

Editorial

Bhutan is approaching its third general election under the Constitution, which was adopted to establish a Democratic Constitutional Monarchy. The election being scheduled for late 2018, the Spring 2018 issue of The Druk Journal aims to contribute critically and constructively both to the 2018 elections and to the process of democratisation as another step forward. The proposed title for the spring 2018 issue of the journal is “Party Politics and Elections in the Democratisation of Bhutan”.

A decade into the democratisation process in Bhutan, political discourse remains superficial and politics primarily personal. This issue of the Journal aims to take political discourse in Bhutan to a depth that Bhutanese society has not yet experienced. It also aims to encourage debate in the new election cycle that will focus more on issues than on the competitive promises that candidates make to win votes. To be distributed at a time when the political process is gathering momentum, The Druk Journal carries articles that analyse, honestly and realistically, the current stage of democratisation to seriously critique the electoral process and raise and discuss issues that candidates for parliament should be debating. The articles should encourage candidates to reflect on their activities and, at the same time, encourage the electorate to question politicians at a more profound level.

The articles are authored by a broad range of people, including analysts, journalists, politicians involved in the electoral process, citizens who are observing and experiencing the political process, as well as observers in other parts of South Asia and beyond. They examine the electoral provisions of the Constitution, critique the first two elections that took place under the Constitution, raise issues that we think ought to form the substance of the political debate that should be at the centre of the 2018 electoral cycle, and realistically evaluate the evolving democratising system.

The articles in this issue of The Druk Journal have both an immediacy of its publication during the 2018 electoral cycle and a clarity that encourages longer-range analysis and a deepening of the process of democratisation.