

# The Bhutan REVIEW

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## RAINS WRECK HAVOC

**BHUTAN:** According to the Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS), flash floods have caused extensive damage in southern Bhutan, especially in Samchi district which remained cut off due to major damages to the Indian highway. Although no loss of lives were reported, electricity, telecommunications and other infrastructural facilities have been badly affected. The hospital at Pagli was reportedly submerged under floodwaters with only the roof visible. According to BBS, patients and staff have been shifted to the Penden Cement Authority Club at Gomtu. A medical team from Thimphu visited the district to assist and coordinate relief efforts.

The heavy rains have reportedly resulted in landslides at a number of places. The chronic problem at Sorchen on the Thimphu-Phuntsholing highway has once again resurfaced with the monsoons this year. For a few days Thimphu was cut off forcing the government to announce heavy penalties against opportunistic merchants found to be overcharging customers.

**NEPAL:** Unprecedented floods and landslides triggered by incessant monsoon rains during the latter half of July wrecked havoc in Nepal with the death toll, according to official sources, standing at 66 on July 31. The final tally of the number of people killed in the natural disaster is likely to be much higher since 789 people are still reportedly missing. Roads and communications have been hard hit. Besides landslides at many places, a number of bridges have been washed away. The capital, Kathmandu, remains cut-off from the Terai since July 21. Efforts are on to complete temporary repairs and reestablish vital links. Meanwhile, austerity measures and rationing of petroleum products have been introduced.

Thousands of people have been made homeless. Relief works in the worst affected areas are continuing. The Royal Nepalese Army and Police have been deployed at most places. In addition to government personnel a number of non-governmental organizations and private citizens are providing relief services.

Emergency assistance has been provided by a number of governments in cash and kind. Private individuals, organizations and institutions have also responded generously to the call for assistance and continue to contribute to the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

We express our deepest sorrow and anguish over the loss of life and property in Nepal due to the recent devastating floods and landslides. In this hour of national distress, we extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of the bereaved and pray for the souls of the departed.

HUROB/The Bhutan REVIEW



## NEPALESE DELEGATION VISITS THIMPHU

The long awaited bilateral talks between Bhutan and Nepal on the issue of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal finally took off the ground with the visit of a Nepalese delegation to Thimphu from 15-19 July 1993. The Nepalese delegation led by Home Minister Sher Bahadur Deupa included the Nepalese Ambassador to Bhutan, Chakra Prasad Bastola, Joint Secretary and Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kedar Bhakta Shrestha and Ram Bhakta Prasad Biswakarma Thakur respectively, Joint Secretary and

Section Officer in the Ministry of Home Affairs, Srikant Regmi and Ganesh Rai respectively. This was the first meeting between the two countries after the failed talks between King Jigme Singye Wangchuck and Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala in Dhaka during the SAARC Summit in April this year.

The Bhutanese side at the talks was led by the Home Minister Dago Tshering. The delegation included Home Secretary Jigmi Thinley. The two sides which met on 17 and 18

July have decided to set up a joint ministerial level committee comprising three members each to resolve the problem. The names of the members of the committee are to be intimated to each other soon and the committee is expected to start its work expeditiously.

While in Thimphu, the Nepalese delegation received an audience with His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck and also witnessed the proceedings in the National Assembly.

## FULL TEXT OF THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE

The Home Ministers of the Kingdoms of Nepal and Bhutan met in Thimphu on July 17 and 18, 1993. His Excellency, Mr. Sher Bahadur Deupa, the Home Minister of the Kingdom of Nepal and his delegation were accorded a warm welcome by Lyonpo Dago Tshering, the Bhutanese Home Minister who expressed the desire of the Royal Government to further strengthen the traditionally close and friendly relations between the peoples and governments of the two countries. He expressed his extreme happiness with the visit of the high delegation from Nepal to hold discussions on the problem confronting the two countries at present. The Home Minister of Nepal and his delegation were received in audience by His Majesty the King at Tashichhodzong.

The Nepalese Home Minister conveyed his appreciation for the warm welcome and reciprocated his country's desire to strengthen the existing ties of friendship and cooperation. The talks were held in a warm and cordial atmosphere.

