

REPORT

Druk Journal Conversation on “Educating
Bhutan”

CONVERSATION

The conversation was held on November 11, 2019. This was dedicated to the 64th Birth Anniversary of the Fourth Druk Gyalpo on the theme of the Volume 5, Issue 1 of the Druk Journal “Educating Bhutan”

November 11, 2019

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Conversation

Sherubtse College have collaborated with the Bhutan Center for Media and Democracy (BCMD) on educating students on peer reviewed journal – The Druk Journal for the last three years. In line with the MoU signed between the College and BCMD, the conversation is held every semester. Current issues published in the journal are shared and discussed with the students.

This Autumn semester, the conversation was held to dedicate to His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo on the 64th Birth Anniversary on the theme "Educating Bhutan".

Picture 1: The Druk Journal Conversation Banner

The banner is a rectangular graphic with a light beige background. At the top, a yellow banner reads "In celebration of The Great Fourth's 64th Birth Anniversary". Below this, the main title "The Druk Journal Conversation 'Educating Bhutan'" is displayed in a mix of blue, green, and red fonts. To the right, the "The Druk Journal" logo is shown, with "The Druk" in small black text and "Journal" in large, bold black letters, accompanied by a small Tibetan script logo. In the center, a white box contains the names of the speakers: "Ugyen Lhendup", "Tashi Chophel", and "Sonam Chophel" in red serif font. To the right of this box, another white box titled "Context:" lists "Educating for Life", "Buddhist Education", and "Bhutanese Studying Outside". At the bottom left, there are logos for Sherubtse College and the Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy, with the latter's name in English and Tibetan. At the bottom right, the event details are listed: "Venue: Lecture Theatre", "Time: 02:00 pm to 4:00 pm", and "Date: November 11, 2019". A final line at the bottom states "Coordinated by Economics Programme, Department of Social Science, Sherubtse College".



In celebration of The Great Fourth's 64th Birth Anniversary

The Druk Journal Conversation
"Educating Bhutan"

The Druk Journal

Ugyen Lhendup
Tashi Chophel
Sonam Chophel

Context:
Educating for Life
Buddhist Education
Bhutanese Studying Outside

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BHUTAN CENTRE
for MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY

Venue: Lecture Theatre
Time: 02:00 pm to 4:00 pm
Date: November 11, 2019

Coordinated by Economics Programme, Department of Social Science, Sherubtse College

Agenda

Time	Programme	Individual
01:30 – 01:50 pm	Registration	Economics Program
02:00 – 02:05 pm	Welcome and Introduction of Speakers for the conversation 'Educating Bhutan'	Ugyen Lhendup, Economics Program
02:05 – 03:40 pm	The Conversation 1. Educating for Life 2. Buddhist Education in the 21 st Century 3. When Bhutanese study Outside	Ugyen Lhendup, Sonam Chophel and Tashi Chophel
03:40 – 04:00 pm	Q & A Session	Ugyen Lhendup, Sonam Chophel and Tashi Chophel
04:00 – 04:05 pm	Vote of Thanks	Student Representative, Economics Program
04:05 pm	Tea and Snacks and Disperse	

Speakers/Resource

The resource for the participants were from Social Science Department of Sherubtse College.

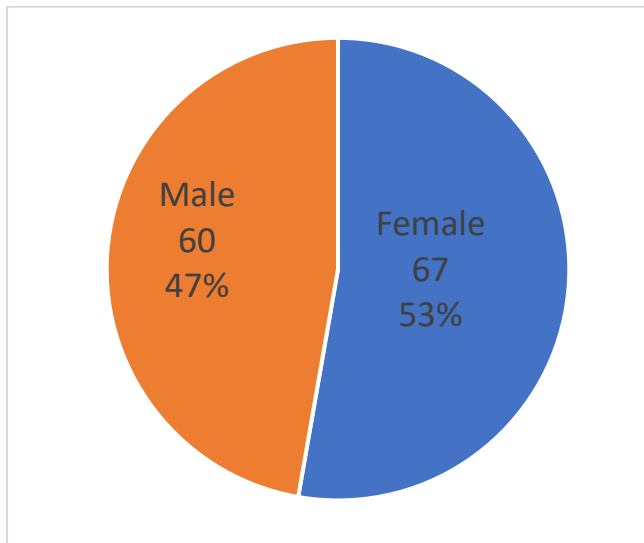
1. **Ugyen Lhendup** has MA in Economics and specializes in Development Economics. Mr. Ugyen have been in Sherubtse College for the last four years teaching economics and allied Subjects. Before joining Sherubtse he worked in QED Consulting Group, Institute for Management Studies and Centre for Research Initiatives.
2. **Sonam Chophel** has MA in Geography. He has been in Sherubtse College for the last three years. Before joining Sherubtse, Sonam has taught in various schools across the country for more than eight years. Sonam is Buddhist practitioner and his reads on Buddhist philosophy besides various researches in geographical and settlement anthropology.
3. **Tashi Chophel** has MA in Political Science and Sociology and has been teaching at Sherubtse for over a decade.

