



On the auspicious and glorious occasion of the 100th National Day, the officials and staff of the National Assembly Secretariat join the Nation in expressing its heartfelt gratitude and offer humble prayers to the Triple Gem for everlasting peace, prosperity and happiness in the Kingdom of Bhutan.

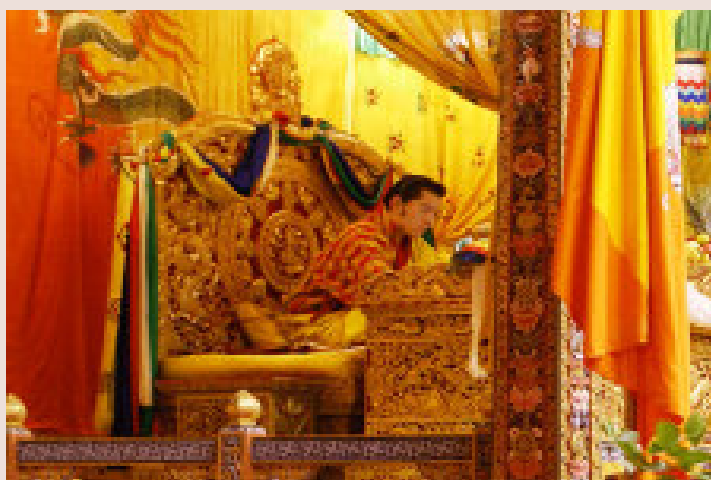
We re-dedicate ourselves to the service of Tsa-Wa-Sum.



His Majesty the Fifth Druk Gyalpo addresses the 87th Session of the National Assembly

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Addressing the inaugural session of the 87th Session of the National Assembly on June 7, 2007, His Majesty the King said that the historic transition to democracy is something all Bhutanese must take great pride in.

“It is an unprecedented and unique achievement in the world that a benevolent King has through his efforts over 34 years, laid such strong foundations for democracy.” His Majesty said. “It is also the direct result of the dedication and commitment of the people and government of Bhutan.”

His Majesty commended the efforts of, and expressed his gratitude to the clergy, ministers, government officials, people's representatives and the people of Bhutan for their dedications and services to His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo and the country.

His Majesty reminded the Assembly members that this generation in Bhutan's history carried the sacred duty of ensuring the success of the democratic transition. His Majesty

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said that every person must play his or her part in the coming elections. He encouraged all those who had the skills, experience and desire to serve the country as politicians, to come forward. “While the strong foundations for democracy built by His Majesty were a source of optimism and confidence, no one should be complacent.” said His Majesty.

His Majesty said that democracy was not about going from elections to election, but a way of life. “The spirit of democracy must be a part of one’s life at home with one’s family, in the community, at work and in the government. It is not a word to be used for politics alone,” he said. “The spirit of democracy depends not on the form of government but on the principles, integrity and values of the individual.”

His Majesty reminded the Assembly that with the start of the political process, Bhutan’s 20 dzongkhag and 205 Geog would be divided into 47 constituencies with many political parties and candidates. “In such times, the most important thing to remember is that we are a small country of 600,000 people,” he said.

“We must always stand united in spirit and purpose. We must always be one nation with one shared goal-one nation, one goal.” “His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck has sown the seeds of democratization. It is now my solemn duty to work with the people and ensure that the roots of democracy take strong and unshakable hold in our nation.”

His Majesty then addressed the issue of the Coronation in 2008. His Majesty said that he had become aware of the preparations for a grand coronation. He said that such elaborate preparations were unnecessary and that it was more important to ensure effective utilization of the limited resources of the government.

“The blessing of the Guardian deities and of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo and the blessing, faith and confidence of the people of Bhutan are most important to me as King,” His Majesty said. “Rather than a grand formal coronation like in other parts of the world, I would be most content to travel throughout 2008 to be with the people of the 20 dzongkhags.” “2008 should be a historic year to pay tribute to His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, commemorate 100 years of the Monarchy’s service to the nation and celebrate the birth of democracy.”

The royal address was telecast live nationwide.

(Source: Kuensel issue dated June 9, 2007)

Officials take research and report writing workshop

More than 35 Bhutanese officials from the National Assembly Secretariat and other government agencies attended an intensive five day workshop on “Research Methodology and Report Writing” organized by the National Assembly Secretariat with financial assistance from DANIDA at the Gyelyong Tshokhang from October 15-19, 2007.



