

BHUTAN:
ASPECTS OF CULTURE
AND DEVELOPMENT

edited by

MICHAEL ARIS & MICHAEL HUTT

Kiscadale Asia Research Series No.5



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Introduction

Michael Aris

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The papers assembled here were among those presented to a conference on "Bhutan: A Traditional Order and the Forces of Change" held at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, in March 1993.¹ The convenor, Dr. Michael Hutt, brought together a wide range of scholars from many countries for what was certainly the first international conference on Bhutan held in an academic setting. Particularly welcomed by all participants was the strong representation from this small, landlocked kingdom of the eastern Himalayas. The meeting was credited principally to the energy and enthusiasm of Michael Hutt, but it also reflected a need and willingness in Bhutan to communicate its policies and traditions to the outside world at a time of political crisis. This was felt to be significant, seen in the context of the continuous soul-searching that takes place within the kingdom. How much does it stand to gain or lose by departing from what looks superficially like the age of Marco Polo and entering the twentieth century with its complex problems and benefits?

It is fair to say here that very few, if any, of the papers presented to the conference were the product of wholly independent research. Unless I am mistaken, all but one of us who participated have been, in one capacity or other, the employees or guests of the Royal Government of Bhutan, and this is bound to have been reflected in our writings in various ways. To balance the fundamental need for objectivity with the duty to reciprocate the friendship and hospitality of our patrons or hosts is not always easy! However, the neutral ground of London certainly provided the right context for the sober appraisal of a difficult issue. So far as one could judge, the conference was deemed a great success by all who attended.

Although the ambitious scope and title of the gathering focused on how Bhutan's traditional order deals with the forces of change, no one was unaware that what provided the immediate impetus to look at this

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issue came from the urgent and related problem that has arisen in the south of the country since 1989. The departure, whether by voluntary exodus or involuntary flight, of some 85,000 or more Nepali-speaking people from that area to refugee camps in Nepal is the only international issue affecting Bhutan to have brought the attention of the world's media to bear on the kingdom. To see the problem in true perspective it was thought necessary to place it firmly in the wider context of contemporary Bhutan, seen against the backcloth of its cultural heritage reacting to modern change. Those papers which directly addressed the problem and immediate context of the Nepalese exodus from Bhutan have already been published under Michael Hutt's editorship in a volume in this series entitled *Bhutan: Perspectives on Conflict and Dissent*.² Presented here are the papers which considered some of the dimensions of the broader issue of culture and development in Bhutan. Despite the pioneering nature of the papers, readers may be disappointed by the omission of many aspects of the issue. For instance, an account is lacking of the changes affecting the all-important institution of state monasticism, of music, the arts and literature. The course of modern development itself is considered in only two, albeit wide-ranging, contributions. For these reasons the collection should be seen as no more than the first installment of a complete survey that must gradually be made.

* * *

The fundamental challenge facing Bhutan is expressed in a cluster of closely related questions. Even if they are not articulated in the same way, they are present in the minds of a great many Bhutanese and their foreign guests. How can Bhutan's modern development be harmonized with its traditional culture? Are the concepts of "development" and "culture" as presently conceived so intrinsically opposed and so mutually exclusive that dualism and alienation cannot be avoided? Is this really an issue whose outcome a government body or international agency can determine by formulating policies, issuing decrees and trying to implement them? Will the conundrum be settled by the people themselves gradually according to their own will, naturally and spontaneously? Or will the dual effort to preserve ancient legacies and

to improve the quality of present life be hijacked by forces beyond human control?

The pressing need to achieve a balance and synthesis between the heritage of the past and a programme of modernization and reform has been recognized as a priority of government since Bhutan began to emerge from isolation and enter the modern world in the 1960s. Indeed nobody inside or outside the kingdom has argued against the wisdom of an ideal which looks to the steady and controlled integration of the best aspects of the past with what is so urgently needed from the present. However, the policy rests on the assumption, which can always be challenged, that those responsible for its implementation not only have the necessary discrimination to identify what is valuable and worthy of being preserved or introduced but also the practical ability to do so. Moreover, as development gathers pace and foreign contacts multiply in all directions, it is clear to everyone that the key issue of integration becomes increasingly complex, raising more and more questions and yielding fewer and fewer answers. Perhaps the time is right, therefore, to reflect on some aspects of the question which are likely to endure even as change accelerates. No solutions are offered here, merely a few pointers that may or may not be useful to future discussion.

