

The Bhutan REVIEW

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TALKS POSTPONED

The third round of Nepal-Bhutan talks scheduled to take place in Kathmandu on 28-31 March has been postponed. The decision to this effect was taken on March 27 when the Bhutanese side requested that the talks be put off on account of the demise of the maternal Royal Grandmother Rani Chuni Dorji. The Joint Committee will now meet in Kathmandu from 4-7 April.

RANI CHUNI PASSES AWAY

Rani Chuni Dorji, mother of Her Majesty the Queen Mother Ashi Kesang Wangchuck passed away in Kalimpong, a hill-station in West Bengal, India, on Saturday, March 26. *The Bhutan Review* offers prayers for the peace of the departed soul.

Rani Chuni visited Bhutan only infrequently, spending most of her life in Kalimpong from where the Dorji family practically ruled southern Bhutan until the 1960s. She is survived by two daughters, HM the Queen Mother and her elder sister Tashi Dorji and two sons, Ugen Dorji and Lhendup Dorji. The eldest son Jigmi Palden Dorji, Bhutan's only formal Prime Minister, was assassinated in 1964.

Daughter of the Chogyal (King) of Sikkim, Sir Tashi Namgyel, Rani Chuni was born in Gangtok, Sikkim around 1895. She married Raja S.T. Dorji, son of Kazi Ugyen Dorji who was instrumental in ensuring British help for Sir Ugen Wangchuck thus enabling him to crown himself as the first hereditary King of Bhutan in 1907. In exchange, the Dorji family, which had migrated to Kalimpong from Haa in western Bhutan in the 1870s, also acquired hereditary claims to a post equivalent to that of Prime Minister until the assassination of Jigmi Dorji and consequent "conspiracy" in 1966 involving Lhendup Dorji.

RELEASED AFTER FOUR YEARS



The Human Rights Organization of Bhutan (HUROB) in its 1993 Annual Report had appealed for pressure to be applied on the Royal Government of Bhutan regarding the whereabouts and physical condition of Deo Dutta Sharma, a student activist who had been abducted by government agents from

RAPHEL VISITS REFUGEE CAMPS



Ms Raphael and Tahir Ali with HUROB Acting Chairman at Beldangi

The United States Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Ms Robin Raphael, who was on an official visit to the Kingdom of Nepal from 26 - 30 March 1994, visited Beldangi refugee camps on March 28. Speaking to refugees in Beldangi I, Ms. Raphael expressed satisfaction with the efforts of His Majesty's Government of Nepal, UNHCR and the voluntary agencies and thanked them "for what is clearly a very impressive operation." She said that the United States is urging both Nepal and Bhutan to come up with "concrete ways for repatriation to begin."

Ms Raphael was accompanied by Michael Malinowski, Charge d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy in Kathmandu, Chakra Prasad Bastola, Royal Nepalese Ambassador to Bhutan, James Smith, Resident Representative of the World Bank, Tahir Ali, Resident Representative of the UNHCR in Kathmandu and other officials.

On arrival, the delegation was briefed on the refugee camp situation by Pashupati Karmacharya, Deputy Director, OMIU, His Majesty's Government of Nepal. Jock M. Baker, Head of UNHCR Sub-Office in Jhapa, highlighted the relief activities carried out by various agencies and Jwala Prasad Regmi, Head Master of Panchawati High School in Beldangi camp spoke on behalf of the refugees.

Siliguri, India, on December 24, 1989.

On February 22, coinciding with the 400th birth anniversary of Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyel, Sharma was released after spending over 4 years in prison. He was among the twenty three "anti-national detainees" amnestied without being charged or put on trial.

Ms Raphael briefly inspected the camps and talked to representatives of refugees. She said that she could clearly see that the refugees had no desire to remain in the camps and wished to return home. She admired the "courage and ability" of Bhutanese refugees and hoped that "justice can be done" and that people could end their lives as refugees soon and begin life all over again.

Talking to the media at the Tribhuvan International Airport prior to her departure from Nepal, Ms Raphael said that she had raised the issue of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal with the Indian Government officials who in turn informed her of their inability to do anything because of the open border between India and Bhutan. Having facilitated the exodus of Bhutanese refugees to Nepal since they have come through India, the Government of India was reluctant to take on any responsibility in the matter, she further stated.

