, and urges a thorough investigation regardless of whether a disputed land title was granted by “*the order of the late Majesty or my order*”. There is nothing more effective than for the people to hear their leaders admit errors in earnest, in erasing psychological barriers that separate them.

Decrees in this section are all highly technical in legal terms. Collectively, however, their substance conveys an acute sense of justice, and their words and turns of phrase voice the author’s humility. Indeed, no sound-minded Bhutanese citizen would have considered it rhetorical, when they heard His Majesty speak on the role of the monarch as “serving” the people.

Such a state of trust is never preordained, whether in politics, business or even in military. It is the fruit of the leadership’s real hard work, sustained consistently over time, out of the singular conviction to serve. This is the essence of a leadership style known today as “servant leadership”. It was articulated by Robert K. Greenleaf (1904~1990) to describe a leadership style he thought was missing from organizations:

“The servant-leader is servant first... It begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. He or she is sharply different from the person who is leader first, perhaps because of the need to assuage an unusual power drive or to acquire material possessions. For such it will be a later choice to serve – after leadership is established. ... The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. The best test ... is: do those served grow as persons; do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And, what is the effect on the least privileged in

society; will they benefit, or, at least, will they not be further deprived?" (*Servant As Leader*, 1970)

Greenleaf was an AT&T executive and management expert, whose work is beginning to influence a new generation of organizational leaders mainly in America and Europe. Servant leadership is now taught at leading Business Schools. It is practiced by some of the best in the corporate world. They see themselves as stewards of human and other resources, focused strategically on business outcomes aligned to their corporate vision and values. They stress the importance of "emotional intelligence", and ethical use of power with integrity, humility, compassion, trust and teamwork. (See the section, "An Emotional Journey", on emotional intelligence.)

His Majesty's leadership style was *ahead of the times*, indeed.

Servant leadership as practiced today is a history in the making – leaders of excellence and lasting legacy are those who are driven to lead because of their desire to serve, *not* because of their ambition for power.

While such leaders are increasing both in numbers and visibility in the business world, there is a curious scarcity among politicians. It is understandable, therefore, that the people of Bhutan voice their reluctance in embracing the parliamentary democracy. Unlike people of other nations, they know what it is like to have a servant leader at the top.

But, it is hoped that they would continue to value such leaders in electing those who represent them. It is also hoped that future political leaders of Bhutan would always look to His Majesty as the role model in exercising their mandate to serve the people – with a sense of justice born of true humility.

**8. Kadoen Ghapa (Charter C, issued to the Judiciary)**

1. According to Article 7 of the Druk Gyalpo's Charter 19, a judge cannot participate in a case where any of the litigants are related to himself, his wife, or even if a far relative. Thus, anyone coming to the High Court under the above circumstances will not be punished.

2. A judge cannot decide a case if the litigant is staying as his dependent, although he/she may not be in anyway related to him. Therefore, his opponent can appeal to the High Court.

3. If a party having filed a case in a dzongkhag court appeals to the High Court alleging that a particular judge has miscarried justice by accepting bribe or by indulging in deceitful practice, and as alleged if the misconduct of dzongkhag judge is found during the High Court's investigation, the appellant will not be punished for appealing.

4. If a litigant, who lost at the dzongkhag court, being held liable to pay four parts of fine, is now found liable to pay a part lesser by the High Court and the defendant, who won at the dzongkhag court, is liable to pay one-fourth of the penalty, then the defendant should be considered to have a cause to appeal. Therefore, he/she will not be punished for appealing.

5. If one of the parties appeals to the High Court from the decision of the dzongkhag court on the ground that the decision was not up to his expectations, and if the High Court finds out after investigation that his rights are no different from the decision of the dzongkhag court, then the appellant will have to bear the penalty and fines as prescribed in the *genja* of the dzongkhag court. In addition, he will be liable to an imprisonment for a term ranging from 1 to 12 months at the discretion of the judges. No fines in lieu of imprisonment shall be accepted.

6. If any party to a case appeals to the Druk Gyalpo from the decision of the High Court and if it is found upon review that his rights are the same as decided by the High Court, he will be liable to pay the penalty and fines prescribed by High Court in the genja, and will also be liable to an imprisonment for a term ranging from 3 months to 3 years. If the party who was found to be wrong appeals to the Druk Gyalpo before the case has been decided by the High Court, he will be imprisoned for 3 months to 3 years at the discretion of the judges, and no fines in lieu of imprisonment shall be accepted.

7. When a case has been investigated and decided that one of the parties is right and the other wrong, if the party who is proven to be wrong disagrees to sign or seal on the decision agreement or shows disrespect to the law during the court proceedings, it shall be considered as contempt of the court. Thereafter, the judges should sign and give a genja with all such details to the party proved to be right. The party violating the law should be imprisoned for a term ranging from 3 to 12 months at the discretion of the judges in proportion to his conduct.

8. If one of the parties to a case appeals to the High Court stating that the decision of the dzongkhag judges, rabjam gongmas or any other government official deciding the case, did not meet his expectations and if it is found by the High Court that such authority decided contrary to the law, the appellant should be considered to be aggrieved. If the said authority repeats such act, the judges of the High Court should report to the Druk Gyalpo and the punishment of such dzongkhag authority for deciding the case by setting the law aside will be according to the Druk Gyalpo's decree.

9. If one of the parties to a case appeals to the Druk Gyalpo stating that the decision of the High Court judges was contrary to the provisions of the law, and if it is found upon inquiry by the Druk Gyalpo that the party is truly aggrieved by the judges of the High Court involved in deceptive or illegal

practice, the punishment for such judges will be as per the Druk Gyalpo's decree.

10. Regardless of the gravity of the matter, the judges of the High Court should execute all legal processes, such as imprisoning the guilty, executing *bah*, imposing fine, imposing corporal punishment or whether to imprison or not, according to the Thrimzhung Chhenmo. If it is not clear in the Thrimzhung Chhenmo, it should be reported to the Druk Gyalpo alone, and no other ministers, officers and civil servants who are independent, and who do not participate in the job of the High Court shall participate either verbally or in writing, whether directly or indirectly.

(Undated)

**Druk Gyalpo**

**9. Kadoen Ghapa Ka (Charter C.a, issued to the Judiciary)**

1. All the cases of dzongkhags, whether big or small, should initially be filed in the trial court. They cannot be directly filed in the High Court without being filed in the dzongkhag court, except when it is not possible to file in the trial court for some other reasons.

2. According to Article 7 of the Druk Gyalpo's Charter 19, a judge cannot decide a case where he is related to a party. Therefore, if the other party during the proceedings of a case in a dzongkhag court approaches the High Court for the reason that his opponent is a relative of the dzongkhag judge, he will not be punished.

3. The party who is not related to the dzongkhag judge will not be punished for coming to the High Court, if his opponent is a dependent of the judge, for the reason as mentioned above.

4. The party will not be punished for appealing to the High Court, if it is decided by the High Court that the dzongkhag court has miscarried justice as alleged by the appellant.

5. When a party to a case appeals to the High Court based on the decision of the dzongkhag court, where he was held liable to pay the full amount of fines, and if the High Court finds that he is liable to pay only three-fourth of the fines with his opponent liable to pay one-fourth of the fines, he will be considered to have been aggrieved and will not be punished for appealing.

6. If a party appeals to the High Court being aggrieved by the decision of the dzongkhag court, and if the High Court gives the same decision, the appellant who appealed at the earliest will be liable to pay the *bah* and fines as decided by

the dzongkhag court. And he will also be liable to an imprisonment ranging from 1 to 12 months. If he has appealed pending litigation in the dzongkhag court, he will be liable to an imprisonment ranging from 1 to 12 months depending on the matter in question, for which no fines in lieu of imprisonment will be accepted.

7. When a party appeals to the Druk Gyalpo from the decision of the High Court and if the Druk Gyalpo comes to the same decision as High Court, the appellant will be liable to pay the *bah* and fines as decided by the High Court and will be imprisoned for 3 months to 3 years. If he has appealed pending litigation at the High Court, he will be liable to an imprisonment, which may vary from 3 months to 3 years depending on the severity of the matter in question.

8. When the High Court has decided the rights and liabilities of the parties to a case, and if the party who has been held liable disagrees to sign or seal in the decision-agreement or if he shows disrespect to the law during the proceedings, it will be considered as a contempt of court. Therefore, the judges should sign the agreement and give to the party proven to be right. The party disregarding law will be liable to an imprisonment, which may range from 1 to 12 months depending on the gravity of the matter.

9. When a party appeals to the High Court from the decision of the dzongkhag judge, rabjam or any other authority, and if it is found upon inquiry that such authority has decided in contravention of law as against the interest of the appellant, and if he repeats the same thrice, the High Court should report to the Druk Gyalpo and the punishment for such authority will be as per the Druk Gyalpo's decree.

10. Likewise, if a party appeals to the Druk Gyalpo being aggrieved by the decision of the High Court and if the Druk Gyalpo finds out that the High Court has not decided according to the law and thereby affected the interest of a

party, the punishment for such judge will be as per the Druk Gyalpo's decree.

11. The judges of the High Court should execute all the legal functions like executing bah, imposing fines, imprisoning the guilty etc., according to Thrimzhung Chhenmo and the Charters of the Druk Gyalpo. If they are not clear, it should be reported to the Druk Gyalpo alone and no other ministers, dignitaries or departments outside the Judiciary can participate, advise or amend laws.

(Undated)

**Druk Gyalpo**

**10. Kadoen Ngapa (Charter 5, issued to the Judiciary)**

1. According to Section Ga 6 (3.6) of late Majesty's decree, when a party appeals to the Druk Gyalpo being aggrieved by the decision of the High Court, which was given on appeal from the dzongkhag court, he will be liable to an imprisonment ranging from 3 months to 3 years, if the Druk Gyalpo arrives at and provides the same decision. The punishment will be at the discretion of the judges of the High Court depending on the gravity of the offence.

2. Once a case has been decided by the High Court or the dzongkhag courts, no one whether high or low can amend such decision, except the Druk Gyalpo.

3. The High Court should conduct an annual inquiry to see whether the district judges, dzongdas and rabjam gongmas decide the cases fairly and justly according to the Thrimzhung Chhenmo and the Royal Charters.

4. In any event, if a party to a case, whether high or low, petitions directly to the Druk Gyalpo or the Queens without litigating in the dzongkhag courts, they will be sent back to the concerned dzongkhags.

5. According to Thrimzhung Dha 2.7, the mediators and witnesses who are called to the court are paid Nu 2.00 per day, if they were entitled to get daily expenses. However, they should be paid Nu 5.00 per day henceforth considering the rise in the costs of living.

6. There is an act in every department, whether executive or security, prescribing the dos and don'ts of the employees, drafted in line with the modern system of other countries. If anyone contravenes or attempts to contravene such provisions, then whatever may be his punishment, no departments can decide and punish the accused except the dzongkhag court.

7. If any dzongkhag judge resigns his office due to superannuation or because of his inability due to sickness or because of his disability to perform his duties as a government servant, the judges of the High Court should find a replacement. In finding the replacement, they should see whether such person has participated in the job of a judge and whether he is capable to be a judge. Thereafter, a report must be submitted to the Druk Gyalpo stating that such person can shoulder the responsibility of a judge and it will be the Druk Gyalpo alone who will decide his eligibility.

Regarding the disharmony of domestic servants going against their owners, all other matters will be dealt as per the decree of late Majesty passed in the Earth-Pig year. If the servants have land registered in their name which does not conflict with the rights of the owner, they can occupy such land and reside in the same gewog without having to change and shift to a different gewog. However, the past decree has been amended to the extent that the servants are not entitled to the houses built by their owners and given to them, although they can occupy the houses built by them.

Issued on this 13<sup>th</sup> Day of the 4<sup>th</sup> Month of the Fire-Dragon Year (10 June 1976).

**Druk Gyalpo**

## **11. Charter pertaining to land**

(Issued to Dasho (dhegong) Norbu Tshering, Royal Body Guard)

If a person has acquired an order from the Druk Gyalpo by claiming that a land registered in the name of another belongs to him or is government land without the knowledge of the real owner, and if the controversy reaches the court, the court should investigate such a case. If it is found during investigation that such land neither belongs to the person petitioning for order nor to the government but is a land registered in the name of the parents of the owner, the person having the order, whether it be the order of the late Majesty or my order, will not be entitled to the land except the owner. If the owner claims that it is a land registered in the name of his parents or it is a land of his own, and if it is revealed during the investigation by the court that the land is neither in the name of his parents nor has he any receipts to show that he has paid for the land or taxes, he will not get the land simply by claiming that the land belongs to his parents.

Issued on this 10<sup>th</sup> Day of the 9<sup>th</sup> Month of the Earth-Horse Year (14 November 1978).

**Druk Gyalpo**

## **12. Charter (issued to Tshering)**

Tshering from Tshogongma, Gaselo prostrated before the Druk Gyalpo on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of the 6<sup>th</sup> month of Wood-Rat Year, submitting that it has been one and a half years since the beginning of his litigation in Wangdue Phodrang dzongkhag court and there has been no answer from the court, whether good or bad, except for the daily attendance. It was decreed through Captain Dresang Namgyel on 17 August 1984 that Sonam Tobgye, a judge of the High Court, should investigate reasons for taking such a long time, and in answer to the investigation report, it was decreed on 23 August 1984 at 10 am as follows:

1. However big the matter in a case may be or whatever type of case it may be, it should not take more than 198 days and even two months is more than sufficient for such a case.
2. Though it may seem so, taking attendance does not constitute adjudication of a case. Thus, it does not serve the purpose.
3. If a case cannot be decided, it should be reported to the High Court and decided as per the orders, instead of delaying.

It is the responsibility of the High Court to investigate if it is done otherwise than as above. If the judge has intentionally rejected and delayed such litigation, he will be warned for the first and second times and will be terminated at the third instance. However, if it is due to his inability and not because of his intention to do so, the High Court should transfer him to a different post.

4. It was submitted that there are around 384 litigants till today in Wangdue Phodrang dzongkhag court and every case has to be decided seriatim, according to article 13 of the Charter A, and so the case was delayed. Henceforth, the

responsibility of the High Court is to see whether dzongkhag courts have decided the cases effectively and efficiently. It is also decreed that the judges from the dzongkhags with less number of cases should be sent to help the court where there are more number of cases. If this is not possible, a rabjam or a judge from the High Court should be sent to help the concerned court to decide cases.

Captain Dresang Namgyel attended the High Court on 24 August 1984 and reviewed the order of the Druk Gyalpo, section by section in the presence of the judges and corrected minor errors. Henceforth, it is decided that it should be adopted as equally authoritative with the Thrimzhung, as it is the real Charter of the Druk Gyalpo as provided under sections Om, Ah and Hum of the Thrimzhung Chhenmo.

Issued on this 23<sup>rd</sup> Day of August 1984 (Wood-Ox Year).

**Druk Gyalpo**

### **13. To the Judges of the High Court**

Although our Thrimzhung Chhenmo and my previous Charters provide the procedures for the adjudication of cases, there is an urgent need to amend the court procedure for the practical purposes of public convenience and ensure their satisfaction of the court processes. Henceforth, it should be done as per the following decree:

1. As most of our common people approach the courts as a final resort for justice, the number of litigations is increasing these days. Therefore, you must find ways to adjudicate efficiently, and minimize the wastage of their resources and energy.

2. Although there is a custom of High Court judges closing the court and going on annual vacation tours, henceforth the court should remain open. The judges should go on vacation on the basis of rotation and there should always be someone to adjudicate cases, although they are entitled to annual leave as per the Royal Civil Service Rules. A case cannot be rejected during that time for the reason that some judges are absent. Judges cannot go on leave only on the basis that the cases are not important.

