

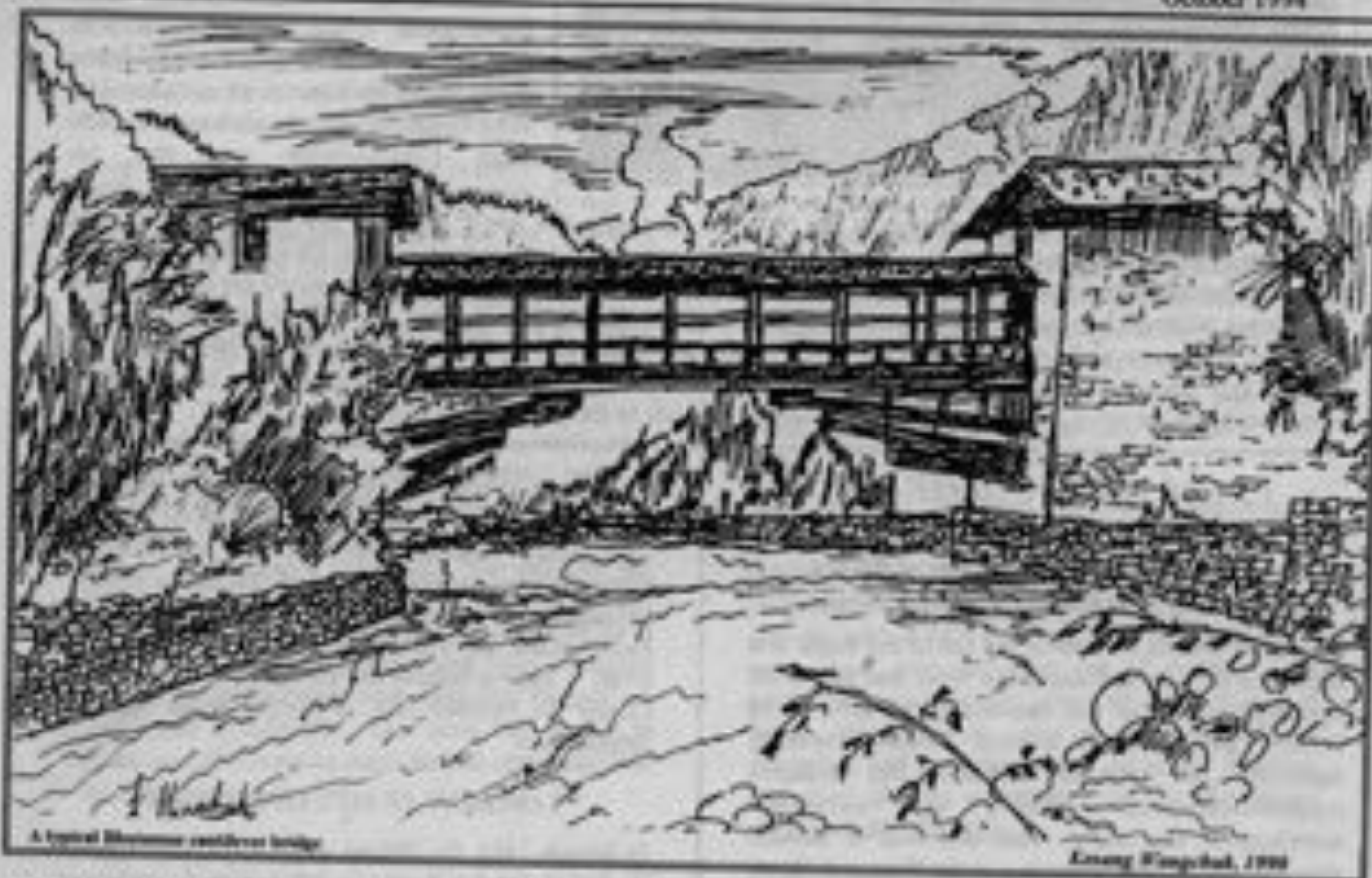
# THE BHUTAN SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER

Number 5

October 1994



### Bhutan's Environment protected by the Environmental Conservation Fund

The Kingdom of Bhutan possesses extraordinary - and largely undisturbed - natural wonders. Sixty percent of the country is still covered by forests that shelter numerous endangered species, including the snow leopard, tiger, red panda, greater one-horned rhinoceros, clouded leopard, black necked crane, takin and the golden langur, a rare primate believed to survive only in Bhutan. The eastern Himalayas has been designated as one of the ten global "hot spots" by scientists due to its exceedingly rich natural heritage. With only seventy percent of Bhutan's natural habitats inventoried, approximately 5,000 species of plants, 160 species of mammals and more than 770 avian species have been documented. The task of environmental protection and conservation in Bhutan is a monumental one and so far donor assistance in this field has been insufficient to manage the task. To guarantee itself a sustainable revenue source that could be applied to the full range of environmental requirements, the Royal Government has joined together with the UN Development Programme and the World Wildlife Fund to create the Bhutan Fund for Environmental Conservation. This is the first Trust Fund of its kind in the world

involving a partnership of Government and Donors specifically committed to environmental conservation.

The objectives of the Fund include the training of foresters, ecologists and natural resource managers, the surveying of Bhutan's biological resources and the creation of an ecological information base, and the promoting of environmental education in schools and through public awareness campaigns. The fund has helped the Department of Forests to establish a Nature Conservation Division and to implement biodiversity conservation programmes. A Field Research and Nature Study Centre is also being constructed to facilitate research. A conservation-minded leadership combined with Buddhist ethics have helped Bhutan to avoid so far the ecological crises that now face other Himalayan countries. The Bhutan Government has opted for slow-paced development, enacting legislation to restrict grazing in critical watersheds, to ban logging and agriculture on steep slopes, to limit the conversion of forest land to other uses and to ban hunting. However, in spite of the Government's best efforts, much remains to be done to conserve Bhutan's unique natural environment.