It helps to realise that Bhutan is not alone in addressing the issue or making it a priority. Much of the developmental effort brought to bear on the poorer countries of the South in recent decades is now recognized to have failed spectacularly because little or no account was taken of cultural traditions and values or indeed of genuinely popular aspirations.³ The term “endogenous development” is today the new catch phrase. Instead of looking to the imposition of external models and squeezing these, usually without success, to fit local conditions, this new strategy or “style” of development seeks rather to uncover those factors, particularly cultural factors, internal to any society which promote a human, sustainable and shared development. The World Commission on Culture and Development currently in session under the auspices of UNESCO has declared in its mandate that “this new development can only be built on the basis of new ideas, policies and practices, which will develop only if the links between culture and development are explored and strengthened. In the future, development models should be focused on people and should foster

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cultural values instead of being prejudicial to them... Culture, indeed, is the source and the ultimate goal of development ...".⁴ The deliberations and guidelines of the Commission are intended to be adopted and distributed through the UN General Assembly in 1995 after yielding a document similar to the Brundtland Commission report on the environment.

According to one of the working papers of the Commission, "In the South, the primary aim will be to avoid the dangers of slavish imitation, by fostering a development at once endogenous and open to the outside. The enormous cultural and biological diversity of the South creates favourable conditions for inventing futures that do not fall into the Northern trap of overconsumption. These countries will thus also be confronted with the twin challenge of, on the one hand, a creative interpretation of their culture and, on the other hand, the evolution of a new culture which takes a selective vision of modernity into account".⁵ Although not articulated in quite the same words, this sounds very much like the stance adopted by the Government of Bhutan over the last three and a half decades. Few would disagree, however, that it is much easier to make pronouncements of this sort than to bring them to reality. The intangible, even spiritual, goal of development as thus conceived cannot be quantified and reduced to a statistical table.

* * *

The present collection begins with a clear and optimistic account of how the country has sought to develop in tune with its heritage, written by a Bhutanese civil servant directly involved in the planning process. Karma Ura considers the impetus for change in the light of the transition from theocracy to monarchy that was achieved in 1907. The constitutional change which brought in monarchy entailed no radical break with the Buddhist ideology of the past. However, the direct purpose of government was gradually transformed and enlarged from its primary duty of maintaining the institutions of religion. It is worth emphasizing here that even under the theocracy, the "welfare of the public" was seen as a principal task of government.⁶ Indeed behind the local conception of "welfare" lies the primary Buddhist injunction to remove human suffering. Ultimately this takes place in the mind of

each person as the bonds of desire are severed. Directed to that end are the primary ethical values taught by Buddhism, along with a huge array of philosophical, ritual and meditative techniques. At the same time there has long been clear recognition, at least since the country's first unification in the seventeenth century, that a government must take practical measures to eliminate the immediate, material causes of suffering and to actively encourage the conditions necessary for prosperity. The reforms introduced by the third king⁷ and the modern development of Bhutan which he and his son, the present king, have pursued with such vigour can therefore always be presented in this light, that is to say in very traditional terms which in no way conflict with the heritage of the past. It is partly for this reason that the Buddhist clergy, whom some might expect to act as a reactionary force opposing change, have never done so.⁸ On the other hand the modern concept of "engaged Buddhism", which lays special emphasis on the religion's active potential for relieving social and political inequities, has yet to take root.⁹ What is sure is that the ethical basis of Buddhism and its teachings on compassion and harmony will continue to provide the theoretical basis for much of the state's endeavours. It can also be expected that the tensions which naturally arise between the ideal and the reality will be expressed in new and troublesome ways. These tensions will be seen especially in the interaction of the state's theoretical basis in the primary teachings of Buddhism with those militant aspects of the institutionalized Drukpa school which lay much emphasis on the defence of the realm against external threats.¹⁰

The movement described by Karma Ura towards decentralization and popular participation which has received such emphasis in government policy since the present king came to the throne can also be shown to have arisen from traditional roots waiting to emerge. There are few hints in the indigenous historical literature about how corporate decisions were taken on matters which lay outside the immediate purview of the state, or about the way in which negotiations between the state and society were conducted. However, the concept of the *mang* (spelt *dmangs*, which can be translated variously as the "public", "community" or "commonalty")¹¹ served as a balance to the absolutist, and often exploitative, nature of government in the past. The term occurs most frequently in reference to monastic communities, conceived as the sum total of their members, but it is

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also heard in speaking of village communities and their corporate rights and responsibilities. Nothing has so far been recorded of how the *mang* operates on the ground, either in the past or the present, but the whole notion has been deliberately brought to the fore in the operation of the local development committees which now fill the country.¹² Popular empowerment of this kind at a grass-roots level is restricted so far to making choices and decisions on relatively minor issues of local development. When these issues are contentious or involve policy considerations they are forwarded to the National Assembly by elected "people's representatives" who make up roughly two-thirds of its membership. However, it is the non-elected government representatives in the National Assembly, the appointees of the king, who are the main initiators of major legislation, and the king himself retains the right to veto any resolution. If the experience of recent decades is anything to go by, the further progress of reform and democratization will depend more on the king himself continuing to take the lead rather than on popular pressure exerted from below. The king has set himself the task of finding a durable solution to the "southern problem" of the ethnic Nepalese. Any lasting settlement would presumably entail political changes affecting the system of government.

