

# THE BHUTAN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



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PRESIDENT: SIR SIMON BOWES LYON

AUTUMN 2020



***On the auspicious occasion of the Birth Anniversary of Guru Rinpoche (Trelde Tsechu), on June 30th 2020, the Second son to His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen has been named Jigme Ugyen Wangchuck. His Royal Highness, born on March 19th 2020, will be referred to as Gyalsey Ugyen Wangchuck. It is a highly auspicious name for The Second Royal Child as Ugyen Wangchuck was also the name of His Majesty The First King of Bhutan, Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck.***

## ***SOCIETY UPDATE***

None of us has experienced before now the constraints and challenges of a pandemic and the past six months have made many new demands on all of us. As you know, the Society had to cancel or postpone all its forthcoming events for this year and we are still not sure when our first get together will be next year, although we have some really interesting topics lined up. However quite a lot has been happening during this time.

***The AGM - The new date is 6.00 pm on 17th November 2020 (by Zoom). Further details to enable members to join online will be circulated by e-mail ( including links to the agenda, accounts and 2019 AGM minutes). Any questions or matters arising please contact David Glazebrook by November 7th. After the formal business of the AGM, there will be an update from Bhutan by Michael Rutland OBE, the UK's Honorary Consul in Bhutan, and Vice President of the Society.***

Work on updating the web site is under way - read more on Page 2. Can you please let Rosie Glazebrook, our Membership Secretary, know your latest e-mail address as many of the updates on the web site etc will be circulated via e-mail as well as for the additional AGM information.

We are still looking for photographs to add to the web site, so if you have any that you are willing to share, free of copyright of course, then please forward copies of them also to Rosie Glazebrook . We would prefer your photos to be of the more curious, interesting and unusual aspects of life in Bhutan, especially from places less visited.

Sadly we will miss our Annual Dinner this year, but if you fancy a DIY event at home, we have included some menu and recipe ideas on Pages 6 and 7 that would be appropriate for the occasion! Whether or not you choose to have your celebratory dinner on the National Day of Bhutan – December 17th - please do send us photos of the occasion and the dishes you prepare and we can share them in the next issue. For those who enjoy quizzes, we have created one specially to test your knowledge of Bhutan. The quiz is on Page 3 and I am sure you will be pleased to know that you don't have to wait for the next issue to obtain the answers as they are on the last Page!

# SOCIETY NEWS

## ***Helping our Bhutanese visitors***

When Dee Cano joined the Committee as the Student Liaison Officer in the Spring, none of us anticipated what an important and busy role she would be playing in the life of the Bhutanese students and ex-students now living and working in the UK, during the past six months.

The **WhatsApp** Group she set up for them last autumn proved to be a very popular facility. It was a timely means for them to stay in touch and to establish a forum to support each other. It also provided a means of sharing information when everything was changing so fast during the earlier months of the pandemic. The Group includes some thirty six students who are located in many centres including Cardiff, Leeds, Oxford, Brighton, Reading and Edinburgh. Some decided to stay in the UK and will continue their studies once Universities have new arrangements in place. Fourteen students returned to Bhutan and most are able to continue locally with preparing their work to complete their Master's degree. They will return to the UK as and when they can, but possibly not until January.

The four Chevening Scholars, who will be undertaking one year Master's Degree Courses, have arrived in the UK and are keen to find out as much as possible before they commence their studies.

Also belonging to the Group are those former students now working around the UK, currently around ten, some on their own, others with their families. Most have little contact with other Bhutanese in the UK other than through the Society and this **WhatsApp**. Areas of work and study topics are as diverse as their academic locations and include, among others, Dentistry, Law, Banking, Agriculture, International Business, Aeronautical Engineering, Film Making, Teaching, IT and Medicine.

The level of support wanted varies. Some are seeking very practical and topical information e.g. during the early stages many asked for help in obtaining updates on the ever changing restrictions, flight availabilities to India and Bhutan and even where they could obtain a certificate to fly. Others appreciated some more on-going practical and emotional support as they faced the more personal challenges of being a long way from home in difficult circumstances and with little support being accessible to them from Academic Institutes, families and others in Bhutan.

Dee keeps in touch with them all on a regular basis – sometimes it's a text, sometimes a phone call and on some occasions, meeting students for a chat and a pizza – all socially distanced of course! It is also good to hear that they are all so appreciative of being part of the **WhatsApp** Group and of the support available from Dee. In turn she says her Dzongkha is improving rapidly!

