

THE BHUTAN SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER

Number 33

President: Lord Wilson of Tillyorn, KT GCMG FRSE

Spring 2006

HRH The Crown Prince,
Dasho Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck
will be enthroned as the fifth Druk Gyalpo - King
of Bhutan - in 2008.

See pages 2 & 3 for more on this momentous news.



A date for your diary

Friday 3rd November, 2006

We are delighted to announce that the Peers' Dining Room of the House of Lords will be the venue for the 14th Annual Dinner of the Bhutan Society, by kind invitation of our President, Lord Wilson. Full details and application form to follow later.

New Membership Secretary

We are very pleased to welcome Elizabeth Lee as our new Membership Secretary. Elizabeth is the wife of our Hon. Treasurer Robin Lee, and we are sure they will make an excellent team!

Elizabeth's contact details are:

Tel: (01483) 455 764
E-mail: lee.elizabeth@btopenworld.com
Address: 13 Albury House, Sells Close
Guildford, Surrey GU1 3JY

As previously advertised:

Monday 13th February, 2006

An illustrated lecture by Dr. Peter Harrison

The Fortress Monasteries of Bhutan



Trongsa Dzong

Bhutan's *dzongs* (fortified monasteries) surely rank among the world's most impressive architecture. Dr. Harrison will talk about their origin, location, purpose and functions, as well as their architecture, building techniques and artwork. He will also discuss the associated cantilevered and iron bridges.

In addition to Dr. Harrison's own excellent photos, slides will include the sketches of Samuel Davis and the photographs of John Claude White.

Dr. Harrison is a Research Associate at the Centre for Medieval Studies, University of York. His book, *Castles of God: Fortified Religious Buildings of the World* is published by Boydell Press (2004).

Date: **Monday 13th February, 2006**

Time: **6:30pm for 7:00pm**

Venue: **The National Liberal Club, London
Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HE**

Drinks available before the lecture

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 and carries information about the Society, news and events, an archive of previous Newsletters and a selection of interesting Bhutan-related links.



News from the

Extract from His Majesty the King's National Day address on December 17, 2005

Kuensel, translated from Dzongkha

Iwould 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. It is my wish and prayer that during the reign of Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the Palden Drukpa will remain strong and glorious, that our country will achieve greater prosperity with the sun of peace and happiness shining on our people, that all the national objectives of the country and the hopes and aspirations of our people will be fulfilled and the Bhutanese people will enjoy a greater level of contentment and happiness.

A New Moment in History

Kuensel Editorial, December 18th 2005

His Royal Highness Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck will be enthroned as the fifth Druk Gyalpo in 2008. A shocked nation has received this news in stunned silence. While the Bhutanese population has already welcomed the idea of His Royal Highness succeeding His Majesty the King, the nation could not fathom the concept of His Majesty himself stepping down in this short period.

As His Majesty the King announced the decision in the remote dzongkhag of Trashiyangtse, the unprecedented crowd of more than 8,000 farmers, herders, *gomchhen*, teachers and students, and civil servants, who had gathered to celebrate National Day with the royal family fell into a bewildered silence. They had waited a long time for this day and many had walked over the steep paths for days to meet the royal family. Now they had seen and heard far more than they had expected.

"I was shattered when I first heard him but I somehow believe that His Majesty will always be with us," 69-year old Chuni Zangmo told Kuensel through her tears. "Things may change but His Majesty will still be here." It was the first reaction that many people shared after hearing His Majesty's address. "I cried when I heard him," said 60-year old Aum Tendi. "I don't understand what is happening but I will not give up hope." For a former *gup*, it was heartbreaking news. "I feel that the sun is already setting on us," he said, as he packed his pony to walk home. "2008 is too early. Many of us feel that His Majesty should reign for another 20 years."

Not long after the announcement Bhutanese citizens were calling each other across the length and breadth of the country in disbelief. "It might be momentous news for others but it is a cause for profound sadness for us in Bhutan," commented a caller to Kuensel.

Soon, however, people were also sensing the silver lining in the cloud. High school student Sangay Dorji's parents were deeply disturbed but the young boy expressed surprising wisdom. "Our King is our father," he said. "A father will always remain a father and he can never neglect his children. I don't think we have anything to regret."