The search for internal prosperity has been matched by the external search for the means to achieve it. Bhutanese diplomacy has been aimed both at locating the funds to underwrite the cost of development and at gaining international recognition for the country's independence. Thierry Mathou provides a most useful account of this process in the years 1961-91. The growth of modern diplomacy is presented as a radical break with the past, for it has caused what he describes as "this most isolated country in the world" to develop formal relations with eighteen nations and it has joined one hundred and fifty international organizations. No one will dispute the importance of this movement, but it has to be seen in the context of some far-flung Asian contacts which Bhutan developed in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Trade and pilgrimage provided links with lands to the north and south, and missions of a diplomatic nature were deputed to successive rulers of Assam, Bengal, Kuch Bihar, Nepal, Sikkim and Ladakh. The Sakya principality, a quasi-autonomous unit within Tibet, maintained particularly cordial relations with Bhutan over a long period. After two sides in a conflict appealed to Beijing by

sending delegations there in 1734 a permanent Bhutanese mission was established in Tibet's capital and continued there until 1959. The grant to Bhutan of large monastic estates in Nepal, western Tibet and Ladakh brought frequent contacts with the other major Himalayan powers. In the later eighteenth century Indian secretaries were maintained at the Bhutanese court for correspondence with the British authorities in India.¹³ The nature of some of these relationships has sometimes been interpreted to support claims that Bhutan formed part, successively, of the Chinese and British empires.

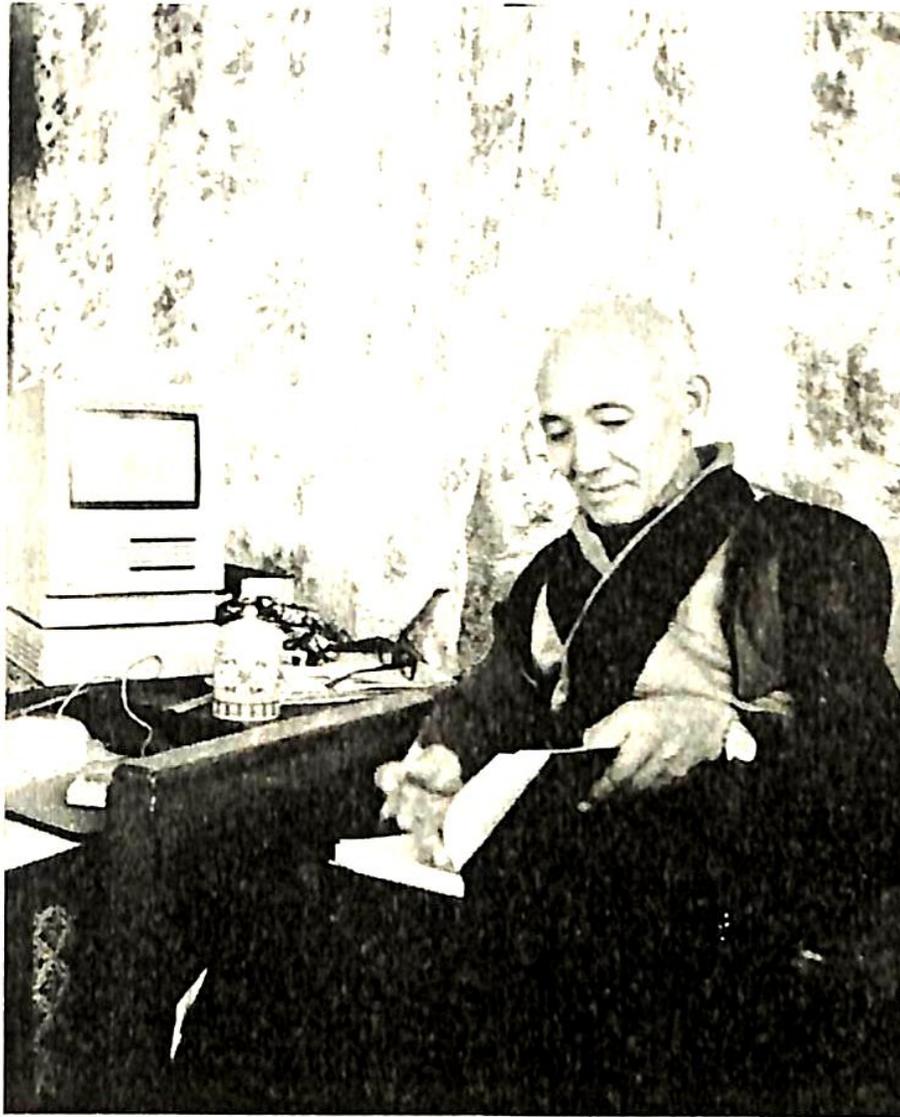
None of this fits the standard picture of long and deep isolation that is normally drawn for the country. What is sure, however, is that the chaos of civil strife in the nineteenth century gradually caused the Bhutanese state to turn away from the confident external relations it had earlier developed. By the time the monarchy was established in 1907, apart from British India the only foreign power with which Bhutan continued to have relations was Tibet, and there the contact was limited mainly to issues of trade and ceremony. It took more than a decade after India had won independence in 1947 before the treaty provision which had placed Bhutan's external relations first in British and then in Indian hands gradually came to be ignored, culminating finally in Bhutan's admission to the United Nations in 1971. The expansion of its diplomatic relations thereafter can in one sense be seen as a turning of the clock right back to much earlier times when the country had strong regional ties in Asia, now augmented on a global scale. Mathou gives a detailed account of the skill with which this was achieved, and he points to some of the future challenges that may arise from the rapid expansion that has taken place.