## BHUTAN DISCUSSES COOPERATION WITH UN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSIONER.

During the last week of July Mr. Ayala Lasso, who was appointed the first UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in February this year, paid a three day visit to Bhutan at the invitation of the Royal Government, which said it was keen to establish cooperation with his office. The photo shows Mr. Lasso at an audience with H.M. The King in Tashichodzong. The UN High Commissioner said that his discussions with Cabinet Ministers, senior

Government officials, and representatives of the National Assembly and Royal Advisory Council had covered the possibility of projects in the judicial, civil service, health, education and environment sectors. He also said that he had dealt with questions concerning occupants of the refugee camps in Southern Nepal, and emphasised the importance of the current bilateral negotiations between the Bhutan and Nepal as being the best way of solving this problem. Mr. Lasso, who came to Bhutan after visiting South Korea, Japan and Cambodia, and before visiting Nepal, said that he was very impressed with the atmosphere of peace and quiet in which the Bhutanese people lived, and he commented "I hope other countries will follow Bhutan's example in the preservation of their environment".

### FROM THE LAND OF THE THUNDER DRAGON

*A New Book on the Textile Arts of Bhutan*  
Edited by Diana Myers and Susan Bean

Bhutanese textiles are among the last of the major arts of Asia to gain recognition in the West, and this is the first book to present this outstanding art form in its cultural and historical context. Bhutan's textiles, especially the intricate brocades and complex supplementary-warp patterns, are unmatched anywhere in the world. This art, with a steadily growing and devoted following in the West and Japan, has become Bhutan's most powerful emblem abroad.

Textiles are integrated into all aspects of life in this Himalayan kingdom - fashioned into clothing and various kinds of containers and covers. Wild silk, cotton, settle, wool and yak hair are the fibres basic to the region. Gifts of cloth mark important social traditions such as career promotions and marriages. Textiles are critical to the practice of Buddhist ritual, providing images of deities and markers and adornments for sacred spaces. Textiles are prestige, commodity, wealth, forms of payment and capital as well as expressions of religious devotion. Weavers, always women, are esteemed as artists for their highly skilled and visually stunning mastery of colour, pattern and composition. Men, often monks, embroider and appliqué religious images and assemble three furnishings with great skill.

*From the Land of the Thunder Dragon* covers all aspects of Bhutan's textile and weaving heritage, from the central role of women - more than 80% of Bhutanese women contribute to their household's income by weaving - to fibres, dyes and looms, to the

functioning of beautiful cloth as an item of trade and an indicator of historical change and social identity. This richly illustrated book reveals the richness, originality and striking beauty of Bhutanese textiles. (Available in hardback at £29.95 from Serindia Publications, 18, Parkfields, Putney, London SW15 6ND) Also available at the lecture "The Raven Crown" on October 19th, at 6.45pm at the National Liberal Club.

### LONDON SEMINAR PAPERS

In March 1993 the School of Oriental and African Studies in London hosted an international conference on "Bhutan: a Traditional Order and Forces of Change. Papers from this conference are being published in two volumes. The first was published in September 1994 and contains ten essays by scholars, journalists, observers and an official of the Royal Government of Bhutan that look at the Southern problem from a variety of perspectives. The speakers who took part in the Seminar and whose essays appear in this first volume include Michael Hart (SOAS), Michael Aris (Oxford University), Dasho Jigme Thinley (then Secretary, Home Ministry), Kinley Dorji (Editor of *Koenig*), Brian C. Shaw (Hong Kong), Leo Rose (University of California), Kanak Mani Dixit (Editor of *Himal*, Kathmandu), Nick Nugent (BBC Overseas Service) and Awadesh Coomart Sinha (Shillong). Copies of the first Volume can be obtained at £17.50 from Paul Strachan, Kiscade Publications, Garmore, Stirlingshire FK8 3RJ. Copies of the second Volume, which deals with aspects of culture and development, will be available towards the end of the year. \*\*

## **Flash Flood in Punakha Kills Twenty Three People**

The bursting of a mountain lake caused a flash flood in Punakha town on Friday, 7th October. Significant damage was done to the town, and a temple beside the Dzong was destroyed. It appears likely that at least twenty three people have been killed in the flood, which happened at 7 o'clock in the morning. Houses and animals were lost too. As reported in the previous issue of this Newsletter, the Punakha Township will be relocated during the next few years to allow more space for expansion and to preserve the Dzong environment.

The Bhutan Society extends its deepest sympathy to all the families who have suffered loss in this flood.

## **NEW UNDP RESIDENT REPRESENTATIVE TAKES OVER IN THIMPHU**

Mrs. Akiko Naito-yuge has recently taken over from Terry Jones as the Resident Representative of the United Nations Development Programme in Thimphu. Mrs. Naito-yuge is accompanied by her husband, who is a journalist. She was educated in the US, taking a Liberal Arts B.A. at Columbia University, and later an MA in Economics at New York University.