3. There have been cases where a judge for different reasons walks off from cases involving a rich person or abstains from adjudication, when he understands before the judgment that such person will be held liable. Further, the judges who speak are those who speak always and there are some who neither speak good nor bad. This later group of judges are firstly neglecting their duty and secondly, dissatisfying the litigants. Henceforth, no judge can either evade a case without fulfilling his duties or pass on his responsibility to others, but should bear equal responsibility.

4. Once a schedule for the hearing of a reported case has been prepared and notified to the litigants, it must be

conducted as per the schedule without any holiday or additional time, except when there is a death at the house of a litigant.

5. Once a case has been heard and adjudicated in different Benches and when it is time for the decision, it should be decided by all the judges, headed by the Chief Judge of the High Court. A quarterly report of the cases decided, registered and pending should be submitted to the Druk Gyalpo.

6. The High Court should see whether the dzongkhag courts follow the Charters and other laws properly, and accordingly be strict in accepting their way of executing their duties.

7. The system of adjudicating cases in different Benches stands good. But there should be three judges in one Bench and they should change their Benches and gradually even their composition.

8. According to the existing Court Procedure and Charters, the cases should initially be filed in the dungkhag courts and dzongkhag courts. And, if a case is filed in the High Court for the reason that it could not be decided in the above courts or because a party is not satisfied, the High Court should first see whether such court has decided according to the law, and then decide the case. If a party appeals to the King from the decision of the High Court for the above reasons, the King may order any person or department to investigate into the matter. Thereafter, if it results in two different decisions – one given by the High Court and the other given by the appointed persons, after their investigation, the investigators should meet at the High Court to give their reasons and decide the case. However, if the decisions are the same, the person appealing to the King or the High Court shall be punished without exception as per the Royal Charter C (Gha).

9. If the party being dissatisfied abstains from signing the agreement at the time of passing the judgment and fails to appeal to the King within the period provided under section Dha 3.10 of the Thrimzhung Chhenmo, the court should decide according to Article 8 of the Royal Charter C (Gha) without extension of time.

10 In the case of loss of petition submitted by a litigant or record of the court or if anyone hides documents of his interest, and if it is proved that such document was hidden, the person who has hidden them or the caretaker of the lost documents shall be punished without exemption.

11. The increase in the number of cases is due to our people coming to the courts in ignorance of our laws. Therefore, the judges of the High Court should go to the villages and explain the laws and raise awareness among the public.

12. As to the judges, you have been selected from many and appointed as judges, hoping that you will do better. And, since the respect and acceptance of laws depend on the conduct of the judges, you should give up all the unreasonable and unacceptable conducts and act as per our culture, norms and etiquette. Above all, you should be able to respect, consider and protect the position given by the government and fulfil your duties accordingly.

It is hereby decreed that henceforth the twelve points in the decree be followed as if provided under the laws.

Issued in the Fire-Tiger Year (1986).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**14. To the Home Minister**

Though section Ka 3.4 of the Land Act does not prescribe any ceiling on the land belonging to the Royal family members, I hereby amend and decree that it should be dealt as per the general laws of the land in the same manner.

Issued in the Fire-Tiger Year (1986).

**Druk Gyalpo**

## **15. Appointment of the Judges**

The peace and happiness in a country depend on how properly, strongly and impartially the justices are dispensed. Therefore, it is important to select capable, impartial and good persons as the Judges of the High Court and dzongkhag courts.

However, with very few civil servants in grades 1 and 2, it is very difficult to get the candidates for the post of High Court judges, which is grade 1 in the civil service cadre. If they are selected from Grade 3, they will jump two grades, which is against the law of the country. However, for the time being, the candidates will be selected from the officers who are in grades 1 to 3, in order to get more number of candidates. During their tenure as Judges of the High Court, their entitlements will be as per their grade but they should be considered as equal to all other Judges subordinate and reporting to the Chief Justice, in their power and responsibility.

Issued on this 25<sup>th</sup> Day of the 4<sup>th</sup> Month of the Earth-Snake Year (28 June 1989).

**Druk Gyalpo**

## **16. To the Judges of the High Court**

Since olden days, there have been some cases of rape in Bhutan just as in other countries. However, today because of the southern problem there have been lots of rape cases committed by the anti-nationals. The punishments for those who are found to be guilty, according to our laws are as follows:

Thrimzhung Kha 8.7: If many men together rape a woman, the compensation is Nu 200.00 and double the amount should be paid as fine.

Ba 1.4.6: If a woman dies subsequent to being raped, Nu 5000.00 should be paid as cremation expenses and Nu 4000.00 should be paid as compensation.

Kha 8.11: If a man rapes a woman, Nu 300.00 should be paid as compensation and double the amount should be paid as fine.

Kha 8.12: If a man rapes a married woman, he should pay compensation and fines as provided under section Kha 8.11 and *gau* to the husband. If many men rape a married woman, Nu 300.00 should be paid as compensation and double the amount should be paid as fine and should pay the *gau* too.

So even if the highest fine is imposed, the punishment for such heinous crimes is too little. Hence, you should draft an appropriate bill with whatever additions or amendments necessary and put up before the Lhengye Zhungtshog.

Issued on this 28<sup>th</sup> Day of the 11<sup>th</sup> Month of the Water-Male Monkey Year (14 January 1993).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**17. To the Judges of the High Court**

All the people in Bhutan, be they the royal family, civil or armed officials and the citizens, whether rich or poor, are equal before the law. Hence, anybody who is aggrieved can approach the courts. But section Na 1 of our Thrimzhung Chhenmo provides that if any person libels or defames another by uttering defamatory words, or lies about a murder, theft or robbery, or defames a person about the incest among the siblings, or disturbs marriage, or does what is prohibited, or commits treason, the person will be liable to be punished with an imprisonment for a term ranging from 1 month to 3 years. However, if the defamation relates to any other reason, the prescribed fine is Nu 10.00 – 100.00, which is too low. But a person alleged to have committed an offence would be aggrieved if he is found to be otherwise. Therefore, it is decreed that if anyone defames another about the matters not included above, the section providing procedures for the punishment according to the gravity of such imputation be amended and an appropriate bill be drafted and submitted.

Issued on this 7<sup>th</sup> Day of the 8<sup>th</sup> Month of the Fire-Rat Year (19 September 1996).

**Druk Gyalpo**

## **18. Appointment of the Chief Justice**

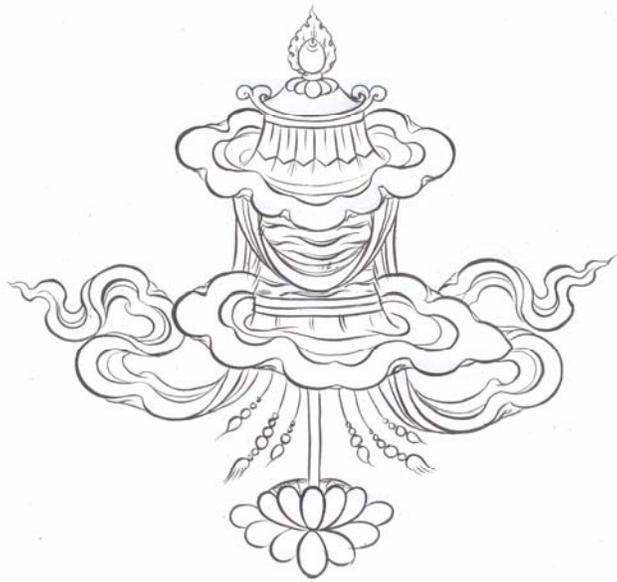
As per my plans and advice, the National Assembly in its 76th session has amended the old system of Lhengye Zhungtshog and even Cabinet Ministers have been elected through secret ballot.

Based on the 10 virtuous actions and 16 pure human laws, the yoke of King's golden rule and the knot of religious discipline, the Judiciary has been made an independent body by segregating from the executive arm of the government since long. It is for this reason that we need to have a system of fair adjudication and administration of just laws in our country.

As the responsibility, functions and powers of Legislature, Executive and Judiciary are different; there is no system of electing the Chief Justice by voting. In recognition of the law as the foundation of people's peace, and to express the status of our laws by strengthening the Judiciary, and because Sonam Tobgye has been working with utmost dedication as the Chief Justice, he is awarded the position of a Minister.

Issued on this 10<sup>th</sup> Day of the 5<sup>th</sup> Month of Earth-Tiger Year (4 July 1998).

**Druk Gyalpo**



*The Victory Banner represents*

*Buddha's perfect Body.*

*It symbolises a complete victory of*

*one's body, speech and mind over negative influences, and*

*Buddha's uncommon quality of*

*abandonment of illusion and delusion.*

## OF BODY, SPEECH AND MIND

Leaders driven to serve their people are consistent without fail. Their head and heart are connected, and their actions do not betray their conviction. This consistency earns the people's trust, motivates the leaders in turn, and the virtuous cycle grows. As the Bhutanese people are fond of saying, their "body, speech and mind" are aligned.

The entire collection of His Majesty's decrees makes this alignment plainly clear. The focus on the sovereignty and the people of Bhutan – along with an unvarying aspiration for their happiness – is evident throughout.

Likewise, His Majesty's focus on devolution of power to the people is constant, having strategically chosen democracy as the best political system to secure the sovereignty and happiness for "*all time to come*". This theme threads through the decrees, and three of the more obvious ones are in this section.

The deeper the conviction, the stronger is the consistency. It guided more than three decades of building public institutions, and the people and leaders who make up such institutions, to ready the nation for parliamentary democracy. This gradual process of learning and change culminated in the draft Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, which awaits ratification in 2008.

The year 2008 will turn a new chapter in the history of Bhutan, as well as that of the world. Never has the history of mankind seen a peaceful transition from an absolute monarchy to democracy, nor has it seen such a transition brought about by the monarch's own initiative and personal leadership.

It has been a process steered by not one, nor two, but three successive monarchs – Druk Gyalpo III, IV and V. One can

hear, in the words of the late Druk Gyalpo III, the future that was to unfold, and the future that has come to fruition:

“During the last Spring Session of the National Assembly, I had expressed my desire to form a government combining the monarchical and democratic systems in order to ensure the stability and solidarity of the country. Our sovereignty may be endangered by the fact that we are placed between two powerful and big countries, although at present we are not faced with external aggression and there is peace within the country as there are no undesirable elements to create disorder. This, therefore, is the time to think of forming a stable government for maintaining the peace and tranquillity of the country in future. With the approach of bad times, the present peace of the country and feeling of the people may change. If the people do not cooperate with the King, it will not be possible for the King alone to protect the people. We have a hereditary monarchy, but the people must also realize their duties and responsibilities. Even if you feel that the system of hereditary monarchy should be abolished, this also should be achieved by proper means, the procedure of which is to be decided. Rebellion will only bring disaster and disgrace to the country accompanied by loss of lives and chaos, which will be exploited by outsiders to the detriment of the country. In case of misunderstanding between the King and the people or if the King resorts to repression, the people, instead of rebelling, should convene the National Assembly...”  
[Statement of Druk Gyalpo III to the National Assembly, on his recommendation that the King, as well as the civil servants, be subjected to the Assembly’s vote of no confidence. From *Kuensel*, 30 November 1968]

“Like father, like son”, indeed, as Bhutanese elders would often remark whenever they speak of His Majesty, the Druk Gyalpo IV. And today, they and their offspring count their blessings once again – “Like grandfather, like father, like son” – as they behold their youthful King, His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, ushering in the new political order.

*Portrait of a Leader*

The only constancy in life is change. Yet, many would rather avoid change, as it brings uncertainty and even fear of the unknown. So much more, therefore, is the comfort that the people can draw from their leadership's steadfast constancy – of the “body, speech, and mind”.

**19. To the Communication Minister**

In Bhutan, the Land of Medicinal Plants, unprecedented developments are taking place across various ministries both in terms of economic welfare and political changes, and likewise collection and dissemination news have increased. Moreover, the numbers of Bhutanese who are keen and experienced in composition and vocabulary have increased, and there are also lots of people who have excellent knowledge in different disciplines. Hence, recognizing the importance of developing our communication and media properly, you are hereby commanded to de-link Bhutan's national newspaper *Kuensel* and Bhutan Broadcasting Service from your Ministry and create two separate autonomous organizations which will gradually achieve full self-governance in future as per the policy of decentralization of power to our people.

Issued on this 21<sup>st</sup> Day of the 7<sup>th</sup> Month of the Water-Monkey Year (18 September 1992).

**Druk Gyalpo**

## **20. Facts for Life**

One of the main objectives of Bhutan is to enable our people to lead a peaceful life, as they constitute both the outer fence and the inner jewel of our country. Therefore, out of the various functions of community and economic development, government has been giving priority to people's physical health for enabling them to lead a productive life without diseases.

The programmes of eradicating diseases through medication, bodily health and cleanliness, and safe drinking water, have flourished in Bhutan during the past three decades or more, with aid from friendly countries and international bodies, and combined with our indigenous and allopathic medical practices. Because of these, the child mortality rate and maternity death rate has decreased and the general life expectancy has increased, which shows that standard of our health has improved.

The government and people should unite and make full use of the basic health facilities to achieve the above objectives henceforth. To ensure that the above benefits reach all the people, our people should gradually abandon the misconception that it is the responsibility of the government alone to manage medical programmes. And it is time for every locality and community to know the merits and demerits of adopting methods relating to prevention of diseases, medication, cleanliness etc., and adopt what is best.

The UNICEF, WHO and UNESCO has cooperatively published a book by the name 'Facts for Life' for this purpose. It has also been translated into Dzongkha and has been distributed by UNICEF and the concerned Bhutanese agencies. This would definitely help in broadcasting information about medical sciences and related news which can be practiced by our common people.

In this book, the teachings and information about the necessary medical care for a pregnant mother, the quality of breast milk, the necessities for the growth of a child, the need and time of immunization for the prevention of diseases like diarrhoea and cough, methods of maintaining cleanliness, and child development are all made very easy and understandable. It also contains advice about the source and methods of prevention and medication of the diseases like malaria, tuberculosis, leprosy and AIDS.

When the book is distributed in schools, religious institutes, broadcasting agencies and villages in Bhutan by the Department of Health, and when everyone knows about the necessary facts for life, it is hoped and prayed that more of our people will practice them. This will benefit the policy of preventing epidemics, and in achieving the objectives of our planned programmes for the welfare of our people.

Issued on this 10<sup>th</sup> Day of the 7<sup>th</sup> Month of the Wood-Male Dog Year (16 August 1994).

**Druk Gyalpo**

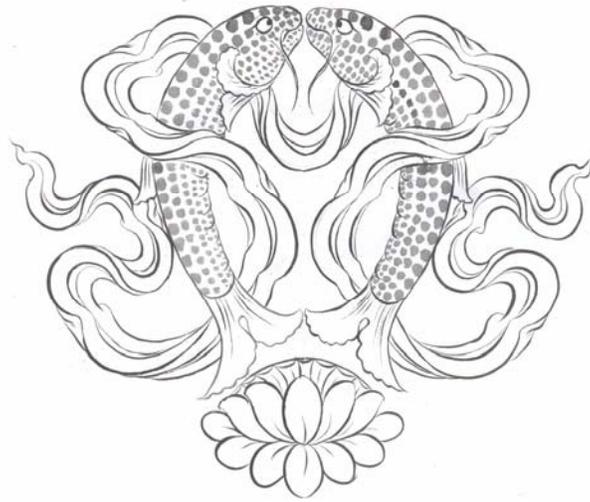
## **21. To the Speaker of the National Assembly**

The National Assembly is the highest body to discuss and decide the laws and important policies of our country. It is important for the people to elect their representatives who are dedicated to our country and who can serve our country with commitment for the advancement of people's welfare. It was for this reason that the Chimis' Selection Rules has been amended in 1968 and 1981.

