



In Touch



Vol. 8, Issue 2, Feb 2017



**Celebrating the Birth Anniversaries of Our Present the 'People's King'
and our Future the 'Son of the Nation'**

Inside
Find out why
Namgyal
Zangmo
Believes in
Women's
Empowerment
and Economic
Independence

**Socio-economic
Transformation:
The Story of Dechen-Pelri**



“As I have said before, the Gyalsey is not just the prince of the King and Gyalt-suen, but a son to all the Bhutanese people. When the time comes for Gyalsey Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck to serve his country, he must always place the concerns of his country above all else and serve his people justly with great love and dedication. It will be his sacred responsibility to build a harmonious and just society, and thereby, fulfill all the aspirations of his people”.

-His Majesty the King Khesar Jigme Namgyal Wangchuck



From the Editorial Team

February is an exciting month as Bhutan celebrates the first birthday of His Royal Highness the Crown Prince Gyalsey Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck on the 5th and the birth anniversary of His Majesty the King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck on the 21st.

We humbly dedicate this newsletter in celebrating both our Present and our Future this month. The Tarayana Family joins the nation in offering our heart-felt felicitations to His Majesty our beloved King and to His Royal Highness the Gyalsey.

Included in this newsletter are dedications from representatives of our board and executive committee on the happy occasion of the two special birth anniversaries. Our colleagues from the field as well as from the Tarayana School Clubs have also sent in their contributions of articles and poems to make the special occasions and we are happy to share some selected ones here.

This edition of 'In Touch' brings you a glimpse of empowering women and her route to economic independence in Tsento, Paro. We also bring you a transformative story of a place called Dechen Pelri in Gelephu. .

It is with immense pleasure that we share these stories about change and hope against the backdrop of several challenges with you. We cannot emphasize enough the importance of grassroots empowerment in deepening the democratic processes and encouraging citizen engagement at all levels.

All at Tarayana, most humbly re-dedicate our service from the heart and pledge to work harder and smarter in operationalising the development philosophy of GHN at the grassroots bringing prosperity and improved well-being to rural communities.

We hope you enjoy reading this as much as we enjoyed putting together this special edition.

Tashi Delek and Thank you!





Felicitations on the Royal Birth Anniversaries of His Majesty the King and His Royal Highness the Gyalsey

From the day our nation was founded, we have been blessed with extraordinary and visionary leadership of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, his successors and since 1907, the successive Monarchs of the Wangchuck Dynasty. Since the founding of the Wangchuck Dynasty, we have enjoyed unprecedented peace and prosperity. Our Kings have selflessly devoted their lives towards safeguarding the security and sovereignty of our nation and our wellbeing.

The Institution of the Monarchy is therefore most revered and loved by all subjects and is the life and soul of our nation. Every Bhutanese believes and knows that as long as we have our King on the Golden Throne, our security, sovereignty and wellbeing is assured. At the start of the 21st century, on 9th December, 2006, our nation and people have been blessed with yet another great Monarch in His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck. We, His subjects, are all aware of His Majesty's deep commitment and tireless works to ensure the wellbeing of our people and nation. We enjoy total support to our livelihood through the Kidus granted by His Majesty such as land to the landless, relief during disasters, support for the old, handicapped and the poor, to name a few. We are also familiar with the regular travels undertaken by His Majesty to the remotest parts of the country to meet the people and to closely look into their welfare.

We enjoy access to justice and security and protection from all untoward eventualities such as illness, death and poverty. We are most fortunate as we do not suffer from despair and the indignity of hopelessness, prevalent among people in most parts of the world.

The year 2016, the Fire Male Monkey year is very special and auspicious for our nation and people. It is the Birth Year of Guru Rimpoche, 400th Year of the arrival of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, Founder of our nation, and the 10th Anniversary of His Majesty The King ascending the Golden Throne. In the year of many significant events, our nation and people have been blessed with the Birth of His Royal Highness The Gyalsey Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck. The auspicious Birth of His Royal Highness embodies the continuation of the Wangchuck Dynasty and the wellbeing of our nation and our children.