One common belief was that the people of Bhutan had every reason to trust the decisions of His Majesty the King no matter how devastating they might sound. "I am just trying to console myself," said a teacher in Paro. "But I have decided that I will have faith in the royal decision." Eighty-one-year old Tashi spends his summers circumambulating the Kurje Lhakhang in Bumthang and his winters sitting by the fire in his son's shop. "My generation has seen one wise King succeeded by a wiser King," he said. "We should not forget that the Chhoetse Penlop is His Majesty's son. His Majesty's vision will continue to shine through him. In fact it is good that he will receive guidance even as he reigns." Ugyen Norbu too has faith in His Majesty's decision. "His Majesty, who has reigned since the age of 16 years, knows what he is doing," he said. "Sons have taken over their father's responsibilities as far back as we can imagine."

Bhutanese across the country, old and young, agree that the magnitude of His Majesty's announcement has left them in a deep shock and more than a little dazed. With their emotions disturbed it will be some time before they are able to find the clarity of thought to understand its implications. As a first step, however, many people have understood that it is time to wake up to new realities.

After all, it is a royal command and, according to traditional wisdom, a royal command has always been heavier than the mountains, more precious than gold.

Kingdom of Bhutan



An analysis of His Majesty's announcement

by Michael Rutland

Whilst the announcement by His Majesty The King that he would abdicate in 2008 in favour of his heir may have come as a surprise to many, and indeed as a shock to most Bhutanese, it is clearly part of an overall strategy which has existed in the King's mind for many years. His rationale is clear and far-sighted. It is that the future of Bhutan is best guaranteed through a fully democratic constitutional monarchy; and that the best time to introduce the profound changes needed to achieve this end is when the country is stable, peaceful and prosperous.

The Bhutan which the King inherited at the age of seventeen as a near-absolute monarch was a far different place from the Bhutan of today. International links were minimal; the country had only recently joined the United Nations; there were just a few hundred vehicles in the whole country; communication even within the Kingdom was difficult; telephones were a novelty; and foreign visitors were a curiosity. There were few schools and health care was minimal; international links barely existed. Knowledge of the outside world was at best rudimentary – and indeed it was of no real concern to the average person. Since the institution of the Monarchy in 1907 the country had been almost (though not totally) 'problem-free'. It was in many ways a simple country in which the vast majority lived rural agricultural lives and the tiny minority who did not were part of the traditional administrative system through which it was perfectly possible for one person to govern the whole country.

In a little over thirty years Bhutan has undergone a major transformation in technology, communications, health, education and society. Now only a minority – around 44%, of the population – still live the old rural agricultural life. The majority are urbanised in a few major centres, living from business or bureaucracy, with the old links to the countryside rapidly dissolving. Bhutan has international responsibilities, not only as a full and active member of the United Nations, with all the commitments that involves, but also as a member of other multilateral organisations such as SAARC (South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation). Education has altered the mind-set of the younger generation, as has the advent of television and the considerable contact with the outside world through study and travel abroad – the main customers of Drukair's daily flights to Bangkok are now Bhutanese, mostly going on holiday or business trips.

The economy grows and will continue to grow mainly from the harnessing of hydro-power. As the people become more materially prosperous the Kingdom's dependency on foreign donors diminishes, and Bhutan will shortly be removed from the official list of 'least developed countries'. All this in just three and a half decades.

Inevitably these changes create their own internal and highly complex problems, for example the problem of finding employment for around 70,000 young people who will pass out from schools and colleges over the next ten years, and a population growth rate at an unsustainable 2.8%. Wider problems with an international dimension have inevitably emerged, for example the much publicised 'Southern problem' and the issue of incursions of the Assamese separatists into South East Bhutan.

The country is a far, far more complex place than it was 35 years ago, and few who knew the Kingdom then would have predicted how rapidly it would develop. One who did, and who must be given due credit for his far-sightedness, was the King. He realised before most others that it would soon no longer be reasonable, wise nor indeed possible for the country to remain an absolute monarchy. All his policies – devolution of planning processes, creation of regional councils, extension of the franchise and, eight years ago, the devolution of the day-to-day running of the country to the Council of Ministers followed by the drafting of its first Constitution introducing a multi-party democracy with a monarch as purely a constitutional Head of State, have been directed resolutely towards the eventual passing of the governing of the country to the people.