The two Ministers expressed their firm resolve and keen determination to bring about a speedy and durable solution to the problem of people in the refugee camps in eastern Nepal. In this regard, both the Ministers agreed to establish a ministerial Joint Committee comprising of three persons from each side to resolve the problem. With a view to ensure that such a committee will be able to carry out its work effectively, the two Ministers agreed that this high level committee will fulfill the following mandate before undertaking any other activity:

- To determine the different categories of people claiming to have come from Bhutan in the refugee camps in eastern Nepal.
- To specify the positions of the two governments on each of these categories.
- To arrive at a mutually acceptable agreement on each of these categories, which will provide the basis for the resolution of the problem.

Both sides will communicate to each other the names of the members of the Joint Committee through the normal diplomatic channel. The Joint Committee shall begin its work as expeditiously as possible.

The first meeting of the Joint Committee will be held in Kathmandu as early as possible on mutually acceptable dates which will be decided through normal diplomatic channel.

The Home Ministers of Bhutan and Nepal reiterated the importance of close and friendly relations between the two countries and they expressed the conviction that the Joint Committee will find a durable solution to the problem which is causing great concern to both countries.

## EC ASSISTANCE FOR BHUTANESE REFUGEES

In response to a call for assistance from the UNHCR, the European Community has extended ECU 500,000 in emergency aid to Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. The amount will be used to provide refugees with shelter materials, blankets, cooking fuel and medical and

hygiene products.

Clearly more governments and international agencies are now better informed about the political crisis in Bhutan and the problem of Bhutanese in Nepal. The European Community's concern is also reflected in the agenda of its meeting during the

first week of June this year when the Bhutanese problem was discussed. The continued solidarity and support to Bhutanese in exile and simultaneous pressure on the Royal Government will go a long way in bringing about an early solution to the problem.

## 72nd SESSION OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ENDS

The 72nd session of the National Assembly of Bhutan which began on July 8 ended on July 30. With regard to issues related to southern Bhutan, the National Assembly repeated the deliberations of the 71st session. In most cases the discussions followed exactly the same pattern, but unlike last year when the government responded to the 'fire and brimstone' of National Assembly members with a refined but equally aggressive display, this year the government response was more subdued and cautious.

An interesting addition to the deliberations this year was a session devoted to Human Rights Violations in the Kingdom. Not surprisingly, the Assembly determined that there were human rights abuses in the country, but resolved that the perpetrators were dissidents and not the government! Further, according to Kuensel, the Assembly "pointed out that as practitioners of a religion (Buddhism) rooted in compassion and non-violence, the question of human rights violation in Bhutan does not arise at all."

## SEMINAR ON BHUTAN IN NEW DELHI

A seminar on Bhutan was organized in Delhi on July 28, 1993 by the Royal Bhutanese Embassy under the aegis of the India International Centre. It is the second such seminar in India ostensibly financed by the Royal Government of Bhutan as part of its propaganda campaign. Earlier a similar seminar was organized in Jaipur in the Indian state of Rajasthan. As in the case of the Jaipur meet, the seminar in Delhi was open to only a selected few; media persons and scholars known to be regime-friendly and diplomats from donor countries. The seminar was clearly organized primarily to provide a platform for the Bhutanese government to "complain" about the "adverse propaganda" against the regime on the issue of southern Bhutan.

Speaking at the opening session, former Ambassador to Bhutan and current Secretary (East) in the Indian Ministry of External Affairs Mr. Salman Haider maintained that resolution of the present crisis in Bhutan was "in India's interest as well" and that "quiet diplomacy may pay off." He also spoke at length on the achievements of the Bhutanese monarchy especially with regard to its handling of its foreign policy and refusal to be swamped by external forces.

Secretary in the Bhutanese Ministry of Home Affairs, Jigme Thinley, reiterated the hackneyed Royal Government position but echoed Mr. Haider's observation that in the search for a durable and lasting solution quiet diplomacy will ultimately pay off.



## The Bhutan REVIEW

### THIMPHU'S CAPITULATION

Not unexpectedly, concerns and criticisms have abounded in some quarters at the end of the first round of bilateral discussions between His Majesty's Government of Nepal and the Royal Government of Bhutan in Thimphu - refugees were not identified specifically as Bhutanese, no detailed solution was indicated, repatriation was not reflected in the Joint Communique etc. Some have seen the outcome of the Thimphu talks as a failure on the part of His Majesty's Government of Nepal; yet others have expressed their lack of faith in the bilateral efforts. All these critics appear to have missed the significance and implications of the Nepalese delegation's visit to Thimphu.