This month, our nation and people are celebrating two most joyous occasions, the Birth Anniversary of our beloved King, His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and the first Birth Anniversary of His Royal Highness The Gyalsey Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck.

In celebrating these auspicious and happy occasions, I join the Tarayana family, under the leadership of Her Majesty Gyalum Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, our Founder and President, in most humbly offering my heartfelt felicitations and Tashi Delek to His Majesty the King and to His Royal Highness The Gyalsey.

We pray to Kencho Sum and the Guardian Deities of the Palden Drukpa for the good health, long life and happiness of His Majesty The King, Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen and His Royal Highness The Gyalsey.

Dasho Yanki T. Wangchuk,
Former Secretary, Ministry of Finance
Board Member,



AN EPITOME OF HAPPINESS

The mindful inquisition of a farsighted prophecy,
Born and named as the futuristic King,
He who holds the true jewel of Buddha,
Dharma and Sangha,
Equally filling in each prophecy told and foretold,
Lining within the understanding of human realm,
Born with the rays of hope for this nation,
May Drukyl shine for eons with your blessing,
"LONG LIVE THE GYALSEY"

Folk Heritage Museum Team

Our Gyalsey

The Prince was born-
For the people and the country.
A hope was born-
In the hearts of the people.
A gift was showered-
To the land far and near.
A true son of the nation
Blessed from Paradise
Keeper of the people's happiness
I humbly submit to your feet.

Dechen Seldon, XI Arts

Gift from the Royal Couple

In a small land of Bhutan
On 5th February of monkey male year
A beautiful son was born to their Majesties.
The son for the people,
The heart of the nation.
The jewel of the country,
The pride of the people.
The future of the nation,
The promise of tomorrow.
Flourishing the peace and the happiness,
In every corner of the nation.
His Royal Highness, the Gyalsey
I solemnly bow to your service.

Jambay Lhamo, XI sci 'A'

Jigme Sherubling High Secondary Tarayana School Club

Gyalsey-Jewel of the Nation

The day was beautiful, 5th February 2016
Startled by the beep of my phone,
Read the news of His Royal birth on facebook.
The news shook off all my sleep,
Then I knew a beautiful day was here.
The sun of happiness
Shone brilliant and bright
Veiling the moon and stars
I took my pen to paper
To pen down my joy.
I am lucky and felt proud to be a citizen.

Pema Wangmo, XII Sci 'A'

Our Charming Prince

The somnolence broke
And ignites the immense fire of happiness.
Unanimous prayer of people paid off,
The smiling, dinging on the face of every citizen.
Danced with the joy and tethered succession,
The hand of the people.
Cluttered with the thunder of giggle and nodding.
Rainbow bland with the sky and sprinkled the rain
of honey,
Leave fluttered, whistled with the smiling wind of
breeze.
Stirred the subjects with the gift they got.

G-Godly in the hearts of every Bhutanese,
Y-Youth in the country join our hands,
A-As a king you will be enthroned,
L-Long live The Crown Prince,
S-Sacred philosophy of GNH, you flourish,
A-Attempt to strengthen the nation forward,
Y-Your greatness will be printed in every heart.

Tshering Choki, XII Arts





A King of Hearts and The Gyalsey's Gift'

Spring has always been special in Bhutan. It is a time of year when Tsechus abound, fields are sowed and the Bhutanese people look as fresh as the flowers in this blessed land. In 2016, on the 5th of February, a Prince was born to Their Majesties The King and Queen of Bhutan, thus ushering in an earlier air of spring into the hearts of the Bhutanese people just as the birth anniversary of His Majesty the King does on the 21st of February

each year. It was a few months earlier that the buds of this joy sprang forth. I remember sitting in front of the television on the 11th of November, with my aging Mother, feeling grateful on the occasion of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo's Birthday. As His Majesty addressed the nation we held on to every word of his speech while enjoying the visual of witnessing our Handsome King of Hearts close up, albeit through a camera lens. As soon as His Majesty announced that the Gyaltsuen was expecting, the crowd in the stadium and those of us watching at home chorused in unison with a great cry of joy! It was instantly exhilarating! I hugged my mother and we shed tears of joy! For the remainder of the ceremony we stayed glued to the broadcast to catch every glimpse of Her Majesty as though we could see more than the television offered us a view of. Their Majesties, adoringly, kept the Royal pregnancy a secret so that they could give us, the people of Bhutan, a surprise gift at the appropriate time!