BHUTANESE PROBLEM IN THE NEPALESE PARLIAMENT

Cutting across party lines and ideological differences, representatives of various political parties in the Nepalese Parliament on March 20 expressed concerns about the slow progress in the bilateral talks with Bhutan and demanded that they be informed about the latest position with regard to the repatriation of Bhutanese refugees to their homeland.

Responding to the queries, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala informed the House that considerable progress had been made in the matter of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. Despite the doubts expressed by Bhutan in the initial stages regarding the identity of the refugees, the Bhutanese Government has now come to the negotiating table to discuss the problem. He also stated that progress has been made in providing legitimacy to the identity of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal.

The Prime Minister added, however, that since the repatriation of refugees to their homeland is not an issue of unilateral concern, and since it involves several sensitive and complicated aspects, it is taking time to resolve the problem. Informing the House that the Government's diplomatic efforts are centred in the direction of repatriating the Bhutanese refugees to Bhutan with dignity and respect, the Prime Minister expressed the hope that Bhutan will also understand the importance of the issue and help create a congenial atmosphere in finding a solution to the problem.

FOREIGN SECRETARY TRANSFERRED

The post of Foreign Secretary now lies vacant with the transfer of Tshewang J. Rixin to the Ministry of Health and Education on March 25. The Royal Government also announced the placement and transfer of four other senior officials. Deputy Minister Leki Dorji has been moved from Agriculture to Communication while former ambassadors, also of Deputy Minister rank, Karma Letho and Paljor Dorji have been placed in the Royal Advisory Council and Environment Secretariat respectively. Dr. Kinzang Dorji, the Joint Secretary of the Research, Extension and Irrigation Division in the Ministry of Agriculture has been promoted to the rank of Secretary in the same Ministry.

The transfer of Rixin, a popular individual who has spent his entire career in the Foreign Ministry, to the less glamorous post has not come as a surprise. The first sign that his time in the wilderness had begun was recently in evidence when Rixin was bypassed while Jigmi Thinlay and Khandu Wangchuk, both many years his junior, were appointed as Deputy Ministers. The fresh humiliation confirms the worst. Since his estrangement from the monarch's elder sister HRH Ashi Sonam Chhoden Wangchuck, this was always on the cards. Royal displeasure is reported to have been further inflamed when Rixin's late father, Lyonpo Sangye Penjor, tendered his resignation.

With an overabundance of Secretaries in the Health and Education Ministry, three as against none in most other Ministries, no one will be unduly surprised when the royal brother-in-law from the Health Division is commanded to take up the now vacant coveted post. Fortunately for the latter, while he too may have been estranged from another princess, he has four of his own sisters married to the monarch to serve as a wide safety net.

HMG, UNHCR AGREEMENT

UNHCR and His Majesty's Government of Nepal signed an agreement on running a project for the management of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal. Signed on March 14 by Srikant Regmi, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs on behalf of HMG/ Nepal and Tahir Ali, Representative of UNHCR in Nepal, the agreement provides for an assistance amounting to Rs 10.801 million from UNHCR to HMG/ Nepal for running the project. UNHCR has also provided two computers and a photocopying machine to the National Refugee Coordination Unit in the Ministry of Home Affairs as institutional support.

The Bhutan REVIEW

ANOTHER CHANCE

Coming in the wake of visit by the Kathmandu and New Delhi-based diplomatic corp to the Bhutanese refugee camps in southeastern Nepal last month, the tour of the Beldangi camps in Jhapa by the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs is further testimony of the international community's sympathy for Bhutanese refugees and concern over the political situation in Bhutan. The visit by Ms Raphel, the highest level official from the Clinton administration to visit Nepal, has understandably raised hopes among refugees and well-wishers.