Under the Constitution – to be enacted in 2008 along with celebrations of one hundred years of monarchy – the role, responsibilities and powers of the King will change profoundly. It will be far easier for the people to understand and accept the new realities if the new constitutional monarchy is embodied in the person of a new King – highly educated, well travelled, familiar with the international scene, but above all known to his people and utterly committed to their well-being and to the progress of the Kingdom of Bhutan as a fully democratic constitutional Monarchy.



News from the

Cordyceps sinensis in Bhutan – An Update

by Nigel L. Hywel-Jones

When I first visited Bhutan (May 2002) to survey the problem of Tibetan poaching of *Cordyceps sinensis*, (a fungus prized for its uses as herbal medicine - see article in Newsletter 26*) the Bhutanese yak herders knew where the sites were but simply watched the Tibetans take this valuable herbal medicine from under their noses. And from under the noses, often, of the rangers who had the almost impossible job of patrolling the many widely spaced sites. "Poaching of *Cordyceps sinensis* by Tibetans? Not my problem." That seemed to be the attitude.



The fungus in the field
– a brown fruit body
measuring 3-5cm long

A simple and immediate solution was to allow limited collecting by the Bhutanese yak herders which would put pressure on the Tibetans in addition to their need to lookout for rangers. In 2004 the Government, for the first time, allowed limited collecting by Bhutanese. I had the opportunity, with my friend and colleague Tshitila of the Ministry of Agriculture's Renewable Natural Resources Institute, to survey sites after the collecting period. We were very pleased to see that a significant number of the *Cordyceps* had not been picked and had been allowed to mature. Maturation of *Cordyceps sinensis* is paramount if the next generation of the caterpillar host is to be infected.

Our research was limited by not having a funded project on *Cordyceps*. With Dr Paul Cannon of CABI, we submitted a UK Government Darwin Initiative proposal. Also, Tshitila was able to have *Cordyceps sinensis* officially included in an EU Medicinal Plants Project. Both proposals were funded – a pleasant surprise.

Tshitila and I are now able to look forward to three seasons of work investigating the life-cycle of the fungus and its host. We expect this will lead to a better understanding of the dynamics of the relationship. We will then be able to better understand the effects that harvesting by humans (Tibetan, Bhutanese and researchers) may have on the population dynamics.

Paul, Tshitila and myself returned to the sites in June 2005. For the first time we were able to take with us an entomologist – Norbert Maczey. Norbert was joined by a Bhutanese counterpart, Kinzang. Completing our group was a socio-economist, Dophu. We spent two weeks trekking through the hills of the Soe and Lingzhi valleys, working mostly between 4300-4700 metres – the home of *Cordyceps sinensis*, its host insect and the plant(s) on which the host feeds.

Whichever way we look at the *Cordyceps* problem we need to accept that it is a multi-disciplinary one. We are dealing closely with a fungus (*Cordyceps sinensis*), its host (a moth caterpillar of the family *Hepialidae*) and the unknown host plant(s) on which the caterpillar feeds. We are dealing with a harsh environment where the host plant(s) has evolved tiny ecological niches in the mountains in which to grow. Favourable niches are based on soil pH, temperature, water balance, minerals etc.

The adult female moths have evolved means to identify the potential host plants so that they can drop their eggs where the hatched larvae have the best opportunity to rapidly find a source of food. And of course, on top of this relationship between plant and caterpillar is the addition of the fungus that infects and kills the caterpillar.

Hepialid moths are in the record books for the numbers of eggs they lay – 20,000-30,000 for each female. No other animal comes close. If all these eggs matured to breeding adults then Planet Earth would be aswarm with moths. Only two of those eggs need survive to perpetuate the species. It is a dynamic equilibrium and *Cordyceps sinensis* is merely one 'mortality factor' that helps to maintain this balance.