Secretary addressing the workshop

Inaugurating the workshop, Dasho Nima Tshering, Secretary of the National Assembly said that “As we prepare for the new parliament, it is important for us to have our staff knowledgeable of the most modern and effective communications skills.” “This is just one of a number of training programs we are sponsoring to enhance the expertise of our civil servants. In the last year we have also sent people to the Philippines, Thailand and other countries for additional education.”



Participants attending the workshop

In addition to the emphasis on communications training, the program also included sessions on crisis management and constituent relations. The Honorable Speaker Dasho Ugen Dorje graced the concluding ceremony of the workshop

and awarded the certificate to the participants. The workshop was conducted by Professor Stephen Lay and Ms. Kate Weaver from Webster University, Thailand.

Evaluation of the Workshop on Research Methodology and Report Writing held from 15-19 October 2007

I believe that the workshop on research methodology and report writing was quite successful. In the different sessions, attendance varied from a high of 39 to a low of 27. Most who missed a session had to return to their offices to take care of a specific project or attend a required meeting. In the group projects, participants were involved and clearly worked to improve their skills.

The general sessions included a lot of questions and answers, but I also discovered that individuals preferred to ask their questions on a one-on-one basis. Consequently the lunch and break periods consisted of nearly non-stop conversations with the resource persons.

By the questions asked, it was readily apparent that participants were listening and were involved. Their questions were thoughtful and based on material covered in the presentations.

I discovered the attendees, who had advanced degrees from internationally recognized universities in the US, UK and Australia, had expected a more intensive pure research program. On the other hand, participants with less education experience felt that the information covered in the workshop was helpful and appropriate for them.

From my informal conversation with the participants, I believe there is interest in additional workshops specially designed to cover advance research methodologies and an intensive report writing workshop and we hope to organize such workshops in the near future.

Contributed by
Lakshuman Chhetri
Chief information and Media officer/Coordinator for the Workshop

Call on to the Hon'ble Speaker by H.E Mr. John Philip McCarthy, Ambassador of Australia to Bhutan

H.E Mr. John Philip McCarthy, Ambassador of Australia to Bhutan called on the Hon'ble Speaker Dasho Ugen Dorje on September 20, 2007 at the Speaker's Chamber.

The Hon'ble Speaker expressed his deep gratitude for the many scholarships offered by the Australian Government to the Bhutanese youth and commended the close ties and friendship between the two countries.

The meeting discussed on the launching of the parliamentary democracy in Bhutan and the challenges ahead for the National Assembly that would be brought about by the major democratic transition in 2008.



H.E Mr. John Philip McCarthy with Hon'ble Speaker of National Assembly

Devolution of Power and Responsibility Establishing the foundation of genuine Democracy

Bhutan has gone through remarkable political changes that have led to an amazing transformation of its governance system from feudalistic society to that of vibrant and fast developing country. This has been possible mainly because of two major reasons:

- a. The choice of the Bhutanese people for a unified Bhutan to be governed by a hereditary monarchy and protecting it with unwavering loyalty and trust.
 - b. The vision and the commitment of the hereditary monarchs for the welfare and wellbeing of the Bhutanese people.
1. Till the beginning of the twentieth century, Bhutan was ruled by the dual system of administration known as "Chhosi" which was initiated by Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel in 1651. Under this system, while the temporal administration of the country was entrusted to the Druk Desi known to British India as Deb Raja, the religious matters was left in the hands of the Je Khenpo. Although the successors of Zhabdrung lacked his stature and vision, this system provided a workable form of government for over two centuries.