And what a surprise it was!
What a pleasant surprise indeed!

We were all on the phone with each other excitedly sharing and discussing the future Prince. I remember calling my friend Thinley and discussing what age our Gyalsey would begin riding motorcycles! We spoke of our own resolution to double our efforts in charity; little realizing our own future as members of the Bhutan Dragons Motorcycle club was about to dramatically change for the better.

The excitement of the news carried on up to the Royal Birth and continued past mid April when a special naming ceremony was held in Punakha coinciding with holy occasion of Zhabdrung Kuchoe. His Royal Highness Gyalsey Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck was named in accordance with the significance of embodying the names and essences of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, Desi Jigme Namgyel, and His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and of all our former kings.

"The Gyalsey is not just the prince of the King and Gyaltsuen, but a son to all the Bhutanese people... Jigme means fearless. It symbolizes great courage to overcome any challenge that he may confront in future as he serves our country."

- His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

Soon after, elsewhere in Bhutan, with the blessing of His Holiness the Varotsana Trulku the Bhutan Dragons were given new direction and strength as Her Majesty Gyalyum Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck took us under the charitable wings of Tarayana Foundation to contribute further to the visions of our great Kings and in the service of the nation as the Tarayana Dragons.

What makes this celebration of the birth anniversaries of the Gyalsey and His Majesty so much more special is that, as in the Birth year of Guru Rinpoche, His Majesty and His Royal Highness were also born in the year of the Iron Monkey. His Majesty and His Royal Highness, both, were born in the month of February in leap years (1980 and 2016)!



It was Guru Rinpoche who predicted the birth and reign of the First King His Majesty Ugyen Wangchuck. The prophecy is recorded in Kathang Duepa, a brief biography of Guru Rinpoche that reads, "From the direction of Bumthang, the limits to the throne will be overcome. There will appear my emanation, who will reign in accordance with the Dharma." The First King, who reigned from Bumthang, also had the same name as that of Guru Rinpoche. Guru Rinpoche also appeared before Tertön Drukdra Dorji, a great treasure revealer of the 18th century, at the holy site of Tshaluney and prophesized the birth of the Fourth Druk Gyalpo. "Son, don't be disheartened but listen well. Amidst forests of this hidden Southern Land, where three valleys converge. In the hamlet known by the name Womina (modern day Dechencholing), a person born in the Wood Sheep year in that place/ will be the illustrious one with a delightful demeanor!"

The founding of the monarchy in 1907 was not based on any invocation of divine right though the Royal Family descends directly from Tertön Pema Lingpa, one of the five great treasure revealers, who was also foretold by Guru Rinpoche to be his own emanation. This is an important reason that makes the Bhutanese monarchy both modern and unique in terms of the timing and ideology during its establishment.

Over the last 400 years, the form of government in Bhutan has changed. From being a monastic initially, it evolved to be a monarchy in 1907 and then a parliamentary democracy in 2008. The essence of the government, which is the interdependence of the secular and the spiritual or Chhoe-sid nyi, has continued as the ideological core of the state. Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel was the founder of such a government, and the Bhutanese Monarch epitomizes this interdependence.

"When the time comes for Gyalsey Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck to serve his country, he must always place the concerns of his country above all else and serve his people justly with great love and dedication. It will be his sacred responsibility to build a harmonious and just society, and thereby, fulfill all the aspirations of his people".

- His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck

It has been 108 years since the start of the Wangchuck Dynasty and, as mentioned earlier, both His Majesty The King and The Gyalsey were born in leap years, which consist of 366 days. If you were to multiply each digit of the leap year (3x6x6), you will get 108 as a result!