The commercially valuable *Cordyceps* are the immature ones – those that have not produced the spores to infect future larvae. If all these were picked *Cordyceps sinensis* could rapidly become extinct, thereby removing a mortality factor that kills the larvae and maintains the hepialid populations at acceptable levels. By understanding the relationship between caterpillar and fungus we hope to provide guidelines for how much *Cordyceps* can be collected while also maintaining a source of spores for future infection of larval generations.

As Dophu and I sat atop a 5000 metre pass looking over the valley beyond, and contemplating that behind, he noted, "My country may be small but its land area is vast." Tucked in to the scree slopes below us, hidden within the alpine meadows are tiny patches of grassland where the composition of plants, pH, temperature, water etc. is just right to provide the host plants of the caterpillar and to provide conditions under which *Cordyceps* can infect and kill the caterpillars. Many of these sites are known to the

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poachers. Many are also known to the Bhutanese Yak herders who watched as their over-the-border cousins came and took a valuable source of income from Bhutan to Tibet, and ultimately to China which drives the international *Cordyceps* herbal medicine market.

Dophu's job was to interview yak herding households. All approve of the relaxation of the rules which now allow them to collect *Cordyceps* and make extra income and several said that they will not sit back as they have previously done, but will confront the Tibetan poachers. Others told Dophu that they would like to see the collecting season brought forward into May as Tibetans still cross the border and take the good stuff! Others said they are grateful the government has offered them an alternative source of income which can save them the slaughter of a winter yak, previously an important source of income to get them through the winter months when yaks are not producing milk.

Since my initial visit in 2002 the future of *Cordyceps sinensis* has changed in Bhutan. However, it is still early days and much needs to be done. Our multi-disciplinary team will, I expect, learn much in the coming years of the special dynamic that exists between a plant, a caterpillar and the fungus that kills that caterpillar. And, of course, we must concentrate also on understanding the human dynamic that determines the population success, or failure, of *Cordyceps sinensis*.

* Newsletter 26 is available online at:
www.bhutansociety.org/newsletter/26.pdf

Cordyceps Nu. 98,000 a kilogramme

Unperturbed by harsh weather conditions, Thinley, 36, spent countless hours collecting *Cordyceps*. His hard work paid off when the 1.5 kg he collected earned him about Nu.80,000 (approx. £1,000) at auction in Thimphu. "I was physically tortured, but it was worth it," he said.

The price in Bumthang went as high as Nu. 98,000 (approx. £1,250) per kg. Tsheltrim found only a few *Cordyceps* plants per day, but having now earned Nu. 50,000 (approx. £635) says he has forgotten the hardship he faced. "It takes patience and good eyesight to identify the plant from hundreds of similar plants," he said. "But I am happy to go home with the money."

Collectors pay a royalty to the government of 10% of the reserve auction price. Farmers say that the legalisation of harvesting *Cordyceps* has helped enormously to improve living conditions in the remote areas where it is found. "People are able to buy more rice, better clothes and renovate their houses," one commented.

Cordyceps in Bhutan grows from May to early July and collection is permitted from June 1-30. The plants are then dried for two months after which they are weighed and sold. *Cordyceps* is exported to Singapore, China, Hong Kong, and even to the United States.

Bhutan's Population

According to the population census conducted in 2005, the official population of Bhutan is **553,000**

This should put an end to the widely differing estimates that have been bandied about in recent years (such as the extraordinary figure of 2,232,291 in the Bhutan section of the current CIA World Factbook!).

Further details of the census will be released later.

Adult Literacy Targets Revised

The Education ministry has rescheduled its target to achieve full adult literacy in Bhutan by three years to 2015 based on new data from the 2005 housing and population census.

The target adult group for non-formal education is those aged between 15 and 50. The new census data gives the number of Bhutanese in this category as 44% of the population, of which 47% – about 114,360 people – are illiterate.

"Based on these figures we have to be realistic and ensure quality of education. Therefore we have rescheduled the target to 2015" said the director of the Non-formal & Continuing Education Division, Dorji Wangchuk.

At present about 5,000 adults a year are enrolled in the country's 623 non-formal education centres. The programme offers a one year basic literacy and a nine month post literacy course in Dzongkha, covering agriculture, health, numeracy, sanitation, culture & tradition, forestry & environment and the smokeless stove.