2. However, by the second half of the 19th Century frequent disputes over the issue of succession to the Deb's office brought internal strife and instability to the country.
3. The year 1907 marks the beginning of a new era in the history of Bhutan. In that year, the whole body of the Clergy, the State Councilors, the Chillahs of all the dzongkhags, and the representatives of the people unanimously elected Trongsa Penlop Ugyen Wangchuck as the first hereditary King of Bhutan. The coronation took place on December 17, 1907.
4. The first King brought peace and stability to the country and laid the foundation for the emergence of modern Bhutan. Since then Bhutan was administratively unified under one government.
5. The second King further consolidated the stability and the effectiveness of the government by including different monastic and regional elites as an integral part of the administrative machinery of the government with political authority.
6. The reign of the third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck was marked by substantive reforms and initiatives within the country and progressive opening of the country to the outside world.
7. The establishment of the Tshogdu (National Assembly) in 1953 with progressive increase of its role and powers.
8. Abolishment of serfdom and promotion of a land reform in 1959 and 1953 respectively.
9. Introduction of the planned development in 1960s. Under the first five-year plan (1961-1966) priority was given to the creation of basic infrastructural facilities like roads, power, communication system, transports, national health, agriculture and animal husbandry.
10. The establishment the Lodoi Tshogdue (Royal Advisory Council) in 1965. Besides other functions it has been gradually empowered with the mandate to report to His Majesty the King and if necessary to the Cabinet and the National Assembly if it finds any action or activity of any person or organization to be detrimental to the interest of the country and the people.
11. The introduction of the no-confidence vote in 1968 could force all senior officials of the royal government including the King himself to resign from public service if they receive a no-confidence vote in the Assembly.
12. The creation of the first council of ministers in 1968. With this, the system of cabinet was introduced in which the Royal Advisory Councillors are also members
13. The separation of the judiciary from the executive by establishing a High Court in 1968. This has given way to re-organize the judicial system on modern lines.
14. Bhutan became the member of UNO in 1971. This enabled her to share the same platforms with other nations.
15. Coronation of the Fourth Druk Gyalpo in June 2, 1972
16. The Fourth King, His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, since his accession to the throne in 1972, has selflessly endeavoured to uplift the welfare of his people.
17. The spring session of the National Assembly in 1973 unanimously took the initiative to abolish the system of calling a no-confidence motion against the King as it felt that as a very small and landlocked country, undesirable elements, both from within and outside, could use this system to destabilize the Kingdom.
18. Bhutan has seen unprecedented socio-economic and political changes within a span of three and half decades transforming it from a subsistence farming society to a modern nation of the 21st Century.
19. One of the most significant reform introduced under the present King has been the decentralization of administration initiated in 1981 through the establishment of 20 Dzongkhag (district) Development Committees (with 560 plus elected members) followed by further decentralization to the Geog (block) level in 1991 (202 blocks with more than 2600 elected members).
20. June 10, 1998 will stay as a milestone date in Bhutan's history. His Majesty the King issued a Kasho (royal edict) devolving full executive powers to an elected cabinet and introducing the principle of his own political responsibility.
21. His Majesty the King dissolved the long existing Cabinet and directed the National Assembly to elect the Cabinet Ministers, who would be vested with full executive powers.

22. His Majesty also proposed that the Kings of Bhutan henceforth should face a vote of confidence and that if two-thirds National Assembly votes against the King, the King will have to abdicate in favor of the Crown Prince, or the next in line of succession. Consequently, the National Assembly endorsed a mechanism for a vote of confidence in the King.
23. The political reforms of 1998 further strengthened the decentralization process by introducing additional measures to promote accountability, efficiency and transparency. To further promote these objectives, larger ministries will be divided along their functional lines which will become effective from July 2002.
24. New organizations, such as the Department of Legal Affairs, National Employment Board and National Pension Board have already been established and the Bhutanese civil service restructured in order to rationalize it and help to redefine the role of the State.
25. De-linking of the Royal Audit Authority from the bureaucracy, and re-structuring the civil service.
26. All these denote the seriousness of the Royal Government to translate ideas into actions and to create bureaucracy that is compact, efficient, accountable and transparent.
27. The other significant changes in governance in the 9th Five Year Plan will be the geog based plan. The geog plan will make it possible for the people to determine their own priorities for the development of their communities and districts. In short, geog planning and consequent devolution of responsibility to the gup and the geog will be one of the most important changes in the structure and processes of governance wrought by development.
28. On September 4, 2001, His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo briefed the Council of Ministers, the Chief Justice and the Chairman of the Royal Advisory Council on the need for a written Constitution for Bhutan.