The birth of The Gyalsey also ensures the continuity of national leadership and that of the Wangchuck dynasty. For us, the people of Bhutan, that may well be our *raison d'être* as we have faith that the wisdom of our great kings, past and present will also find embodiment in the shaping of our Gyalsey.

That he may shine early in life as his Father and His Father's Father did before him is evident from the fact that all our Kings showed their mettle from an early age. The Gyalsey is considered the symbol of future Bhutan as He ensures both the continuity of the lineage as well as the political dynasty.

Never has there been a time in our history when a former King, a reigning King and a future King have been among the Bhutanese people at the same time. We are deeply grateful to His Majesty The Fourth Druk Gyalpo and Their majesties The Gyalyums for gifting us The Fifth King; the Peoples King, the King of Hearts.

In turn we thank Their Majesties, The Fifth Druk Gyalpo and The Gyaltsuen for the birth of our Gyalsey. In what can only be attributed as a blessing to our accumulated good karma, we may now celebrate spring even earlier as the warmth of the love and compassion of His Majesty's rule envelope not just the people, but our seasons as well!

To celebrate the birth anniversaries of His Majesty The King and His Royal Highness The Gyalsey, I offer a pledge, on behalf of the Tarayana Dragons to continue to grow in our committed service of the Tsa Wa Sum and the visions of our great Kings, Gyalo!!!!!!!!!!

Kelly Dorji
Executive Member
Tarayana Foundation



Transformation of Dechen-Pelri Village

The village of Dechen-Pelri in Sarpang Dzongkhag is surrounded on three sides by a cordillera of emerald-green mountains. The rough and stony terrain is covered with groves of bamboos as tall as four storied apartment buildings and patches of ferns the size of queen-sized beds. The quaint village of Dechen-Pelri is home to 42 resettled households from Edi village of Zhemgang Dzongkhag, who migrated here in 2003 due to the Indian militant fractions who used the lush forest of Bhutan as their hideout. The Edi community left their well tended orange orchards behind, packed what they could carry, herded their cattle and other livestock and trekked all the way to their new settlement in Dechen-Pelri, where the Royal Government gave each household three acres of farm land and half an acre land for developing their homesteads. Once the land deeds were handed over, the families constructed make-shift wooden shelters of cane, wood, boulders, plastic sheets and metal roofs depending on their financial capacities

The Edipas were farmers but found the Dechen-Pelri. Land very rocky was and coaxing any crops to grow was a big challenge. There was either no water at all during the dry months and flood conditions during the monsoons. The bumpy roads to the village become muddy swift flowing rivulets during the monsoons and the endless landslips with the slightest of rainfall, made transportation and mobility a big issue. There community encountered herds of wild elephants that moved back and forth from the nearby jungles damaging huts and settlements in their path. . The nearest school was two hours walk away. These adverse conditions led to unemployment and migration of youth to the city to work as paid-labor. The women, senior citizens and children were left behind and often faced severe hardships when they ran out of provisions and their men folk failed to show up to replenish their stock for a multitude of reasons. Lack of income-generating capacities and unfavorable climatic and geographical conditions made living in Dechen-pelri back then not a very easy task.

Tarayana Foundation was associated with the Edi community; the migration to Dechen-Pelri, a village very close to Gelephu town with access to electricity and road changed the dynamic of our engagement. The community was no longer the once remote village, so Tarayana hung back to 'wait and watch' mode. Before long it became clear that the community needed social mobilization and that they needed help with creating livelihood options. Tarayana engaged with the community and consulted them in hopes of being able to identify entry points for socio-economic development of the community. Most of the households had not been able to construct proper houses. After a series of discussion, Tara equipment for making micro-concrete-earth block making was purchased and installed in the community. Interested members from the community were trained to use this equipment. It was hoped that having such a facility that was owned and operated by the community would provide access to construction material for their own house building.