Since it started in 1992, about 24,000 people have completed the programme. According to officials, most learners were motivated by a wish to be able to write letters, do calculations and read prayer books and newspapers.

Rail links to Bhutan

Rail links between India and Southern Bhutan are in the planning stages and a survey report is currently under preparation by India's North East Frontier Railway.

The projected route includes 15 km of track from Bararhat (Jalpaiguri, West Bengal) to Samsing, Bhutan, 18 km of track from Kalichini (Jalpaiguri) to Phuntsholing, Bhutan), 43 km of track from Pathshala (Assam) to Nanglam, Bhutan, 70 km from Rangdala (Assam) to Darang, Bhutan and 70 km from Kokrajhar (Assam) to Lyelegphu, Bhutan.

It is hoped that these new lines will give a boost to the import-export business between India and Bhutan. Bhutan currently exports oranges, ginger and cement, among other items, to India.



News from Bhutan



Bhutan Looks to the Future

Kuensel, Dec. 2005

The past and the present merged and Bhutan started to look into the future as His Royal Highness the Crown Prince presided over recent consultations on the draft Constitution of Bhutan.

“Many of you are worried about what the future might bring,” His Royal Highness said. “I think it is an indication that you care for the future of the country. What you need to do now is to turn that concern into the act of serving your fellow people and country. Take time to think about the future and about what you want Bhutan to be in your children’s time. How do you want to be remembered by the future generations of Bhutan? Do you want it written that an unprecedented glorious reign of an enlightened King like no other was followed by the shameful failure of our generation? Or shall we take the strong foundation laid by His Majesty and build a special nation for the future and go down in history as worthy citizens of our time?”

Those present said that they were overwhelmed by a sense of nostalgia, given the changing times, but were reassured by the confidence conveyed by His Royal Highness. Many shed tears. Many expressed their hope for the future. “It was incredible,” said a retired government official. “As we sat there, it was vividly clear that we were watching history repeat itself. His Royal Highness was with his people, charting out their future just as his forefathers did before him.”

Kunzang Dorji, 69, could not ask for anything more in his life. He had seen King Jigme Wangchuck and served in the courts of Their Majesties Jigme Dorji Wangchuck and Jigme Singye Wangchuck. He had not even dreamt that he might see the future Druk Gyalpo. “I may not live to see him rule but I know the next generation is in safe hands.”

As the people expressed their emotions His Majesty the King’s National Day announcement still seemed to echo. Many people said that they had been in deep despair since they heard the news. The resounding view after attending the Crown Prince’s meeting was that it was only the sense of permanence of the Bhutanese Monarchy that could reassure the Bhutanese people.

“I cannot imagine anything else that could have lifted my spirits so quickly than to see and feel the charisma of our royal lineage in the future King,” said Sonam Wangmo. “The Bhutanese system will live on and that legacy, personified by our Kings, is our strength,” she said.

“Sitting in the crowd I thought I was looking at His Majesty the King himself,” said 68-year old Kuenzang. “But it was not because of my poor eye sight. I felt exactly the same excitement when I first saw His Majesty the King. I thought that he was his father.”

In other words Bhutan is already looking at the dawn of a new era.

Bhutan’s forest cover lower than thought

Bhutan has a forest cover of 64.35% of its land area and not 72.5% as it has often been quoted. The revised figure was officially announced during the 2005 forestry conference in Thimphu.

With about 100,000 trees felled every year and about 1,000 acres of forest land lost to development activities, mining, and forest fires, Bhutan’s tree-cover is declining, said officials at the conference. “The 72.5% figure was derived in the 1980s,” said Dr. Sangay Wangchuk of the nature conservation division. “It will not be correct today. It is a myth.”

The director of the Forestry Department, Dasho Dawa Tshering, explained that the 72.5% forest cover, as projected by satellite images included river basins, shrubs and all uninhabited land and, therefore, had not revealed the correct picture of actual forest cover. “We have been losing forest cover to increasing demand for forest resources, and this is increasing each year,” he added.