Although Bhutan and the United States do not have diplomatic relations, American concern over the crisis in southern Bhutan is not new. In addition to making substantial contributions for the welfare of Bhutanese refugees, the U.S. has not missed out on opportunities to let it be known to Bhutan that the problem should be speedily resolved. It may be recalled that the 1993 country report on human rights practices in the Kingdom had clearly indicted the Bhutanese regime for grave human rights violations. More significantly, by censuring Bhutan for the forced eviction of legitimate citizens, the United States Government, like all other governments, has acknowledged the *bona fides* of refugees in the Nepalese refugee camps, a point that Thimphu continues to foolishly argue and belabour over. The State Department's decision to use Ms Raphel's trip to Nepal to make what is unmistakably a political statement on the Bhutanese issue must be seen in this context.

While Ms Raphel's visit brought hope and cheer to Bhutanese in exile, it also brought disconcerting news. Prior to her departure from Nepal Ms Raphel disclosed to reporters that Indian officials had expressed their inability to do anything regarding the Bhutanese crisis because of the open borders between Bhutan and India. Considering Indo-Bhutanese relations and equations, no other excuse could be quite as lame.

New Delhi's apathy does nothing to help allay fears that the situation in Bhutan has reached the point it has only on account of Indian engineering. That the latter remains the sole beneficiary of an unstable Bhutan only helps to further reinforce this view. It is thus unfortunate that India continues to hide behind the convenient screen of "non-interference" while thousands of human beings suffer.

It is also ironic and tragic that while there are those forced by circumstances to address the political situation in Bhutan from the refugee perspective, India steadfastly refuses to be drawn into the Bhutanese refugee issue ostensibly on account of political ramifications. However, like the arguments of the Bhutanese regime, New Delhi's excuses, however noble, are unlikely to hold valid for long. With the rest of the world taking a common stand against the gross injustice, it ill befits an immediate neighbour with an established tradition of democratic values to continue playing the odd man out.

It is against this backdrop that the third round of bilateral talks between the two Governments is taking place in Kathmandu. It is no coincidence that so far almost every round of discussions between Bhutan and Nepal has been preceded by either a visit to the refugee camps by representatives of various Governments or Press Releases announcing assistance to the refugees. While the regime may draw comfort from the silence in some quarters, Thimphu must clearly recognize the explicit signals conveyed through these diplomatic actions.

Thus far, Bhutan side has availed of every opportunity to inject elements of delay, and has time and again exposed its insincerity in the search for a lasting solution. In fact, reliable sources indicate that this time, too, a postponement was already on the cards once Ms Raphel's visit to Nepal was finalized to coincide with the bilateral talks. In the end, the sad demise of Rani Chuni Dorji in Kalimpong provided Thimphu with the excuse at the last minute to avoid the discomfort of sharing the stage with the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State.

It should be amply clear to Thimphu that the issue of Bhutanese in exile will not simply vanish; that thanks to the goodwill and sympathy of the international community legitimate citizens unlawfully evicted from their homes will not perish in the wilderness. It should also be equally clear to the regime that prolonging the problem will not be in the long-term interest of the country. With the passage of time, discontent in the Kingdom can only grow. There are already visible signs that unrest is on the rise, and that the country is coming face to face with difficult situations. The arrests of a large number of dissidents in the east and west, and the problem of 'intrusion from across the border as a result of empty villages' in the south, are examples. These are bound to multiply manifold in the absence of basic reforms in the country and an early resolution of the refugee problem.

The second round of talks in Thimphu in February produced nothing concrete but the two sides did at least agree to meet almost immediately. The Bhutanese regime has another chance in Kathmandu this April. The need of the hour is for sincerity of purpose and genuine efforts on the part of the Royal Government of Bhutan because, having lived in exile for over four years, the patience of refugees is understandably wearing thin.

NEED FOR NON-VIOLENCE

- HH The Dalai Lama

The emergence of non-violent 'people-power' movements have indisputably shown that the human race can neither tolerate nor function properly under tyranny. The recognition of this truth represents remarkable progress.

Love and compassion have been omitted from too many spheres of social interaction for too long. Usually confined to the family and home, their practice in public life is considered impractical, even naive..

This is tragic. The practice of compassion, far from being a symptom of being unrealistic, is the most effective way to pursue the best interests of others as well as ourselves.

The more we - as a nation, group or individuals - depend on others, the more it is in our best interests to ensure their well being.