Implicit in the Royal Government of Bhutan's willingness to formally participate in the bilateral talks to resolve the issue of refugees on Nepalese soil is the acceptance that there are refugees in the camps who have come from Bhutan, a clear departure from her earlier position that refugees in camps in eastern Nepal were not from Bhutan but from the north-eastern states of India and Nepal itself. (Thimphu is undoubtedly painfully aware that similar bilateral talks have not been initiated between Nepal and India to consider those people alleged by Bhutan to have been evicted from North-East India). Also implicit in the Royal Government of Bhutan's agreement for setting up of a Joint Committee to determine the different categories of people is the tacit acceptance that there are legitimate Bhutanese citizens in the refugee camps. As a corollary, Thimphu has, by default, conceded that Bhutanese authorities have been responsible for forcible eviction of its citizens.

Consequently, on the crucial question of whether, owing to the discriminatory policies of the regime and the consequent enforcement of repressive rules and regulations in southern Bhutan, the Royal Government of Bhutan is guilty of violating the basic rights of legitimate citizens and compelling them to seek sanctuary outside the kingdom, the capitulation of Thimphu is a major step forward towards resolving the current crisis. That the Royal Government of Bhutan has been compelled, whether of its own volition or not, to formally be a party to the physical aspects of the solution process is a moral victory for the Bhutanese refugee community. The search for the truth can be said to have begun; in due course the world will be able to determine whether truth springs from the anguished voices of a hundred thousand people who have been wronged or from a small coterie desperately seeking to protect their special privileges.

### WANTED: HELPFUL INTRUDERS

The commencement of formal talks between Nepal and Bhutan for resolving the problem of over a hundred thousand Bhutanese refugees brings to mind a particular variety of friendly chess matches, the kind where friends and passers-by crowd around two 'players' across a single board. From silent observation to subdued comments to guarded suggestions, the intrusions begin. Before long, foreign arms reach out to help along pieces across the board, and 'players' often become relegated to mere spectators as the game progresses. In extreme cases, there is even that strange and comical situation where one overhelpful individual thinks out strategies for both protagonists and even conveniently moves both black and white pieces. The intrusion is complete. The initial steps in the Nepal-Bhutan bilateral talks have begun. Thimphu may have been given the benefit of the doubt by some, but among others fears persist that Bhutan has little interest in allowing the deliberations between the two governments to reach its logical conclusion. In the minds of many observers, the Royal Government may be faltering, but it still remains recalcitrant.

Obviously not a willing participant but compelled by circumstances to enter into the bilateral dialogues with Nepal, Thimphu clearly believes itself competent of making the appropriate moves in the diplomatic parleys ahead. Procrastination at opportune moments is likely to form an important part of the Bhutanese strategy. Will the world stay a mute spectator and observe this slow progress in disciplined silence or, in the manner of the intruding 'chess spoilsport', offer comments and suggestions to keep the talks moving?

The refugees and Nepal are looking forward to early solutions; Bhutan, on the other hand, probably hopes to prolong the negotiations to delay the inevitable return of Bhutanese citizens ousted from their homes by foul means. With such divergent perceptions and objectives, the talks can hardly be expected to progress smoothly. To keep the bilateral talks on track, therefore, international pressure which was brought to bear on Bhutan to force the regime to the negotiating table must continue even now. Frequent and timely intervention and advice by friendly governments will be necessary to force Thimphu to see reason.

While not suggesting the ultimate intruder, breathing down the necks of both Kathmandu and Thimphu dictating terms and deciding every move for each side, healthy intrusions from all concerned governments will ensure steady progress in the bilateral efforts. To this end, Bhutanese in exile count on the sympathy, support and solidarity of the international community and hope that a sense of urgency will be demanded from Bhutan and necessary directions provided to the bilateral talks so that there is an expeditious settlement of the problem enabling the early return of Bhutanese refugees to their own homes in southern Bhutan.