Mrs. Naito-yuge joined the UNDP as a Junior Professional Officer in Thailand in 1976. From 1979 to 83 she was Area Officer for the East Asia and Pacific Division in New York, and subsequently held posts in Japan and in Thailand again, where she was Assistant Resident Representative. Before her posting to Thimphu Mrs. Naito-yuge was Deputy Resident Representative in Indonesia. She expressed her delight at being posted to Bhutan, and sent her good wishes to the Bhutan Society of the United Kingdom.

## **BHUTAN TO COMPETE IN THE 1994 ASIAN GAMES**

Archery, Tai-Kwon-Do and Table Tennis will be the sports in which competitors from Bhutan will take part during the 1994 Asian Games in Hiroshima. The games, which will be held from 2nd to 16th October, are held every four years and this year will be just the second occasion on which Bhutan has participated. At the last games, in Beijing in 1990, the Bhutanese team competed only Archery. This year there will be three competitors in each of the three sports, Archery, Tai-Kwon-Do and Table Tennis, and they will be accompanied by three coaches and a chef-de-mission.

Dasho C.K. Chetri, Secretary of the Bhutan Olympic Committee. The majority of the competitors are High School Students, and this is in keeping with one of the aims of the Bhutan Olympic Committee, which is to promote sports and games among students and young people. The B.O.C. hopes gradually to make Bhutan's name well known in international sporting schemes. The Bhutan Olympic Committee has also sponsored the participation of handicapped students in the 1994 FESPIC Games mentioned elsewhere in this Newsletter. Thanks to the work of the B.O.C. the interest in a whole range of sports has grown rapidly in Bhutan, and Dasho Chetri commented that over the last two or three years there had been a significant increase in the number of girls participating in a variety of sports in School and National Tournaments.

## **English-Speaking Union presents Debating Trophy**



The Guildford Branch of the English Speaking Union has presented the Department of Education in Thimphu with a Trophy to be used for an Annual Inter-High School Debating Competition. Here, Michael Rutland, of the Guildford ESU Committee is seen handing the Trophy to the Director General of Education, Dasho Thinley Gyamtsho. One aim of the ESU is to encourage the teaching and learning of English, and it is hoped that this Trophy will be an encouragement in the development of oral English skills. High Schools in Bhutan already have active Debating activities, and the standard reached by many of the students is impressive. Eventually it might be possible to find sponsorship to invite a winning High School team from Bhutan to take part in a Debating Tour of some schools in the United Kingdom. If any members have contacts with ESU Branches or have ideas on this subject please get in touch with the Hon. Secretary. ■

## The Drukyl High School

In Spring this year the British High Commissioner to India, Sir Nicholas Fern, visited Bhutan to open the new Drukyl High School, built as part of the UK Overseas Development Administration's aid programme to Bhutan. The school, for both boys and girls, was built to replace the former Paro High School which was situated above Paro Dzong on a steep hillside that had over the last twenty years become progressively more unstable. The architecture of Drukyl High School reflects Bhutanese tradition both in the main school buildings and in the boarding houses, and its situation, fifteen kilometres north of Paro just below the ruins of Drukyl Dzong, is splendid. The Headmistress, Mrs Namgyi Om, studied in England and spoke at the Inaugural Meeting of the Bhutan Society two years ago.

Students in  
School  
uniform  
preparing  
to enter the  
School  
Assembly  
Hall for  
afternoon  
prayers



## VSO UPDATE

from Liz Pritchard, Field Director

On 26th August there were 11 volunteers in post in Bhutan, 4 of whom were recent arrivals. One more is expected in October, and one or two more in January 1995. We expect the total in February will be around 15 volunteers altogether, as two will be leaving in December 94. Seven of the volunteers are Primary School teachers who are posted in rural areas. They spend a year in the classroom before taking on the peripatetic role of Dzongkhag Resource Teacher. Other volunteers have a wide range of jobs ranging from engineering to stamp design. Whilst we expect our input into the education sector to continue to form the mainstay of our programme, we have recently been asked to provide accountants to help strengthen the financial management in Government

departments. One has just arrived to work in the Revenue and Customs Division, and two more are due to come in January. The possibility of providing Sports Coaches for the Bhutan Olympic Committee has also been discussed. Around half our volunteers are in rural settings, with five in Eastern Bhutan, one in Punakha and one in Wangdi Phodrang. The rest are Thimphu-based. After a reduction in numbers over the last two years, as you can see the trend is upwards again. While we do not envisage the programme reaching the size it was in the early 1990's, I think we can hope to see the programme build up to a stable size of around 15 volunteers in country at any one time over the next few years.

If you would like more details of the VSO Bhutan programme please contact VSO, 317, Putney Bridge Road, London, W15 2PN

## SANGA DORJI SAYS FAREWELL

*Sanga Dorji lost his sight in his early childhood through vitamin deficiency. He came to Britain in April 1989 from the Kaling School for the Blind in Eastern Bhutan. He returned to Thimphu in September 1994, and is now working as a Physiotherapist in the Department of Health. He has written this brief summary of his life in the United Kingdom.*

It was a great privilege and experience for me to be in the UK for the last five years. I had mixed feelings as the time approached for my return to Bhutan. It is a great relief and satisfaction to be able to complete something I wanted to do for a long time, but on the other hand I felt sad to leave all my good friends and exciting activities here. I am grateful to all my friends in the UK for their time and the kindnesses they have shown to me.