Turning back to the internal situation, George van Driem looks to the important issue of language policy, basing his information partly on the first linguistic survey of the country which he recently helped to conduct and partly on statements of government educational policy. (The broader issue of education in general is among the topics missing from this volume, along with those of agriculture, health, trade, industry and several other critical aspects of development.) The linguistic survey has given valuable detail to a picture that was already known in outline.¹⁴ It reveals that the speakers of those closely related Central Bodish dialects of the western Bhutanese who are known as the Ngalong, upon whose tongue the national language of Dzongkha¹⁵ is

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based, only slightly outnumber the ethnic Nepalese of the south. (There are 160,000 Ngalong and 156,000 Nepalese according to his figures. However, it is not clear to me at all how the figure he provides for the Nepalese relates to that of the refugees now in Nepal, whether it includes or excludes them.) Each of these groups outnumbers the other two major language groups, namely those who speak dialects of the Bumthang language that falls under East Bodish (108,000) and the so-called “Easterners” (Shachop) who speak Tshangla (138,000). Three other languages — Lhokpu, Gongduk and Lepcha — are, like Tshangla, as yet unclassified within the Tibeto-Burman family. They are spoken by only 6,500 people.

The linguistic diversity of the kingdom is said to be accommodated and preserved by the government. Multilingualism is both the reality and the aim, and it is worth remembering here that Nepali is widely understood and used in the north alongside the indigenous languages and English. However, it is noted that the teaching of Nepali has now been totally abolished in reaction to the southern problem. The key issues remain to what extent the government’s plans to develop the national language of Dzongkha will affect the classical Buddhist heritage preserved in literary Tibetan, also whether Nepali will be allowed to make an official comeback, and how Dzongkha will be used in its spoken and written forms alongside both the local languages and English. Apart from the single newspaper, *Kuensel*, and educational textbooks, the only major publication in Dzongkha I am aware of has been the multi-volume collection of short stories compiled from vernacular oral tradition by Sherab Thayé.¹⁶ Long poems in Dzongkha of the *lozé* genre have certainly been composed and circulated in recent years.¹⁷ However, despite the considerable effort to expand the use of Dzongkha as a unifying instrument of national identity, literary Tibetan remains the standard for practically all new compositions and most government transactions. Indeed a certain revival of classical literary standards has been apparent since Bhutan turned towards modern development, the result surely of a perceived need to preserve and reassert the heritage of the past in the face of so much change.¹⁸ Clearly the fear that Dzongkha would displace literary Tibetan, as expressed by some inside the country and also by David Snellgrove,¹⁹ seems far from being realized. Yet the movement for classical revival, though not coming to an end, appears to be slowing down, at least in



The eminent scholar Lobsön Pemala (Lama Pema Tsewang), retired Director of the National Library of Bhutan, with the computer used for writing his works of history and religion, Thimphu 1982. (Photo: Anthony Aris)

terms of literary output. The present head abbot of the state monks, Gendun Rinchen, is a prolific author of traditional writings, but he is unmatched by any except the retired director of the National Library, Lama Pema Tsewang (Lobsön Pemala), the author of a major and long-awaited history of Bhutan that has just appeared.²⁰ The work breaks new ground in its traditional methodology by adopting a rigorous attitude to sources, but the viewpoint remains wholly conservative. That the author now uses a computer to facilitate his writings is typical of a cultural climate which, although traditional, is beginning to exploit the advantages of modern technology.