In 2011, the community implementing "Piloting Green Technologies for Social-Enterprise" a small grants project funded by the Canadian High Commission in Delhi and facilitated by a Programme Officer working in the field. Every morning at 8am sharp, 25 community members gather at the community facility centre and create a bustle as much with their lively spirits as with the sounds of machines they operate and hard work they do. These community members have been making Stabilized Compressed Earth Blocks (SCEB), pavement tiles, interlocking tiles, hollow-blocks and solid blocks from the same soil that was disadvantageous because of no agricultural use. A bunch of young women can be seen mixing sand with aggregate in the courtyard, while a few men pour water, soil and cement into moulds of interlocking tiles and put them to dry as the teenagers shift the cured hollow blocks from yesterday inside and start making fresh batches.



A batch of 15 community members was trained as master-trainers. They have learnt to examine the soil through the means of visual identification, shine, cohesion, composition and chemical composition to use for making eco-friendly, cost-effective and income generating construction material. These 15 community members continue to further train other community members.

These locally made construction materials fuel the need for sustainable and weatherproof housing. Aum Zomba Lhamo, age 43, whose family has used the Stabilized Compressed Earth Blocks to build two toilets no longer use a wooden frame covered by plastic sheets. She says that she feels very happy and lucky to learn about green technologies and to operate the equipment?). Like Aum Zomba, many community members were very enthusiastic and actively participate in the various production processes.

Dema Tshomo and Kinzang Tshomo, both 17, whose families after the resettlement had hard time to adjust because of more expenses and limited income. They both had to drop-out of school after the 10th standard because of financial reasons. They both say they enjoy working together with the community and hope that their efforts would help improve the living conditions of the community. They feel that getting trained in new skills at their very doorsteps will help them earn some income and perhaps, enable them to go back to school again.

Kencho Wangmo, 37, one of the first community members to join the project feels that the blocks they make are extremely eco-friendly, cost-effective and easy to transport since they are built right in the village. She wants to set an example that women can operate CEEB (SCEB) machines, color mixing machines and sedimentation machines as easily as men. She aspires that the green technology she is using now will brighten the future of the children of the village. Kencho who also happens to be the finance officer of the community centre was proud to announce that they received two orders for hollow blocks worth Nu.200, 000/- each.

In 2014, the Foundation also came up with eco-friendly, low cost, community model house built purely by using construction materials produced within the Dechen-pelri community. The model house was designed in consultation with the community members, constructed by the community members and for the community members to encourage and built confident with construction materials produced by them.

Currently the community has built eight family houses after the competition of the model house one community Lhakhang, one Early Childhood Care and Development Centre (Buzip Centre) and more than 45 toilets.

The Community Centre at Dechen-pelri village which faintly looks like an Eames house at night-fall has become a source of interest, income, ideas and learning for the community leaders as well as children alike. The people of Dechen-pelri sincerely thank Tarayana Foundation, supporters and exemplify that they can generate income while reducing carbon footprint as Bhutan continues to develop.

Karma Wangchuk
Programme Officer



The Power of a second chance

One Sunday morning my colleagues and I headed out to the northern end of Paro valley to take stock of the progress made by one of our Self-Help-Group members in Tsento. I was accompanying the programme team to this village not really knowing what to expect, little did I know that this was going to be a very gratifying Sunday for me!

I finally met Namgyal Zangmo for the first time although I had heard much about her good work from my colleagues and had been intrigued.

Namgyal Zangmo was born in Wangkha village in Punakha. She was lucky that she could go to school but she could study only up to class ten. She had not qualified for further studies and her parents could not afford to send her to a private high school. Having little option, she chose to look for work opportunities and took up a yearlong house-keeping assignment at the Olathang Resort in Paro.

Namgyal then met and fell in love with a man who later became her husband. After marriage, she quit her job as her husband worked in Nganglam and she moved to be together with her husband. A year later she gave birth to their son. The young couple faced much hardship as their son frequently fell sick and had to be taken to the Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital in Thimphu for regular checkups. The young couple incurred more expenditure than what her husband earned. The financial dependence as well as knowing that she could not contribute to the family kitty deeply bothered Namgyal.