From April 1989 to July 1991 I studied at the Royal National Institute for the Blind's New College, Worcester, where I took (and passed) two Advanced Levels and three GCSE exams. I also learnt to swim, play cricket, ride a tandem and use a white cane! From October 91 to July 93 I studied at the North London School of Physiotherapy where I learnt a great deal of anatomy and physiology and had a taste of life in London. From September 93 to July 94 I studied at the Royal National College for the Blind in Hereford, where I continued my Physiotherapy course as well as taking a diploma in Reflexology and the ITEC in Remedial Therapy. I had a wonderful time in the peaceful and magnificent city of Hereford. All these places and activities I will look back upon with nostalgia and satisfaction, and would like to thank everyone who made my time interesting and successful. I want to mention a few names who helped me at a time when I was most needy - Miss Mollie Clark (of the Leprosy Mission Office in London), the Bowes Lyon family in Herefordshire, the Rev Bob Manthrop from New College, Worcester, Michael Ratford (Secretary of the Bhutan Society) and Miss Jane Hider (RNCB

Hereford). I have not forgotten all my other close friends and colleagues though I have not space to mention them all here.

My past life has been very challenging; my life at present is very interesting, and I look forward to a future which will be adventurous and useful. I feel that what I have learnt and achieved so far will be very useful on my return home. My desire is to be a good model and inspiration for my disabled fellow citizens in Bhutan. I hope to be able to help a great deal in the rehabilitation of the disabled, and I think a new hospital specially for rehabilitation is to be set up in the former Leprosy Hospital in Giddakom.

I would like to express my delight and gratitude to all the members of the Bhutan Society for their support of Bhutan, and I am very glad that one object of the newly set-up Bhutan Society Trust Fund will be to help disabled people in my country to become useful citizens.

I wish you all a very prosperous life - my thanks to you all and "Tashi Deleg".

Sanga Dorji

Sept 94

## DISABLED STUDENTS TAKE PART IN BEIJING GAMES

Three disabled Bhutanese athletes took part in the Far East and South Pacific Countries Games which were held in Beijing in early September. Accompanied by their escort teacher, Tshewang Razin, the athletes, 21 year old Pemba from Chukha with Kaling Blind School students 17 year old Pemsa Chogyal from Pernagatse, and 18 year old Pemsa Gyaltshen from Wangsong, will take part in the Shotput, the 100 metres, the broad jump and the triple jump events and the javelin. This is not the first time Bhutan has taken part in the FESPIC Games. In 1989 in Kobe, Japan, Bhutanese participants brought home four medals. Karang, now a partially blind teacher in Bumthang, won a Silver Medal in the Triple Jump and two Bronze Medals for shotput and javelin. Wangmo, a blind student, won a Bronze Medal in the 100 metres run.

### OFF TO BEIJING GAMES



Pemba, Pemsa Chogyal and Pemsa Gyaltshen, with their escort teacher Tshewang Razin (on the right)

## The first Bhutanese physiotherapist achieves long-cherished goal

By Karma Lingpa

The young man wearing a white medical jacket over his blue gaily striped traditional Bhutanese chukha pants, as the patient walks a hand of pain, the man quickly pulls it straight and speaks in his soft tones. The patient smiled, the physiotherapist who he explained, he read and the man's medical history from a file lying on the floor of the bed.

Later, the physiotherapist visits the laboratory and teaches a wheelchair man some daily breathing exercises. After this he attends to a woman whose complaint is a mild arthralgia in the legs. The patient now tells him it is time to go down stairs to the "other" ward. As he is led out into the corridor, however, a ward boy comes hurriedly up the stairs and tells him he has been called back to office.

"Office" is on the ground floor past the orthopaedic ward. Here, there is a strong smell of muscle ointment and several people are being carried head and leg exercises amid the sounds of cracking wheelchairs and benches. An old man is lying down on a bed with a tiny bright lamp lighting a big circle on his exposed back.

This is the physiotherapy unit of the National Hospital in Thimphu and the young man in the white coat is 29-year old Sanga Dorji, a recent graduate of the Post Graduate School of Physiotherapy, Brighton, United Kingdom.

He is the first Bhutanese physiotherapist. He is also blind.

Speaking in Khazung on his first day of work, on Monday, Sanga Dorji explained his choice of profession. "Anyone who needs my services is, it's a need, handicapped. While they will eventually recover and leave they are disabled for the time they are here. It makes me feel good that I can be of some help to others as well."

Sanga returned to the kingdom this month after five years of study in the British Isles where he picked up a near impeccable record in which he talks about himself. The cassette days before he lost his eyesight at the age of eight, becoming blind, however, meant a physiotherapy, the years in England, and his satisfaction as an ambitious fulfilled.

His earliest recollections are, at a five-year-old, of long, dreary days looking after the family cat while they searched for it in the woods near his home at Dorji, a day's walk away from the Thimphu town.

He also remembers making occasional forays with friends into a neighbour's maize field, playing archery, and often running home to the kitchen and give discipline of an apple. Almost every day for the next three years, he would head out into the forest with the best every morning without ever the promise to visit his best.

Then his eyes began to fail. The world became dimmer over the coming several months that his vision deteriorated. After about a year he was really blind then, as he was to learn later, a deficiency of Vitamin A.

"I don't think I was very worried or frightened when I first lost my sight," he reflects. "I was just young. I was my mother who was affected more... she cried a lot," Sanga recalls being handled

initially with great sympathy. "I was moved very carefully like a very sick person."

This, however, wore off gradually over the next two years that he was at home, able to do little else besides sit around the house.

Of this time he lived with his mother, his older brother and sister, and his own's daughter in whom fell his share of the household chores, his strongest motivation is a feeling of usefulness and inclusion. "For a time I was all right but, after a while, I got very restless and finally with every one else either busy with housework or in the fields the whole day."