It was also to promote full participation of our people in the decision-making process and to define the responsibilities of the National Assembly as per the need of the time. Therefore, the amendment should be included among the matters to be discussed and decided in the 73<sup>rd</sup> session of the National Assembly.

Issued on this 21<sup>st</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of the Wood-Pig year (18 June 1995).

**Druk Gyalpo**



*The Golden Fish represents*

*Buddha's Eyes.*

*It symbolises wisdom and courage of all sentient beings,  
swimming freely from place to place,  
without fear of drowning in the sea of sufferings.*

## DOING THINGS RIGHT

Put simply, leadership is about doing the right things. Management, on the other hand, is about doing things right.

Bad management reduces leadership's inspiration to a mere rhetoric. Lack of leadership wastes good management. Excellence in either is incomplete without the other, generating little of intended results in matters of government, business or military. Naturally, excellence of both in one person is essential for the top leadership of any organization. Likewise, for the top leadership of a nation.

Decrees of this section mirror His Majesty as one such leader-manager. Needless to say, many are addressed to the Royal Civil Service Commission. Of particular note are decrees addressed to its Secretary (1985), and to the Commission's Secretary and Members (1993).

A good management practice is about managing people, so that the people can perform not only their individual best, but also with a true team spirit that makes the whole greater than sum of its parts. Such a practice makes intended results explicit for individuals, teams and the organization, and measures, monitors and evaluates them regularly. It links corporate goals to *what* employees do, and *how* they are to do what they do (i.e., corporate values). It aligns incentives for employees with the corporate goals, and bases pay, benefits and promotion on individual performance as well as their teamwork.

Such is a basic no-nonsense management practice in private business, but not necessarily among institutions whose existence is not driven by their profitability or client satisfaction. Public sectors around the world, including the civil service, have tended to be notoriously inadequate in managing its people. The management practice outlined above is what has only recently become known as "results-

based management”, in the context of its application to non-profit or public sector institutions.

The 1985 decree is *ahead of the times*, for His Majesty commands the Secretary of the Royal Civil Service Commission to introduce what is essentially this results-based management practice. The decree instructs the Secretary to “*review the current system of promotion and draft an act to introduce a system of promotion, which will enhance the achievement of our objectives and goals ...*”. Considering “*a proper hierarchy*”, “*in proportion to the size and responsibility of the department*”, and incentives for “*civil servants to serve our government well*”, a promotion system based on civil servants’ “*capability and the results of their work*” is instructed, instead of one based on the length of time served in grade. More than twenty years hence, too many civil service administrations around the world are yet to effect such a basic change.

Perhaps the most powerful application of the results-based management is in downsizing business. Hit by a financial crunch, average managers’ reaction is to cut outputs and services, and lay off employees, without thinking strategically about business objectives. In other words, they take an easy way out.

Outstanding managers take the crunch as a challenge and an opportunity for re-creating their business. Corporate goals are revisited and reshaped. Employees’ capacity and performance are re-assessed. Transfers or terminations are made to align the people to new goals, jettisoning waste and inefficiencies in the process. Such strategic restructuring is much harder to execute. Yet, it is the only way to internalize lessons from mistakes, turn crises into positive outcomes, and shape an exciting business with a better chance of sustained growth.

Faced with an unexpected fiscal crunch, the 1993 decree expresses serious misgivings on how the Royal Civil Service

Commission is going about downsizing the government. *“You were told to review the system of management for more peace and happiness”,* reminds His Majesty of the strategic goals for the nation. *“Today, when the ministries and departments are trying to find ways of curtailing the expenses, the civil servants must be given responsibility according to their capability. There must be a strong result evaluation system rather than cancelling or postponing planned programmes and decreasing human resources. Instead, the departments have enlisted 300 civil servants as incapable and liable to be terminated.”*

In other words, the decree reprimands the Secretary and Members of the Royal Civil Service Commission for their tendency towards the easy way out. One can almost hear His Majesty’s wrath in the decree’s sentences – anger, if at all, that is most certainly justified.

Good managers being good managers of people, unfailing focus on the people is the thrust of all the decrees in this section. Characteristics of good people management are evident throughout, such as attention to detail without micro-management, consideration of pecuniary and other incentives, sense of fairness, discipline, and making accountabilities explicit.

Assigning unambiguous accountabilities, in particular, is the hallmark of good people management. Average managers shy away from doing so, for an obscure accountability means nobody can be held responsible. The 1985 decree addressed to the Head of the Land Record Office states, *“the head of land record alone will be held responsible for any deviation from the Land Act of Bhutan.”* Likewise, the 1993 decree issued to the Minister of Communication, on a matter of Druk Air safety, notes the security responsibilities on the shoulders of a group of managers, states unequivocally that they *“should not only be on paper”,* and concludes: *“If the Druk Air meets an accident for the reason that you have acted in contravention to the above Act and this decree, the risk to the*

*lives of all the passengers lies on the Minister of Communication and the concerned officials without exemption.”*

Taken together, the decrees of this section comprise a record of a rare leader, doing the right things *and* doing things right. While it does not necessarily imply that the Civil Service of Bhutan has performed up to His Majesty's expectations, the royal commands, as instructed, collectively define the frontier of good management, *ahead of the times*.

## **22. To the Head of the Land Record Office**

In order to avoid the shortage of land for the future generations, it is very important to be strict from the beginning only in transferring and registering the land by changing the type of land which may be registered in one's name. Moreover, the office of land record must be very careful and should not deviate from the Land Act, and should be very strict, as far as possible, in cases where tsamdo (pasture land), sokshing (wood-lot), garden, etc., are sold or given for free and needs to be transferred from one name to the other. You should be careful in changing the type of land, for example: while changing kamzhing (dry land) to chhuzhing (wet land), making dry land and wet land into garden and where there is a need to change the type of land. Regarding the new land record from government, the land confiscated by the government and the land which must have been in one's thram but was left as unwanted, then whoever may be using the land, whether rich or poor, if they come to the land record office to register in their names, the head of land record alone will be held responsible for any deviation from the Land Act of Bhutan.

Issued on this 11<sup>th</sup> Day of the 7<sup>th</sup> Month of the Wood-Ox Year (2 August 1985).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**23. To the Secretary of the Royal Civil Service Commission**

As regards the general transfer of the government servants in different departments, it is appropriate to transfer technical persons according to the policies framed as per the specific requirements of the government. But a system of transferring other civil servants once in three to four years depending on their qualification and capability should be gradually framed.

This year some civil servants who are not required in departments in Thimphu were asked to resign, some were terminated and some were transferred. In the same manner, such policy should gradually be introduced in the dzongkhags after necessary investigation.

The number of modern civil servants working for their private interests in contravention of Royal Civil Service Commission rules are increasing yearly. Therefore, it is decreed that you should review the sections of the Bhutan Civil Service Rules, which prohibit such acts and amend them if necessary.

Issued on this 17<sup>th</sup> Day of the 9<sup>th</sup> Month of the Wood-Ox Year (30 October 1985).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**24. To the Secretary of the Royal Civil Service Commission**

Our government servants are promoted after the completion of their term in their grades, without considering their capability and without ascertaining the requirement of such persons in such grade in different departments. Due to this situation, there are many officers of same grade in one department, which causes inconveniences.

To achieve the goals and objectives of our government the following matters need to be considered during promotion:

In proportion to the size and responsibility of the department, a proper hierarchy of officers should be introduced for creating a congenial work environment.

Secondly, before promotion their capability and the results of their work should be assessed. You must see whether the person worked with allegiance and if they really deserve promotion.

If they are promoted mechanically on the expiry of their term, it will affect the resolve of civil servants to serve our government well.

Therefore, it is decreed that the Royal Civil Service Commission must review the current system of promotion and draft an act to introduce a system of promotion, which will enhance the achievement of our objectives and goals, and submit to the Druk Gyalpo as soon as possible.

Issued on this 28<sup>th</sup> Day of the 11<sup>th</sup> Month of the Wood-Ox Year (8 January 1986).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**25. Soelrey to the Employees of the High Court**

The Lodey Tshogdey and Royal Audit Authority have submitted their report of auditing in the dzongkhags to the government and it is important that the High Court should investigate immediately and decide on the matter. Therefore, the Druk Gyalpo has ordered the High Court to grant an amount equivalent to one month's salary to all the judges, rabjams and clerks of the High Court who have been troubled to participate and work beyond office hours as soelrey from the Druk Gyalpo.

Issued on this 17<sup>th</sup> Day of the 10<sup>th</sup> Month of the Fire-Tiger Year (27 October 1986).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**26. To the Secretary of the Royal Civil Service Commission**

There are rumours about the appointment and transfer of government servants and officers saying that such officer has been appointed or transferred to such department, before the release of official order, without any verification. This affects the discipline of the executive. There have also been some people who disclose national confidential information to foreigners, employees of the foreign Commissions and others such as journalists, without looking at the effects it would bear on our policy. Some have directly and clearly disclosed the objectives and policies of our government without differentiating as to what should and what should not be told. There is a danger that these things will affect the achievement of our objectives and cause problems. The Royal Civil Service Commission should investigate into this matter and punish those people who contravene the regulations according to the gravity of the matter, without regard to their position.

Issued on this 27<sup>th</sup> Day of the 8<sup>th</sup> Month of the Fire-Rabbit Year (19 October 1987).

**Druk Gyalpo**

## **27. To Project DANTAK**

The project DANTAK will celebrate the completion of 30 years in Bhutan in 1991. The project was launched in 1960 in Bhutan, coinciding with the commencement of our first development plan, with the technical and financial assistance from our friend, India to help Bhutan. During the past 30 years, DANTAK has served us extremely well and accomplished development plans of Bhutan.

The officers of DANTAK have exemplary moral conduct and their employees have shown enormous interest and discipline in laying the foundation of Bhutanese road with great difficulty. The establishment has completed many major projects like construction and maintenance of main roads, telephone, and development of Paro airport etc. This has developed the friendship, co-operation, respect and co-ordination between the people of Bhutan and DANTAK, which is a sign of close relationship between India and Bhutan.

I, on behalf of my government and people, and personally, would like to congratulate the Chief Engineer, Brigadier M. G. S. Balha, officers and employees of DANTAK in the celebration of the completion of 30 years in Bhutan this year. I also thank DANTAK for the assistance in developing Bhutan, and I pray and hope that it will be able to accomplish whatever task it undertakes without any obstacle.

Issued on this 1<sup>st</sup> Day of the 1<sup>st</sup> Month of the Iron-Sheep Year (15 February 1991).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**28. To the Judges of the High Court**

It is provided under Section Chha 5.3 (a) to (d) and Chha 11.2 (e) of our Prison Act that the prisoners will be chained on their legs. However, since our country is a Buddhist country, we need to look at the difficulty and misery in the life of human beings with compassion, kindness and love. Therefore, amend the above sections accordingly and henceforth chain the prisoners only when there is a great danger to life or escape, as imprisonment per se is sufficient. Therefore, as a *kidu* they are pardoned from being chained on their legs.

Issued on this 23<sup>rd</sup> Day of the 10<sup>th</sup> Month of the Water-Monkey Year (17 December 1992).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**29. To the Secretary and the Members of the Royal Civil Service Commission**

All the foreign aid should be spent on the development of the economy, health, education, agriculture and animal husbandry etc., of our community, which are directly beneficial for the common people. You know the objective of making our domestic revenue sufficient to meet the overall administrative expenses and a decree of reminder was passed last year before the beginning of the seventh plan.

However, there has been a shortage of Nu 240 million within six months of the first year of the seventh plan, and loans amounting to Indian currency of Rs 1,420 million and US\$93,234 has to be repaid. I was worried for this reason and it was decreed in the meeting of ministers and officials in the Ministry of Planning that you should control the wastage of government property. It was further decreed that you should promote the outputs of our civil servants and concentrate on the programmes necessary for the common people. You were told to review the system of management for more peace and happiness.

Today, when the ministries and departments are trying to find ways of curtailing the expenses, the civil servants must be given responsibility according to their capability. There must be a strong results-based evaluation system rather than cancelling or postponing planned programmes and decreasing human resources. Instead, the departments have enlisted 300 civil servants as incapable and liable to be terminated.

The civil servants who did not serve with their utmost capability and with interest in their responsibility deserve to be terminated. But the rest cannot be terminated without giving them the responsibility according to their capability from the very beginning. Therefore, it is decreed that if there are civil servants in the ministries and departments without relevant jobs, they should be transferred to the departments where they are required. They should be given jobs according

*Portrait of a Leader*

to their capability.

Issued on this 1<sup>st</sup> Day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Month of the Water- Female-  
Bird Year (22 April 1993).

**Druk Gyalpo**

### **30. To Dzongdas, Gups, Chhimis and the People**

According to the policy of executing development works by the government and people together, in close co-operation, the government has been paying Nu 15.00 for man and Nu 13.00 for woman for contributing 15 days of labour force from every household. However, some households send people who cannot work.

In this regard, if the people cannot contribute physically according to the Labour Contribution Act, it will be very difficult to accomplish many development projects, which directly benefit the public. Therefore, it is very important to send people who are between the ages of 17 and 50, who are physically strong to accomplish our planned development projects on time. The members of Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogchung and gups are responsible to check and co-ordinate this matter.

Although it is a heavy burden on the government to announce and increase the wages for household labour contribution, the Druk Gyalpo has decreed that the wages be increased to Nu 25.00 per day without any gender distinction with effect from 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1993 for the benefit and welfare of the poor people.

Issued on this 19<sup>th</sup> Day of the 4<sup>th</sup> Month of the Water-Female-Bird Year (8 June 1993).

**Druk Gyalpo**

### **31. To the Minister of Communication**

Till this day, by the grace of our god and due to the blessings of our guardian deities, Druk Air has remained safe. Henceforth, it is important for Druk Air to take care of the passengers and to serve our country continuously.

The choice to send or withhold the plane should not be influenced by daily schedules and urgency of matters since the airport at Paro is very small, surrounded by high mountains and as it is risky during bad weather. The pilot and all the employees should work according to the standard aviation operating procedures, and safety and security regulations, without negligence. After the landing, the engineers and mechanics should check the machines and repair wherever necessary with care and promptness. Therefore, the rules of co-ordination and reminders for the above persons should not only be on paper, but the Minister of Communication, Director of Druk Air and Director of Security and Investigation of the Druk Air should see to it that the work is done properly.

If Druk Air meets an accident for the reason that you have acted in contravention to the above regulations and this decree, the risk to the lives of all the passengers lies on the Ministry of Communication and the concerned officials, without exemption. Therefore, you must keep these things in mind and follow them properly from the very beginning.

Issued on this 21<sup>st</sup> Day of the 8<sup>th</sup> Month of the Water-Female-Bird Year (7 October 1993).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**32. To the Secretary of the Royal Civil Service Commission**

Although there were many members in the Royal Civil Service Commission as per the needs of the civil service, it has decreased today. Therefore, for the efficient administrative functioning of the Ministries and departments, the following persons are appointed as the members of the Royal Civil Service Commission for the time being:

Mr. Dorji Tenzin, Secretary of Public Works;  
Mr. Sangay Ngedup, Secretary of Health;  
Mr. Thinley Gyamtsho, Secretary of Education; and  
Mr. Kinzang Dorji, Secretary of Agriculture.

Issued on this 12<sup>th</sup> Day of the 7<sup>th</sup> Month of the Wood Pig Year (6 September 1995).