The efforts of these and other authors and the fact that the National Library has its own valuable holdings and over two hundred Bhutanese

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and Tibetan classics currently available for purchase means that the literary and historical heritage of the country will definitely survive for reappraisal by future generations.²¹ Any new vision of the present and future is bound to entail a new vision of the past. But the prospects for literary development, as distinct from preservation, will be closely affected by the increasing use of English. Far more than written Dzongkha, it is English which is serving to displace the classical idioms. Nor do any of the insights, perspectives and literary genres open to users of English appear yet to be filtering back either into written Dzongkha or into literary Tibetan as used in Bhutan. For instance, a novel has yet to appear in either of these forms, and no English work has so far been translated into any Bhutanese language. Until some cross-fertilization begins to take hold in this and similar ways it is difficult to see how the use of English will not lead to a sense of cultural alienation.²²

Literary forms, indeed practically all types of cultural expression in Bhutan, are closely bound up with religious attitudes. It is fortunate we have two contributions by the husband-and-wife team of Sonam Chhoki and Michael Kowalewski. They explore the Buddhist religion in its popular aspects that are so easily missed or ignored by scholars concerned only with textual traditions. Sensitive to the loose boundaries separating the "high" religion of monks in their monasteries from the "low" religion of peasants in their villages, they are conscious of the way these oppositions have merged at many points and drawn inspiration from each other to form a total world view of great depth and complexity. Sonam Chhoki's account of a hitherto unrecorded village ritual helps to throw light on the way local aspirations are expressed very differently from the concerns of the dominant, all-powerful establishment. The latter appears to deal with these potentially threatening forms of expression either by ignoring them or by gradually incorporating them into the purview of the state. Many of Bhutan's most interesting traditions are, like the one studied by Sonam Chhoki, those which are least accessible, hidden in the customs and seasonal festivals of remote communities or in texts whose secrets have to be teased into the light of day.²³ The quest to reveal and understand this legacy is potentially the most exciting and rewarding of all the joint ventures that bring insiders and outsiders together. Kowalewski attempts a holistic approach to the total picture by providing an

impressionistic account of the main themes which imbue popular historical consciousness and ritual activity.

“Culture” tends to be conceived by the state largely in terms of those elements deliberately selected by it for the purpose of constructing a single national “identity”. Indeed the two terms “culture” and “identity” are practically synonymous in official statements in English.²⁴ Most of the more traditional Western notions of culture fall in Bhutan under the heading of “religion”, *cho* (chos). However, one term which comes closer to the more contemporary and inclusive conception of culture is “tradition”, *lusö* (lugs-srol). The term alludes to all those customs, whether of the state or of the local community, lay or religious, that are sanctioned by historical precedent. It can potentially accommodate “the whole complex of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize a society or social group ... not only the arts and letters, but also modes of life, the fundamental rights of the human being, value systems, traditions and beliefs”.²⁵ The category of *lusö* can thus subsume not only *rigné* (rig-gnas, Sanskrit vidhyāsthāna), which refers to culture in its more limited aspect of “arts and letters”,²⁶ but also, as Sonam Chhoki has shown in her paper, those cultural features of village life that the state might look on as aberrant.

When the term *lusö* is qualified in the common phrase *Drukpa'i lusö*, “the cultural traditions of the Bhutanese”, the speaker is usually invoking a set of norms governing ritual behaviour and appearance prescribed by the state and enforceable by law. Formal acts of deference and national styles of building and dress all come under this heading. In this way the distinctive and specific forms which evolved in Bhutan as a result of the country’s political unification are deliberately promoted to counter the effects of modernization and to foster loyalty to the state. Just as the rights and aspirations of the common man are given prominence by the state in its development programmes, so at the same time does the state seek to bring compliance to its ordinances by asserting what is lawfully and acceptably Bhutanese. Nowhere is the culturally prescriptive role of the state more evident than in the official “code of discipline” (*dritrim*, grigs-khrims) now laid down by the government and imposed on the population at large. Known as “The Fundamentals of Disciplined Behaviour” (*Driglam Namzha*, sGrigslam gNam-bzhag), it consists of an elaborate choreography of

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deference developed out of monastic tradition. Observed not only on formal occasions but, increasingly, in areas that some might consider private, the code constitutes “culture” in official eyes. But how will this state-conceived culture deal with those aspects at the core of the traditional heritage which depend on the individual’s own quest for enlightenment or with all those external influences that encourage free thought and expression? When so much effort is aimed at identifying and “freezing” ancient forms it cannot be easy at the same time to maintain a flexible and rational approach to the fundamental changes that are taking place. The success and integrity of Bhutanese culture, conceived in its widest sense, will depend on keeping the poles in balance, and much thought will be needed to achieve this by developing new rationales of what culture is all about.

Meanwhile the state’s strict ordinances on architecture and dress provide a testing ground for its cultural policies. These areas of material culture account for almost everything that is visibly and distinctly Bhutanese, and the effort to preserve them as a statement of national identity runs parallel to the government’s environmental policies aimed at keeping the country’s natural heritage intact. Writing from the perspective of architectural anthropology, Marc Dujardin takes pains to relate the values expressed in buildings and in their methods of construction to the wider context of Bhutanese culture. He provides a sensitively critical analysis of the government’s attempts to marry distinctive features of the local architecture with imported building techniques. Here tradition is reduced to mere wallpaper decoration, and its truly dynamic quality, never static, is lost in the “urban tissue” of the developing townships. However, as he points out with optimism, the great majority of the population outside the townships still preserves a vibrant and integrated dwelling culture that carries the potential to meet the challenges of development and modernization.

