

# THE BHUTAN SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER

Number 31

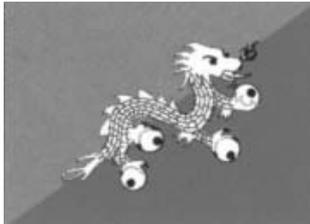
President: Lord Wilson of Tillyorn, KT GCMG FRSE

Spring 2005

### As previously advertised:

Monday 7th March, 2005

A lecture by Mr. Nic Marks,  
Head of Well-being Research,  
New Economics Foundation, London



### Bhutan's "Gross National Happiness": Realities, Myths and Relevance to the West

Can a tiny kingdom inspire the western world to pay more attention to what really matters – people's happiness? Or are our problems completely different? Perhaps the Bhutanese want to make sure they don't lose something culturally vital, whereas we are searching for something we have already lost.

Nic Marks will offer a perspective on how Bhutan appears to be putting the concept of Gross National Happiness into practice, some typical western misinterpretations, and also the relevance to his own work on promoting the concept of people's well-being as an appropriate aim of government.

Monday 7th March, 2005

6:30pm for 7:00pm

The National Liberal Club (Lady Violet Room)  
Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE

Drinks available before the lecture

HRH the Crown Prince,  
Dasho Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck,  
has assumed the revered position of  
Chhoetse Penlop (see pages 6&7)



### Dates for your diary

#### Friday 18th March, 2005\*

Dr. John Ardussi will speak on "Bhutan Ancient and Modern: The Influence of Geography, Society and Religion on the character of a Himalayan state".

Venue: Room 104, SOAS (School of Oriental & African Studies), Thornhaugh St., Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG

Time: 5.30pm

\* *Please note, this is NOT a Bhutan Society event*

#### Monday 12th September, 2005

Michael Rutland will give his annual talk on recent developments in Bhutan. Full details to follow.

Venue: The National Liberal Club, London

Time: To be confirmed

#### Friday 21st October, 2005

The 13th Annual Dinner of the Bhutan Society  
Full details and application form to follow.

Venue: The National Liberal Club, London

Time: 7:15pm for 8:00pm

This Newsletter is produced by Lucy & Bodo Hornberger to whom enquiries and contributions should be addressed.  
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The Society's website is at [www.bhutansociety.org](http://www.bhutansociety.org) and carries information about the Society, news and events, an archive of previous Newsletters and a selection of interesting Bhutan-related links.



# News & Updates from

## Lecture Organisation

The Society is most grateful to the work done by Freda Ferne and Catherine Eva who kindly organised events in London and Bristol during the last year. As most of the formal Bhutan Society lectures are held in London, and we have found that organising them from outside London involves considerable expense and inconvenience, Mr John Davey, who lives in London, has now kindly agreed to take over the organisation of Bhutan Society lectures.

Thoughts, comments and suggestions regarding lectures should therefore be sent to Mr Davey, whose contact details are:

John Davey  
Charterhouse, Charterhouse Square  
London EC1M 6AN  
Tel: (020) 7608 1696  
E-mail: jhhdavey@yahoo.co.uk

This does not preclude other members from organising events, but please note the item in the previous Newsletter (no. 30) about the procedures should you wish to organise Bhutan Society events, particularly outside London.

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## Recent Trust Fund Donations

The Society's Trust Fund has donated £1000 to the registered charity RENEW, which was founded two years ago by HM Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuck, in order to address in particular women's issues in Bhutan. Many of the issues identified arise from urbanisation and development, and RENEW tries to identify problems for 'women at risk' before the problems become too great.

During the two month-long Winter vacation, many school students are at a loose end. This is particularly evident in Thimphu, which has the highest concentration of students in the Kingdom. Last year HRH the Crown Prince established a Youth Club in Thimphu which provides a range of activities for around 150 school students, and was a great success. One aim of the Club is to encourage students to take initiative and run activities of their own choosing themselves – these include debates, visits to places such as the Bhutan Broadcasting Service, the National Assembly and the UN Headquarters, and even self-organised picnics! In its first year, the Club was entirely funded from the Crown Prince's own pocket. To help the Club become sustainable in this, its second year, the Trust Fund has donated £500.