**Druk Gyalpo**

### **33. House rent allowance for Judges**

It is the responsibility of the judges to uphold the laws, and secure and strengthen peace and prosperity of our country for all times. Therefore, in administering justice, it is important for the judges to act according to the law without partiality, whether the litigants at law are high or low, affluent or pauper. And taking into account their welfare and the fact that there are no standard government quarters in most of the dzongkhags and dungkhags, they have been compensated for their rent. Likewise, the judges of the High Court also have to bear the responsibility and execute legal functions. Therefore, the Druk Gyalpo has viewed this fact with compassion and ordered that they be paid 20% of their monthly salary as compensation for house rent with effect from July 1998.

Issued on this 1<sup>st</sup> Day of the 4<sup>th</sup> Month of the Earth-Tiger Year (26 May 1998).

**Druk Gyalpo**

### **34. To the Finance Minister**

According to the system of electing Cabinet Ministers, as decided in the 76<sup>th</sup> session of the National Assembly, their functions and responsibilities have become heavier and more difficult. It has also been resolved that their term of office shall be for 5 years only.

It is expected that they will bear their responsibility by committing their body, speech and mind to the Tsawa-Sum, with whatever they know to the best of their ability and show examples of good conduct to all the Bhutanese. Therefore, to prevent them from resorting to other means of income to meet their basic needs and expenses, there is a need to give them a reasonable facility.

The current monthly basic pay scale of a minister is Nu 29,000.00, which is even less than the pay scale of an officer in a private organization. Therefore, this is a permission to grant an increase to the salary of the Cabinet Ministers and the Chief Justice with effect from 1 January 1999, considering that they need to maintain the status of their position and as they have to spend huge amounts as per our culture.

Issued on this 13<sup>th</sup> Day of the 11th Month of the Earth-Tiger Year (31 December 1998).

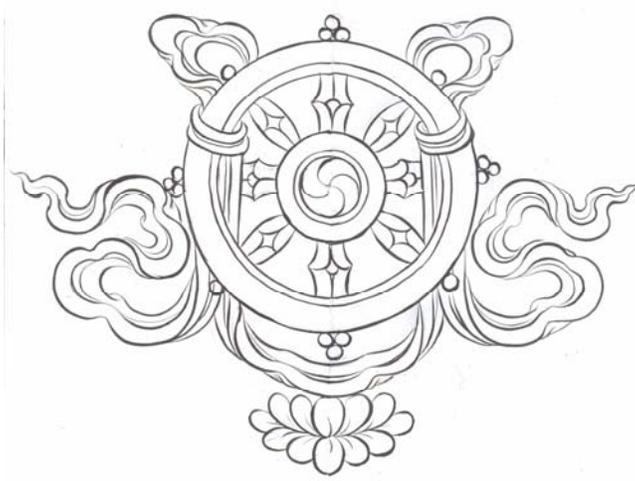
**Druk Gyalpo**

**35. To the Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee**

The Druk Gyalpo considers the Constitution as a very important document for the welfare of our country. Therefore, the Druk Gyalpo has increased the daily allowance of the members of the Constitution Drafting Committee – comprising two representatives of the Zhung Dratshang and Rabdey, and representatives of people from the twenty dzongkhags. They are to be paid Nu 800.00 per day considering that the current amount of Nu 400.00 per day is not sufficient to meet their expenses.

Issued on this 25<sup>th</sup> Day of the 10<sup>th</sup> Month of the Iron-Snake Year (10 December 2001).

**Druk Gyalpo**



*The Dharma Wheel represents*

*Buddha's Palm or Sole,*

*the wheel's eight spokes signifying the Eightfold Paths.*

*It symbolises the auspiciousness of*

*the turning of the Dharma Wheel at all times,*

*which enables all sentient beings to experience*

*the joy of wholesome deeds and liberation.*

## AN EMOTIONAL JOURNEY

It is a fact not commonly understood that leadership is an emotional journey. It is even more so for those who shepherd a process of fundamental change in business, government, or society at large, simply because such undertakings entail changing people's mindset and behaviour. Creating a new corporate, organizational, or societal culture is, by nature, an engagement that claims a head-and-heart commitment of the leadership.

As such, cognitive skills alone do not make the stuff of leadership. Indeed, the past decade has witnessed a growing recognition that "emotional intelligence" matters, and matters a great deal, in effective leadership. Put simply, emotional intelligence is a gift that enables one to blend cognitive thoughts with emotions holistically in making choices and decisions. Increasingly, corporate leaders, management consultants, educators, leading business schools and multi-disciplinary community of researchers are embracing the fact that the power of emotions is too important to relegate to the back stage. Here, too, His Majesty was *ahead of the times*.

Tapping deeply into one's own emotions, as well as those of others, demands honesty of open mind and open heart. It is not difficult to apply such feelings as happiness, joy or pleasure in enhancing human relationships even in one's workplace. But, emotions such as frustration and anger are tough to harness constructively for positive outcomes. Yet, these are the kind of emotions that one needs to draw on in resolving problems.

Superb leaders are assertive ones, who own the gift of emotional intelligence to express their convictions and feelings in ways that are not destructive. Such leaders act decisively and fairly, for instance, in dealing with problematic performance. They know how to give negative feedback just as

well as positive ones. Done well, negative feedback generates a sense of relief on the receiving end, for it is far better to have issues out in the open to be dealt with, than to live in doubt or under suspicion. Frequently, even a deeply felt sense of appreciation is a result, for one feels their leaders care, and care enough to take the trouble.

It is such gift of emotional intelligence that makes an inspirational leader who earns people's confidence and motivation to outperform themselves. Decrees in this section mirror some of those powerful emotions.

Among the collection are five decrees about "*land kidu*" (royal welfare land grant), addressed mostly to the Home Minister during 1984 to 1991. Compassionate concerns about fair and just distribution of *kidu* are apparent throughout these decrees. But, what distinguishes these decrees is a palpable sense of frustration – even some anger perhaps – in discovering that land *kidu* continued to be granted by the Home Minister and others with no authority to do so (a 1980 decree, not included in this collection, established that it is an exclusive authority of the King).

The first of these decrees, addressed to the Home Minister (1984), confronts the problem head-on: "*With regard to the grant of land kidu, it was decreed that neither you nor any others except me can grant land as kidu, and you have also informed different dzongkhags in the same manner. But you have given many government lands in contravention of my decree.*" Confiscation of such land in ways that would not harm the erroneous grant recipients is ordered. There is no mistaking about how His Majesty feels about the issue: "*I do not appreciate anyone granting land in contravention of my decree ...*". Old habits die hard, it seems, and similar decrees had to be issued twice more in 1985 and 1991!

Another decree, addressed to the Home Minister (1987), also expresses similar frustration openly: *“These days there are some people who do not follow my decrees which are given for their benefit.”* One can almost sense disbelief at such *“act of disrespect to the government order”*.

In another, addressed to the Speaker of the National Assembly (1998), His Majesty seems baffled. The topic is on gender imbalance among *chimi* (elected members of National Assembly). It catalogues measures and circumstances that ought to have assured gender equity: *“there is equal opportunity in every matter according to one’s ability without any gender discrimination”*; *“the voters at the election meeting are mostly women”* in most villages; the Election Act and *“the National Assembly and our government do not discriminate between the sexes”*; and there is *“no custom of consultation as to who should be elected”*. Having listed them, His Majesty simply makes a factual statement: there are *“only few women candidates interested”* and *“there are only three women chimis in the National Assembly.”*

Together, these statements comprise an open-ended question: Why is it that there are not more women representatives in the National Assembly? It is plainly clear that the leadership is troubled and is sincerely puzzled about the issue.

Asking open-ended questions is an excellent means to put issues on the table, and induce meaningful dialogue and productive debates – a fact too often overlooked by leaders too eager to assert their authority. No leader is ever all knowing. A thoughtful, unrestrictive, and unbiased question never signals weakness. Instead, it is a powerful tool to convene people’s attention and constructive energy.

This particular decree does not issue any commands. A simple *“reminder”* is given, instead, that *“there is no offence in participating as candidates in the election of a chimi ... even if*

*they are women.*” It is a powerful reminder. It is even more so set against the background of Bhutan, where majority of the people have their cultural roots in matriarchal society and women are the ones who inherit family assets.

In contrast, a 1995 decree addressed to the Deputy Minister of Health and Education conveys serious concerns on quality of education, its relevance for gainful employment, and lack of *“good counselling and teachings to develop good moral conduct in our children”*. With new school year beginning in about two months, the decree instructs the *“matters be reviewed and discussed and a resolution, which can be supported by money and labour, be framed and submitted to me immediately.”* This is one of the few decrees that command an immediate action, conveying a strong sense of urgency. Some might even perceive a little impatience or frustration at the bureaucracy for not being proactive enough. Indeed, it has come to fore that these are precisely the issues facing Bhutan’s education system today.

Anger, for obvious reasons, is an emotion best controlled in a leader, to be used only sparingly. This is in fact the case in the entire collection of His Majesty’s decrees, save one: a decree addressed to the Head of the Bhutan Olympic Committee (1996).

This decree states why it would have been in the interest of the nation to participate in the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games – to *“convey the message to the world that Bhutan is an independent country with a distinct identity ... ”* Then follows the thunder of the Dragon King: *“But the Committee has not shown any interest in furtherance of its responsibility. It has not at all been concerned to arrange proper sportswear for the only four members. How can our current uniform of our four members be shown to the international community with dignity and glory, when it cannot be shown within Bhutan. Having been disheartened by the fact that the Committee has*

*abandoned such a minor responsibility, I hereby decree that the Committee be dissolved with effect from today.”*

It is the angels, not the devils, who dwell in the details. The King's rare wrath, on something that might have been regarded so little and insignificant, sends a powerful message. It demands the nation's leaders to raise their sights and keep their focus on national goals, in everything they do, at all times. Simply breathtaking, and singularly effective!

### **36. To the Home Minister**

With regard to the grant of land *kidu*, it was decreed that neither you nor any others except me can grant land as *kidu*, and you have also informed different dzongkhags in the same manner. But you have given away many government lands in contravention of my decree. Therefore, the government should confiscate all the land given either by you or by any royal family member after the date of my decree. You must also conduct a thorough investigation at the time of confiscation to find out if the land is cultivated. If it is the case, then the wages for cultivation and the expenditure for such land should be paid from the national budget. Henceforth, no other person except me can give land as *kidu*. I will not appreciate anyone granting land in contravention of my decree, and you must once more convey this message to different dzongkhags and departments.

Issued on this 17<sup>th</sup> Day of the 9<sup>th</sup> Month of the Wood-Rat Year (10 November 1984).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**37. To the Deputy Minister of Finance**

Despite my decree dated 29 August 1980 to the Home Minister stating that I alone and no other person can grant land *kidu*, the Home Minister and some royal family members have granted land in contravention of my decree. It is hereby decreed that you should investigate as to who have given the land without my order, with effect from the above-mentioned date and cancel such lands even if they are registered in someone's name and declare them as government land within December 1985.

Issued on this 15<sup>th</sup> Day of the 5<sup>th</sup> Month of the Wood-Ox Year (2 July 1985).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**38. Land *kidu***

As our country depends mainly on agriculture, the number of people applying for land *kidu* from the Druk Gyalpo is increasing daily and some people do so even when they have sufficient land. Therefore, both genuine and frivolous applications need to be investigated. That in turn would take a long time causing more trouble to the needy applicants. On the other hand, if it is given without investigation, gradually all the government land will be exhausted. In future, there will be no land to be awarded as *kidu* for the landless, as thousands of acres go as *kidu*. It would also affect our forest, which is the source of our income. Henceforth, there will be no land *kidu* for those residing under the same roof as one family with three or more acres of land in their name including wetland, dry land and kitchen garden but excluding pangzhing and tseri. In order to avoid harassment to our people, it is decreed that the dzongdas, the gups and the chimis should explain this to our people.

Issued on this 11<sup>th</sup> Day of the 7<sup>th</sup> Month of the Wood-Ox Year (22 August 1985).

**Druk Gyalpo**

### 39. To the Home Minister

These days, people of different dzongkhags are constructing buildings and these people are the ones who come to ask for *kidu*. However, with the increase in the number of buildings it is important that they should meet the standard of design and sanitation. Henceforth, beginning with the sixth plan, next year, the houses in the communities shall be classified into house numbers 1 to 4 and the toilets and smokeless ovens should be constructed inside the house. The practice of keeping domestic animals in the ground floor should be abolished. The government should frame rules for constructing buildings providing for electrification in future and publicize such rules. The government must also frame policies to decrease the costs of construction materials such as soil, stones and timber. People should not ask for *kidu* of constructing new buildings till such policies and rules are publicized.

Although it has been only few years since the introduction of the system of granting land *kidu*, the number of people applying for *kidu* is increasing year after year. If the system is retained, the following problems would arise with the rise in population:

Firstly, there would not be sufficient land;

Secondly, people who have lived together for very long will be scattered in different places; and

Thirdly, when the quantity of land for every person increases, there will be shortage of labour, and the agricultural activities cannot be carried out as per the government policy, which in turn will affect our agricultural productivity.

Henceforth, it is once more decreed that a family residing under one roof having three acres or more of land including

wetland, dry land, and kitchen garden in their name is not entitled to land *kidu*. The Home Minister should inform different dzongkhags, gups, chimis and the public about this decision.

Issued on this 12<sup>th</sup> Day of the 7<sup>th</sup> Month of the Fire-Tiger Year (24 September 1986).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**40. To the Home Minister**

These days there are some people who do not follow my decrees, which are given for their benefit. And as it is an act of disrespect to the government order, you must thoroughly investigate whether the concerned departments of the government, gups, chimis, public and private persons follow my orders properly. Those who contravene my orders should be punished and must be stopped from carrying out illegal activities.

Issued on this 27<sup>th</sup> Day of the 4<sup>th</sup> Month of the Fire-Rabbit Year (23 June 1987).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**41. To the Home Minister**

It was decreed that I alone can grant land *kidu* and the Home Minister too notified about this on 25<sup>th</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month of the Iron Monkey year. Thereafter, a decree was passed to the Home Minister on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the Wood-Rat year, supporting and explaining the previous decree. However, it was found after the regularization of land that some lands in some dzongkhags were given in contravention of the above decree. Such lands will be dealt as per the decrees given after 25<sup>th</sup> day of 7<sup>th</sup> month of the Iron-Monkey year. Henceforth, except the land for which I have granted kashos, others given by anyone whether royal family members or any dignitary shall be cancelled and forfeited to the government. The Home Ministry should act according to this order.

Issued on this 22<sup>nd</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Month of the Iron-Sheep Year (2 August 1991).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**42. To the Deputy Minister of Health and Education**

It is the responsibility of our people to strengthen and safeguard our sovereignty and maintain peace in the country. Our government recognizes children as an important national asset. Thus, it is very important to promote their education and good moral conduct. For this purpose, 288 schools have been established as a basic foundation and our government has kept Nu 1,739 million as education budget. And, the developments in education, which have taken hundreds of years in other countries, have taken place in Bhutan in the last 35 years. However, to achieve the objective of giving our children good education and productive jobs, there is a need to review the policy of education and refine them wherever necessary. But, with the schools reopening by March 1996, there is no way of discussing all the matters at once.

Therefore, you must discuss and review the following matters with the heads of schools and teacher training institutes and come up with a resolution:

1. Our government has spent Nu 248 million for the promotion of education alone in the financial year 1995-1996. Therefore, the costs of education should be estimated and steps should be taken to give our people problem-free education.
2. You should amend the syllabi and give priority to subjects, which will make our students productive and promote opportunities for jobs within Bhutan, instead of keeping many subjects starting from the lower classes.
3. In our present context, there is a need to introduce programmes of good counselling and teachings to develop good moral conduct in our children.