As recently as the fifties and sixties, people believed that war was an inevitable evil of mankind. The cold war, in particular, reaffirmed the notion that opposing political systems could only clash, not compete or even collaborate.

Few hold this view now. Today, people all over the planet are genuinely concerned about world peace. They are far less interested in propounding ideologies and far more committed to coexistence.

Still, every day, the media report incidents of terrorism and aggression. I have never been to a country where tragic stories of death and bloodshed did not fill the newspapers and airwaves.

The overwhelming majority of the human race does not behave destructively; very few of the five

billion people on this planet actually commit acts of violence, but why does it continue all the same?

Most of us have been conditioned to regard military combat as exciting and glamorous - an opportunity for men to prove their competence and courage. Since armies are legal, we feel that war is acceptable; in general, nobody feels that war, or even the acceptance of it, is criminal. We have been brainwashed. By their very design, military establishments are the single greatest violators of human rights - and not only in war time. Once an army has become powerful, there is every likelihood that it will destroy its own country's happiness.

No matter how malevolent or evil the many murderous dictators and cause international problems, they cannot harm or destroy human lives or whole countries if they do not have a military organization, accepted and condoned by society.

As long as there are powerful armies, there will always be danger of dictatorship. And if we really believe dictatorship to be a despicable and destructive form of government, we must recognize this inescapable fact.

Although I am deeply opposed to war, I am not advocating appeasement. I feel that compassionate concern for the benefit of others - not simply for oneself - is the sole justification of the use of force. It is often necessary to take a strong stand to counter unjust aggression, as was the case in World War II, or the Korean War.

However, it is difficult to assess such matters with a degree of accuracy. War is violence and violence is unpredictable. Therefore it is far better to avoid it altogether, if possible, and never to presume that we know from beforehand whether the outcome of a particular war will be beneficial or not.

I have heard the occasional Westerner maintain that long-term Gandhian struggles employing non-violent passive resistance do not suit everybody, and such courses of action are more natural in the East.

Because Westerners are active, they tend to seek immediate results in all situations, even at the cost of their lives. This approach is not always beneficial. The practice of non-violence clearly benefits all of us.

Although the majority of young Chinese students involved in the democracy movement were born and raised under an especially harsh form of communism, in Spring 1989, they spontaneously practiced Mahatma Gandhi's strategy of passive resistance.

This is remarkable and clearly shows that ultimately, all human beings want to pursue the path of peace, no matter how much they have been indoctrinated.

For thousands of years, people believed that only an authoritarian organisation employing rigid disciplinary methods could govern human society, but peoples' innate desire for freedom and democracy was in constant conflict with that system. Today it is clear which idea has won.

Courtesy : The Independent, Kathmandu.

HRH ASHI DEKI SENTENCED

A Taiwanese Court sentenced Her Royal Highness Ashi Deki Yangzom Wangchuck, an aunt of His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, to 10 months imprisonment on March 18 after finding her guilty of violating Taiwan's Conservation Laws. In what was reported as Taiwan's largest haul of endangered wildlife parts, the princess was arrested at the Taipei Airport last September with 22 rhino horns and parts from musk deer valued at US \$740,000. She had been released on bail pending formal trial but had been ordered by the court to remain in the country.

THE BOSTON GLOBE • SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1993



RHINO HORN BUST - Princess Dekiy Wangchuck (left), 43, of Bhutan appears at a Taipei airport yesterday after being arrested for allegedly attempting to smuggle endangered rhinoceros' horns into the country. Police displayed the 22 horns (right photo), reportedly worth more than \$740,000 on Taiwan's black market.

From the Archives... Lessons from the Past?

The Government of India view - that it is not responsible for Bhutan's refugee problem and is not in a position to do anything with regard to the current problem in Bhutan - disclosed to visiting U.S. officials recently, may have appealed to some naive Bhutanese nationalists, but the ramifications of such an attitude do not augur well. There may be some parallels in this front-page article written when Bhutanese were still "naturally suspicious of foreigners" and "reliable friend" Sikkim was still an independent Kingdom.