Members who have visited Bhutan may have visited Cheri Monastery, north of Thimphu. Cheri is the Meditation Centre for the Monk Body of Bhutan, and is considered to be a most sacred place. The Principal is a splendid and most devout monk called Lopen Pasang. The Trust Fund donated £150 to Lopen Pasang to enable him to carry out a year of full meditation himself.

## Can you help?

Two young Bhutanese ladies, mid-twenties, are keen to improve their English through working as 'au-pair' in a UK family, preferably a family familiar with or interested in Bhutan.

The two ladies are traditional Bhutanese folk-singers in the Royal Academy of Performing Arts in Thimphu. If you are interested, or know of any family which might be interested, please would you contact either the editor of the newsletter (see contact details at foot of front page) or Michael Rutland at: [mrutland@aol.com](mailto:mrutland@aol.com)

## The Society's 12th Annual Dinner

The 12th Annual Dinner of the Bhutan Society took place on Friday 22nd October, 2004, in the Peers' Dining Room of the House of Lords, London.

Our President, Lord Wilson of Tillyorn, presided, and more than 80 Members and their friends were joined by H.E. Sonam T. Rabgye, the Ambassador of Bhutan to the UN in Geneva, his wife, Aum Sonam Yangchen Rabgye, and daughter, Miss Pem Rabgye, and seven Bhutanese students – six of whom are studying in the UK, and one who is studying in Switzerland. They are:

Mr Kinley Woochu  
Miss Thinley Delma  
Miss Sangay Wangmo  
Mr Pema Tashi  
Mr Phurbu Rinzin  
Mr Choki Dorji  
Mr Thinley Phuntsho

As ever, it was a most enjoyable evening with good food, good conversation and not a little merriment! The Society would particularly like to thank those Members who generously sponsored tickets for the Bhutanese students to attend – it is greatly appreciated.

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The Hon. Secretary Michael Rutland will be in Bhutan until early June 2005. He is delighted to meet Members visiting Bhutan during the periods when he is there. Please telephone him when you are in Thimphu.

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# the Bhutan Society



## Bhutan in Yorkshire!

Last October a small group of Bhutan Society members visited Harewood House, Yorkshire, to see the newly constructed Bhutanese Chorten which David Lascelles has created in the grounds of Harewood House. David brought over to Yorkshire three Bhutanese craftsmen and a monk from Punakha Dratshang to supervise the construction of the Chorten, built from hand-hewn Yorkshire stone. Bhutan Society members are urged to visit the Chorten and Harewood when in the Leeds area. Excellent visitor information can be found at: [www.harewood.org](http://www.harewood.org) or telephone: (0113) 218 1010.

The Chorten will be formally inaugurated on 5th April 2005. Any members interested in attending the ceremony should contact Lucy Hornberger for further information: [info@bhutansociety.org](mailto:info@bhutansociety.org) or tel: (020) 7580 2617



*The Harewood Chorten*



*Members of the Bhutan Society with Viscount Lascelles (far right) at Harewood House*

## Bristol Event – Report

Nine members of the Bhutan Society met in Bristol on the 6th November for a congenial evening, kindly organised by Catherine Eva and Freda Ferne. We were made very welcome by Catherine and Ed Russell in their Clifton flat. Six of those present had been on the Society's trip in 2002 and two of the others are going on the Rhododendron Visit in May.

The focus of the evening was a most entertaining and decorative film called, amazingly, "Unicycling in Bhutan". The title is entirely appropriate: two intrepid, skilful and good-natured Canadians decided to take their unicycles to Bhutan and ride them wherever seemed most likely to be impossible. They found that Bhutan was rich in such places, and used the unicycles to make vertiginous mountain descents and even, after some initial failures, to climb one of the traditional ladders, made out of a tree trunk. We saw many places in Bhutan that we were familiar with – Paro, the view towards Tiger's Nest, Thimphu, Ugyen Choling and many others. The riders were very well received by the Bhutanese people and were mobbed by children wherever they went. Altogether a film worth seeing.