4. Today, many foreigners are employed in civil service, public organizations and private organizations, as we lack qualified personnel. But the problem of unemployment has begun with some cases of our youth being unemployed. Our policy is to maintain a small, efficient and effective government by employing capable civil servants, and this policy cannot be achieved if all the students are to be employed in government service. Moreover, despite the development of our private organizations, not many Bhutanese have been employed in their organizations. For this reason, it is important to introduce appropriate programmes of counselling and consultation about job opportunities for our students from the beginning.

5. Amongst various steps, the most important step of developing the education system is to enhance the capabilities of our teachers and resolve the urgent problem of teacher shortage in the country. Therefore, the pay and allowances of our teachers should be increased and made attractive.

6. Although our government has been giving huge amount of money for the ration of schools and teacher training institutes annually, the costs of goods and services in the locality have increased and the amount has become insufficient even for the teacher training institutes. Therefore, this needs to be reviewed and increased.

It is hereby decreed that the above matters be reviewed one by one and discussed thoroughly and a recommendation, which can be implemented with our available resources, be framed and submitted to me immediately.

Issued on this 18<sup>th</sup> Day of the 11<sup>th</sup> Month of the Wood-Pig Year (8 January 1996).

### **43. To the Head of the Bhutan Olympic Committee**

The Bhutan Olympic Committee, which was established in 1983, to promote sports in Bhutan and to participate in International Olympic Competition, has not at all been able to fulfil the objectives. Moreover, many countries are going to participate in the 26<sup>th</sup> International Olympic Games, to be held in Atlanta, USA by July this year to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> year of the introduction of International Olympic Games. Therefore, it is important for us to participate and convey the message to the world that Bhutan is an independent country with a distinct identity, though we cannot win with a very less number of participants. But the Committee has not shown any interest in furtherance of its responsibility. It has not at all been concerned to arrange proper sportswear for the only four members. How can the current uniform of our four members be shown to the international community with dignity and grandeur, when it cannot be shown within Bhutan? Having been disheartened by the fact that the Committee has not fulfilled such a minor responsibility, I hereby decree that the Committee be dissolved with effect from today.

Issued on this 26<sup>th</sup> Day of the 5<sup>th</sup> Month of the Fire-Rat Year (11 July 1996).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**44. To the Speaker of the National Assembly**

In Bhutan, there is equal opportunity in every matter based on one's ability without any gender discrimination and inequality between sexes. Likewise, the Chimis' Election Act provides that the people of the concerned gewog can elect as a chimi any person willing to contest as a chimi, whether man or woman.

Further, in most of the gewogs, the voters at the election meeting are mostly women and they constitute 48% of Bhutan's population. However, since there are only few women candidates interested in competing for the post of the chimis, there are only three women chimis in the National Assembly.

According to the Chimis' Election Act, the people of the concerned gewogs should elect the chimi according to their choice and at the gewog level, the National Assembly and our government do not have their hand to distinguish election based on their sexes or in identifying candidature for a chimi. The term of 38 chimis will expire by next year when the 77<sup>th</sup> session convenes and new chimis will have to be elected. The people of the concerned gewog should elect their chimi as per their choice as decreed above and of course, the victor will be the one who gets the maximum number of individual votes.

Therefore, it is a reminder to all the Gewog Yargay Tshogchung and Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogchung of the 20 dzongkhags that there is no offence in participating as candidates in the election of a chimi in their concerned gewog even if they are women. But they must serve our country and people with utmost loyalty and capability as the people's representative in the National Assembly with dedication and as per the Act.

*Portrait of a Leader*

Issued on this 28<sup>th</sup> Day of the 7<sup>th</sup> Month of the Earth-Tiger  
Year (18 September 1998).

**Druk Gyalpo**



*The Endless Knot represents,  
with its unity and eternity without beginning or end,*

*Buddha's Heart.*

*It symbolizes the union of method and wisdom,  
permanent awareness of the interdependent nature of reality, and  
the union of infinite compassion and wisdom.*

## BEYOND THE EARTH AND THE SKY

A sense of closure visits every leader, sometime well before the tenure's end. Be it just a happenstance, a conversation, an event, or an insight straight out of the blue, something triggers a leader to think of the unfinished work, and to look beyond the horizon of one's term. One may not necessarily be conscious of such a visitation. Yet, inevitably, it influences the leader's work.

This is a critical moment. It is a watershed that divides "servant leaders" from the rest. (See the section, "Justice born of Humility", about servant leaders.)

Many leaders begin to focus on their personal legacy, often at the expense of tasks in hand or service to their people. Too many even become obsessed with power, and set out irrationally to hang onto it. Sadly, such undeserving leaders populate a lion's share of corporate headquarters and houses of parliament around the world.

Servant leaders, by nature, tend to have their antenna out to intuit the right time for stepping down. Neither the moment nor its significance is missed, when the sense of closure visits them. Quietly but steadfastly, such leaders cast their thoughts on their people's long-term priorities and needs, and set out to find ways to secure good policies or outcomes beyond the horizon of their own term.

There are four decrees, issued one after another over two years, which make one wonder whether they might be the work of that sense of closure.

The first of these decrees is addressed to the Deputy Minister for Health and Education (1997). It begins with a particularly striking and passionate statement about how His Majesty regards his people: *"In Bhutan, whether it is the external fence or the internal wealth, it is our people."*

The decree reasons that *“health of the children and the citizens of Bhutan”* is a priority that must be secured well into the future. While the people’s access to health facilities has improved greatly over the years, supply of non-traditional medication, which is all imported, exposes the national health system to a risk of total service breakdown. The decree thus commands the government to establish a *“trust fund for production of medicines”* because *“if we cannot produce medicines necessary for treatment now, there may arise inconvenient times where our government cannot take care of people’s health.”*

Two more decrees command similarly that trust funds be created. One, addressed to the Finance Minister (1997), begins by noting that *“development plans and programmes are meant for the common people and I have been looking into the welfare of various individuals.”* His Majesty shares concerns on extra-budgetary claims generated by *kidu* (royal welfare grants for those in need of extraordinary assistance), and instructs a *kidu* trust fund to be established along with associated financial and administrative governance measures.

The other, addressed to the Minister of Health and Education (1998), commands a trust fund to be set up for the purpose of youth guidance and counselling, *“in order to develop our youth”*. Matters of national security motivates the command: *“The sole responsibility of our people is to safeguard the sovereignty of our country and endeavor to attain fruition for all time to come ... And, since the stability of our country lies in the hands of our youth, it is considered very important to enable them to bear the responsibilities efficiently and effectively.”*

Last but not least, a decree addressed to the Secretary of the Royal Civil Service Commission (1998) instructs the government to explore means of providing financial security for civil servants, including *“a system of allowances”* (a retirement pension scheme). *“It is my idea to consider the status of our civil servants, not only when they are in service, but even after their resignation and ensure that they serve the*

*Portrait of a Leader*

*government, country and people with utmost ability and commitment.”*

Whether on the health system, *kidu*, the youth, or the civil servants, issues addressed are those of security and sustainability in perpetuity. These decrees speak to the future of the nation – sights fixed far beyond the earth and the sky.

**45. To the Deputy Minister for Health and Education**

In Bhutan, whether it is the external fence or the internal wealth, it is our people. One of the most important and planned development objectives of Bhutan is to bring up a productive community by promoting the physical health of the children and the citizens of Bhutan.

In order to achieve the above objective of making cent per cent health services available everywhere, 655 basic health units have been established in all. Further, with our government spending a lot of money every year, there are people who have passed out as doctors and dungtshos. However, the most important thing is to ensure that we provide health services to our people continuously and make ourselves self-sufficient. Although the development results of our health services are very encouraging currently, if we cannot produce medicines necessary for treatment now, there may arise inconvenient times where our government cannot take care of people's health. As a result, there is a risk that whatever has been invested in the basic health facilities till today will not benefit the community. So it is extremely important to become self-sufficient. In order to enable the regular production of medicines on our own without any obstacle in future, steps should be taken to set up a trust fund for production of medicines with the beginning of the 8th Five-Year plan. For this matter, it is decreed that the Finance Ministry should grant US\$ 1 million for creating a trust fund. The department of health should take steps to find additional capital, and the interests of the trust fund should enable us to produce medicines yearly on a regular basis

Issued on this 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Month of the Fire Ox Year (11 March 1997).

**Druk Gyalpo**

#### 46. To the Finance Minister

The development plans and programmes are meant for the common people and I have been looking into the welfare of various individuals. However, with the increase in the number of people asking for *kidu*, it has become very difficult for the government, despite the rules being very strict.

For example, the people who have suffered loss of life or property due to landslides and fire deserve *kidu*, and should be granted. In the same manner, the patients who need to replace their inner body organs like kidney also deserve *kidu*. But it is very expensive and also in contravention of the policy of the Department of Health. The policy of the Department of Health is to develop infrastructure and human resources by employing specialized doctors in the hospitals in Bhutan, with the money, which is to be spent in referring patients outside Bhutan. It is because referring patients outside Bhutan benefits only a few. However, when a person appeals to the Druk Gyalpo, there is no alternative than to grant him *kidu* for the patient's life is at stake.

Therefore, it is very inconvenient to command Finance Ministry to grant *kidu*, when a citizen appeals for monetary *kidu* with regard to any matter, as it is not included in the budget. You must invest whatever amount you can, depending on the necessity and establish a *kidu* fund exclusively for this purpose. A Committee has been established to look after the *kidu* fund, with the following persons as members:

- Gyalpoi Zimpon,
- Secretary of Finance, and
- Auditor General

It is the responsibility of the Committee to check which bank or industry is profitable and invest the fund and stabilize the foundation of the *kidu* fund. Further, the orders for *kidu*,

which were given to the Ministry of Finance, will now be issued to the Committee. You should grant the *kidu* from the interest and study the results after the grant of *kidu*. You must maintain an account and should be audited as per financial rules. Finally, it is decreed that you must discharge the above functions properly and submit an annual report.

Issued on this 30<sup>th</sup> Day of the 4<sup>th</sup> Month of the Fire-Female-Ox Year (15 June 1997)

**Druk Gyalpo**

**47. To the Secretary of the Royal Civil Service Commission**

It is my idea to consider the status of our civil servants, not only when they are in service, but even after their resignation and ensure that they serve the government, country and people with utmost ability and commitment. But, according to the current system, the highest limit of gratuity upon resignation is only Nu 100,000 in addition to the provident fund. Therefore, the members of Royal Civil Service Commission and Ministry of Finance should consult and discuss whether to raise the ceiling of gratuity above the current ceiling or introduce a system of allowances. You must consult the civil servants and review as to which would be better for the government and for the welfare of the retiring government servants. Thereafter, a report about the same should be submitted to the Druk Gyalpo stating what is better for the civil servants' future and the government.

Issued on this 3<sup>rd</sup> Day of the 4<sup>th</sup> Month of the Earth-Male-Tiger Year (28 May 1998).

**Druk Gyalpo**

**48. To the Minister of Health and Education**

Bhutan is a very small and landlocked country. Our government should not create a situation where any educated Bhutanese cannot get an opportunity of joining a service of his choice according to the policy of making every Bhutanese a productive citizen. Nevertheless, the citizens should also serve our country with full dedication.

The sole responsibility of our people is to safeguard the sovereignty of our country and endeavour to attain fruition for all time to come by serving our country with solemn oath and allegiance. And, since the stability of our country lies in the hands of our youth, it is very important to enable them to bear the responsibilities efficiently and effectively.

So, in order to develop our youth, our government has been coordinating the programmes of counselling and guidance of our youth. The Youth Guidance and Counselling Centre established by the Ministry of Health and Education in Thimphu with different programmes should be made accessible to about one hundred thousand of students in the schools ranging from primary schools to colleges. Further, for the continuity and sustainable promotion of such programmes, there is a need to ensure self-sufficiency.

Although our government is to spend Nu 3 million for the advancement of education in the eighth five-year plan, youth guidance and counselling, and development programmes cannot be implemented with this amount. Moreover, according to our policy of achieving self-reliance, we have to spend our revenue on regular administration.

Therefore, it is decreed that a permanent trust fund be established, for which the government will invest US\$ 1 million to make the Centre self-reliant. Further, you should seek for maximum of foreign aid.

*Portrait of a Leader*

Issued on this 13<sup>th</sup> Day of the 9<sup>th</sup> Month of the Earth-Tiger  
Year (2 November 1998).

**Druk Gyalpo**



*The White Lotus represents*

*Buddha's Tongue,*

*endowed with miraculous power to teach the Dharma.*

*With roots in mud yet flowering into to a beautiful blossom,*

*it symbolises the complete purification of*

*defilements of the body, speech and mind, and*

*blossoming of wholesome deeds.*

## TRUE POWER

From ancient times, countless thinkers have pondered about power and human behaviour. Restraint of power frequented their thought. It is seen as a rare virtue.

A few of the notables among many are: the Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC (*“Mastering others is strength, mastering yourself is true power”*), the Greek philosopher Aristotle in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (*“What lies in our power to do, it lies in our power not to do”*), William Shakespeare in *Measure for Measure* (*“O, it is excellent to have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous to use it like a giant”*), a 19<sup>th</sup> century American President, Abraham Lincoln (*“Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power”*), and Nelson Mandela (*“Our worst fear is not that we are inadequate, our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure”*).

The essence of true power is in giving it away. In doing so and empowering the people, leaders receive the gift of true power in return. Yet, this plain fact is rarely practiced, for power tends to intoxicate not only the leaders themselves but also those who derive power by association. Simply put, it takes a colossal courage to give away one's power.

The thrust of political reforms steered by His Majesty has been the devolution of power to the people. It included decentralizing legislative and administrative powers to local governments beginning in 1981, long before the era when efficacy of political decentralization for social and economic development became the mainstream thinking internationally. In this, too, His Majesty was *ahead of the times*.

But, the nation and the world were equally surprised – even shocked – upon realizing that more was in store.

The decree addressed to the Speaker of the National Assembly (1998) was the first of a series of surprises to come. It notes: *"It is important to promote participation of people in the system of decision making. There is a need for a permanent system of administration ... There is also a need for a method of check and balance, and limitation, to safeguard the national interest and security in the system."* His Majesty then instructs the Assembly to debate two major changes in the power of the monarch.

First, the Cabinet Ministers are to be elected by National Assembly (instead of appointed by the King) for a five-year term, and to be vested with *"full executive powers"*. Thus, the King's executive power is to be devolved to the Cabinet, with a note that when *"the Cabinet Ministers rule our country with full executive powers, it should report all matters relating to the sovereignty and security of our country to the King."*

Second, the Assembly is commanded to debate an impeachment procedure against the monarch: *"It is my wish that the National Assembly will decide about the system of casting vote of no confidence against the Druk Gyalpo in order to strengthen the system of government. It is decreed that if three-fourth of the members of National Assembly cast vote of no confidence, the Druk Gyalpo shall resign from the throne and the Crown Prince or his successor shall be enthroned as the King."*

Uncharacteristically, the decree insists on a strict timetable without elaborating the reason why. The Assembly is asked to discuss these reforms and *"pass a resolution in the 76<sup>th</sup> session only"*. An act, drafted by a committee, is to be submitted to the Assembly's 77<sup>th</sup> session.

Then came the instruction to draft a Constitution. With the benefit of hindsight, clock for that moment of closure seems to have begun ticking...

“On 4th September 2001, His Majesty the King briefed the Council of Ministers, the Chief Justice and the Chairman of the Royal Advisory Council on the need to draft a formal Constitution for the Kingdom of Bhutan. His Majesty expressed his desire that the Lhengye Zhungtshog and the Chief Justice should hold discussions on formulating the Draft Constitution.

His Majesty said that while Bhutan did not have a formal Constitution, all the principles and provisions of a Constitution were covered under the various written laws and legislations, which guided the actions of His Majesty the King and the functioning of the Royal Government, the Judiciary and the National Assembly of Bhutan. Nevertheless, with the country and the people having successfully achieved a high level of development and political maturity, the time had come to bring out a formal Constitution for the Kingdom of Bhutan.