## NEED FOR GLOBAL THINKING: HUMAN RIGHTS IN A SHRINKING WORLD

BY HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA

No matter what country or continent we come from we have common human needs and concerns. We all seek happiness and try to avoid suffering regardless of our race, religion, sex or political status. Human beings, indeed all sentient beings, have a right to pursue happiness and live in peace and in freedom.

As free human beings we can use our unique intelligence to try to understand ourselves and our world. But if we are prevented from using our creative potential, we are deprived of one of the basic characteristics of a human being. It is very often the most gifted, dedicated and creative members in our society who become victims of human rights abuses. Thus the political, social, cultural and economic development of a society are obstructed by the violation of human rights. Therefore, the protection of these are of immense value and importance.

### PRINCIPAL REASON

It is my belief that the lack of understanding of the true nature of happiness is the principal reason why people inflict suffering on others. They either think that the suffering of others can somehow be a source of happiness for themselves or that their own happiness is of such importance that the pain of others is of no significance. This is clearly shortsighted.

When we demand the rights and freedoms we cherish, we should also be aware of our responsibilities. If we accept that others have an equal right to peace and happiness as ourselves, do we not have a responsibility to help those in need? Respect for fundamental human rights is as important to the people of Africa and Asia as it is to those in Europe or the Americas. All human beings, whatever their cultural or historic background, suffer when they are intimidated, imprisoned or tortured.

Recently, some Asian governments have contended that the same standards of human rights advocated by the west cannot be applied in the Third World because of differences in culture and differences in social and economic developments. I have been saddened and concerned by this position. I do not share this view and I am sure neither will the majority of the Asian people, for it is the inherent nature of human beings to yearn for freedom, dignity and peace. On the contrary, the rich diversity of cultures and religions should help to strengthen the fundamental human rights in all communities. Traditional customs, such as discrimination of women and weaker sections of society, that are inconsistent with the concept of the universally recognized human rights, must change. The universal principles of equality of all human beings must take precedence.

In India there may be stray outbursts of human rights' violations. These tend to occur in comparatively isolated pockets where extremists and terrorists themselves engage in acts that violate human rights. By and large, there is genuine freedom in

this country and a healthy flourishing democracy. India can truly take the pride in this. Thus, it is all the more unfortunate and sad that on the issue of human rights India takes a stand similar to that of a country like China, where there is neither genuine freedom nor even a semblance of democracy, which must form the very basis of human rights.

It is mainly the authoritarian and totalitarian regimes who are opposed to the indivisibility of human rights. It would be absolutely wrong to concede to this view. On the contrary, such regimes should respect and conform to the universally accepted principles in the larger and long-term interests of their own peoples. The dramatic changes in the past few years clearly indicate that the triumph of human rights is inevitable.

### HUMAN RIGHTS

The creation of universally accepted and binding standards of human rights as laid down in the universal declaration of human rights and in the international covenants of human rights is essential in today's shrinking world. We need to think in global terms, because the effects of one nation's actions are experienced far beyond its borders.

There is a growing awareness of people's responsibilities to each other and the planet we share. This is encouraging even though so much suffering continues to be inflicted in the name of nationalism, race, religion, ideology and history. A new hope is emerging for the downtrodden, and people everywhere are displaying a willingness to champion and defend the rights and freedoms of their fellow human beings.

Brute force, no matter how strongly applied, can never subdue the basic human desire for freedom and dignity. It is not enough, as communist systems have assumed, merely to provide people with food, shelter and clothing. The deeper human nature needs to breathe the air of liberty.

Artificial barriers that have divided nations and peoples have fallen in

recent times. We are experiencing a time filled with hope and expectations. However, some governments still do not accept that the fate of a people in any country is the legitimate concern of the entire human family and that claims to sovereignty are not a license to mistreat one's citizens. It is not only our right as members of the global human family to protest when our brothers and sisters are being treated brutally, but our duty as well to do whatever we can to help them.

### POPULAR MOVEMENT

We are witnessing a tremendous and popular movement for the advancement of human rights and democratic freedoms in the world. This movement has to grow to such a moral force that even determined governments and armies are incapable of suppressing it.

These changes fill many of us with courage and hope for the future. It is natural and just for nations and peoples to demand respect for their rights and freedoms and to struggle to end repression, racism, economic exploitation, military occupation, various forms of colonialism and alien domination. Governments should now actively support such demands instead of only paying lip service.