Following an initial round of hospitalisation in Thimphu and Thimphu, the family's search for a better hospital, frustration and then anger. Although they did not intend to but him he was frequently at the receiving end of harsh words from other members of the family.

"They could not help themselves when they entered lived from a hard day's work in the fields," Sanga explained.

Eventually, it was decided that he would go to the Khaling School for the Blind where he would receive the proper care and attention. To Sanga, this was the most painful part of his young life, the separation from his mother who brought him up singlehanded after his father abandoned them at childhood, entering the familiar surroundings of home and the voices of his family. Life was miserable for the first few weeks of school.

"It was like being deaf, dumb and blind all at the same time," he recalls. "None of the others spoke either Manchuha or English, both of which I didn't understand then."

But gradually, he began to find someone in new friends and the school's activities kept him occupied. He developed a love for the radio and he was heard, for the first time, the word that would change the rest of his life physiotherapy.

Sanga had asked a Swedish teacher at the school about professions for blind people in Europe. Physiotherapy was mentioned, among a long list of others,

and it was the only one he would think about ever since.

Sanga began begging his teachers with such a persistent interest in the subject that they eventually got him to teach, through letters, with friends overseas who knew about the profession and, later, with physiotherapists.

Four years later, with the distinction of being the first blind student to sit for the Indian Certificate Secondary Examination (ICSE), Sanga Dorji was asked what he would like to do after his studies. "Physiotherapy," he said excitedly.

"That single-mindedness of purpose has been the strongest trait in his character, according to old friend in Thimphu. "He was always determined that it was not enough for a blind person to just study up close right at his ear and write for a meagre blind job, he wanted to break the stereotypes of the average blind person and set a precedent for others to follow."



Sanga Dorji treats one of his first patients.

others to follow."

His excitement surfaced again during the next two years, much of which he spent at the then newly established physiotherapy unit of the Thimphu Hospital.

Mr. Kalka Cui, a Bhutanese physiotherapist who works at the National Hospital, remembers Sanga's fervent interest in the work at the unit. "He always wanted to know what the symptoms of the different patients were, how they were treated and why. "He always had so many questions and showed a lot of interest."

Although he was working part-time as a telephone operator then, he would spend hours of his free time with the unit's staff listening to what the therapists said to the patients, speaking to them himself whenever opportunity, and generally trying to grasp as much as he could.

In the meantime he also pursued efforts for a study opportunity in the field and, after some months, landed himself a job at the unit as an assistant.

Many an evening he followed Mr. Cui home and also established a warm friendship with his family, especially his teenage son, Tenzin.

Soon he became a familiar figure to other staff of the hospital and helped to bridge the gap between the patients and the experienced physiotherapists who ran the unit.

Sanga's government was finally awarded in 1991 when the royal government was able to send him to the

UK.

Between September, 1992 and July, 1994, Sanga Dorji attended various courses at an institution in another city, Hoveford, then, at the Royal National College for the Blind, he pursued higher studies in physiotherapy and also acquired a diploma in counselling and added medical therapy to his other studies.

His endeavours completed, he set for the final examination which he successfully passed and obtained. Five years after his entry into the world of physiotherapy he passed with a certificate of "credit" from the Brighton school.

As he joins work this week, Sanga Dorji's message to other handicapped people in the country is "never give up and keep hoping, even when the times seem hard."

"The most difficult thing about being blind?"

"I see difficulties as being relative... different people see it different ways," he explains. "The difficulty of you should see much as problems, even a minor irritation is a difficulty and, if you look at it to the right perspective, it may turn out to be nothing really."

But even as he takes up the job that has been the substance of his long field dream, the challenges for Sanga are not just over. In a profession that literally calls for "hands on" involvement, how will patients react to a blind physiotherapist?

"With some hesitation," says one young and professionally "new" official who has considered visiting the unit for a back ailment. "Despite its acceptance that one has to be forward looking and open, I would still need to see for myself how effective he is before I feel completely at ease."

But as a disabled student, and then a professional, Sanga Dorji has been facing and overcoming such scepticism of his life.

"I realize that such feelings are only natural at this stage," he says. "But I have gained my academic qualifications only on merit... And of course people don't have to take my word for it. In the end it's hard to be my work that should prove itself."

## Six top teams move into quarter finals of Gold Cup

In a quarter final of the Super Dorji Wangchuck Memorial Gold Cup, six teams remain from the total of 16 which entered the tournament on 18th September.

Dhawal BCCL (Bihar) will play against Dhawal Prithvi on Friday night at 7.30 pm.

Mithun, New Phonsom, Dhawal United and Army team, tomorrow, at 7.30 pm, also in the quarter final. Tomorrow's match between Sikkim and Inara, for the first time in the tournament, a net will be given to a player. It is expected that a controversial goal which Sikkim scored minutes before the final bell, in front of Inara players, tried to pick up with the referee, when the net was raised.

The game turned rough in the second half, with the young Sikkim being no match against the more mature players. For Inara it was no problem with two goals scored in the half. Sikkim's goal disappointed as a handball. Sikkim's goal improved with the crowd's support but they barely broke through

Inara's sturdy defence. Despite 10 players, Inara scored a third goal, winning the semi-finals of the tournament.

The player gives the net used in an experimentally suspended to the new game, said the national coach. Phonsom defeated New Mal Jorjigin, 3-1, in an exciting game which turned out to be the second half after the New Mal goalkeeper was hit while diving to save a set goal. Phonsom managed a first six into their third goal a few minutes later but the keeper, assuming that he was not ready, worked off the field. The game turned rough even after the referee waved the yellow card twice.