SWARAN'S BHUTAN TRIP: NEED FOR NEW APPROACH THE SUNDAY STANDARD, BOMBAY, FEBRUARY 27, 1966

In focus again, this time more sharply than ever, is India's relationship with the twin Himalayan border States — Sikkim and Bhutan. The occasion is Foreign Minister Swaran Singh's forthcoming visit to Bhutan to confer with the King.

The immediate need, say political observers in the capital, is to have a reassessment of New Delhi's attitude towards the two protectorates. And, if a painful reappraisal is required, it should not be delayed any further.

The top Buddhist priests who help the King rule Bhutan are not terribly keen on reforms, for understandable reasons.

—These observers make the point that for too long India's policies towards the Himalayan States has been left to "chance" and now to the overall threat of Chinese troops sitting across the border.

The first job is to see if we can have a diplomatic mission in Bhutan — a sort of listening post. The Bhutanese in the past, under that shrewd diplomat, the late Prime Minister Jigme Dorji, expressed reluctance to let New Delhi have a separate mission for Bhutan.

In the eyes of the Bhutanese Durbar, an Indian "presence" in Paro would show to the outside world, especially the Chinese, that probably the Bhutanese are being "governed" by the Indians.

CLAN FEUD

The over-sensitive Bhutanese have not been too happy about the Indo-Bhutanese Treaty, under which India is looking after the external interests of the Himalayan State.

During his years as Prime Minister, Jigme Dorji sought to raise this issue a number of times and, in effect, wanted to sign a new pact with India.

Finally, Bhutan became a member of the Colombo Plan, and Bhutanese delegates began visiting London and other European capitals.

Then came the assassination of Mr. Dorji and the plot to oust King Wangchuk himself.

This resulted in the fleeing away to London of the youthful and ambitious Lhendup Dorji, a brother of the Queen of Bhutan.

The ensuing feud between the ruling Wangchuk family and the clan of Dorjis has not healed. Relations have got worse between the two clans. And it is Bhutan's misfortune that the Dorjis are considered to be better educated and more progressive than the others.

Some of the leading members of the Dorji clan have accused the ruling family to be living under "the spell of New Delhi."

In this delicate and embarrassing situation the Indian Government can only hasten slowly in the matter of persuading the Buddhist kingdom in Paro to introduce reforms, give a more democratic form of government to the people, build roads, hospitals, schools and, in general, open up the country at least to the neighbouring States.

The top Buddhist priests who help the King rule Bhutan are not terribly keen on reforms, for understandable reasons. Nor are they keen that foreign experts should live in Bhutan to educate their people, train their technicians and give them the modern amenities of life.

Visitors to Bhutan have found the people indifferent to politics. They want to be left alone to the enjoyment of their simple tribal life. They do not want to be encumbered with the responsibilities of modern life. But with the Kingdom presenting itself as a sitting duck to Chinese troops across the thin border all this might change one day.

MAIN TASK

And it is here that New Delhi faces an even more important task.

The task is to convince the Bhutanese that the threat from Peking exists. And that, just as the Chinese overran the Buddhists of Tibet, they would not hesitate to conquer the Himalayan States if it suits their ends.

In point of fact, India does not have a satisfactory defence treaty with the Bhutanese Gov-

ernment. There is no formal arrangement between the two Governments to enable India to have troops in Bhutan to defend the frontier.

Only an Indian Military Mission has been trying to trans-

The Sikkimese have let Indian troops patrol the frontiers and, in general, have proved more reliable friends than others in the Himalayan region.

form what is basically a bow-and-arrow army into a modern fighting force. The Bhutanese soldier is reputed to be better than many, a superb fighting man. But the resources of the country are too meagre to enable the border Kingdom to have an adequate defence force.

Already, India is assisting the development of Bhutan and Sikkim, constructing new roads, building airfields and supplying teachers and technicians.

But a more pragmatic and realistic approach is needed to build a healthy relationship with Bhutan, whose people are known to be naturally suspicious of foreigners. This suspicion and fear must be removed and soon.

A new bridge of understanding is also needed to be built with Sikkim, whose Maharaja is a sincere friend of India. The case of Sikkim is on an entirely different footing. And if the Chogyal wants a revision of the Indo-Sikkimese Treaty, New Delhi can probably afford to be generous.