The same is unambiguously true for the culture of cloth, which has accommodated new materials and styles without losing anything by way of meaning and purpose. From slightly different perspectives Françoise Pommaret and Diana Myers explore the fundamental importance of textiles to many critical aspects of Bhutanese life.²⁷ The tradition as we see it today can be viewed as the gradual triumph of elements that are usually marginal and excluded from the central fabric

of the state. Originating in the peripheral east of the country that was made subject to the dominant west, the textile arts lie in the hands of women whose voice is rarely heard in a society, government and culture dominated by men. In textile production, largely free from government stricture, we see an efflorescence of creative expression quite unique in the trans-Himalayan world. That this evolving tradition as a whole was absorbed wholesale from the fringe and made so central to national culture provides eloquent testimony to the long-term capacity of Bhutanese society to adapt to new and vibrant forms. Nevertheless, difficult political issues remain. Will the measures to enforce the national dress code on those who now prefer to wear imported garments really work? Is it necessary or desirable to preserve “culture” by coercion? Will the Nepalese population in the south continue to be made to wear the national dress? Is this really practicable or desirable? Only time will tell.

The greatest challenge will come, surely, from the rapid expansion of a monetary economy rather than from external influences affecting established norms of cultural expression. If these norms have the value claimed for them, then they will endure naturally by adaptation, aided by the undoubted strength and resilience of the Bhutanese character. However, the need to improve the quality of day-to-day life through controlled development programmes has brought with it unprecedented opportunities to make a great deal of money very quickly. A shared, even prosperity is the worthy goal of a Buddhist state, but a growing climate of competitive greed and ostentation threatens the ultimate purpose of Buddhist institutions and traditions. While the Bhutanese are just as preoccupied with material acquisition as the people of most other countries, a strong sense of the ideal of sufficiency is inherent in their value system. The “awareness of sufficiency” (*chokshé*, chog-shes), which renders Sanskrit *saṃtuṣṭi*, “contentment” or “satisfaction”, is fundamental to Buddhist teachings. Along with the primary value placed on compassion, which can only promote pluralism and a tolerance of diversity, it is surely these elements in the national culture which will, in the end, achieve the balanced integration that is so much desired, both with the modern world and with the country’s largest ethnic minority.

Notes

- ¹ It is assumed readers will have had access to basic information on Bhutan. Those who still require this are referred to Michael Hutt's introduction to this volume's companion (see next note). See also Ramesh C. Dogra, *Bhutan* (World Bibliographic Series cxvi, Oxford and Santa Barbara, 1990); John Bray, "Bhutan: The Dilemmas of a Small State", *The World Today*, xxxix no. 11 (1993), pp. 213-16.
- ² Michael Hutt (ed.), *Bhutan: Perspectives on Conflict and Dissent* (Gartmore, Kiscadale Asia Research Series no. 4, 1994). It may be useful to provide here the contents of this companion volume: Michael Hutt, "Introduction", pp. 5-20; Michael Aris, "Conflict and Conciliation in Traditional Bhutan", pp. 21-44; Jigmi Y. Thinley, "Bhutan: A Kingdom Beseiged", pp. 45-76; Kinley Dorji, "Bhutan's Current Crisis: A View from Thimphu", pp. 77-96; Christopher Strawn, "The Dissidents", pp. 97-128; Rachael Reilly, "Life and Work in the Refugee Camps of Southeast Nepal", pp. 129-140; Brian C. Shaw, "Aspects of the 'Southern Problem' and Nation-Building in Bhutan", pp. 141-164; Kanak Mani Dixit, "Looking for Greater Nepal", pp. 165-182; Leo Rose, "The Role of the Monarchy in the Current Ethnic Conflicts in Bhutan", pp. 183-94; Nicholas Nugent, "Reporting Bhutan", pp. 195-202; Awadhesh Coomar Sinha, "Bhutan: Political Culture and National Dilemma", pp. 203-16.
- ³ This is well understood in Bhutan. "Simply imposing development models from outside which do not take religion and tradition into account will not only serve to diminish existing culture, but will also meet with limited success. The process can lead to the creation of dualism, whereby the majority of the population continue to make use of traditional services and practices, while a minority, usually the more educated population, will benefit from government funded development programmes": Planning Commission, Royal Government of Bhutan, *Seventh Five Year Plan, 1992/93 - 1996/97*, 2 vols. (Thimphu, 1991), i, p. 66.
- ⁴ "Mandate of the World Commission on Culture and Development" (UNESCO, Paris, 1993), paras. 2-3.
- ⁵ Ignacy Sachs, "Cultures, Environments and Developmental Styles" (UNESCO, CCD-II/93/DOC.5, Paris, 22 June 1993), p. 7. See also Celso Furtado, "Development as an Endogenous Process" (UNESCO, CCD-II/93/DOC.3, Paris, 22 June 1993); Robert Klitgaard, "Taking Culture into Account: From 'Let's' to 'How'" (UNESCO, CCD-II/93/DOC.8, Paris, 22 June 1993).
- ⁶ See the Bhutan law code of 1729 edited and translated in my *Sources for the History of Bhutan* (Wiener Studien zur Tibetologie und Buddhismuskunde, Heft 14, Vienna, 1986), text 3, pp. 122-68. It is very clear from the provisions of the code that the rapacity of government officials was a major cause of human suffering under the theocracy. The "welfare of the public" (*misergi kyiduk*, *mi-ser-gyi skyid-sdug*) consisted both in controlling official corruption and in taking positive measures to promote human harmony and prosperity.
- ⁷ For a brief account of how the first tentative steps towards reform and development began during the reigns of the first two kings, see my *The Raven*