Dhawal college defeated Dhawal (Bihar) 2-0 in the match that followed same as a job for many spectators who expected the college to win. Dhawal played the most powerful players against Sikkim's energetic performance. Sikkim missed its first chance to score in the opening minutes when the college netter was a close half over the post. This would have changed the direction of the game, opened football ex-

posed, Dhawal's keeper, who belongs to the lower level National team saved a close call, finally grabbing the ball to end all before the referee could consent it to be the first ball.

Dhawal scored its first goal just before the half time.

As soon as the second half began, Dhawal scored their second goal after the first attempt was deflected by the goalkeeper. The Dhawal striker attempted to before the keeper could get into position, but it made the collision what was harder. The sides were, however, against the collision who missed several chances to equalise.

A selected three were knocked out Deyingling, 2-0, in a tough game that was dominated by net on September 11. Inara displayed superb passing and half control which Deyingling tried to break by playing a random game.

Inara scored their third goal in the next five, keeping the Deyingling goal under heavy pressure. The first goal came in from an Inara defender who took the keeper unaware from outside the six,

Inara's decisive second goal, in the remaining half, disposed the crowd. A shot that slipped the Deyingling keeper's grip was headed in by a striker.

The Sikkim team, with a largely supportive crowd, landed one Sahel Sporting of Calcutta, 1-0, on Tuesday, September 13. The only goal of the match came in the second half when Sikkim managed a corner kick to a winning goal. A long shot from over the half took the keeper unaware, Calcutta, for the rest of the time, defended the goal while Sikkim continued to take long shots in the Calcutta goal.

Salon club of Calcutta defeated Thimphu Deyingling last Sunday, 1-0, in a disappointing game. The retired coach attributed this weakness to the lack of exposure. Salon noted their winning goal when the rebound of the first shot was converted by a Salon striker, while the keeper still on the ground.

In the opening match of the Gold Cup, which took the entire first half to pick up, Deyingling knocked out Coach Bihar, 2-1, on September 15.

## BAMBOOS OF BHUTAN

AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE

Chris Stapleton



Illustrations of the genera and species, with notes on identification, distribution, utilization, and propagation

"Bamboos of Bhutan" includes chapters on Identifying Bamboos, Methods of Propagation, Key to Genera, Illustrated descriptions with keys to species, a Checklist of species with authorities and synonyms, a Glossary and a Bibliography. It is published by the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, (from where it can be purchased) for the Overseas Development Administration Forestry Research Programme based at Oxford University.

ISBN 0 947643 67 2

### UK ROTARY CLUBS SUPPORT BHUTAN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

In what is perhaps the first involvement of the Rotary organisation in Bhutan, the Rotary Club of Ripley and Scud, and the Rotary Club of Guildford, have each donated £75 for each of three years to help less well-off students in Bhutan's High Schools buy school uniforms, books and stationery. The students are selected by a small committee in Bhutan consisting of Karma Ura (who studied at Oxford University), Kesang Wangchuk (who studied Computer Operating in England), and Tshewang Tandin, Headmaster of Yangchonglug High School. Members of the Bhutan Society who have contacts with Rotary Clubs may wish to have further details, obtainable from the Hon Secretary of the Bhutan Society.

### Smoke Emission Tests to begin in Thimphu

A new exhaust smoke emission test will shortly be added to the vehicle fitness test in Bhutan. These tests will be initiated by the National Environment Commission, whose Chairman is the Minister of Planning, Lyompo Chenkyab Dorji. An NEC spokesman said that the main aim initially is to collect baseline data so that an appropriate pollution standard can be set for vehicle emission. Thimphu has been chosen for the first tests because of the concentration of vehicles there compared with the rest of the country. The NEC said that although the level of vehicle pollution is not hazardously high, it did not hurt to take precautions to prevent a problem arising in the future.

### TRAFFIC LIGHTS GO OUT ALL OVER THIMPHU!

In the last issue of the Bhutan Society Newsletter it was reported that at last Traffic Lights had come to Thimphu. They did not last very long! Within days they had been deemed unnecessary and were removed. The traffic police are back in their shelters directing the vehicles with the well-known graceful white-gloved hand waves.

### Visiting Bhutan?

Members of the Bhutan Society or their friends who are thinking of visiting Bhutan on holiday are invited to contact the Hon Secretary of the Bhutan Society.

### Bhutan Societies in Europe

The Bhutan Society of the United Kingdom is one of the largest of a number of similar groups in Europe. Addresses and contact names are given here:

**GERMANY:** Bhutan-Himalaya-Club e.V., c/o Herr Fritz Hermanns, Schaalenstrasse 7, Köln, 506756 Germany (Tel:0221 2439516)

**HOLLAND:** Friends of Bhutan, PO Box 31, 7650 AA Tubbergen, Holland. (Mr Herb Scholten)

**FRANCE:** Les Amis de Bhutan, c/o Ms Francois Pennaerret, CNRS, 189 Avenue du Club Hippique, 13084 Aix-en-Provence, France (Tel: 33 42 95 16 55)

**DENMARK:** Hans-Christian Kose Poulsen, Vennekabsforeningen Danmark-Bhutan, Christianshavns Voldgade 59, 2tv., 1424 Copenhagen K, Denmark.

If any member knows of others please get in touch with the Hon Secretary.