I, for one, strongly believe that individuals can make a difference in society. Every individual has a responsibility to help guide our global family in the right direction and we must each act by self-responsibility. As a Buddhist monk, I try to develop compassion within myself, not simply as a religious practice, but on a human level as well. To encourage myself in this altruistic attitude, I sometime find it helpful to imagine myself as a single individual on one side and on the other a huge gathering of all other human beings. Then I ask myself, "whose interests are more important?" To me it is quite clear that however important I may feel I am, I am just one individual while others are infinite.

### THE BHUTANESE REFUGEE

*You murdered no one, abandoned no children  
to starvation before the television screen  
of a calloused world, spaced-out  
on soap opera - Indeed, you assembled  
no Molotov cocktails with paraffin and tin.  
Peasant, on your hillslopes, forging  
a lush green growth of humble cereal  
to feed the scions of a dragon king;  
and enable him to keep his Shangri-La  
to enchant that adoration from afar  
for a plastic land based on false purities.  
How wonderful, the fair anachronism  
to those who dwell caged in affluence,  
shielded from a way they cannot understand,  
adoring that which will now fail  
without the sweat and ceaseless toil  
of those who dwell as strangers on another's soil.*

GRETA RANA, JULY 1993.

A member of PEN International, Ms. Rana is a well known poet and writer who lives in Kathmandu. She wrote 'The Bhutanese Refugee' especially for the Review.



## BHUTAN AND THE INDIAN MEDIA

Advances in communications have brought the world closer and ensured that even small nations do not escape media attention. The Indian mass media in general and print media in particular plays a critical role in the affairs of not only India but also in that of the entire sub-continent. But for the average Indian, the mountains in the Himalayas are still culturally, economically, socially and politically dormant; there is little that can happen in these mountain kingdoms which would significantly affect India. Faced with such a mental block and the myriad of problems that provide abundant good copy at home, the Indian media generally tends to see most developments in the tiny neighbouring kingdoms to the north as inconsequential. It is precisely because of this mindset that Bhutan, faced with a political crisis for over four years now, has appeared in the Indian media only intermittently.

But over the last one month, starting from the last quarter of June, there was suddenly a flurry of reports about Bhutan. The coverage, however, can hardly be considered serious or conscientious. In fact, a sampling of a few of the articles which appeared during this period indicates the distinct possibility that deadlines were simply being met when the media, for unexplained reasons, was compelled to carry stories about Bhutan. More often than not, even in these hasty reports the Indian media has repaid the regime for Thimphu's kindness and generosity. The numerous instances of biased and prejudiced reporting is not, however, the main problem; what is shocking is the vast degree of glaring inaccuracies, absolute blunders and uninformed opinions in respected periodicals and newspapers.

### INDIA TODAY

Writing in India Today (June 30, 1993), under the title "The Divide Deepens," Sarbari Majumdar says "with the Drukpas becoming restless and the king unable to stem the growing ethnic divide, the subcontinent's Shangri La is rapidly turning into the region's latest killing fields". Harsh words, indeed. Fortunately, they are far from true. Despite the Bhutanese government's wish to desire it so and its obsessive attempts to create such a situation, the current crisis in Bhutan has very little to do with ethnic differences. What does exist is a divide between the regime and a particular ethnic group which has been the target of discriminatory policies and regulations.

In all fairness, it must be emphasized that Majumdar tried hard to be objective. But how accurate the analysis is, should be viewed in the context of the statement, "since royal forces put down agitations there in 1988." Anyone attempting to analyze the current Bhutanese crisis should be aware by now that the year in question is 1990. Moreover, there is an accompanying photograph which has been credited to the reporter. The photograph depicts the "tika" ceremony at "Dasain", in this instance 1991; foreigners are never invited to this function. But, it is the little map in the article which contains a horde of blunders;

Every Bhutanese, refugees included, will rightfully have cause to shed a tear for the truly dreadful map of the country. Besides being badly deformed, of the nine locales identified only three, Thimphu, Tongsa and Samchi are shown approximately in their correct locations. Chirang is a district which does not have a town named after it. Even in the case of the district Chirang, the dot is way off target. But not quite as much as the dot representing Samdrup Jongkhar which has migrated from the extreme east to where Phuntsholing should be. Of course, nobody in Bhutan could have heard of Dorbi and Dukti, names which appear to have been concocted for this map alone. And the handful of villagers from Thewargaon, if they could read, would be forever thrilled that their tiny, remote, inconsequential, and generally unknown village merited a mention in a 1:10,000,000 map of the country