Participants

The participants for the seminar included faculties and students of Sherubtse College. There were eight faculties and 127 students representing Political Science and Sociology, Media Studies, Economics, Geography, Population Studies, physical Science and English programmes.

The composition of the participants as registered showed there were seven more female participants.

Figure 1: Conversation Participants by Gender



Picture 2: Participants for the Conversation



Educating for Life

Ugyen Lhendup presented Dr. Yang Gyeltshen's Paper – Educating for Life. He explored student's aspiration in education – what they aspired to do after their graduation? Is the education system faulty? What could be changed of the education system?

The perspective of holistic education was explored keeping in mind the basic human aspirations of cooperation and compassion. The thematic approach to study was discussed as a better method compared to the traditional lecture method.

The competitive mode of education backed by the systemic merit-based award was discussed as a flaw in the system. Participants noted that introduction of common examination in the primary schools brought in education which was not holistic; as teachers, if they went out of syllabus to teach values did not help their students in performance during the common examination – which the schools were rated and compared.

Picture 3: Ugyen Lhendup on Educating for life



Buddhist Education in the 21st Century

Sonam Chophel discussed Lopen Lungtaen Gyatsho's paper on Buddhist education in 21st century. He began with the exploration of meaning and purpose of life, which is to be happy. Then causes of happiness and the choice of decision regarding our lives, issues related to contemporary living, whether we are mindful of the choices, etc. were discussed.

Rethinking education in line with incorporation of spiritual and emotional intelligence was discussed. Furthermore, Sonam discussed on what he called the "Principle of Internal Fencing" and taking care of oneself based on the Bhutanese principles of དྲེན་པ་དང་ཤེས་བཞིན་ (dren pa dang shes bzhin) to filter random thoughts as an ideal of an educated citizen.

Picture 4: Sonam Chophel on Buddhist Education



When Bhutanese Study Outside

Dr. Janet Schofield's paper on When Bhutanese Study outside was discussed by Tashi Chopel. Tashi started by exploring what students thought about studying outside. Majority of the students responded by saying they would want to study outside after graduation. The reasons for wanting to study were proposed for master's degree unanimously with few opting to work overseas after graduation.

Explored on whether they attitude towards foreigners, method of studying and what made them Bhutanese; these would change after working overseas, participants responded these wouldn't. Then Dr. Scholfield's findings were presented.

Picture 5: Tashi Chopel on Bhutanese Studying Outside



Discussion and Q&A

Student participants actively participated with various questions regarding education in Bhutan. The summary of the question and answer session is provided as recommendations.

Picture 6: Conversating the Discussion



Recommendations

1. To change the current common examination at the primary level. Where teacher focussing in the performance, negatively impacted value-based teaching and learning at their formative stages of the student.
2. The education system, both at Education ministry and the Royal University of Bhutan is not able to retain the good teachers. To improve retention, government has adopted higher pay. Besides these, the system has failed to retain the best of teachers. To encourage teachers, stay in teaching profession, it is recommended to explore for more options besides pay scheme alone.
3. Student participants thought that there was abrupt shift in the way teaching is programmed at the school and the college level. The system has to adopt a swift transition mechanism for student's learning from primary to secondary to tertiary level.
4. In the wake of alarming youth unemployment, government is encouraging entrepreneurship and blue-collar jobs. Without prior training and knowledge on these fields and other funding avenues provided, graduates are not able to avail these opportunities. Therefore, vocational education and entrepreneurship is recommended that these be incorporated into the education system.

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Bemo talk on 11/11/2019
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Kvensel

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9. Lexi Wangmo Sp.
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11. Dorji Youden Burmo
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