- Crown: The Origins of Buddhist Monarchy in Bhutan* (London, 1994), pp. 104-5, 135-8.
- ⁸ By contrast the clergy in Tibet during its period of *de facto* independence earlier this century actively opposed measures for reform and development. This seems to have happened because the measures were thought to threaten their influence and vested interests. This has not been the case in Bhutan.
- ⁹ The delegation of state monks who travelled in 1994 from Bhutan to Sri Lanka to learn from the activities of Buddhist clergy engaged in social welfare projects there was one of the first, officially-sponsored steps in this direction.
- ¹⁰ I address this issue in my "Conflict and Conciliation in Traditional Bhutan", in Hutt (ed.), *Bhutan: Perspectives on Conflict and Dissent*.
- ¹¹ Bhutanese terms as pronounced in Dzongkha are rendered in italics, their proper orthography in roman. The Glossary at the end contains simple definitions of all Bhutanese terms found in this collection.
- ¹² Christopher Strawn has suggested in his "The Dissidents", in Hutt (ed.), *Bhutan: Perspectives on Conflict and Dissent*, that in the south of the country the policy of decentralization through the establishment of local development committees and other measures has served to remove intermediate levels of accountability and to reinforce the power of the centre.
- ¹³ On Bhutan's foreign contacts under the theocracy, see the relevant sections of Yoshiro Imaeda, "La constitution de la théocratie 'Brug pa au dix-septième siècle et les problèmes de la succession du premier *Zhabs drung*" (Doctorat d'Etat es lettres et sciences humaines, Université Paris 7, 2 vols.); Michael Aris, *Bhutan: The Early History of a Himalayan Kingdom* (Warminster and New Delhi, 1979), esp. pp. 266-9; Aris, *Raven Crown*, pp. 40-2.
- ¹⁴ See my *Bhutan*, pp. xiv-xviii.
- ¹⁵ It should be understood that the system of "Roman Dzongkha" used in his contribution by Van Driem is a technical method of transcription developed for the linguistic projects of the Government of Bhutan, not a system intended for public usage. The system has undergone further development since the paper was written, and the superscript cirlet is no longer used.
- ¹⁶ Entitled *rDzong-kha'i gtam-rgyud sna-tshogs* ["Dzongkha Short Stories"], these have appeared in ten volumes at irregular intervals. An English collection of similar legends has been assembled by Kunzang Choden in her *Folktales of Bhutan* (Bangkok, 1993).
- ¹⁷ Two of these have reached me in Oxford. One composed in 292 lines by Dasho Lam Sangak in 1989 is entitled *bDud-rtsi'i thigs-pa* ["A Drop of Nectar"]. It tells the tragic story of his love for a girl of Dagona. Another, undated *lozé* in 320 lines by Dasho Karma Gelek has no title but begins *lHo mi-'gyur chos-khi rgyal-khab-'di / bstan dar-zhing rgyas-pa los-rang-dga'* / ["In this unchanging kingdom of religion in the south / There is certainly joy for the Teachings prosper".] The poem is a eulogy of the Bhutanese monarchy and a prayer for victory over the Nepalese of the south.
- ¹⁸ See my "The Revival of Traditional Scholarship in Bhutan", in Tadeusz Skorupski (ed.), *Indo-Tibetan Studies: Papers in Honour of Professor David L. Snellgrove's Contribution to Indo-Tibetan Studies* (Buddhica Britannica, Series

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Continua ii, Tring, 1990), pp. 23-7. The survey takes account only of works published up to 1986. I am indebted to Chris Butters for information on works that have appeared in more recent years.