Reports from Gangtok stress that the Sikkimese are beginning to "resent" what appears to them as a strong influence of New Delhi in their Government.

A new bridge of understanding is also needed to be built with Sikkim, whose Maharaja is a sincere friend of India.

RELIABLE FRIENDS

But, in common with India, Sikkim too faces the Chinese peril across the Chumbi valley. The Sikkimese have let Indian troops patrol the frontiers and, in general, have proved more reliable friends than others in the Himalayan region.

So more shrewdness, a little more generosity and more imagination is needed to sustain old relationships.

It is necessary, say experts on Sikkim, that the Maharaja should be encouraged to discuss his real problems with New Delhi and not merely minor irritants.

In other words, experts on

the Himalayan border Kingdoms would like to see in New Delhi a better understanding of these small States and a more realistic attitude towards people who are still reluctant to get out of their shell and face the tasks of mod-

ern age. They should be persuaded rather than pushed into the harsh sunlight of border realities.

MEDIA SCAN

From the Archives...Lessons from the Past?

Among the visitors who flew in to Kathmandu for King Mahendra's Coronation last week were 3 sturdy men wearing swords, embroidered knee-length felt boots and striped wrap-around coats. They were from the tiny 18,000 sq. miles Bhutan, a state perched in the Himalayas between India, Sikkim and Tibet. Although King Mahendra's close neighbours, they had traveled eight days on foot and by pony to India and then by plane to Nepal.

In the 20th century only 20 foreigners (not including Tibetans and Nepalese) have visited the big, rambling mountain-foot at Punakha that serves as Bhutan's capital. So rugged are Bhutan's passes and so formidable its mountains that the Indian Government's Political Agent makes the trip to Punakha only once every three years. In Bhutan there is not a single wheel form of transport - no bullock carts, not even a bicycle. Everything in Bhutan is carried along bridle paths by mules. Bhutan has no electricity. No roads, no factories, only clusters of farmhouses surrounded by rice and wheat fields. When trouble occurs in some corner of the Kingdom, it may take two months (in time of floods, six months) for the news to reach the Government.

"Call Me Mister": What gives Bhutan real distinction is the fact that it is a country without any army - at the moment. The Head of the Government is youthful (27 years) Druk Gyalpo Jigme Wangchuck, whose name means the Dragon King. Up to six months ago he ruled Bhutan (pop.300,000) with the aid of a council of eight members plus 125 civil servants and a handful of palace guards. Among the Dragon King's closest advisers is bespectacled, English-speaking Jigmi Dorje, 37, one of the delegates visiting Nepal. Although he is the King's brother-in-law, he has no title. "Just call me mister," he told the Time Correspondent, Tim Greenfield, in Nepal last week. Elder statesman Jigmi told a sad story of modern influence overtaking tiny Bhutan.

Shortly before the Chinese communists seized Tibet, the Bhutan Government closed its northern borders. But having no army or frontier guards, the Bhutanese were unable to prevent a number of Tibetans from crossing into Bhutan. Many of these uninvited visitors turned out to be Chinese in Tibetan clothing. On the other side of the mountains, Red China is building a road towards Bhutan. To strengthen his Government, the King recently set up a Central Advisory Council composed of elders elected by tiny villages. Explained Jigmi: "We have begun to sow a few seeds of Democracy."

The Museum Piece: At the same time, he justified Bhutan's continued isolation. "Almost 98% of Bhutanese have their own farms. If we opened out the country to foreign aid now, India and perhaps Red China would rush in, overwhelm us and reduce our people to a servant class.".....

TIME, New York, May 14, 1956

It is evident from the story which appeared nearly 38 years ago that certain phrases and sentiments have a long history of usage in Bhutanese diplomacy: the cliché of "modern" influence expressed on the right occasions was apparently expected to attract attention and sympathy then as the regime hopes it will today; the "seeds of Democracy" may have been trampled upon or otherwise had no scope for germination, but the government propaganda machinery continues to tout the alleged unique and distinctive Bhutanese "Democracy" within an absolute monarchy; and "rushing, overwhelming and reducing" are terms and convenient perceptions that continue to find their place in various arguments of the government - only the context may vary.