Over tea and biscuits we enjoyed looking at photos and revisiting Bhutan in our imaginations. We dispersed into the November night in our warm, four-wheeled vehicles with the satisfaction of an evening well spent.

*Margaret and Christopher Jenkins*

## 'Travellers & Magicians' screening

Lotus Outreach, a charitable organization working in Bhutan (see p.8), held a very successful gala screening of this wonderful film on January 22nd. For members who have not yet had the chance to see the film, we have been assured by the UK distributors that it will go on general release in April – first in London (probably at the Curzon Soho Cinema) and then 'beyond London'. We hope to include more detailed information about this release on the Society's website and in the summer issue of the newsletter.

### E-mail List

We were recently able to contact a proportion of members by e-mail to tell them, at very short notice, about the above event. However, our e-mail records are far from complete. We realise that some Members do not have e-mail, and that others prefer not to be contacted in this manner. However, if you **do** have an e-mail address, and you do not object to **occasional** e-mail contact from the Bhutan Society, then please let us know at: [info@bhutansociety.org](mailto:info@bhutansociety.org). Thank you!



# News from the

## Bhutan's Royal Society for the Protection of Nature

by David and Jen Bowes Lyon

A visitor to Bhutan in these winter months may be fortunate enough to see the black necked cranes against a backdrop of a snowy Phobjikha valley or perhaps one of the world's few White Bellied Herons fishing in Punatasangchu. Back in Thimphu you might observe a poster informing people about managing waste. These are some of the many projects that the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature (RSPN) has initiated and continues to run.

RSPN is Bhutan's only national non-governmental organisation working to inspire personal responsibility and actively involve the people of Bhutan in the conservation of the Kingdom's environment. Over recent years RSPN has worked closely with both the Royal Government of Bhutan and local communities to deliver effective conservation projects such as:

- Setting up the visitor centre at Phobjikha and helping conserve endangered birds through supporting education and socio-economic development activities such as solar panels for village houses
- Initiating a wide range of projects to improve Bhutan's urban environment including community-based water quality monitoring projects, helping to get the first refuse trucks for Thimphu and campaigning for waste reduction
- Setting up 80 nature clubs in Bhutan's schools to encourage young people to become actively involved in addressing local environmental issues

More recently, RSPN staff have supported government and other organisations in carrying out scientific and social surveys as part of efforts to increase knowledge and understanding of Bhutan's biodiversity and how it relates to people's everyday lives.

RSPN's success is due to its ability to work in partnership with other organisations and identify where it can complement the work of government agencies.

### Volunteering with RSPN

As part of a sabbatical from our jobs in Cambridge, we were fortunate to be able to work with RSPN while they were developing their strategy for the next five years. RSPN wanted to review their successes and challenges since their last strategic review, and work out where to focus their efforts. Over the years, RSPN has moved from delivering numerous single projects to working in specific targeted geographical areas. They

want their programmes to deliver tangible results, to reflect the needs of local people. At the same time, the programmes need to be feasible – able to access scarce sources of funding; play to the strengths of the dynamic RSPN team and have the support of key stakeholders.

With the whole RSPN staff – from the Director to the RSPN driver – we spent two weeks working on the strategy. We started by clarifying the unique attributes of RSPN – such as being flexible, innovative, ability to work at grass-roots level – and agreed the key criteria for their strategy. We then went on to explore what challenges they were looking at in each of their programmes.

RSPN works in a range of areas across the country where they manage endangered species, protect key ecosystems, or improve environmental quality (see map p.5). For each of these eight locations, and for activities conducted across the country, the RSPN staff assessed where they could make a real difference. For the Black Necked Cranes in Phobjikha, for instance, the key priorities included:

- Increase awareness of local communities and visitors of crane conservation and ways of reducing wetland encroachment
- Provide incentives for people living in/near crane habitat to reduce demand for agricultural land
- Restrict construction and agriculture in core zone
- Ensure tractor routes avoid sensitive wetland areas
- Maintain forest cover to protect watershed
- Control chemical fertilizers and pesticides in core zones
- Improve management of household waste and sewage
- Reduce disturbance to Black Necked Cranes
- Maintain healthy relationship between RSPN and local stakeholders

In the other ecosystem and species-based programmes, the priorities included further research to understand how people relate to specific species or habitats. At the same time the RSPN team identified specific projects such as providing toilet facilities, ensuring quarrying does not occur at sensitive times of the year, and educating the public on plant collection.