- ¹⁹ See David Snellgrove's remark in the preface to the second edition of his *Himalayan Pilgrimage: A Study of Tibetan Religion by a Traveller through Western Nepal* (Boulder, 1981), pp. xix-xx: "So far only the Bhutanese have attempted to differentiate their written language from literary Tibetan by devising new spellings which accord more with Bhutanese pronunciation, calling this newly created literary form Dzongkha. But if its use is successful, it will have the great disadvantage of cutting those so educated off from all their previous literature, which is in normal Tibetan".
- ²⁰ Gendun Rinchen's Collected Works are still appearing in a multi-volume *poti* format; the index (*dkar-chags*) so far occupies nine folios. Pema Tsewang's work is entitled '*Brug gsal-ba'i sgron-me* ["The Lamp which Illuminates Bhutan"] (Thimphu, 1994). Another of his important works is '*Khor-'das lam-gsum ston-byed srid-'khor rnam-bshad* ["An Explanation of the Wheel of Existence which Reveals Samsara, Nirvana and the Path (to Enlightenment)"] (Thimphu, n.d. 1992?).
- ²¹ See Yoshiro Imaeda, "National Library of Bhutan: Role and Function", in Ihara Shôren and Yamaguchi Zuihō (eds.), *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 5th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Narita 1989*, 2 vols. (Narita, 1992), ii, pp. 497-500.
- ²² By contrast some Bhutanese works have appeared in English translation: *The Divine Madman: The Sublime Life and Songs of Drukpa Kunley*, trans. Keith Dowman and Sonam Paljor (London, 1980); Aris, *Sources for the History of Bhutan*; Kunzang Choden, *Folktales of Bhutan*. Michael Kowalewski is presently translating the life of Phajo Drukgom Shikpo (1208-76), and four translations by Khenpo Phuntsok Tashi and Chris Butters are currently in press in Thimphu. See also '*Brug pa kun legs: Das wundersame Leben eines verrückten Heiligen*, ed. and trans. Andreas Kretschmar (Beitrage zur Zentralasienforschung v, St Augustin, 1981); Michael Aris, *Hidden Treasures and Secret Lives: A Study of Pemalingpa (1450-1521) and the Sixth Dalai Lama (1683-1706)* (London and New York, 1989).
- ²³ See for instance Michael Aris, "The Admonition of the Thunderbolt Cannonball' and its Place in the Bhutanese New Year Festival", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, xxxix (1976), pp. 601-35; Chime Wangmo, "Rituals of Bhutanese House Construction", in Barbara Nimri Aziz and Matthew Kapstein (eds.), *Soundings in Tibetan Civilization* (New Delhi, 1985), pp. 107-14; Michael Aris, "The Boneless Tongue': Alternative Voices from Bhutan in the Context of Lamaist Societies", *Past and Present*, no. 115 (May 1987), pp. 131-64; Françoise Pommaret, *Les revenants de l'au-delà dans le monde tibétain: Sources littéraires et tradition vivante* (Paris, 1989); Sonam Wangmo, "The Brokpas: A Semi-Nomadic People of Eastern Bhutan", in N.K. Rustomji and Charles Ramble (eds.), *Himalayan Environment and Culture* (Shimla and New Delhi, 1990), pp. 141-158; Marceline de Montmollin, "*bKra shis sgo mang* of Bhutan: On a Specific Tradition of Shrines and its Prolongation in the

Museum of Ethnography in Neuchâtel”, in Ihara and Yamaguchi (eds.), *Tibetan Studies*, ii, pp. 605-14; Françoise Pommaret, “Les fêtes aux divinités-montagnes *Phyva* au Bhoutan de l’est”, in Per Kvaerne (ed.), *Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the 6th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Fagernes 1992*, 2 vols. (Oslo, 1994), ii, pp. 660-9.

- ²⁴ The Planning Minister, Lyonpo C. Dorji, clarified the objectives of development in the completed Sixth Plan in an interview with *The Hindu*, 11 Nov. 1992, p. iv. The first objective was said to have been aimed at tightening the administrative machinery and the second objective at “preserving and promoting the national identity which is vital for strengthening the security and status of a small country like Bhutan”. This was achieved “by promoting the Bhutanese heritage in literature, architecture and art; promoting and adapting Bhutanese institutions and values; promoting research on Bhutan’s history and geography; promoting the national dress and language; and providing access and orientation to courses in tradition and culture. There is now a greater appreciation and desire among Bhutanese people to strengthen their unique national identity”.
- ²⁵ This definition of culture was put forward by the World Conference on Cultural Policies in the Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies (1982).
- ²⁶ *Rigné* (literally, “field of knowledge”) is divided into ten subjects commonly enumerated as grammar, medicine, painting and crafts, logic, philosophy, poetry, semantics, lexicography, astrology and dance-drama. The Chinese communists use the term *ri gné* for “culture”, as in *ri gné sarjé* (“cultural revolution”).
- ²⁷ For a fuller treatment of the subject, see the illustrated catalogue to the international exhibition of Bhutanese textiles held at the Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts, and other sites in the United States: Diana K. Myers and Susan S. Bean (eds.), *From the Land of the Thunder Dragon: Textile Arts of Bhutan* (London and Salem, Mass., 1994), with contributions also by Michael Aris and Françoise Pommaret.