## Immunization in Bhutan: a success in public health.

by Dr Paul Jakeman

*Dr Paul Jakeman and his wife Niki served in Bhutan for nearly 14 years with The Leprosy Mission. Paul was District Medical Officer of Lhuntsi Dzongkhag and in charge of Lhuntsi Hospital for 8 years, overseeing the introduction of MDT and the subsequent fall in the number of leprosy cases. They were also closely involved in immunization activities. They later moved to Thimphu, where they ran a regional office for TLM, while Paul also assisted the Public Health Division as Coordinator of the National Leprosy Control Programme. Paul now heads TLM's Evaluation Unit, based in Singapore.*

### INTRODUCTION

Among the many remarkable strides taken by Bhutan along the road towards development, perhaps the most noteworthy was the achievement of "Universal Child Immunization" in 1991. This designation, awarded by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and Unicef after a nationwide survey of immunization coverage, was an official accolade on one of Bhutan's most clearly successful programmes. To put the achievement into context, however, it may be helpful to review the role of immunization world-wide.



Immunization is proving itself a vital tool in the preventative care of children in the "Third World", especially by controlling the six killer diseases included in the WHO Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI). Immunization needs to be a matter of public health rather than simply of personal choice, as good coverage is needed to establish the "herd immunity" that prevents the re-establishment of the germ within the community.

WHO set a goal for the achievement of "Universal Child Immunization" (UCI) by 1990, as reductions in the suffering and deaths caused by these diseases - measles, poliomyelitis, whooping cough, diphtheria, tetanus and tuberculosis - would be a major step on the road to "Health for All by the year 2000". That this has not yet been achieved in many countries is not very surprising, given the low level of resources available to health services, and the large populations to be reached.

### IMMUNISATION IN BHUTAN

In Bhutan, however, immunization has made considerable progress. The immunization programme has been a cornerstone of the public health policy of the country since 1979, when EPI was first launched in Bhutan. By 1988, the whole country was covered by EPI. By this time the programme was fully integrated into the routine health services. WHO has been instrumental in guiding this programme, through technical advice and regular review, and has also provided funding. Other funding agencies, notably Unicef, have given support, and several non-governmental organisations working in the field of health (The Leprosy Mission, the Norwegian Santal Mission, Helvetas, and SCF-USA) have also cooperated. However, the programme has been indigenously managed and staffed throughout.

The current vaccination schedule has developed in line with current WHO recommendations, and at present children receive BCG (against TB) at birth, three doses of oral polio drops and three doses of DPT ("triple antigen") monthly from 6 weeks, and the single-dose measles vaccine at 9 months. Pregnant women receive immunization against

tetanus (to protect the new-born from infection at birth) twice in their first pregnancy and once in subsequent ones. All childhood vaccinations should be received before the first birthday.

The Royal Government originally provided EPI services only from hospital clinics, but then organised a mobile EPI team to take immunizations to the rural people. As Basic Health Units (BHUs) were set up and staffed, the EPI team gradually handed over their responsibilities, the staff being retrained as technicians and managers dealing with the necessary supplies and equipment. However, even transfer of services to BBU level was inadequate to attain full coverage.

Sub-post clinics, manned by the staff of the BHUs and hospitals, were therefore started to increase the accessibility of services, and are held in village homes, purpose-built huts, schools, or even the open air. It is clearly better for a few health workers to travel the long distances involved rather than for all the mothers and children to have to do so. Each BBU now has an average of three outreach clinics every month, often held on the regular Buddhist holy days, when people do not undertake



agricultural work and so are free to attend. Sub-post clinics have proved very successful, and are a major factor in the high degree of access to immunization achieved by the EPI programme.

Despite the greatly improved access, immunization coverage was not good when calculated using the official population of Bhutan as the denominator. It was therefore decided that a sample survey was the only practical way of obtaining reasonable data on the true situation. The 1988 survey produced impressive results, but some shortcomings were identified. An intensification of the programme followed, and the survey was repeated in 1991.

#### THE "THIRTY-CLUSTER SAMPLE SURVEY"

The method used (recommended by WHO) was to check the immunization status of 30 different "clusters" of seven children each, chosen randomly from all over the country. Only children of 12-23 months were eligible, as the intention was to survey the status of those who had been "under-15" in 1990.

Some of the cluster starting points were very remote. As the survey had to be completed within a limited period, individual transport had to be arranged for each team, itself a major feat for a country with limited resources. On the day the teams set out, the Directorate of Health Services took on the appearance of the starting line of a motor rally. The survey teams took from one to ten days to reach the target area, complete the survey, and return to Thimphu. One team had to visit as many as 109 houses in order to find seven children of the eligible age.

The results showed a gratifying, and statistically significant, increase in the immunization coverage over the three year period. Each vaccine, and dose of vaccine, was more completely delivered than three years earlier, and far fewer children failed to complete their immunization courses. The retention of the immunization card (the "Road to Health" card, issued to each child) also improved. This followed the decision of the National Assembly to require completed personal vaccine records before primary school entry, though this has also provided the unscrupulous with a motive for falsifying the card which did not previously exist.

#### "UNIVERSAL CHILD IMMUNIZATION"

The 1991 survey revealed an 84% coverage at one year of age, sufficiently close to the 85% target for WHO and UNICEF to sponsor the declaration of Universal Child Immunization. Overall, a coverage of 95% was achieved. Perhaps the most important result, however, was the 100% coverage with BCG and DPT1, as this represented (within the limitations of the survey method) complete

access of the population to immunization services. This has been achieved by the stress on sub-post clinics, and by the training of health staff to undertake these as a routine part of their work. This result may be of wider usefulness as the strategy can be broadened to include other aspects of health care delivery, such as chronic disease control, and ancillary care.