His Majesty emphasized that the Constitution must promote and protect the present and as well as the future well being of the people and the country. It must ensure that Bhutan has a political system, which will provide peace and stability for the Bhutanese society, and also strengthen and safeguard the security and sovereignty of the country. The Lhengye Zhungtshog should, therefore, establish a Committee to draft the Constitution for the Kingdom of Bhutan. His Majesty said that the Drafting Committee should not only comprise of government officials and National Assembly Members who are well qualified and have a good understanding of the laws of the country but also include eminent citizens who will be able to contribute towards drafting the Constitution.” [Archives of the Drafting Committee, [www.constitution.bt](http://www.constitution.bt)]

Devolution of power to the people culminated in the draft Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan. The Drafting Committee completed its work in 2004, embodying a constitutional monarchy, with, *inter alia*, a two-party based Parliament (a lower house, with the majority party to form the

Executive), the National Council (an upper house, elected independently of political parties), independent Judiciary, and a set of autonomous constitutional agencies (Anti-Corruption Commission, Audit Authority, Civil Service Commission, and Election Commission).

Having completed nationwide public consultations, the Constitution now awaits formal ratification by the new Parliament in 2008. As rest of the decrees in this section show, however, preparations for the new political regime continued apace without waiting for the ratification.

Autonomy of the Royal Audit Authority was re-asserted, and its reporting arrangements clarified (1999). The National Legislative Committee was established, to “*strengthen the Judiciary of Bhutan*” (2003).

The Anti-Corruption Commission was created with the appointment of its Chair (2005): “*At a time when we are establishing parliamentary democracy in the country, it is very important to curb and root out corruption from the very beginning. Therefore, it is imperative to establish the Office of the Anti-Corruption Commission before the adoption of the Constitution and build a strong foundation for the Commission to effectively carry out its functions and responsibilities.*”

Likewise, the Election Commission was created with the appointment of its Chair (2005). The decree gives specific instructions for the Commission to execute such preparatory tasks as constituency demarcation, electoral rolls, and “*training and familiarization for the people in the electoral process during the next two years in 2006 and 2007 so that the first general elections in the country can be carried out successfully in the year 2008.*”

In his seminal book, *The Politics of Bhutan* (1977), Leo E. Rose commented on the political reforms of the late Druk Gyalpo III as follows: “While the relationship between the monarchy, the

Assembly, and the Council of Ministers cannot yet be described as parliamentary in character, such a system does exist in embryonic form. Whether it will develop along classic parliamentary lines with the power of the king strictly limited and the Council of Ministers elected by and responsible to the representative body is still too early to tell. But, it is probably without precedent in the history of monarchies that an absolute ruler has, on his own initiative and without serious overt challenges to his authority, introduced basic structural changes that could eventually transform the entire character of the monarchical polity.”

The moment for a historic closure had indeed arrived. A closure for His Majesty’s own leadership work spanning over more than three decades, and a closure for the leadership journey that began when the late Majesty created the National Assembly in 1953.

**49. To the Speaker of the National Assembly**

The 76<sup>th</sup> session of the National Assembly needs to discuss and resolve very important matters in the interest of perpetual national peace and security. I have been concentrating on the interests of our country and welfare of our people more than everything else in my life for the past 25 years of my reign. I have been working hard to guard the sovereignty of Bhutan and for the perpetual prosperity and happiness of our people with full dedication of my body, speech and mind.

During this period, our people have been able to lead a better life of economic development in our community and it has become a basis for us to be happy and satisfied, as our country's independence has gained permanence.

I have been working hard to prepare the people to fully participate with alertness and commitment, in the system of deciding matters of our country. For this matter, the decentralization policy was introduced in the year 1981 and Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogchung established in all the Dzongkhags. Further, in 1991, the system of Gewog Yargay Tshogchung was introduced in all the 202 gewogs and the policy has flourished well.

Today, our country follows the path of economic development of the community and is progressing steadily. Our people have been shouldering their responsibility with commitment and have progressed well in preparing and executing development programmes through Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogchung and Gewog Yargay Tshogchung. Furthermore, there exists a system of submitting matters of national interest to the National Assembly for discussion.

It is important to promote people's participation in the system of decision-making. There is a need for a permanent system of administration that should be able to provide a fair and effective management as per the responsibilities of our people.

There is also a need for a method of check and balance, and limitation, to safeguard the national interest and security in the system. In order to achieve this objective, the idea is to amend the old system of the Cabinet Ministers as an important step of procedure, and elect the ministers through voting and establish an independent council of ministers with full executive powers for an effective administration.

Therefore, it is decreed that the members of the National Assembly discuss and resolve about the following important matters in the 76<sup>th</sup> session of the National Assembly, keeping in mind the permanent interest and welfare of our country:

1. Since all the council of ministers will be elected by voting in the National Assembly, the first voting for the election of Cabinet Ministers will be held in the 76<sup>th</sup> session.
2. The National Assembly should pass a resolution on the functions and responsibilities of the Cabinet Ministers.
3. There should be a method of submitting a vote of no confidence against the King of Bhutan in the National Assembly.

After having thought of the important matters, I intend to discuss my thoughts and plans with the members of the National Assembly and decide accordingly about the matters of national importance in the 76<sup>th</sup> session to arrive at fruitful results. It is hoped that the members of the National Assembly will discuss well, and adopt my thoughts and plans as the basis of discussion to gradually give the powers of the executive to the elected Cabinet Ministers by amending the system of Lhengye Zhungtshog.

Henceforth, the elected ministers and councillors of the Loday Tshogdey will be the members of Lhengye Zhungtshog. The existing Cabinet Ministers had to hold their posts for long as many of our educated and capable officers are very young and

have not reached the position to be appointed as Cabinet Ministers, according to our culture and norms. With the passage of time, there will be prospective candidates for the post of Cabinet Ministers, which will benefit the establishment of a permanent, effective and efficient executive in our country.

The National Assembly should elect the ministers of Lhengye Zhungtshog through secret ballot. In order to lay the foundation of an effective executive, the candidates for Cabinet Ministers should be selected from among the persons holding the post equivalent to that of a government secretary.

A candidate should get the majority of the votes cast by the voters in order to be considered as elected. The Druk Gyalpo will award the responsibility and post of the Cabinet Ministers. The term of office of a Cabinet Minister is five years. Thereafter, the National Assembly should cast vote of confidence in the concerned minister.

The decisions of the Lhengye Zhungtshog will be based on the unanimous ruling of the National Assembly members. When the Cabinet Ministers rule our country with full executive powers, it should report all matters relating to the sovereignty and security of our country to the King.

A committee should be formed in the National Assembly, comprised of representatives of the religious body and government, and representatives from twenty dzongkhags, to draft an act for the Cabinet Ministers to be submitted to the National Assembly for deliberation in its 77<sup>th</sup> session.

After having studied the political systems of other countries, I have repeatedly thought that we urgently need an appropriate and permanent system of government according to the need of a small country like ours, to safeguard our independence with continued peace and prosperity.

Therefore, to stop bad examples like abandoning the procedure and system of electing Cabinet Ministers and furthering individual interests, from the beginning, a system of check and balance and limitation should be introduced by any means in the system of government. Further, such a system is very important for a small country like ours, which is located between two populous and big countries of the world. In view of this situation, the common purpose of our country should be given priority and no one should be driven away by discrimination, based on the place of origin, religion or caste, during the election of the Cabinet Ministers.

It is my wish that the National Assembly will decide about the system of casting vote of no confidence against the Druk Gyalpo in order to strengthen the system of government. It is decreed that, if three-fourth of the members of the National Assembly cast vote of no confidence, the Druk Gyalpo shall resign from the throne and the Crown Prince or his successor shall be enthroned as the King.

It is my wish and prayer to amend the system of Cabinet Ministers and gradually transfer the executive powers to the elected Cabinet of Ministers for the prosperity and welfare of our country. It is important for the National Assembly to discuss the above matters and pass a resolution during the 76<sup>th</sup> session only. Till today, whatever political works it may be, I have been executing with commitment to the country and people, and have always considered the national interest.

Therefore, it is a reminder that it is the responsibility of the members of the National Assembly to keep in mind the peace and welfare of our country while discussing about important matters of our country. If the members of the National Assembly unanimously amend the old system of Cabinet Ministers and decide upon gradually transferring the full executive powers to elected Cabinet Ministers, it will enhance our development and perpetuate our happiness and peace.

*Through the Looking-Glass of His Majesty's Decrees*

Issued on this 15<sup>th</sup> Day of the 4<sup>th</sup> Month of the Earth-Male-Tiger Year (10 June 1998).

**Druk Gyalpo**

## **50. To the Auditor General**

The important responsibility of auditing the appropriateness of the accounts of income and expenditure of the government money and property, maintained by the ministries, departments and corporations of both civil and armed forces falls on the Royal Audit Authority.

Therefore, while discharging your functions, it is important to investigate thoroughly and impartially without being carried away by your own desires and without considering other's status, whether high or low. It is for this reason that the Royal Audit Authority has been established as an autonomous body and not affiliated to any ministry or department of the government.

The power to rule the country has been given to the Cabinet of Ministers as per the resolution of the 76<sup>th</sup> session of the National Assembly. Henceforth, all the problematic reports should be directly sent to the Cabinet Ministers instead of sending them to the concerned ministries, departments and corporations. Further, the audit report of the Judiciary should be sent to the Chief Justice, and that of the armed forces' to the Ministry of Finance as it looks after the budget of the three wings of the armed forces.

With regard to the submission of report to the Druk Gyalpo, it should be done only when there is a specific order to that effect as before. It is the responsibility of the Council of Ministers, ministries and departments to acknowledge the submitted audit report according to the law on time. However, if anyone does not react properly, the Royal Audit Authority should remind, interrogate and investigate thoroughly and strictly without fearing anyone.

Further, it is decreed that the status of the Royal Audit Authority shall remain autonomous, as it should be free of fear and doubt during investigations.

*Through the Looking-Glass of His Majesty's Decrees*

Issued on this 15<sup>th</sup> Day of the 1<sup>st</sup> Month of the Earth-Female-Rabbit Year (2 March 1999).

**Druk Gyalpo**

### **51. The National Legislative Committee**

In order to strengthen the Judiciary of Bhutan, there is a need to administer it appropriately. According to sections 10 (b), 13 (c) and (d), 14 and 14.1 and 15 (b) of the Civil and Criminal Procedure Code of Bhutan, 2001, a National Legislative Committee should be established. Therefore, the Druk Gyalpo has constituted the National Legislative Committee by appointing the Chief Justice of Bhutan as the Chairman of the Committee, and two judges of the High Court, the head of the Office of Legal Affairs and Secretary of the National Assembly as members of the Committee for three years. The members are hereby commanded to carry out their responsibilities according to the above sections fairly and professionally.

Issued on this 30<sup>th</sup> Day of the 6<sup>th</sup> Month of the Water-Sheep Year (27 August 2003).

**Druk Gyalpo**

## **52. The Anti-Corruption Commission**

It is hereby decreed that Foreign Secretary Neten Zangmo is transferred and appointed as the Chair of the Anti-Corruption Commission until the new parliament is formed subject to adoption of the Constitution and establishment of parliamentary democracy in our country.

With the rapid pace of economic development in our country, there have been changes in the thinking of the people, with the influence of vested interest leading to corrupt practices taking place in both the government and the private sector. If appropriate steps are not taken now to stop this trend, it will lead to very serious problems in the future, for both the government and the people, in our country with a very small population. In this regard, it is the responsibility of every Bhutanese to act against corruption in our country.

At a time when we are establishing parliamentary democracy in the country, it is very important to curb and root out corruption from the very beginning. Therefore, it is imperative to establish the Office of the Anti-Corruption Commission before the adoption of the Constitution and build a strong foundation for the Commission to effectively carry out its functions and responsibilities.

The Chairperson of the Anti-Corruption Commission must discharge her responsibilities with utmost loyalty and dedication to the government and the people, unaffected by any consideration for those in positions of power and influence, showing full transparency and no discrimination whatsoever in the line of her work. The Anti-Corruption Commission must fulfil its responsibility of curbing and rooting out corruption through timely and effective checking on private utilization of public funds and persons engaged in unauthorized use of public resources. Towards this end, the Chairperson of the Anti-Corruption Commission is authorized to carry out investigations on any person in Bhutan,

*Portrait of a Leader*

regardless of status or position, in the course of discharging her important responsibilities.

Issued on this 30<sup>th</sup> Day of the 10<sup>th</sup> Month of the Wood-Bird Year (31 December 2005).

**Druk Gyalpo**

### **53. The Election Commission**

The Draft Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan that was framed to ensure the present and future interests of the country has been distributed nationwide and consultations with our people in the 20 Dzongkhags on the Constitution are already taking place.

Once the Constitution is adopted and the introduction of parliamentary democracy takes place, it is of paramount importance to ensure that elections are conducted properly. As it is necessary to make full preparations to carry out this important task before parliamentary democracy is established, Auditor General Kunzang Wangdi is hereby transferred and appointed as the Chief Election Commissioner until the new parliament is formed after the adoption of the Constitution. The office of the Election Commission is a very important Constitutional post and it is imperative to build a strong foundation for implementing the functions of this post while we are in the process of establishing democratic practices and norms in our country. The Chief Election Commissioner must carry out his responsibilities with the highest level of loyalty and dedication to the government and the people without any distinction or discrimination between regions, dzongkhags and gewogs, and establish a strong electoral system for the present and future interests of the country.

In keeping with the provisions of the Constitution for a minimum of two and a maximum of seven members in the National Assembly for each dzongkhag, on the basis of population, the Chief Election Commissioner must finalize the constituencies for the election of National Assembly members. Towards this end, the Office of the Election Commission must review and finalize the boundaries of the dzongkhags and gewogs together with the concerned ministries and departments.

The Office of the Election Commission must also finalize the electoral rolls and election schedules as well as make full preparations for the supervision, direction, control and conduct of elections to the Parliament and local government. The Election Commission must conduct training and familiarization for the people in the electoral process during the next two years in 2006 and 2007 so that the first general elections in the country can be carried out successfully in the year 2008.

Issued on this 30<sup>th</sup> Day of the 10<sup>th</sup> Month of the Wood-Bird Year (31 December 2005).

**Druk Gyalpo**



*The Precious Vase represents*

*Buddha's Neck*

*that contains all his teachings and spiritual jewels.*

*Serving as a receptacle for the nectar of immortality,*

*it symbolises long life, inner wealth and liberation.*

## FOR ALL TIME TO COME ...

In every leadership position, without exception, the toughest challenge comes at its end. It lies in when and how to step down.

It is rare to see a leader who knows when to leave. It is even rarer to see a leader who acts, and acts decisively, on that knowledge. And, it is near impossible to find a leader who leaves well.

The world history is full of leaders who ended up risking what they set out to achieve, having overstayed their people's welcome. Temptation to remain in leadership is so strong that it is almost inhuman to resist it. Especially so, when leaders have earned the people's trust – not the stuff of passive obedience or blind faith, but the confidence of open hearts, unafraid to voice even objections to the leadership. Yet, that is precisely the moment to leave.

The decision to leave is, by its very nature, an excruciatingly private one. But, there is comfort in preparing for the departure, particularly in making a good succession plan. And it is through succession planning that leaders can help their people anticipate the inevitable to come.

Leaders' authority effectively ends the moment their pending departure becomes known. Lame duck syndrome brings uncertainties, confusion, and even chaos at times, and is to be avoided if at all possible. Ideal time to announce the leadership's departure is on or after the event itself.