Likewise a wide range of priorities were identified for RSPN's urban projects such as encouraging waste segregation programmes, reducing littering and educating the public on use of plastic. The strength of





# News from the

## New Druk Air Airbus in Service

*Kuensel Online*

Druk Air's two US\$ 40 million Airbus 319s are now in service. The new planes were welcomed in a traditional Chipdrel ceremony by the finance minister Lyonpo Wangdi Norbu, the chairman of Druk Air, the Paro Lam Neten, dzongkhag officials and Druk Air staff.



One of Druk Air's new Airbus 319s, with the old BAe 146 in the foreground. The Airbuses have greater capacity and range.

"It is a big leap forward for the national airline," said Druk Air managing director Sangay Khandu. The Airbus can carry 114 passengers, almost 60 percent more than the BAe-146s which Druk Air operated for the last 15 years. Pilot Tenzin Tshering who began his career flying the 18-seater Dornier in 1983 said that the joystick operated Airbus with fly-by-wire technology would enhance the pilot's ability to navigate while landing and taking-off from Paro airport.

Druk Air has begun negotiations with the government of India to increase flights to India and start flights to other Indian cities. There are also plans to fly to new destinations, such as Dubai in UAE.

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## New private enterprise to manufacture Bhutanese organic products

A series of meetings took place late last year in Switzerland and in Bhutan with the major outcome that Bio Bhutan (former Bio Label Bhutan) will develop into a Private Enterprise over the next couple of months. The company will manufacture organic products from Bhutan, in Bhutan, for Bhutanese and export markets.

The first batch of products being produced and marketed by the company are Dried Yak Meat, Lemon Grass Oil, Honey, Herbal Bath and Pipla-Honey Tablets. Products of the company will be certified by the Bio Inspector, Switzerland. In addition, Bio Bhutan is a service provider for technology and know-how on organic production and processing concepts in Bhutan, natural resource management, environmental assessments and small and medium enterprise development.

## The Investiture of the Chhoetse Penlop

*by Phub Dorji*

The investiture of His Royal Highness Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk as Chhoetse Penlop has been much covered by the Kuensel Newspaper. Nevertheless, I am grateful to have this opportunity to share my own view from an ordinary Bhutanese perspective.

The 21st October 2004 was a Red-letter Day in the history of Bhutan, for on this day our beloved Crown Prince was invested with the title of Chhoetse Penlop. This tradition has been preserved for centuries – it dates back to 1647 when the spiritual leader Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel appointed Chhoeje Minjur Tempa as the first Trongsa Penlop (his representative in Trongsa). This role is now known as 'Chhoetse Penlop'.

Trongsa is one of the twenty districts in Bhutan and it represents an important link with Bhutan's precious institution of Monarchy. Trongsa's impressive Dzong is where the future kings formalize their ascension as Chhoetse Penlop. Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuk became Chhoetse Penlop in 1882 before being elected by the people as the first King of Bhutan in 1907. The Chhoetse Penlop is responsible for the people's welfare, especially in the Eight Eastern Districts (the 'Sharchog Khorlo Tshib Gyed'). The citizens of Bhutan are happy to embrace another young and dynamic leader in this role.

The Investiture Ceremony began at the Tashichhoe Dzong where His Majesty the King awarded the Scarf and Seal of Chhoetse Penlop to His Royal Highness the Crown Prince. Members of the royal family, dignitaries and senior government officials later offered scarves to the Chhoetse Penlop at Dechenchholing Palace. For the next two days, tens of thousands of people arrived to offer the scarves to the new Chhoetse Penlop. We had to wait in a queue for hours before entering the palace premises, for which His Highness was concerned and sympathetic. His Highness kept sending the senior officials to thank us and also to express his concerns and appreciation for our patience. Once we entered the palace premises, we were served with refreshments. We slowly proceeded in line to offer the scarves. His Highness thanked us for coming and shook hands with everyone. A lifetime opportunity for us indeed! Later we were served lunch and entertained by musicians.