The knowledge and skill of the staff had also increased. There was a decline in the proportion of invalid vaccine doses and missed doses which shows that the immunization schedule was understood, and adhered to. There were also fewer children whose dose of BCG did not "take"; this suggests that technical aspects of the programme had improved, whether in immunization technique, or in cold-chain management (keeping the vaccine cold all the way from the factory to the clinic site) or both. Encouragingly, a sharp decline in cases of measles and whooping cough has been noted over the past few years to confirm the survey findings. These two diseases used to be common, and were often fatal or debilitating, so this decline is very significant.

The greatest challenge to the immunization programme in Bhutan will be to maintain the achievement in the coming years. The efforts of programme personnel will need to be kept up, now that the goal of UCI has been achieved, so that the programme does not "run out of steam"; the establishment of sub-post clinics as a routine part of health activities will assist in this, as will the discipline and commitment of the staff. Political will must also be maintained, or the programme will inevitably flounder.

#### CONCLUSION

This survey confirmed that the immunization programme in Bhutan has done well. The findings will outlive the short-term achievement of UCI, as they demonstrate the effectiveness of the current health delivery system through BHCUs and sub-post clinics. The Health Services have shown that, despite the small size of the country and its limited resources, a public health programme can be run effectively with results that would be the envy of many more developed countries. However, the sustainability of the programme will be more difficult to achieve, and will need strong political will, continuing commitment by health staff, and the on-going provision of some external funding. The excellent results of this survey should provide the incentive to maintain the effectiveness of the Bhutan EPI programme.

## New Members of the Bhutan Society

The following new members have joined the Bhutan Society since the last Newsletter. (B) indicates Bhutanese student:

Mr Stephen Pullom	Waltham Cross
Catherine Keerick	London
Mr Chris Chadwell	Slough
Mr Matthew Housman	Glasgow
Mrs Karoo Gill	London
Miss R.M.Pratt	Buckingham
Mrs Karen Harding	Hitchin
Mrs Christine Heys	East Molesey
Linda McDowell	London
Victoria Wilmet	Guildford
Hong Lim Mann	Dover
Jane Hider	Hereford
Miss Amanda Brighton	London
Mrs Penelope Manton	Haslemere
Miss Freda Ferne	Bradford on Avon
Mr F.E.B. Witts	Cheltenham
Maybe Jehu	London
Frau Marion Haas	Manich
Mrs Mary Caroe	Godalming
Mrs J Isaacs	Godalming
Mrs Tessa Hawkes	Suffron Walden
Dr P.D Roberts	Jordans, Bucks
Mr Jigme Drakpa (B)	Rastland, Norway
Mrs Sangay Zangmo (B)	London
Miss Karma Chuzom (B)	Glasgow
Mr Dorji Gyaltshen (B)	Reading
Miss Deki Pemba (B)	Wye, Kent
Mr John Ross	Fife

## All Tickets Sold for Annual Buffet Dinner

The Hon. Secretary regrets that all tickets have now been taken for the Annual Buffet Dinner at the House of Lords, London, on November 11th.

## Sports in Bhutan to feature on Channel 4

Bhutan Society member Sophia Swire is visiting Bhutan later this month to make a short programme about Archery and other sports in Bhutan. The feature will appear in the Channel 4 Programme "Transworld Sports" on either Saturday 12th November or Saturday 19th November.

## Annual General Meeting of the Bhutan Society

Last year the Annual General Meeting of the Bhutan Society was held before the Annual Dinner on 11th November. At the suggestion of the Hon. Auditor, the Annual General Meeting will in future be re-located in the early part of each calendar year. This will fit more appropriately with the financial year of the Society, which runs from 1st January to 31st December, and it will allow the AGM to approve the Society's audited accounts soon after the end of each financial year, rather than eleven months later. Accordingly the next AGM will be held in February. We hope a large number of members will be able to attend, and we shall follow the AGM with a function or a lecture. More details shortly!

### THE BHUTAN SOCIETY OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

PRESIDENT: LORD WILSON OF TELLFORD GCMB

VICE-PRESIDENT: JOHN GOELDT

CHAIRMAN: JERON BOWEN LTON

HON. TREASURER: MICHAEL JAWORSKI

VICE-CHAIRMAN & HON. SECRETARY: MICHAEL BUTLAND

#### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Michael Bowland, Lady Pook-Cory, Judge Cook, James Chubb,  
Peter Leffing, Christian Oudgoren, Sharmila Ghosh, Helen Cox

The Bhutan Society of the United Kingdom was founded on 16th October 1992 in response to the growing connections between the two countries. The Society held its Inaugural Meeting in London on Bhutan National Day, December 17th 1992.

The Aims of the Bhutan Society are:

- to encourage and promote knowledge and understanding of the Kingdom of Bhutan, its history and its culture
- to encourage cultural and educational links between the peoples of the Kingdom of Bhutan and the United Kingdom
- to act as a link between all people, particularly those in the United Kingdom, who are interested in or who have connections with the Kingdom of Bhutan
- to promote and foster good relations between the peoples of the Kingdom of Bhutan and the United Kingdom.

The Bhutan Society runs a varied programme of lectures and social functions during the year, and produces a Newsletter three times per year.

### IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO JOIN THE BHUTAN SOCIETY

(Or If You Would Like Further Information About The Society Or About Bhutan)

WRITE TO: THE HON. SECRETARY, FRIARY FLDG, DRUMMOND ROAD GUILDFORD, SURREY, GU1 4NF  
TEL and FAX: 0483 58189