## ***Web site News***

*Work on updating the Society's web site continues with many new links being added. Highlights include:*

- *A 20 min recording of an interview with Gordon Temple (1927-2004) about his life long association with Bhutan from his early years as a Gurka Officer to his later work with UNICEF.*
- *Video messages from two Bhutanese who recently studied in the UK*
  - *Dr Gaki Nima, studied at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and is now working in Thimphu and closely involved with corona virus-related work.*
  - *Pema Wangchug, a Chevening Scholar in 2019/20, has now returned to Bhutan to work at Druk Holding and Investments Ltd.*
- *An intriguing follow up to the talk about the Yeti given by Steve Berry at a Society meeting a couple of years ago. This article, by Bhutanese writer Tshering Tashi, explores why Bhutanese believe it exists.*
- *A special interview with Dasho Benji Dorji specially recorded for the Bhutan Society.*
- *Look out for more new items in the Autumn - including, after the AGM, a talk by Michael Rutland OBE on "Recent Developments in Bhutan".*

# HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW BHUTAN?

*Quizzes have become even more popular during the past few months, so what better opportunity to test your knowledge about Bhutan, its history, culture and special events. All the questions are based on news stories and on articles in our Newsletters. So even if you know the answer, you may find more information in previous Newsletters also listed on the last Page.*

1. Where are the 5,000 plant specimens collected by George Sheriff during his expeditions to Bhutan in the 1930's deposited and on display?
2. How is the "WeChat" phone app used by villagers in rural Bhutan?  
a) To play music together      b) To find missing yaks      c) To sell local produce
3. What is considered to be the most challenging trek in Bhutan?
4. When were green number plates introduced for "green" cars?
5. When did Bhutan first participate in the Olympic Games and in which sport?
6. When was the national flag created and what colour was the dragon?
7. What gift was presented to the Society on its 10th anniversary by the then Crown Prince?
8. Match the events below with one of these dates:  
*2004; 2008; 2012; 2015; 2016*  
a) The visit of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge to Bhutan  
b) The appointment of Michael Rutland OBE as Bhutan's first Hon. Consul to the UK  
c) The establishment of the constitutional monarchy in Bhutan  
d) When Bhutan set the Guinness World Record for "Most trees planted in one hour"  
e) The 17th century Wangduephodrang Dzong was destroyed by fire
9. When was the term "Gross National Happiness" conceived and by whom and why?
10. Where is the 169 ft bronze and gold statue of Buddha located?
11. List these six high road passes in Bhutan in order from West to East:  
(a) Chele-La (b) Pele-La (c) Kori-La (d) Tumsi-La (e) Dochu-La (f) Yotang-La.
12. What is the name for the traditional dances at Tsechu festivals?
13. What are the national symbols of Bhutan?  
a) Cedar or cypress tree  
b) White rhododendron or blue poppy  
c) Takin or snow leopard  
d) Rook or raven
14. What was the local name for runners who delivered official letters and where is the story of their service on display?
15. Bhutan has the highest average elevation in the world. Is it:  
a) 2161 m      b) 2988 m      c) 3280 m
16. What is a "Belo" and what is a "Zum"?
17. When did Druk Air fly a collection of live animals in the passenger cabin on a charter flight from London to Paro via Frankfurt and Bangkok? What were the animals?
18. Name the states and region that surround Bhutan
19. What are a "lingm", a "chiwang" and a "dramnyen" ?
20. What is the name of the traditional boots worn in Bhutan?

**Scoring:**                      *With one point for each answer or part answer, the maximum score is 38*  
*Up to 15                      A good start*  
*From 15 - 30                You must enjoy reading the Newsletter*  
*Above 30                    Excellent, you can help write the next quiz!*



## Construction of the tallest Chorten

Measuring an impressive 42 metres tall, the gigantic Du-dhuel Namgyel Chorten, currently under construction at Ura Gewog in Bumthang, will become the tallest Chorten in the country once construction works are completed. About 24 metres in width, it is also set to become the largest Namgyel Chorten ever built in the country serving as a massive landmark on the East-West primary national highway.



Sitting at the edge of Ura valley, the huge monument, which has been under construction since 2015, is gradually taking shape. About eighty per cent of the structural works have been completed. The construction began as a community initiative by the people of Ura Dozhi, a cluster of four villages in Ura, in 2015 as a tribute to the 60th Birthday of His Majesty the Fourth King. Many lamas have been supporting the people of Ura on the construction of the Chorten. With challenging weather conditions and lack of manpower, progress has been slow. Another challenge has been finding funds and donors to support the sculpting of the 100,000 Guru Dorji Drolo clay statues and the 200,000 clay sculptures (Tshatshas), as its main relics. The statue-making project alone will cost about Nu 5 M. and only about half have been completed so far. Transporting the clay from Shingkar,

some 15 kilometers away, is difficult as only tractors can manage the poor road conditions. Raising funds and finding donors has also proven difficult. However if the works go on uninterrupted, it is expected that all the structural works of the Chorten will be completed by the end of next year.