I became very emotional while offering the scarves. This was due to His Highness' love and care of us, and also because this is a great change in the life of His Highness as he takes on increased responsibility. It was a day of great joy and happiness for the citizens of Bhutan. Celebrating the ascension of His Royal Highness as the Chhoetse Penlop, we affirm the centrality of the monarchy in our lives. This landmark event has a symbolic significance in upholding a national tradition and a functional significance in continuing the monarchy.

# Kingdom of Bhutan



## The Chhoetse Penlop

Having completed his formal education in institutions at home and abroad and having received the traditional Bhutanese process of instruction under the close supervision of His Majesty the King, His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, DASHO JIGME KHEGAR NAMGYEL WANGCHUCK, assumed the revered historical position of Chhoetse Penlop on October 21st 2004.



*HRH the Chhoetse Penlop during the ceremony at Trongsa Dzong*

The Crown Prince received the *Dhar* and Seal of the Chhoetse Penlop from His Majesty the King in a ceremony in the Throne Room of the Tashichhodzong. This was followed by the Tendrel ceremony performed by His Holiness the Je Khenpo. As Chhoetse Penlop the Crown Prince is formally installed as the heir to the Golden Throne. The event is of great significance not only in the life of the Crown Prince but also to the people of Bhutan.

“The Crown Prince becoming the Chhoetse Penlop symbolises that the peace, stability and prosperity the Bhutanese are enjoying today will continue in the future,” said Prime Minister Lyonpo Yeshey Zimba. “Bhutan has come thus far because of His Majesty’s wise and dynamic leadership and we are confident that this will continue in the future. His Royal Highness the Crown Prince is well educated and has the best interests of the nation at heart. We have already seen his deep concern for the people, especially the underprivileged people, and his sense of justice and fairness – these are wonderful qualities to have in the future King of Bhutan.”

Born on February 21, 1980, His Royal Highness has received full exposure to an environment of global learning without losing touch with the traditions and disciplines of the royal household, the rich religious and cultural heritage of Bhutan, and the current realities that the kingdom is going through. Growing up in Bhutan and studying in Bhutanese schools, His Royal Highness developed a close rapport with Bhutanese youth and came to know first hand their concerns and their aspirations for

the future. After early schooling in Bhutan, His Royal Highness attended high school and college in the USA. In 2000 he enrolled at Magdalen College, Oxford University, where he completed the Foreign Service Programme and was awarded an M.Phil. in Politics.

His Royal Highness plays an active role in numerous organisations and is the Chairman of the Bhutan Trust Fund for Environmental Conservation, President of the Bhutan India Friendship Association, Chancellor of the Royal University of Bhutan, and Patron of the Royal Society for the Protection of Nature and the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In addition, he is the Patron of the Convention of European Bhutan Societies, and the Oxford Centre for Buddhist Studies. His Royal Highness is an avid sportsman, taking active part in archery and basketball tournaments.

His Royal Highness has an unwavering interest in youth issues and the well being of Bhutanese youth. He has often noted that, while juvenile crime is not widespread in Bhutan, it is an unfortunate reality that young people are dropping out of school, leaving their village homes for the attractions of urban life, and being caught up in aspects of emerging social problems. In a recent public address, he stated that while the development of Bhutan is extremely important, even more important is to make the Bhutanese people capable of overcoming the challenges of the future.

“There is no greater honour than to follow in the footsteps of His Majesty the King, for this means only one thing – being in the service of the nation”, His Royal Highness has said. “My goals and aspirations are lodged within those of my country. My foremost desire is to work for the greater good of the nation and the Bhutanese people.”