All this is nothing more than a set of common sense. Yet, not all leaders possess it, nor do they put it into practice. His Majesty is one rare leader who executed it flawlessly. An uncommon common sense, indeed.

In addition to His Majesty's final decree, this section includes three pieces from *Kuensel* because of their historical significance.

*Kuensel* article titled "Draft Constitution to be distributed to all Bhutanese" (23 March 2005) reports on a special session of the Cabinet, where His Majesty shared his views on the Draft Constitution. Apart from illuminating the King's substantive analyses on the Draft Constitution, the report gives insights into two aspects of the leadership's departure.

One is the King's statement about the timing of the Constitution. The Constitution being the culmination of His Majesty's leadership work, it paints a vivid picture of why and how the King might have seen the right time for leaving...

*"Today the King, government, and the people in all sections of society, enjoyed a level of trust and fidelity that had never been seen before. The security of the country was ensured and the people enjoyed peace and stability. The genuine rapport in Bhutan's relations with India had reached a new height. ... Bhutan also enjoyed close relations with its development partners as well as other countries that appreciated the Kingdom's wholesome policies for development and change.*

*It was a most auspicious time for the Constitution to be enacted. Unlike other countries where Constitutions were drafted during difficult times, under pressure from political influences and interests, Bhutan was fortunate that the change came under no pressure or compulsion but at a time when the country enjoyed unprecedented peace and stability with total harmony and abiding fidelity between the King, the government, and the people."*

The other aspect is a hint, big enough with the benefit of hindsight, about His Majesty's imminent departure. Whether or not it is registered as such, the people are being helped to anticipate the change to come: *"His Majesty said that it was*

*important for the Chhoetse Penlop (the title for the Crown Prince), Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, to be involved in the consultations with the people, to interact with them, and to understand their views and perceptions on the Constitution. His Majesty said that it would be the Chhoetse Penlop's responsibility to implement and uphold the Constitution."* (Emphasis added.)

A formal announcement came nine months later, at the end of His Majesty's National Day address (17 December 2005). Having announced the first national elections under the new Constitution to take place in 2008, His Majesty simply added: *"I would also like our people to know that the Chhoetse Penlop will be enthroned as the Fifth Druk Gyalpo in 2008. As it is necessary and important for a King to gain as much experience as possible to serve his country to his fullest capacity, I will be delegating my responsibilities to the Chhoetse Penlop before 2008."*

*"A shocked nation has received this news in stunned silence"*, summed up the next day's *Kuensel* news. His Majesty would certainly not betray the people, and made clear that they ought to expect the coronation in 2008 and the transfer of power before then. Human ears tend to hear what they want to hear, however, and that is not what the *"shocked nation"* actually heard.

Just as the people were getting used to the idea of the transition in 2008 (so they thought), the final decree served the notice of abdication after the fact, and long before the erroneously anticipated date. "The Last Kasho – Abdication" (9 December 2006) is a simple announcement. It thanks the people – *"whatever we have achieved so far is due to the merit of the people of Bhutan."* And, it entrusts the future of the nation in their hands: *"I repose my full faith and belief in the people of Bhutan to look after the future of our nation, for it is the Bhutanese people who are the true custodians of our tradition and culture and the ultimate guardians of the security, sovereignty and continued well-being of our country."*

*Kuensel* article, titled “His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck becomes the fifth Druk Gyalpo” (15 December 2006), reports on a special sitting of the Cabinet called suddenly the day before, where His Majesty broke the news for the first time. The Cabinet “*was unable to articulate a comprehensive discussion.*” As members spoke in turn, “*their strongest message came in the deep quiet that hung in the air throughout the meeting ... all members of the Lhengye Zhungtshog were moved to stunned silence by his final act of trust in the Bhutanese people.*”

The new King, His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, had already stepped in seamlessly, and the hard work of leadership has continued with not even a single lost beat.

*Kuensel's* Editorial, entitled “Of destiny” (16 December 2006) offers a fitting tribute: “*As a Monarch who transcends the past, the present, and the future, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck is not departing but leaving behind much of himself in the Bhutanese people. If we expect His Majesty to influence changes from behind the scene it will not happen. But it is our responsibility to make sure that his selfless sacrifices was not made in vain and that the ultimate teaching of impermanence remains our strength. ... We do not mourn the departure of His Majesty as our Monarch but celebrate the achievement of his destiny.*”

Fortunate are the people who beheld such a leader. Precious is the leader who receives such a tribute. May the spirit of this tribute live on, in the body, speech and mind of all the people of Bhutan, “*for all time to come*”...

**54. Draft Constitution to be distributed to all  
Bhutanese\***

*Dasho Kinley Dorji<sup>o</sup>*

23 March 2005 - On March 26, an auspicious day when the stars and elements converge favourably to create an environment of harmony and success, the Bhutanese people will turn the pages of a new era in history as the Draft Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan is simultaneously unveiled around the country. Representatives of the people in the Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdus and the Gewog Yargay Tshogchungs will take part in the traditional ceremonies organised in every dzongkhag to mark the historic occasion.

The Draft Constitution will be made widely accessible, available to every citizen, as it is distributed to government organisations, schools and training institutions, and the business communities. The draft will also be launched on the Internet and a website maintained for the Constitution, with a glossary of terms, to ensure clarity within and outside the country. On March 21, at a special session of the Lhengye Zhungtshog that was charged with a sense of momentous significance, His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck shared his views on the Constitution with the members. It was the last formal discussion on the draft before the public distribution.

His Majesty reminded the members of the Lhengye Zhungtshog that the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan was drafted with a single-minded focus that attached the highest importance to creating a democratic political system best suited to Bhutan. "The adoption of the Constitution will provide the legal framework for a democratic political system

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\* *Kuensel*, 23 March 2005.

<sup>o</sup> Editor-in-Chief and Managing Director, *Kuensel*

that is best suited for Bhutan and will establish a system of governance that will safeguard the security and sovereignty of the nation and ensure the well being of the Bhutanese people for all time to come,” said His Majesty the King.

His Majesty shared his perceptions and views on the Draft Constitution, which has 34 Articles, explaining their significance and emphasising the need for all Bhutanese people to understand their implications in the right perspective.

His Majesty said that Article II, on the institution of Monarchy, aimed to ensure that, if Bhutan had a good and capable King, he would be able to serve the country and the people meaningfully and ensure that the national interests were safeguarded and the aspirations of the people fulfilled. At the same time, if a King did not have the capability or the commitment to discharge this sacred responsibility, he would not be able to compromise the interests of the nation and the people.

His Majesty expressed his satisfaction with the comprehensive rights and responsibilities prescribed for the Bhutanese people in the Constitution.

His Majesty the King also emphasised the importance of the National Council as one of the houses of parliament. With 20 members elected directly by the people in the 20 dzongkhags and five eminent persons nominated by the King, the National Council would act as a house of review on matters concerning the sovereignty of the country and the interests of the people that needed to be brought to the notice of the King, the prime minister, and the National Assembly. His Majesty explained that, while such a body was called an “Upper House” in some parliamentary systems and the National Assembly would be the “Lower House”, these terms could carry the wrong nuances in the perception of the Bhutanese people.

His Majesty emphasised the importance of the Constitutional posts for parliamentary democracy to be a success. Unlike countries where the persons holding Constitutional positions were appointed by a King, President, or Prime Minister, thus compromising their objectivity, the positions in Bhutan would be nominated jointly by the Prime Minister, the Chief Justice, Speaker of the National Assembly, the chairperson of the National Council, and the opposition leader for appointment by the King.

His Majesty the King said that the issue of political parties had been thoroughly debated during the drafting process. Multi party systems in other countries were studied carefully and it was felt that in Bhutan there was every possibility that each dzongkhag might establish a political party, which would not be conducive to political stability and might affect the success of democracy in Bhutan. The concept of a three-party system had also been considered. While a three-party system had advantages, there was a risk that the parties could become regionalized, leading to communal discord and problems. In a three-party system, the party winning the largest number of votes could also be relegated as the opposition party if the other two combined to form the government.

His Majesty pointed out that the government would fully fund the political parties through the Election Commission to ensure the integrity of the electoral process in Bhutan.

His Majesty also pointed out to the members of the Lhengye Zhungtshog that there had been some concerns on the administrative structure and functions of local governments. The Constitution had, therefore, made a provision for parliament to regulate the powers and functions of the dzongda and local governments to ensure that local governments would be self reliant and self sustaining.

His Majesty the King said that he was aware of the widespread opinion that Bhutan was not ready for democracy and that it was too early to enact the Constitution. His Majesty himself had been personally informed by ministers, officials, members of the business community, the clergy, and the people about the concerns that a government formed by political parties would not work because of the lack of political experience, the absence of the necessary institutions, and their inability to provide stable and good governance.

His Majesty said that, while it was natural for people to have misgivings and the concerns were also genuine, it was important to understand the political changes in the perspective of the current situation. Bhutan, through good fortune and fate, could not hope for a better moment than now for this historical development and would never find another opportunity like this.

Today the King, government, and the people in all sections of society, enjoyed a level of trust and fidelity that had never been seen before. The security of the country was ensured and the people enjoyed peace and stability. The genuine rapport in Bhutan's relations with India had reached a new height. With the commissioning of the Tala Hydro Electric Project within two years, the greatly enhanced revenue would bring major economic benefits for the government and the people. Bhutan also enjoyed close relations with its development partners as well as other countries that appreciated the kingdom's wholesome policies for development and change.

It was a most auspicious time for the Constitution to be enacted. Unlike other countries where Constitutions were drafted during difficult times, under pressure from political influences and interests, Bhutan was fortunate that the change came under no pressure or compulsion but at a time when the country enjoyed unprecedented peace and stability with total harmony and abiding fidelity between the King, the government, and the people.

While people questioned the process of parliamentary democracy being introduced too early, it should be understood that the Bhutanese people would never gain political experience until they took part in the new political system. Bhutan today had the luxury of nurturing democracy to maturity and solving all problems at an early stage in the democratic experience. While problems were always inevitable in the early stages of a new political process, all problems at this stage could be resolved without harming the interests of the nation and people.

His Majesty reminded the members of the Lhengye Zhungtshog that Bhutan had laid sound foundations for a genuinely workable democracy at all levels of society. The dzongkhag yargay tshogdu had 24 years of experience in decentralisation, the geog yargay tshogchung had been established 14 years ago, and the elected council of ministers had exercised full executive authority for seven years.

His Majesty the King also reminded the members of the lhengye zhungtshog that the essence of Bhutan's success in the past 30 years had been the ability to anticipate challenges and pre-empt problems. Bhutan had drawn up the right national policies, aims and objectives, and plans, all at strategic moments, in the process of development.

Therefore, the same with democracy. The Constitution introduced an important phase of trial and experimentation with democratic government. Bhutan's lack of experience in democratic governance would not result in political instability and problems. The people, politicians, officials, and the system would get valuable experience and exposure.

His Majesty informed the members of the lhengye zhungtsho that he would personally conduct the consultations with the people on the draft Constitution. Having widely distributed the draft to the people in the 20 dzongkhags, His Majesty would meet the people as and when they were ready. The

consultations would be held chronologically based on the feedback from the dzongkhags.

His Majesty said that it was important for the Chhoetse Penlop, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, to be involved in the consultations with the people, to interact with them, and to understand their views and perceptions on the Constitution. His Majesty said that it would be the Chhoetse Penlop's responsibility to implement and uphold the Constitution.

His Majesty pointed out that the draft Constitution was not submitted to the National Assembly first because the people might not accept the decisions of the Assembly as there would be only 100 chimis representing the dzongkhags. The Constitution of Bhutan would, therefore, be adopted by referendum, as has been the practice in Bhutan for all important issues, and then enacted in the National Assembly.

His Majesty the King expressed his appreciation to the 39-member Constitution drafting committee, which was established in November 2001. The committee, chaired by the Chief Justice with the Speaker of the National Assembly as a member, included two representatives of the ecclesiastical bodies, one elected member from each of the 20 dzongkhags, the Zhung Kalyon and all the members of the Royal Advisory Council, five representatives of the government, and three lawyers of the High Court.

Although they had no previous experience, the committee had worked hard to draft the Constitution. In the process of drafting the Constitution, the committee had studied the Constitutions of more than 50 other countries. The idea was not to copy other Constitutions but to study and adopt what was good and relevant for Bhutan. His Majesty also expressed his appreciation to the council of ministers for their contribution. His Majesty said that the Constitution was not a gift from the King to the people but it was the responsibility of

all sections of the Bhutanese people to draft a Constitution, which would be relevant and beneficial for Bhutan.

The Prime Minister, Lyonpo Yeshey Zimba, described the distribution of the Constitution as one of the most important events in the history of Bhutan. It came at a time when Bhutan was witnessing the culmination of a golden period in history, the reign of His Majesty the fourth Druk Gyalpo, when the people enjoyed unprecedented levels of income, health and education facilities, security, sovereignty, good governance, sound policies and people-centred development aimed to improve the well-being of the ordinary people.

The Prime Minister said that all this did not come by chance. Bhutan was blessed with the protection of its guardian deities and the good fortune of the people but the country enjoyed such a level of progress today because of the dedication of a Monarch like His Majesty who had committed himself to the service of the people.

“All this was possible because of the complete trust and faith between the King and the people who have full faith in His Majesty to continue to lead the nation forward,” he said. “The Constitution is the embodiment of the faith that His Majesty himself has in the capability of the people to look after the national interest.”

The Prime minister expressed the deep appreciation of the lhengye chungtshog that His Majesty himself would conduct the consultations with the people. “The trust of the people in His Majesty is so complete that it can overcome their apprehension over the impending changes that will come with democracy, particularly the problems that many developing countries are facing,” he said.

The Prime Minister also expressed the happiness of the government and people that His Royal Highness the Chhoetse Penlop would be involved in the consultations with the

people. He described it as an important opportunity for His Royal Highness, the future King, to understand the people's perceptions and be fully involved in the adoption of the Constitution. The Chairman of the Constitution Drafting Committee, Lyonpo Sonam Tobgye, said that the committee had been continuously inspired by the radiance of His Majesty's vision during all its discussions. "The Constitution of Bhutan," said the Chief Justice, "is a shining symbol of the devolution of power by His Majesty the King that conveys the eternal message of justice, liberty, and equality to the citizens of Bhutan."

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## **55. The Last Kasho – Abdication**

As I had announced during the National Day celebrations last year about my abdication, and also briefed the Lhengye Zhungtshog on this decision, the time has now come for me to hand-over my responsibilities to Trongsa Penlop Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

While we prepare ourselves for parliamentary democracy in 2008, we must all pledge with our body, speech and mind to be unwavering and steadfast in our efforts to strengthen the sovereignty and security of Bhutan, to secure the blessings of liberty, ensure justice and peace in our country, and enhance the unity, happiness and well-being of our people for all time to come.

In taking note of the progress that our nation has made over the past 34 years, I would like to state that whatever we have achieved so far is due to the merit of the people of Bhutan. I, therefore, wish to express my gratitude to the Clergy, the officials of the Royal Government, the members of the business community and our security forces, and to all the people of the 20 dzongkhags for their unfailing support and loyalty to me and our country.

I am confident that a very bright and great future lies ahead for Bhutan with the leadership of a new King and a democratic system of government that is best suited for our country, as enshrined under the Constitution. I have every confidence that there will be unprecedented progress and prosperity for our nation in the reign of our fifth King.

As I hand over my responsibilities to my son, I repose my full faith and belief in the people of Bhutan to look after the future of our nation, for it is the Bhutanese people who are the true custodians of our tradition and culture and the ultimate guardians of the security, sovereignty and continued well-being of our country.

*Through the Looking-Glass of His Majesty's Decrees*

May the blessings of Ugyen Guru Rimpoche, the father of our nation Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal and our Guardian Deities continue to guide the destiny of our country and protect the future of the glorious Palden Drukpa!