Namgyal Zangmo who had once cherished the dream of becoming a teacher found herself struggling to meet ends meet. She wanted to do everything in her power to secure her son's future. She wanted to be able to give her son the medical treatments he needed, make sure that he went to school. She did not want her son to be faced with the same predicament that she had gone through. So she began to seriously look at her options of securing economic independence. She realized that with sincere hard work, some guidance and integrity, one such as herself, could also become a job creator.

Namgyal and her family then moved to Paro, almost like the call of a second chance. Moving back to Paro was the beginning of the unfolding of the life she wanted. She learnt about the Self Help Group being formed in the village where her husband was posted. She found out that Tarayana Foundation helped women like her to help themselves through these groups by giving them relevant skills and engaging them in income generating activities. She registered as a member of the Self Help Group and learned dry needle felting techniques and used this skill to make dry felted woolen toys. She was happy to make snow leopards, red pandas, yaks and sheep and was happier when these could be sold to the both the locals as well as tourists who paid well for these hand crafted souvenirs.

She also learnt to make candles and soaps, both plain as well as aromatic ones. She found that the lemon grass soaps and candles moved faster than the others. As was expected, she was a keen student and with her diligence mastered these two crafts well. She is now quite an expert in making toy animals and candles. Her work is in demand from high-end Resorts like Uma, Olathang and during the Annual Snow Leopard Festival at the base of Mount Jomolhari. From having no income, she is now earning about Nu.11,300 monthly on average. When I met her she talked about wanting to expand the production by training others to help her meet the orders she receives.



She recalls those old days when she had to depend on her husband for everything and the feeling of helplessness. Today, she is proud to be financially independent and happy in the knowledge that she is also contributing to the family kitty that will ensure that her son will have a better future. She is an advocate for economic empowerment of women like her and adds that if she can do it, so can they. She said that women should step forward, learn a skill or two and make something out of their lives.

She is philosophical as she thinks that marriage is uncertain just as death and feels that financially independent women are better prepared for both. She added that she was happy to share her knowledge and teach anyone who wants to learn the art of making dry felted toy animals from her. Namgyal wants to own a unique handicraft shop someday and fill it with her hand made products because she believes that not many handicrafts shops in Bhutan today have authentic Bhutanese products creating just the right opportunities for her skills. I was greatly impressed with her market analysis and knew that here was a confident lady entrepreneur who would go places.

Her husband is proud of his wife and remarked that he has no doubt that her work will be in the international markets one day soon. He appreciates her relentless spirit to complete whatever she starts meticulously. Namgyal said that he was a very supportive husband and a good father. She acknowledged that without his support, she might have struggled more.

Namgyal Zangmo took up the opportunity of empowering herself and loved working together with the other women from the village. She says that there is nothing one cannot achieve, when women support each other.

Indeed, when we rise up and hold each other's hands, our ingenuity becomes unleashed, allowing innovation and creativity to lead the transformation of women from being dependent to being financially independent. This is how best I can describe and sum up my experience in working with women in the Self Help Group in this community and in other circles of women's assemblage that I engage with in my work place. Looking back at how far I have come in my own growth and development as an agent of change, seeing these women in the community achieve so much in so short a time, I am gratified. I notice how the once isolated journey of change making in the lives of women has fast become propped up by support from all around I am indeed grateful to each and everyone who has been a wellspring of inspiration and motivation in my journey thus far of empowering rural women in Bhutan.

Tashi Choden
Asst. Program Officer



Support Tarayana Rural Crafts

Tarayana Rural Crafts is an initiative of the Tarayana Foundation in its efforts to improve the income earning capabilities of the rural artisans. More than thirty self help groups from different villages across the country are involved in the production of the products.

Each product is painstakingly handmade by the artisans, whose families have been involved in the craft for many generations, using locally available natural materials.

More than 65% of sale proceeds go directly to the artisans.

The true Bhutan resides in its villages. Help us to encourage and promote our rural artisans by buying our rural products.

Our new range of products at Tarayana's Rural Crafts Outlet produced by our rural artisans. If you are interested in any of the products kindly contact us at +9752339510 or leave us an email at tarayana2003@gmail.com. We also take in orders.



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