*HRH the Chhoetse Penlop talks to an elderly man among the crowds of well wishers at Trongsa*



# Bhutan Connections



LOTUS  
OUTREACH

Lotus Outreach began in 1993 in Bir, Northern India, when a Tibetan lama followed Buddha's advice to look beyond the walls of his own monastery to the concerns of others. Seeing a great number of children without access to basic health care and education, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche and his students created a non-religious organization, the White Lotus Children's Programme, to serve these children, their families and communities. Lotus Outreach is now a registered non-profit organisation with programmes in India, Bhutan and South East Asia.

## Lotus Outreach in Bhutan

Health and education systems in Bhutan have experienced unprecedented growth in recent years, however there are still many low-income rural families lacking health services and education. Lotus Outreach is working with the Bhutan Health Trust Fund to provide critical vaccines and essential medicines for these rural communities.

Lotus Outreach is also working with Bhutan's Tarayana Foundation to provide education to children who would otherwise have been forced by circumstances to work instead of attending school. The Tarayana Foundation has set up an Endowment Fund for Education and the interest that this generates provides maintenance grants for students from economically disadvantaged families and communities across Bhutan. The grants cover school fees, uniforms, supplementary meal contributions and other associated expenses. The Foundation currently supports 69 students with grants of Nu.1500 (approx. £17) per annum. The beneficiaries are identified in collaboration with the Geog and Dzongkhag officials and will be sponsored from primary level up to the tenth standard.

The beneficiaries for the year 2004 were:

- Lhop communities, Samtse Dzongkhag – 15 students
- Kangpara, Trashigang Dzongkhag – 10 students
- Adang and Rukha, Wangdue Dzongkhag – 34 students
- Zhemgang Dzongkhag – 10 students

The aim is to support as many students as possible in coming years – more funds will enable more children to be sponsored. **Lotus Outreach is holding a benefit evening on Wednesday 9th March at Leighton House, Holland Park, London.** Mezzo Soprano Annabelle Von Arnim will sing songs of Franz Schubert, Richard Strauss and Kurt Weill. Wine will be served and tickets cost £25.

For enquiries, bookings or for further information about Lotus Outreach, please contact Penelope Tree on (020) 8780 9590, or e-mail: [ptree@dircon.co.uk](mailto:ptree@dircon.co.uk).

## The 3rd Convention of European Bhutan Societies

The 3rd Convention of European Bhutan Societies took place on September 17th and 18th 2004 in Vienna, Austria, generously and expertly hosted by the Austria-Bhutan Society Druk-Yul and its President Dr. Claus Walter and Mrs Walter.

The convention was chaired by HRH Ashi Chimmi Yangzom, daughter of HM Ashi Tshering Pem, and attended by H.E. Sonam T. Rabgye, the Ambassador of Bhutan to the UN in Geneva, and delegates from ten European Bhutan Societies and Friendship Associations. Michael Rutland attended on behalf of the Bhutan Society of the UK.



*HRH Princess Chimmi in conversation with Henk de Jong and Erica Sluyters of the Dutch 'Bhutan+Partners' Foundation during the convention. HRH is currently a student at Columbia University, New York, where she is studying for a degree in Public Administration.*

Issues discussed included official recognition by Bhutan of European Bhutan Societies and the publication of an official list, the possibilities and difficulties of accessing EU funds for projects in Bhutan and a lively discussion of the desirability/feasibility of coordination and cooperation between the various European Societies on certain projects. There were also presentations on the impressive work being done in Bhutan by the Austria-Bhutan Society Druk-Yul, which includes the building of a village school.

The convention took place in the splendid surroundings of Schloss Esterhazy in the picturesque town of Eisenstadt. The excellent programme also included a visit to the Austrian Parliament, an evening reception at Vienna's Karajan-Centre, and a lunchtime cruise on Lake Neusiedel, in the beautiful province of Burgenland, very close to the Hungarian border.

Conventions of the European Bhutan Societies take place every two years. The next meeting will take place in August 2006 in Stockholm, Sweden, at the kind invitation of the Swedish Bhutan Society.



*Dr. Claus Walter and Mrs Ulrike Walter of the Austria-Bhutan Society Druk-Yul*