Given at Tashichho Dzong on the 20<sup>th</sup> Day of the 10<sup>th</sup> Month of the Fire-Dog Year, corresponding to the 9<sup>th</sup> Day of December 2006.

**Druk Gyalpo**

**56. His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck  
becomes the Fifth Druk Gyalpo<sup>o</sup>**

*Dasho Kinley Dorji\**

15 December 2006 - The fourth Druk Gyalpo, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, has handed over his responsibilities as the Monarch and head of state of Bhutan to the Crown Prince Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck who now assumes the full responsibilities of head of state as the fifth Druk Gyalpo.

“The time has now come for me to hand over my responsibilities to Trongsa Penlop Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck,” said His Majesty in a kasho issued on December 9, the 20th day of the 10th Bhutanese month. “I am confident that a very bright future lies ahead for Bhutan with the leadership of a new King and a democratic system of government that is best suited for our country as enshrined under the Constitution. I have every confidence that there will be unprecedented progress and prosperity for our nation in the reign of our fifth King.”

As the transition was formally announced on December 14, the 24th day of the 10th Bhutanese month, the day was charged with emotion, and a special sitting of the Cabinet in Tashichho Dzong was unable to articulate a comprehensive discussion. Cabinet members and special guests that included the chief justice, the speaker of the National Assembly, and the chief election commissioner were overcome by emotion and sat in a long and stunned silence after His Majesty the King’s announcement.

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<sup>o</sup> *Kuensel*, 15 December 2006.

\* Editor-in-Chief and Managing Director, *Kuensel*

With a clarity that has been consistent in the royal views, His Majesty reminded the Cabinet session that he had already announced the decision to the nation last December and repeated it many times to the lhengye chungtshog.

His Majesty explained that Bhutan could not hope for a better time for such an important transition. Today, the country enjoyed peace and stability, and its security and sovereignty was ensured. After phenomenal development and progress the country was closer than ever to the goal of economic self reliance. Bhutan's relations with its closest neighbour and friend, India, had reached new heights. International organisations and bilateral development partners were ready to support Bhutan's development efforts and political transformation.

Bhutan witnesses one of the most emotional moments in Bhutanese history.

His Majesty said that Bhutan was extremely fortunate to have been able to face and overcome many challenges over the past 34 years, even those that many people thought were not possible. While countries around the world were suffering from political unrest and economic woes the Bhutanese leadership and people now had the opportunity to look ahead and plan for the future.

“Such an opportunity will not come again,” His Majesty said.

His Majesty also pointed out that, as parliamentary democracy was established, the country would enjoy peace and stability for several years and that would be a good period for the fifth Druk Gyalpo and the new government to gain exposure and political experience.

His Majesty said that, as long as he himself continued to be King, the Crown Prince would not gain the actual experience of dealing with issues and carrying out the responsibilities of

a head of state. With parliamentary democracy to be established in 2008 there was much to be done so it was necessary that he gained this valuable experience.

His Majesty said that he had mentioned to the Crown Prince that he would have the opportunity to develop the necessary skills to prepare him for his responsibilities as King. His Majesty expressed his confidence that the fifth Druk Gyalpo was fully capable of carrying out his responsibilities. Judging by his performance as Crown Prince, his thinking, and his principles, His Majesty said he had no doubt that the fifth Druk Gyalpo would serve his nation with selfless dedication. His Majesty said that if the Crown Prince was not worthy, he would not have handed over his responsibilities just because the Crown Prince was his own son.

His Majesty himself had taken over the reigns of governance at the age of 16 years and he had no doubt that the fifth Druk Gyalpo, who was now 26 years old, would dedicate his service to the interests of the nation. By the time he retired at the age of 65 years he would have served for 38 years. His Majesty expressed his hope and prayer that the fifth Druk Gyalpo will achieve national objectives that were important to the country and fulfil the aspirations of the Bhutanese people.

Although Bhutan had achieved unprecedented development in the past 34 years, it was more important now to think of the future. His Majesty said that he had made the decision to abdicate because it was in the best interest of the nation.

His Majesty the King expressed his sincere appreciation to the ministers and senior officials with whom he had worked closely over the past 34 years. His Majesty said that he had valued their unfailing loyalty and service.

The Prime Minister, Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk, submitted to the meeting that he and the other members of the lhengye zhungtsho had been aware of His Majesty's wishes but they

were at a complete loss when they actually heard the royal command and received the royal kasho.

It was not possible to list the phenomenal successes of His Majesty the King's reign that allowed Bhutan to stand proud in the comity of nations. The Bhutanese people enjoyed a better quality of life than ever before, the security and sovereignty of the country was assured, and the world admired Bhutan's enlightened policies that helped preserve its unique traditions including the pristine environment, rich culture, and principle of Gross National Happiness.

There could never be a more fortunate generation of people, he said.

The agriculture minister, Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup, said that His Majesty the King had been a true parent of the people of Palden Drukpa who now felt like children whose umbilical cord had been cut. The people, he said, were profoundly sad after being severed from a parent who had nourished them for 34 years.

The home minister, Lyonpo Jigmi Thinley, said that everything that His Majesty had envisioned had become a reality although many people, including himself, had believed that some of them were not possible. He said that they were still unable to comprehend the wisdom of such achievements that had assured the sovereignty of the nation and happiness of the people.

The minister for trade and industry, Lyonpo Yeshey Zimba, said that, at a time when world leaders promised power to the people but never meant it, His Majesty the King had devolved all authority to the people despite their repeated pleas against it. The people would never forget that what Bhutan is today is the achievement of His Majesty the King.

The zhung kalyon, Dasho Rinzin Gyeltshen, said that, in the past 34 years, His Majesty the King had brought the Bhutanese people from darkness into light, from the forests into civilisation, and had shown them the true path when they were lost. It was His Majesty the King who had led them to unprecedented socio-economic and political achievement and ensured the security of the country.

The speaker of the National Assembly, Dasho Ugyen Dorje, said that His Majesty's announcement was like darkness setting in on a bright day. His Majesty's achievements were known to the world and international leaders these days even advised other leaders to look to His Majesty as an example and for inspiration.

The chief justice, Lyonpo Sonam Tobgye, expressed the deep gratitude of the Bhutanese people to His Majesty the King for giving them the identity that they were so proud of. The Bhutanese populace had been poor and down-trodden in the past but now looked into the future with confidence and pride.

Government ministers, the kalyon, the chief justice, and the speaker of the National Assembly also pledged their allegiance to His Majesty the fifth Druk Gyalpo, Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, who also attended the meeting.

The prime minister and the lhengye chungtshog members said that the government and people of Bhutan would serve His Majesty with dedication and loyalty. The ministers expressed their full faith and confidence in their new King and their support for the period during which His Majesty would gain experience to guide the political developments in the future.

Even as the members of the lhengye chungtshog and special invitees to His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck's last appearance in the Cabinet room submitted their sentiments

and views their strongest message came in the deep quiet that hung in the air throughout the meeting. The royal heir and all members of the lhengye chungtshog were moved to stunned silence by his final act of trust in the Bhutanese people.

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## **57. Of Destiny<sup>o</sup>**

*Dasho Kinley Dorji\**

16 December 2006 – Men see the present, great men see the future. We saw this week, through our tears and smiles, the birth of a new era in history with remarkable clarity. We saw it under such extraordinary circumstances that it represents, not just an auspicious occasion for Bhutan, but a unique event in human history.

In handing over the responsibilities of state to his son and heir, Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, His Majesty the fourth Druk Gyalpo has ushered in a new period of a dynasty that has, for 100 years, personified enlightened leadership and profound wisdom. His Majesty has ensured that Bhutan continues to be a land blessed with great leaders.

It is also a gesture of confidence in the fifth Druk Gyalpo His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck and in a new generation of Bhutanese. We saw the continuity of a sacred legacy in the wisdom and compassion that the Crown Prince portrayed as he met with people from every corner of the country to explain the essence of the political transformation taking place today.

His Majesty the King's real gift to the nation and people is a safe, secure, and happy future.

The past three decades of Bhutanese history saw the unfolding of a vision that achieved the impossible in statecraft. His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck ascended the Throne as a young teenager under tragic circumstances and steered the kingdom through an era of unprecedented

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<sup>o</sup> *Kuensel* Editorial, 16 December 2006.

\* Editor-in-Chief and Managing Director, *Kuensel*

change that represented a fine balance of tradition and modernity.

Today landlocked Bhutan enjoys the highest per capita income in the region, a pristine environment and a balanced ecology that the world admires. Our unique values and culture, that has given us the mettle to survive dramatic social change, remains largely intact. Political stability in a turbulent world continues to ensure phenomenal all-round growth. We have the institutions set in place to strengthen good governance.

As His Majesty's clear long-term vision continues to unfold we are poised for exciting change. Today's succession of the Druk Gyalpo is the first of historic transitions that will shape our future and ensure the well being of the people for all time. We will see the adoption of the first written Constitution and, along with it, the establishment of a parliamentary democracy.

We understand, in hindsight, that His Majesty's goals were clearly planned and strategically implemented. Come 2008 we will see the start of a system of governance that has been meticulously designed for the future. It will be a polity that represents a blend of global democratic systems and Bhutan's own traditional structures to ensure the stability of a small and vulnerable country in a fast changing world.

Even if we do not comprehend the full significance of such statecraft our recent past leaves us filled with optimism for the future. In an era of deep uncertainty around the globe Bhutan has shown the world that there is hope for human society.

As a Monarch who transcends the past, the present, and the future, His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck is not departing but leaving behind much of himself in the Bhutanese people. If we expect His Majesty to influence changes from behind the

scene it will not happen. But it is our responsibility to make sure that his selfless sacrifices were not made in vain and that the ultimate teaching of impermanence remains our strength.

The present generation of leaders were educated and trained and nurtured over the past decades. It was His Majesty himself who prepared the youth of Bhutan to take on the role of shaping the destiny of the kingdom. Now, given the opportunity to take the nation into the future, we celebrate the emergence of the fifth Druk Gyalpo as a comforting personification of our past and an inspiration for the years ahead.

We already see in His Majesty the King, Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, the legacy that true greatness lies in serving the people, not in ruling over them. Ultimately governance - and succession - is aimed at benefiting the people and the Druk Gyalpo will continue to be the custodian of the interests of the common people. Zhung da mitshe is not a temporary arrangement but a sacred system and the Bhutanese people, whether they live in the pasturelands of the north, the modern cities, or the sub tropical borders of the south, will continue to look to the Throne for guidance and leadership.

The future, for the present generation of Bhutanese, is not a distant concept but a reality that lies just around the corner. The year 2008 will soon be upon us, with all its excitement and its pain, and we must be ready to move on with all the clarity that brought us here.

As His Majesty the fifth Druk Gyalpo takes the helm today we know that, just as yesterday was a dream of happiness, tomorrow is a vision of hope and confidence.

We do not mourn the departure of His Majesty as our Monarch but celebrate the achievement of his destiny. This is

a wondrous moment in time and we have the incredible privilege of expressing our deep gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty the fourth Druk Gyalpo, our hopes in His Majesty the fifth Druk Gyalpo, and our unwavering faith in the sacred legacy that we call the Bhutanese system.

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## Glossary

<i>Ah</i>	the last letter of the Dzongkha alphabet
<i>Ba</i>	the fifteenth Dzongkha alphabet
<i>Bah</i>	agreement
<i>Chha</i>	the fifth letter of the Dzongkha alphabet
<i>Chhoetse Penlop</i>	a title granted to the Heir Apparent to the reigning monarch of Bhutan
<i>Chimi</i>	elected member of the National Assembly
<i>Chorten</i>	stupa
<i>Chuzhing</i>	wet land
<i>Dasho</i>	a title conferred by the king in recognition of distinguished service to the nation, entitling the recipient to wear a scarlet scarf
<i>Dha</i>	the eleventh letter of the Dzongkha alphabet
<i>Dratshang</i>	monastic body
<i>Dratshang Lhentshog</i>	Commission for the Monastic Affairs
<i>Druk Gyalpo</i>	the King of Bhutan (literally, Thunder Dragon King)
<i>Dungkhag</i>	sub-district
<i>Dungtsho</i>	traditional medical practitioners
<i>Dzong</i>	fortress-like structure, which today houses the executive branch of central or district governments as well as the monk body
<i>Dzongda</i>	chief district administrator
<i>Dzongkha</i>	the national language of Bhutan
<i>Dzongkhag</i>	district
<i>Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogchung</i>	District Development Committee

<i>Gau</i>	penalty for sexual misconduct (particularly extramarital affairs)
<i>Genja</i>	agreement
<i>Gewog</i>	county (sub-district block)
<i>Gewog Yargay Tshogchung</i>	County Development Committee
<i>Ghapa</i>	the third alphabet in Dzongkha
<i>Gho</i>	men's dress
<i>Goendhey</i>	monastery
<i>Gongma</i>	superior (senior)
<i>Goongdrang Woola</i>	annual labour contribution, levied as tax in kind per household
<i>Gup</i>	elected head of gewog
<i>Gyalpoi Zimpon</i>	the king's chamberlain
<i>Hum</i>	one of the six-syllable mantra of Bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokiteshvara
<i>Ka</i>	the first alphabet in Dzongkha
<i>Kadoen</i>	royal command
<i>Kamzhing</i>	dry land
<i>Kasho</i>	royal decree
<i>Kencho sum</i>	triple gem, i.e., Buddha, Dharma (his teachings), and Sangha (the community of his noble disciples)
<i>Kha</i>	the second alphabet in Dzongkha
<i>Kidu</i>	royal welfare grant
<i>Kira</i>	women's dress
<i>Koenyer</i>	caretaker
<i>Ku Sung Thuk Ten</i>	the support of the Buddha's teachings
<i>Lam</i>	guru, spiritual leader

<i>Lhengye Zhungtshog</i>	Council of Ministers or Cabinet
<i>Lhakhang</i>	temple
<i>Lodey Tshogdey</i>	Royal Advisory Council
<i>Lopen</i>	teacher (master)
<i>Na</i>	the twelfth alphabet in Dzongkha
<i>Nangten</i>	relics
<i>Ngapa</i>	the fourth alphabet in Dzongkha
<i>Nu</i>	Ngultrum, the unit of Bhutanese currency
<i>Om</i>	one of the six- syllable mantra of Bodhisattva of compassion, Avalokiteshvara
<i>Pangzhing</i>	fallow land
<i>Palden Drukpa</i>	Glorious Bhutan, or an illustrious Bhutanese person
<i>Rabdey</i>	monastic body in districts, other than Punakha and Thimphu (where the central monastic body is located in winter and summer respectively)
<i>Rabjam</i>	title of deputy officers in executive and judiciary branches
<i>Rabjam gongma</i>	title of chief deputy officers in executive and judiciary branches
<i>Soelrey</i>	reward, grant
<i>Sokshing</i>	Wood-lot or forest maintained for the purpose of using leaves as fodder and compost
<i>Tashichho Dzong</i>	literally the “fortress of the glorious religion” in Thimphu (erected in 1641 and rebuilt by His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, Druk Gyalpo III), which houses the office and the secretariat of Druk Gyalpo, some ministries, and the central monastic body
<i>Tashi Delek</i>	auspicious greetings
<i>Thram</i>	certificate of land ownership

<i>Thrimzhung</i>	supreme law
<i>Chhenmo</i>	
<i>Thrimzhung</i>	law
<i>Thrompon</i>	mayor
<i>Tsamdo</i>	pastureland
<i>Tsawa-Sum</i>	the king, country and people
<i>Tseri</i>	land under shifting cultivation
<i>Zhung Da</i>	the government and people
<i>Mitshe</i>	

## **The Original Texts of Kasho**