This he attributes to the large-scale construction all over the country – the growing real estate, construction of roads, schools, health centres and *gups’* offices cleared away significant chunks of forest land. Mining activities are also on the rise. 50 applications seeking forestry clearance for mining are currently with the department and forest fires are common during the dry winters, the director added.

No study or survey has been carried out since the 1980s as it would entail huge expenditure. “But we have records showing how much forest is cleared for development activities, for mining, and by forest fires. We cannot therefore quantify, but we are losing from the 64.5%.”

Prime Minister and Minister for Agriculture, Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup, said that the country had lost about 2,737 acres of forest to development activities, about 975 acres to mining, stone and sand quarries and about 19 acres annually to forest fires. About 2.1 million cubic feet of timber annually, or about 100,000 trees, was used and 1.1 percent of the forest was considered degraded.

He commented that, at this rate, maintaining a 60% forest cover, as spelled out by the forestry policy and as mandated by the National Assembly, would be difficult. “The consequences of a depleting forest would be severe on the socio-economy of the country,” he warned

Forestry officials and conservationists across the country presented studies, research findings on sustaining forest resources, enhancing the image of forestry, institutional strengthening and human resource development and on natural resource management.

The ‘Forest Management Code of Bhutan’ was also launched at the conference. Hailed as the ‘Bible’ of the department, the document took six years to compile and warrants scientific forest management plans based on field analysis, said Dasho Dawa Tshering.



News & Updates from the Bhutan Society



Bhutanese Au-Pair – can you help?

A young Bhutanese lady, aged 24, is keen to find a job as an au-pair with a British family in the UK. She has passed Class X, and is currently working with the Department of Civil Aviation as a Computer Operator, and as an office assistant for the Cooperative Development for Operational Safety and Continued Airworthiness Program (COSCAP). From February last year she has been working as Personal Assistant to the Airport Manager. If anyone is interested please email Michael Rutland at mrutland@aol.com or contact him via the Editor (see foot of front page).

The Society's 13th Annual Dinner

The 13th Annual Dinner of the Bhutan Society took place on Friday 21st October, 2005, at the National Liberal Club, Whitehall Place, London.

Our President, Lord Wilson of Tillyorn, presided, and 100 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 13 Bhutanese guests – ten of whom are studying in the UK.

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 14th Annual Dinner will take place on Friday 3rd November 2006 at the House of Lords – details to follow.

Michael Rutland awarded an OBE

We are delighted that Michael Rutland, the Honorary Secretary of the Bhutan Society and the Honorary Consul of Bhutan in the United Kingdom, has been awarded the OBE (Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire) in the New Year's Honours List, for services to Bhutan-British relations.

The Hon. Secretary Michael Rutland will be in Bhutan until mid-July 2006, returning to the UK for August, September and October. Michael 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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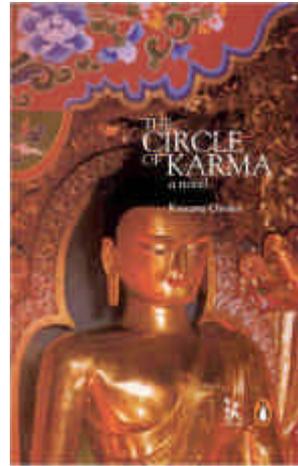
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Coming Full Circle



The Circle of Karma A novel by Kunzang Choden

Penguin Books, India,
2005

ISBN: 8186706798

Available from

www.amazon.co.uk for
£11.99 + £1.99 sourcing
fee +p&p

As a young girl, Tsomo asks her mother, 'Where is the furthest I can travel?' 'Where?' her mother responds, 'I don't know. Where can a girl travel to?'

Caught in the everyday reality of household life, fifteen-year-old Tsomo is suddenly called upon to travel when her mother dies. She makes her first journey to a faraway village to light the ritual butter lamps in her mother's memory. From there her travels take her to distant places, across Bhutan and into India. As she faces the world alone, Tsomo embarks on what becomes a life journey, in which she begins to find herself, and to grow as a person...

Written in English, the *The Circle of Karma* is the first novel by a woman to come out of Bhutan.

