

TÂRAYÂNA FOUNDATION'S Inaugural Speech

On 4th May 2003

By Her Majesty the Queen Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck

Founder and President of Târayâna Foundation

I am very happy to welcome His Royal Highness the Crown Prince and all of you, to the Inauguration of Târayâna Foundation. Most of you may want to know what Târayâna is about, and I wish to tell you that Târa and Yâna are two words put together to mean Vehicle of Târa's Compassion and Wisdom. With Târa's blessings, we, the members of the Foundation that bear the divinity's name, hope to be able to help vulnerable Bhutanese individuals wherever they are. We cannot be overly ambitious to assume that we can help even a significant fraction of such individuals. There are others, both governmental and non-governmental agencies, who can do similar things to reach those who are needy. There is enough space for all. But, all of us should not fail to try with our humane endeavours. Târayâna is a beginning of a humble attempt in this direction.

Mindful of our Beloved King's desire for a Happy Bhutanese Population, we shall devote ourselves to this task, to do our best to contribute towards "Gross National Happiness." Compassion has to go practical. Compassion is relevant not only to the beneficiary, but to those who attempt to

practise it. Self-sacrifice in any form brings benefit to both the practitioner and the beneficiary.

So how so we put it into practice? How would you go about doing that? One might ask.

The members of Târayâna Foundation, consisting of a network of people from all walks of life, will devote their time and expertise on a voluntary basis towards achieving the many goals of the Foundation. The goals are diverse, but they all focus on people on the brink of vulnerability. With the support from Târayâna Foundation, although small, they can overcome their adversity to realise their precious potentials. Our objectives are to provide maintenance allowances for people living in difficult circumstances like the old, handicapped, and young who are otherwise incapable of contributing to the family income and thereby improving their security and sense of dignity. Târayâna will provide modest grants for uniforms, books and stationery to disadvantaged students. In the same light, the Foundation will help the sick with incidental costs for medical care.

Târayâna plans on establishing Folk Heritage Craft Houses. This plan too is aimed for people to improve their lives. Folk Heritage Craft House will promote artisan skills to

generate income in poor communities through sale of local crafts. In such communities, artisan skill of the individuals is their key resource and their lives have to be built around it. To begin with, we feel it is better to strengthen and facilitate their skills rather than introduce new ones. The Craft Museums will aim to promote links between artisan skills and rural income generation while educating its visitors about folk crafts.

Academic excellence will be encouraged by establishing prizes and awards in as many educational institutions as possible. It would be a modest effort to recognise innovation, standard, and performance.

Our youth will be involved in Târayâna's activities so that the value of social service and of helping the disadvantaged will be instilled into the future citizens of our nation. Social engagement, compassion and value education are intimately interconnected. None of these values and attitudes can be learnt in isolation. The Foundation will endeavour to provide a means to practise value education through the realities of experience.

These are a few of Târayâna Foundation's goals, which will keep taking shape according to the needs of our people to raise the level of happiness. I have to mention very clearly

here that we only wish to supplement and complement a variety of activities undertaken by the Royal Government in these fields. Târayâna's initiatives will be consistent with government policies at all times.

Târayâna's coming to life today, I feel, is timely. We must strive to put back into the nation that has given us a life of progress, spirituality and overwhelming pride in being Bhutanese. It is never too early for us, the privileged ones, to mobilize our energies, experiences and resources in an organized fashion to make philanthropy, a priority. We can make just a little difference as individuals. But as an organisation or as an institution with our collective effort we can make a vast difference. If we try to be a little kinder and open our hearts a little more to the plight of the less fortunate and then commit to easing their burdens in a small way, we can achieve a lot. So please help Târayâna help those who reach out to us.

I consider all of you who are gathered here today at this auspicious occasion a core part of Târayâna.

I am sure that the number of members who will play important parts in its growth will increase in future. It makes me very happy to have the heart-felt support of each

and everyone of you here for the welfare of the vulnerable individuals through Târayâna.

Fund raising will be one of the most important pursuits of the Foundation. Today marks the official launch of Târayâna, but we already have many dedicated people who from the goodness of their hearts have contributed their time, counsel, skills and funds. Without them, Târayâna cannot move forward. Târayâna can only exist on the goodwill of the people such as those present here and at large.

All the information you will need is in the brochure and website that is being inaugurated today. I count on your support and hope that Târayâna has your goodwill. I am confident you will all agree with me that what Târayâna stands to accomplish is a good cause, and, for this good cause, I seek your blessings and friendship.

His Majesty our Beloved King has worked very hard all these years for our well-being and that of our children. His philosophy has been recognized and appreciated by nations big and small. Let us then all come together in one spirit and resolve to further pursue His Vision of a Happy Bhutan.

Tashi Delek!