## The changing role of women

**The role of Bhutanese women in the community has changed in many ways over the years. More and more women are now becoming independent, competitive and innovative.**

One example is in the world of tailoring, once considered to be man's profession. It is now gradually attracting women as well. For example, more than half of the tailoring shops in Gelegphu town are now run by women. Today, almost every tailor shop in the town has at least two to three female employees.

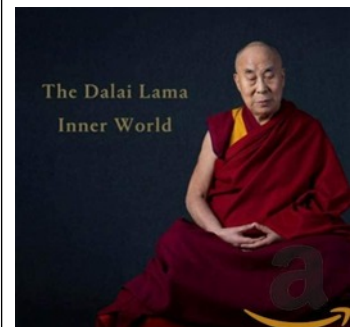
Another area seeing many changes is the police force. In 2000, when Karma Rigzin decided to join the police force after graduation, her parents were upset as such a tough job was considered only suitable for men. After graduating in Political Science from Delhi University, she joined the Bhutan Police Force and in 2006 started their women and child protection unit.



In the beginning, she found communicating with the management difficult, but times were changing. She said, "When you are a woman officer, it is hard to get your messages across, but you have to prove yourself. The workload is also very heavy." Today Karma Rigzin is among the three senior women lieutenant colonels in the country. Recently, the US State Department recognised Karma Rigzin for her relentless effort in combating trafficking in Bhutan. Her parents and her

10-year-old daughter could not be more proud.

## Inner World



This is an album of mantras and teachings, focused on bringing peace and compassion to the world, recited by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and set to music.

**It is now available at <https://www.dalailamainnerworld.com/music>.**

Net proceeds from sales will support SEE Learning and the Mind & Life Institute

# KINGDOM OF BHUTAN



## "Sing me a song"

As the Internet arrived in Bhutan, documentary maker Thomas Balmès was there to witness its transformative impact on a young Buddhist monk whose initial trepidation gave way to a strong engagement with technology.

When filming there 10 years ago, he focused at the start of the film on a seven-year-old Buddhist, named Peyangki, who lived in a monastery near Laya. Peyangki confides to the camera his hopes and fears about the arrival of electricity. The film then skips to the present. Peyangki, now 17, and still at the monastery, but now awakened by the alarm of his constant tool, a smart phone, which is with him every minute of the day, even during prayers. The film follows Peyangki in his rural monastery as he

forms, via WeChat, a virtual relationship with a bar-room singer named Ugyen who lives in Thimphu. She sings him love songs while he saves money from collecting mushrooms to go and visit her. We watch their long-distance relationship evolve from both sides. As with all Internet dating, there are obfuscations and false projections about the future. It comes as no surprise that Ugyen's online persona is a somewhat selective edit of reality, leaving out the information that she has a child, and is planning to go to work in Kuwait, an opportunity far more lucrative than her current job singing to male bar-goers. When they meet, the task of communicating in person overwhelms Peyangki, and the stress of his insufficient emotional tools is compounded by the noise and clamour of city life. The familiar world of the monastery pushes him to return. "I'm too far from Buddha now," he tells a friend, as he wavers in indecision. The film suggests that networked life and traditional spirituality are innately incompatible, and may never be reconciled. With beautiful cinematography, Balmès, with nuance, humour and humanity, helps us to witness the effects of technology in a country that kept it at bay for so long and gives us a fresh perspective on what it might mean to our own lives.

**The film was premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in September 2019.**

## Changing food supplies and habits

A group from Sakteng opened a highland dairy products shop in Thimphu in July which is doing well. The shop is run by five men - three university graduates and two tourist drivers. They have bought around 3,300kg of fermented cheese and 2,100kg of butter from their locality at a time when pandemic related border closures restricted sales elsewhere. They market their products through a Facebook page and currently provide a door-to-door service within the Thimphu area. The group is looking to collect dairy products from other communities and have already bought supplies from Haa, Gasa, Wangdue and Merak. When they have better transport and cold store facilities, they hope to distribute their products in all the dzongkhags. Three months ago, another group of eight tourist guides ventured into organic farming and they are already harvesting their hard work and supplying vegetables such as peas, beans, carrots and radishes to tourism projects in Taktsang and to the quarantine centres in Paro. To broaden their income base, this group plans to grow winter crops and medicinal plants.