"IN QUOTES"

"Tshewang Dorji, a class ten dropout from Lhuntshi, felt that in the army one had more chances of becoming "famous" by proving one's skills than in the civil service."

Kuensel March 5, 1994 - Reporting on Passing Out Parade of Royal Bhutan Army Recruit Trainees

"For thousands of years, people believed that only an authoritarian organization employing rigid disciplinary methods could govern human society, but peoples' innate desire for freedom and democracy was in constant conflict with that system. Today it is clear which idea has won."

His Holiness The Dalai Lama

"As a key policy-maker for South Asia, we, as careful observers, feel Raphael's visit will positively affect the resolution of the Bhutanese refugee problem."

Tahir Ali, UNHCR Representative in Nepal

INFILTRATION OF NON-NATIONALS

ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN
DZONGKHAG ADMINISTRATION
SARPANG : BHUTAN

No. Sardzong/Adm/38/93-94/1930

16.02.94

CIRCULAR

Infiltration of the non-national from across the border.

Over the last three years or so, we have all noticed an increasing infiltration of non-national from across the border into the towns, villages and even in the restricted areas of our Dzongkhag. The consequence of this influx of undesirable people has added a new dimension to our prolonged law and order problem as this has promoted several menaces and unlawful activities such as robberies, thefts and plundering of our natural resources to a considerable extent.

On our careful observation and analysis it is also learnt that this intrusion from across the border has resulted partially because of the empty villages and mainly because of the increasing dependence of our people on cheap labour and supply of firewood, vegetable etc. from them indiscriminately.

As we can not make any direct intervention officially to control the entry and movement of this people due to the existing relationship between two countries, we feel that it is the moral obligation of all residents in the Dzongkhag to indirectly and passively discourage and control the movement of this non-national freely within our Dzongkhag.

Inter-sectoral meeting was held at Sarpang on 07.02.94 and it was decided that through the joint effort of all sectors, the following course of actions will be adopted for strict compliance:-

1. The Dungsas, Gelephu and Kalikhola are instructed to conduct separate meetings with the sectoral heads, businessmen and the general public in their respective jurisdiction and to inform the Dzongkhag on the decisions adopted to control the movement of the non-national from across the border in a passive and indirect ways.
2. The Gups were instructed to conduct GYTs in their respective Gewogs to discuss about the course of actions to be taken to control the movement of the people from across the border into their villages for any purposes and submit the decisions to the Dzongkhag accordingly.

Driglam Namsha (National Dress Regulation).

The Chairman regrettably informed the house that the people have become very relaxed in observing the national dress regulation both in the towns and rural areas over the past few months despite the standing order. To this effect, the Dzongkhag Administration, will once again issue the circular to all organizations and the general public to strictly observe the national dress regulation. The Royal Bhutan Police will continue to keep close monitor and vigilance over the national

Contd.....2/-

dress regulation as usual. In the Gewogs, it will be the responsibility of the Gups and the GYT members to implement and further strengthen the national dress regulation in the villages.

Issued for strict compliance by all residents

sd/-

(Dr. Sonam Tenzin)

DZONGKHAG

Copy to :-

1. The Hon'ble Kiku Lyonpo, Ministry of Home Affairs, Tashichhozong, Thimphu for kind information.
2. The Commandant, Security Force, Sarpang/Gelephu/Kalikhola.
3. The Superintendent, Royal Bhutan Police, Gelephu.
4. The Officer-in-Command, Royal Bhutan Police, Sarpang/Gelephu/Kalikhola.
5. The Dungsas, Dzongkhag Administration, Gelephu/Kalikhola.
6. All Regional Heads, Sarpang/Gelephu/Kalikhola.
7. All Sectoral Heads, Dzongkhag Administration, Sarpang.
8. All Gups under Dzongkhag Administration, Sarpang.
9. All Chhims, Sarpang/Gelephu/Kalikhola.
10. All head of corporation, Sarpang and Gelephu.
11. Deputy Secretary, Gelephu/Sarpang/Kalikhola.

A part of a government notification with regard to infiltration of non-nationals was quoted in the March issue of the *The Bhutan Review*. The full circular, No. Sardzong/Adm/38/93-94/1930 dated February 16, issued by the Dzongdag (district administrator) of Sarbhang district is reproduced alongside.