From the Kuensel Review:

Kunzang Choden's debut novel is a story of a woman in search of her identity in a world dominated by men. The protagonist, Tsomo, unlike the other women in her village, wants to read and write like the *gomchens* (lay monks) studying under her father. But she is denied the opportunity and has to look after her siblings and help her mother, a hardworking and devoted wife.

Marriage brings her no happiness when her husband leaves her for her younger and more beautiful sister. Stung by the betrayal and the indifference from her sister, Tsomo leaves her village and family for Kalimpong, India in search of her *gomchen* brother hoping for a better life. But that better life Tsomo seeks is like an elusive dream, always out of her reach. She spends all her life struggling to make a living until she finally realizes that her happiness lies in de-linking herself from the materialistic world.

Apart from being a saga of a fiercely independent woman, the book also provides a valuable insight to a typical Bhutanese rural life and Bhutan's rich cultural heritage.

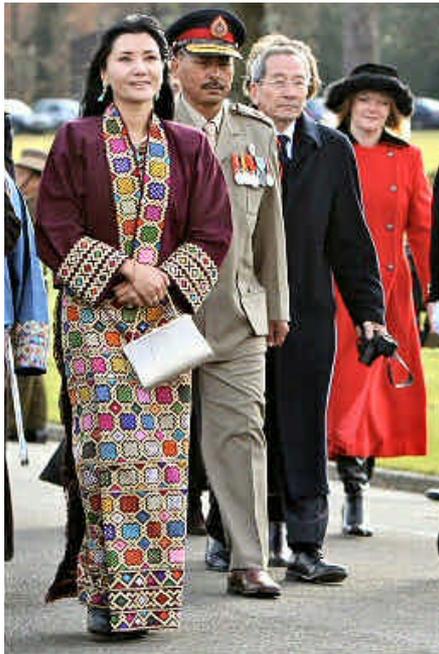


Bhutan Connections



Queen of Bhutan visits Sandhurst

Her Majesty Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuk, Queen of Bhutan, visited the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst on Friday 16th December 2005 to watch the commissioning of her son, HRH Prince Khamsun Singye Wangchuck, at the Sovereign's Parade.



Her Majesty Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuk

Her Majesty presented a wonderful bowl of extraordinary Bhutanese craftsmanship to Maj Gen Andrew Ritchie, the Commandant of Sandhurst. HRH Prince Khamsun started the Commissioning Course in January 2005 along with 23 other overseas Officer Cadets and is to be commissioned into the Armed Forces of Bhutan.



His Royal Highness Prince Khamsun



The bowl presented to Sandhurst by Her Majesty Ashi Sangay Choden Wangchuk

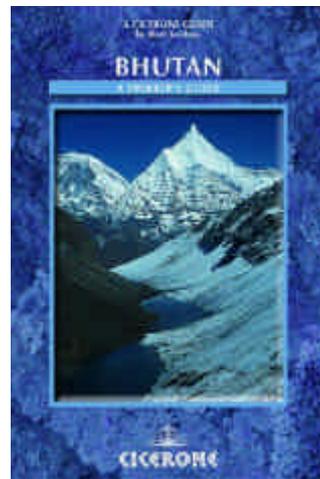
Bhutan: A Trekker's Guide

by **Bart Jordans**

Cicerone (UK), www.cicerone.co.uk, 2006

ISBN: 1-85284-398-5

With 27 treks ranging from 2 to 24 days in length, this new guide offers a unique perspective to trekking through Bhutan. A thorough introduction offers advice on preparation and fitness, when to go and how to get there. In addition to detailed coverage of Bhutan's trekking opportunities, the book also covers the people and culture of Bhutan.



Special features:

- All treks are accompanied by full route information
- ~
- Info on preparation, health issues, permits & culture
- ~
- Information to ensure a minimum-impact trek
- ~
- Illustrated with the author's own stunning photos, and full-colour sketch maps of each trek.

A Bow Between Two Worlds

(Een boog tussen twee werelden)

by **Roel Burgler, photographer**

& **Taco van der Mark, writer**

COS Zeeland, info@coszeeland.nl, 2004

ISBN: 90-806916-4-X

A beautiful book on the differences and sometimes striking similarities between archery in the Kingdom of Bhutan. and archery practiced in Zeeland, a province of the Netherlands.