### HINDUSTAN TIMES

While the article in India Today, despite the plethora of inaccuracies and subsequent conclusions, attempted to provide a faithful analysis of the current situation in Bhutan, the article by M.K.Dhar "The Nepalese Squeeze on Bhutan" in the Hindustan Times (July 5, 1993) is essentially the product of a regime-friendly journalist.

Unlike some in the media who go overboard in the defense of the generous regime in Thimphu, Dhar manages to provide an element of finesse. Thus, while noting the Bhutanese government's admission of the dress code being "implemented with unnecessary vigour by some overzealous district officials" he wisely refrains from analyzing the consequences of the government's failure to recognize and rectify the situation before it eventually was allowed to spin out of control. Further, he accepts the government's explanations that "Nepali was merely dropped from the school curriculum and not banned" but refrains from observing the obvious, that barring the learning of any language is equivalent to effectively enforcing an ultimate ban.

After a lengthy historical background and weighty comments on the "issues" related to the current crisis, all so obviously reflecting the view from the south face of Tashichhodzong, Dhar unleashes two final paragraphs intended to support the regime's position. However, for the careful reader, they actually serve only to negate whatever may have been contained in the preceding 2,000 words. In the penultimate paragraph, he refers to the "invitations" issued by the Royal Government to Amnesty International (AI) and the International

Committee of the Red Cross to visit Bhutan. In typical Dawa Tsering fashion, Dhar firmly concludes that "neither body has found substance in the charge of gross human rights violations." For anyone who has read the AI report such a deduction can only be termed preposterous, to say the least. For Dhar to have arrived at such a conclusion there could be one of three reasons; one, he read and understood the contents of AI report but decided to go with the government's propaganda view for personal reasons; two, he never got to see the AI report and accepted the government's conclusions at face value; three, he received the report but does not have adequate grasp over the English language to recognize strictures when they are made. One can understand both Dhar's psychology and attitude in his concluding sentence where he, as usual, accepts the government explanation that "the monarchical system is democratic and popular" by arguing that "it was the choice of the Bhutanese people to establish such a system [hereditary monarchy] when they unanimously elected Ugen Wangchuck as Bhutan's first hereditary monarch in 1907." He would have done well to remember that it was the "choice" of the people of the time that provided pre-independent India with hundreds of Maharajas and princely kingdoms, and that monarchy was the most prevalent form of government throughout the world even in the not-too-distant past. But this did not mean, as has been proved, that change was undesirable, unlawful or impossible.

### THE HINDU

"Hope on eve of Bhutan-Nepal talks" which appeared in The Hindu (July 15, 1993) must rank as one of the strangest pieces of writing anywhere. For some inexplicable reason datelined Damak in eastern Nepal, the special correspondent makes it amply clear that he is covering every place in the world except the region from where he claims to be filing his report. To further complicate matters, the correspondent covers every other topic except the subject of hope and the Nepal-Bhutan talks. Instead, clearly taking his dictation from the Royal Government, the correspondent takes the opportunity to file the Thimphu view liberally lacing his story with unforgettable quotes from Dago Tsering, the Bhutanese Home Minister.

Starting with the Bhutanese king's denial that there is any persecution of southerners, the special correspondent manages to summarize the entire Bhutanese government position. "It is also a threat to my country's cultural identity, rather than an issue of democracy or human rights as projected by dissident propaganda," he has Home Minister Dago Tsering saying. A new angle to the regime's version of Nepalese "economic migrants" is introduced when he has Dago Tsering stating that "massive scale of illegal immigration (that) occurred in 1961." This determination of a specific year of migration of Nepalese into Bhutan adds yet another dimension to the ever-changing government theory! The special correspondent ensures that he has space to allow the Minister to deny

that there has ever been any "ethnic cleansing", and aver instead that southern Bhutanese were "emigrating and were not being forcibly evicted."