In brief, the notice expresses concern over the "increasing infiltration of non-nationals" which has occurred "over the last three years or so." The "consequence of this influx of undesirable people" has "added a new dimension" to the "prolonged law and order problem" and has "promoted several menaces and unlawful activities." On "careful observation and analysis" it has been learnt that the intrusion has taken place "partially because of the empty villages." Since the government cannot control these people at official levels, it has now become the "moral obligation" of all residents to "indirectly and passively discourage and control" the movement of such non-nationals. In the second half, the circular emphasizes the need for strict enforcement of the national dress regulations.

Beginning at the end, first. The agenda item relating to *Driglam Namzha* is proof that draconian regulations and dress codes are still enforced. A compulsory national dress code may by itself be a non-issue, but this notice does help rake up royal untruths because back in 1992, speaking to Michael Hutt on 10 September the King said: "Look, I've told them they can wear what they like so long as they don't go around naked." (HIMAL, Sept/Oct 1992). With direct-dial facilities from Sarbhang to every corner of the world via satellite technology, the contradiction can hardly be attributed to problems in communication - rather, it confirms that the administrative machinery is intimately and safely aware of when not to take the absolute monarch seriously!

But it is the first part of the circular which is important and scary. Primarily it shows that the regime has finally been caught up in a web of its own creation because the non-nationals who have only now begun to cause the administration worry are the regime's former partners in crime and persecution. When a state of lawlessness was promoted by the regime to punish and forcibly evict genuine citizens in the aftermath of the public protests against government regulations and policies in 1990, in addition to unleashing the hurriedly mobilized security forces against innocent vil-

lagers, the government paid Bodo tribals across the border to raid, intimidate and terrorize ethnic-Nepalese in southern Bhutan. As added incentive, Bodos were permitted to openly carry away goods left behind by fleeing Bhutanese. This arrangement served its purpose as thousands were forcibly evicted or forced to flee during 1991 and 1992. With the objectives having been attained, the government is faced with a problem as it tries to break off this unholy marriage - used to easy pickings and encouraged by the cooperative and "passive" regime, the tribals who have boldly settled down inside the country and continue with their lawless activities, naturally refuse to leave.

The notification begins by making clear that the infiltration of such foreigners began around three years ago, coinciding with the beginning of state atrocities by the Bhutanese regime. This, read together with the admission that the intrusion resulted from empty villages, both confirms and dates the process of forcible evictions which began after the September-October 1990 public rallies in southern Bhutan.

It also helps confirm the argument that the government places the blame for every criminal act in southern Bhutan, even those proven to be the handiwork of uninvited non-nationals, on dissidents because it is politically convenient and expedient. It is abundantly clear from the notice that the primary cause for concern over the increased influx of non-nationals is the rising crime rates because of these "undesirable people". Yet, the government has neither publicly acknowledged this problem nor expressed any concerns on this score. Instead, the weekly glut of crimes reported in the official media are all supposedly politically motivated and are all carried out by alleged terrorists.

The expression of official helplessness and calls for public action against illegal infiltrators, that too "indirectly and passively", is pathetic. More lamentable is the district administrator's naive observation that foreigners illegally settling down in the country adds "a new dimension" only to the "law and order" situation. The symptoms expressed in this notice point to a far more serious ailment, one that can prove fatal to national sovereignty. It is hoped that Thimphu will have recognized this and is prepared to deal with the situation before it is too late.

REFUGEE CAMP INFORMATION			
Location	District	Refugees	Students
Timai	Jhapa	8,215	3,365
Goldhap	Jhapa	7,929	2,990
Beldangi I	Jhapa	14,714	5,054
Beldangi II	Jhapa	18,753	6,690
Beldangi II Ext.	Jhapa	9,518	3,575
Sanishare(Pathri)	Morang	16,691	5,250
Khudunabari(N)	Jhapa	7,170	
Khudunabari(S)	Jhapa	3,015	3,206
Total		86,005	30,130
Cumulative births:		3,540	
Cumulative deaths:		2,537	
The above figures are as of March 31, 1994.			