A Drafting Committee was established, under the chairmanship of the Chief Justice, with thirty-nine members: two venerable Lopons appointed by the Je Khenpo, the Speaker of the National Assembly, twenty elected representatives (one from each Dzongkhag) and representatives of the Royal Advisory Council, the Judiciary and the Royal Government of Bhutan.
 - a) On November 30, 2001, His Majesty, the Fourth king formally inaugurated the process of drafting the Constitution.
 - b) The first meeting was convened until December 14, 2001 in Thimphu.
 - c) The First Draft of the constitution was submitted to His Majesty the Fourth King on December 13, 2002.
 - d) The Second Draft of the constitution was submitted to His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo on June 11, 2003.
 - e) The Draft Constitution was publicly distributed and launched on the Internet simultaneously on March 26, 2005.
 - f) The Draft was submitted to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo and distributed to every household and to international organizations based in Thimphu.
 - g) His Majesty the Fourth King conducted nationwide consultation meetings to discuss the Constitution with the people of the twenty dzongkhags.
29. Election Commission of Bhutan, Anti-Corruption Commission and Office of Attorney General established in 2005.
30. The National Assembly of Bhutan was dissolved on July 31, 2007.
31. Elections for the National Council scheduled to take place on December 26, 2007 which will be followed by the National Assembly election at a date yet to be announced.
32. It may be noted as a matter of fact that contrary to many countries where Monarchy is assimilated to suppression, in Bhutan the leading force of change has always emanated from the Throne.
33. Facts of Bhutanese Parliamentary history and political system can neither be distorted nor concealed and there will be reason to do so.

Highlights of 87th Session

NA members visit Pasakha Industrial Estate

On June 22, 2007, the National Assembly members left for Phuntsholing. On the way, NA members were received by CHPC staffs for refreshment followed by lunch at Tala.

The NA members visited Pasakha Industrial Estate on June 23, 2007. While in Pasakha Members visited Bhutan Ferro Alloys Limited, Bhutan Brewery Private limited,

Rabten Wire Industry, Khenpa Private Limited and Bhutan Marble Private Limited.

On their way back, the NA members also visited the Dam site at Tala Hydropower Corporation.

Hon'ble Lyonpo Yeshey Zimba, Minister for Economic Affairs was also present during the visit.



Members at BFAL

Students attend National Assembly in Session

On June 8, 2007, 127 students from Motithang Higher Secondary School and 130 students from Kelki Higher Secondary School attended the 87th Session of the National Assembly, in continuation to the ongoing Student Education Programme, first initiated from the 82nd Session. The Secretariat will be organizing this programme of students witnessing the proceedings of sittings during every Session of the National Assembly, principally targeted to create awareness among the students in the conduct and functioning of the National Assembly. The students in the National Assembly Programme will be a regular feature and will be given priority by the Secretariat when the National Assembly is in Session.

Around 1900 students from various schools in Thimphu valley witnessed the 87th Session of the National Assembly.



Students of Kelki HSS attending 87th Session of the National Assembly

Training attended

1. Mr. Leki Dorji, Assistant Human Resource Officer and Mr. Kazilal Rai, Senior Administrative Officer attended a course on Human Resource Development and Management at Asian Center for Banking, Manila, Philippines from September 24- October 12, 2007.
2. Ms. Tashi Dem, Assistant ICT Officer attended 3-week course on web designing at Informatics, Manila, Philippines from September 24- October 12, 2007.
3. Ms. Karma and Ms. Tshewang Dema attended 5 day training on Customer Service at Royal Institute of Management, Simtokha from October 1-5, 2007.
4. Mr. Tshewang Dorji, Chief Research Officer and Mr. Sonam Wangchuk, Assistant Research Officer has attended a course on Translation from October 3 – November 8, 2007 organized by Dzongkha Development Commission at Institute of Language and Cultural Studies, Simtokha, Bhutan.
5. Mr. Tshering Dorji, Senior Accounts Officer attended 3-week training on Financial Management at Webster University, Bangkok, Thailand from October 22- November 9, 2007.
6. Mr. Leki Tenzin and Mr. Dorji attended a course on Photography and Video Production at National Printing Technology Training Center at Bangkok, Thailand from October 22- November 9, 2007.
7. Mr. Leki Dorji, Assistant Human Resource Officer attended a course on Parliamentary Internship Program organized by Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training, Lok Sabha at New Delhi from November 1-30, 2007.
8. An intensive in-house training programme for the enhancement of Dzongkha language usage to the staff of the National Assembly Secretariat was conducted from August 7 - October 30, 2007.
9. Dasho Nima Tshering, Secretary and Mr. Tshering Dorji, Sr. Finance Officer undertook study visits to the Parliament of Singapore from November 19- 23, 2007.

National Assembly Speaker resigned

The Speaker of the National Assembly, Dasho Ugen Dorje, formally resigned on November 8 2007 after serving more

than nine years as Deputy Speaker and then as Speaker. On the occasion, the Hon'ble Speaker was granted an audience by His Majesty the King. During the audience, His Majesty the King also granted *Thuk Moen Dhar* to Speaker Ugen Dorje.