There is an increasing emphasis on healthy eating in Bhutan. Not long before the lockdown, the Prime Minister's Office



initiated a "Healthy Drukyl" campaign. It could not pick up pace because of the pandemic but with the increasing demand for vegetables, especially greens and for fresh dairy products, the campaign is on the right track. The advice has been to cut down on carbohydrates and increase intake of green vegetables. The importance of including these products in the diet has been promoted and young children, adults and even elders are encouraged to change their eating habits. Agriculture is still the biggest employment sector in Bhutan and even with recent border restrictions, vegetables have not been imported for some time. Perhaps with the many new farming initiatives developing all over the country in the past few months, self-sufficiency, which has been a long held objective, is closer to becoming a reality for Bhutan.

However, real sustainability will only happen when farmers are encouraged to develop long term initiatives and visions. The recent visit by the King to a commercial farm in Bumthang, a farm that hopes to set a trend towards food self-sufficiency in Bhutan, is a significant step in that direction.

# A TASTE OF BHUTAN

**Many of you will have your favourite recipes for the more traditional dishes of Bhutan. Here are some shared with friends over the years that could be part of your menu for a celebratory Bhutanese meal. The amount of heat and spices can be adjusted to your taste and all the ingredients should be easily available - so go ahead and enjoy!**

## Momos

### Ingredients (Serves 4)

120g/4oz plain flour; 2 tsp vegetable oil; Pinch of salt  
2-3 Tbsp of water  
1 medium carrot - finely chopped  
120g/4oz cabbage - finely chopped  
120g/4oz sweet pepper - chopped  
2 spring onions - finely chopped  
3 cloves garlic - finely chopped  
1.5 tsp soya sauce; 1/2 tsp black pepper



### Method

- In a bowl mix flour, a little salt and oil and add water to make a firm dough. Cover and set aside for 30 minutes.
- Heat remaining oil in a non-stick pan, add garlic and sauté for a few seconds.
- Add onions and sauté for a further 10-15 seconds. Add the carrot, cabbage and sweet pepper, stir and sauté for a further 3- 4 minutes on a medium heat.
- Add a little more salt, black pepper, soya sauce and chopped spring onions to the mix and fry for another 2-3 minutes. Turn off the heat.
- Divide dough into twelve equal pieces and make a ball of each.
- Place each dough ball on a dusted board and roll each one into a thin circle of 2 - 3 inches in diameter.
- Try to make the edges thin and the centres thicker. Add a heaped Tbsp of vegetable mixture into the centre of each.
- Then lift one side of the edge and start pleating by folding each one by one. When the pleats are formed on each, join them up at the centre.
- Continue preparing them all the same way and cover the completed momos under a moist cloth.
- Heat the water in a steamer to boiling point. Place momos on the steamer plate, cover, and let them cook for 5- 6 minutes. When steamed properly, they look transparent and don't feel sticky.
- Serve with your favourite chutney.

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## Spicy Chicken Stew – Jasha Maroo

### Ingredients (Serves 4)

1.5 lb boneless skinless chicken thighs, cut into 1" cubes  
4 cloves of garlic -peeled and finely chopped  
3 onions - peeled and chopped  
2 Tbsp grated ginger  
1 leek - cut into thin slices; 1 large tomato - diced  
4 red chillies (seeded if you prefer) and cut finely  
500 ml chicken stock  
2 Tbsp of vegetable oil  
Small bunch of coriander leaves for garnish



### Method

- Preheat a shallow pan with lid and add the oil. Add the garlic, ginger, onion, chilli and leek.
- Stir-fry until vegetables are soft.
- Add the chicken pieces and tomato and continue to cook until the chicken has started to colour.
- Pour in the chicken stock, cover with the lid and bring to the boil then simmer gently until the chicken is cooked (about 20 mins)
- Garnish stew with chopped coriander leaves and serve with a bowl of steamed red rice.