Not surprisingly, he comes down hard on the Nepalese Prime Minister for the failure of talks at Dhaka. He rationalizes the Bhutanese monarch's position and flays all moves made by Nepal. And, like Dhar of the Hindustan Times, this special correspondent reserves the concluding paragraph to indicate clearly which side he represents; he may be writing from Damak which lies unquestionably on Nepalese soil, but equally unquestionably Thimphu surely pulls the strings because he takes leave of the readers with the words "the Nepalese Prime Minister, however, changed his position and said he was willing to give bilateral discussions a chance to succeed. The Bhutan King welcomed Mr.Koirala's changed attitude."

## MEDIA SCAN

THIMPHU (Bhutan), JULY 20: The Nepalese Home Minister, Mr.Sher Bahadur Deopa, told newsmen here on Monday that two friendly countries, Nepal and Bhutan, were having problems because of one lakh refugees who were living in camps in Nepal, a matter which had to be solved bilaterally. Mr.Deopa said Nepal had no illwill towards Bhutan. "We have nothing to do with the internal politics of Bhutan. But since we have a burden of over one lakh people, Bhutan should understand our problem."

The Nepalese Home Minister was leading a high-level delegation to Thimphu for talks with Bhutan on the fate of about 80,000 refugees settled in camps in eastern Nepal. The talks ended on Monday. This was the first official contact between the two Himalayan neighbours after the failed talks between the Bhutanese King and the Nepalese Prime Minister, Mr.Girija Prasad Koirala, in Dhaka during the SAARC summit in April. Bhutan has maintained that not all the people in the camps were Bhutanese, and that it was willing to take the responsibility for all genuine Bhutanese citizens.

The Hindu, New Delhi, July 21, 1993.

*Not all that appears in print in other languages represents accurate reporting or informed opinion. In the extract below Tom Derksen, Field Director in Bhutan of SNV, an NGO for The Netherlands Development Cooperation, airs his righteous opinions. Since he admits elsewhere in the article that genuine Bhutanese citizens have been evicted by the government, Derksen's proposed solution of re-integration is diabolical and immoral; fundamental freedoms and inherent rights of a section of citizens cannot be trampled upon to facilitate convenient and neat solutions. This extract is translated from the original Dutch.*

"One could have thought of different scenarios. The immigration of people could have continued with the final installation of a Nepalese government. This would have led to more immigration and this would have ended in a situation as in Sikkim, with a marginal original population. There is now a scenario in which the original inhabitants have intervened, leading to dreadful scenes for the people that have to leave the country. It is very difficult to find a happy medium. Of course, the ideal solution for these kinds of problems is a situation in which one ethnic group does not dominate the other. But time and again in various countries it proves very difficult to find a balance between the various ethnic groups. In Bhutan the situation is very complex. What the government does is understandable, but many mistakes have been made. On top of that one always sympathizes with the people that suffer. But the other scenario would have given the suffering to the other side. It will be very tough to come out of this situation in a good way.

It certainly is no good publicity for the country. Bhutan will have to do a lot on Public Relations and admit that mistakes have been made. The country should be prepared to face the rest of the world. The western world should not be patronizing in this dialogue. We will have to tell Bhutan that we also have an immigration problem and ethnic minorities and that we are also not able to deal with it successfully. Let's talk about it and see if we can learn something from one another. If you start a conversation from this angle, you may be able to achieve something. Of course, it does not solve the problem of those that have already been expelled from the country. You may possibly find that in re-integration into Nepalese society. I think The Netherlands and SNV should give all their support to this."

Vice Versa, No.4, 1993 - An SNV Publication.

## "IN QUOTES"

"Education, in the broadest sense, is crucial in a Buddhist Society. Children must be taught reality, not nationalistic, ethnic and sectarian propaganda. Nor should they be indoctrinated into any economic or political system which does not serve their own human needs." Ven. Santikaro Bhikku in "The Desirable Society in Buddhism" quoted in Asialink, Nov-Dec 1992.

"When the RCSC Secretary and the Director General of Education met with students during their recent tour, students said they believed that a candidate must be "well connected" to receive good career opportunities." Kuensel, July 3, 1993.

"The promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms must be brought back to our centre of attention. It should be given its rightful place in the U.N. System." Dutch Foreign Minister, Dr. P.H. Kooijmans at the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna, June 1993.