One of the longest serving Speakers, Dasho Ugen Dorje, who was the 11th Speaker, was elected to the National Assembly in 1998 as the representative of the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industries. He was unanimously elected as the 11th Speaker in 2000 and re-elected in 2003.

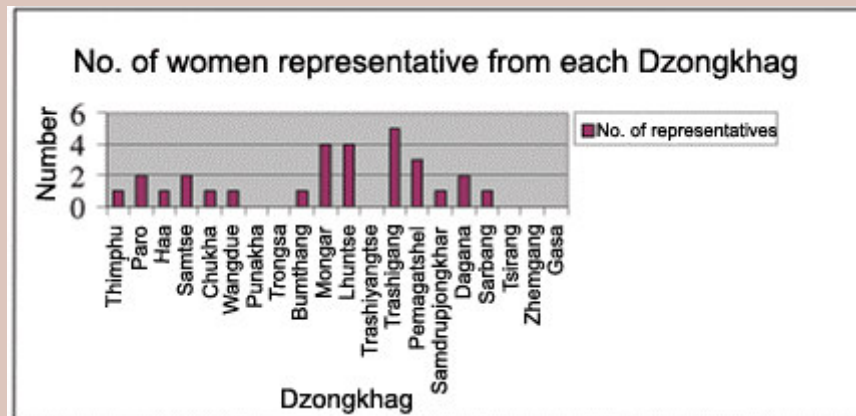
During his tenure as Speaker, the National Assembly had transformed dramatically in line with the developments and

changes in the country. Some of the highlights of the changes are as follows:

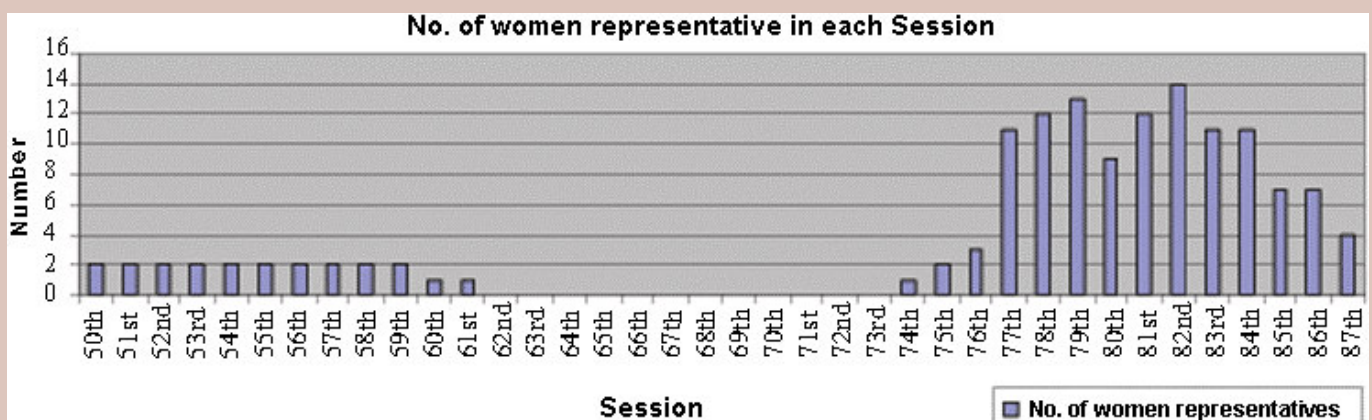
- The devolution of executive power from the Golden Throne to an elected council of ministers.
- The three arms of the government, the Judiciary, Executive and Legislative, separated,
- The drafting of the Constitution,
- The autonomy given to the Royal Civil Service Commission and enactment of about 38 Acts.

Dasho Ugen Dorje was of the opinion that all of above were the ground work for a successful Constitutional Democratic Monarchy and eventually a fair democratic government will prevail in Bhutan.

Graphical representation of No. of women representatives in the National Assembly till date



No. of women representatives (Dzongkhag wise)



No. of women representatives(Session wise)

Assembly to be dissolved

As the Nation prepares to usher in historic changes in its system of governance in 2008, the National Assembly of Bhutan, which was established in 1953, as the highest legislative body in the country was dissolved on July 31, 2007. With the dissolution, the position of chimi no more exists till the composition of the new House.



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