# A TASTE OF BHUTAN

## ***Ema Datsi***

### ***Ingredients (Serves 4)***

8 green/red chillies  
1 onion - diced; 1 tomato - sliced  
5-6 cloves of garlic - chopped  
3 Tbsp vegetable oil  
4 oz cheese - grated  
Salt to taste  
200ml of vegetable stock/water



### ***Method***

- Cut the chillies into quarters lengthwise and transfer to a skillet with a lid.
- Add the onion, tomato and garlic to the chillies.
- Add the stock/water, oil, salt and cheese on top. Cover and simmer for 3-5 minutes on moderate heat.
- Turn off the heat and leave the mixture to finish cooking for 1-2 minutes.
- Stir carefully and adjust seasoning as needed.
- Serve with a bowl of steamed red rice

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## ***Buckwheat pancakes with oranges, honey and walnuts***

### ***Ingredients (Serves 4)***

#### ***Orange syrup***

Juice and zest of 2 oranges; 2 Tbs of honey; 4 Tbs of water

#### ***Buckwheat pancakes***

8 rounded Tbsp buckwheat flour; 1 tsp baking powder; Pinch of salt  
150ml/5oz of milk  
1 egg, lightly beaten with a fork; 1 Tbsp butter, melted  
Extra butter for cooking

#### ***To serve***

2 oranges cut into segments; 50g /2oz chopped walnuts; a few blueberries to garnish



### ***Method***

#### ***Orange syrup***

- Make the orange syrup by simmering the juice, zest, honey and water until it thickens slightly. Set aside, keep warm.

#### ***Buckwheat pancakes***

- Put the flour, salt and baking powder in a bowl. Make a well in the centre and pour in half the milk and the beaten egg, whisk slowly and gently to incorporate the flour mixture into the liquid.
- Whisk in the remaining milk, add the melted butter and stir to combine. Put the batter in the fridge to rest for 15 mins.
- To make the pancakes, heat a non-stick frying pan over a medium-high heat. When hot, lightly grease the surface of the pan with a little of the extra butter.
- Ladle in enough batter to cover the surface thinly and cook until the edges of the pancake start to brown and crisp (about 30 seconds - 1 minute).
- Using a spatula, carefully lift the pancake, flip it over and cook the other side for a further 30 seconds.
- Transfer the pancake to a warm plate while you cook the remaining batter in the same way. Between each pancake, re-grease the surface of the pan with a little more butter.

#### ***To serve***

- Fold and arrange the pancakes on a plate and sprinkle with the orange segments. Drizzle with the orange honey syrup and scatter chopped walnuts and a few blueberries over the top.
- If you are fortunate to have some Bhutanese whisky, add a little to the orange syrup for a truly Bhutanese flavour!

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## ***Creamy Mocha Lassi***

### ***Ingredients***

100g Greek yogurt; 30ml milk or water; 1/2 tsp instant coffee powder  
2 Tbsp of honey ; 2 tsp cocoa powder

### ***Method***

- Blend all ingredients - yogurt, milk, coffee powder, honey and cocoa powder - until smooth, creamy and frothy.
- Adjust the taste by adding honey or sugar and the consistency by adding water or milk.
- Serve immediately or keep in the refrigerator until serving time.



## Answers to the Quiz

1. Logan Botanical Gardens. Near Stranrear, Scotland (**Issue 68**)
2. B. (**Issue 69**)
3. Snowman's Trek - 189 miles long with 11 passes over 16,000 ft
4. November 2019 (**Issue 70**)
5. 1984. A team of six archers attended the Olympic Games in Los Angeles
6. 1947 with a turquoise green dragon (**Issue 24**)
7. A model of the Thimphu Memorial Chorten (**Issue 25**)
8. (a) April 2016 (**Issue 59**); (b) May 2004 (**Issue 30**); (c) 2008 (**Issue 49**); (d) June 2015 (**Issue 56**); (e) June 2012 (**Issue 47**)
9. 1972 by HM the fourth Druk Gyalpo to signal commitment to building an economy that would also serve Bhutan's Buddhist culture (**Issue 52**)
10. Southern side of Thimphu
11. West to East : a, e, b, f, d, c.
12. The religious dances are called cham
13. Cypress (**Issue 56**); Blue poppy (**Issue 55**); Takin (**Issue 54**); Raven (**Issue 57**)
14. Garps. Bhutan Postal Museum Thimphu (**Issue 58**)
15. C. (**Issue 62**)
16. A "Belo" is a conical hat and a "Zum" is a traditional skirt woven from yak's wool (**Issue 66**)
17. In 2004, eighty two pigs were flown to Bhutan to help develop a breeding programme (**Issue 29**)
18. The Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh is to the east and Sikkim, West Bengal and Assam are to the west and south. The Tibet Autonomous Region of China is to the north.
19. Instruments for playing traditional folk music in Bhutan.
20. The boots, locally called tshogham, were originally made of silk cloth, but by the twentieth century were more often made in combination with leather.

## CONTACT LIST

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### NOTE

*If you have not done so already, please send your e-mail address to ***rosieglazebrook@hotmail.com*** who will add it to the database.*

*There is no plan to go paperless, but it is often convenient to communicate information electronically at short notice.*

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