



RIGSS AT 10



A DECADE IN PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

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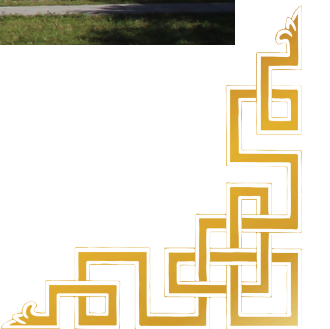
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THE ROYAL INSTITUTE FOR GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGIC STUDIES



‘A GATEWAY TO TRANSFORMATION’





FOUNDER AND ROYAL PATRON - HIS MAJESTY THE KING JIGME
KHESAR NAMGYEL WANGCHUCK



“WHAT WE NEED IS NOT
A LEADER TO LEAD THE
MASSES —
WE NEED LEADERSHIP OF
THE SELF.”

His Majesty The King

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FOREWORD

As the Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS) celebrates the significant moment of its existence, 10 years, it is my sincere prayer that the institute continues to grow to serve Bhutan in the most fitting time and tune.

Worthy of an institution emanating from His Majesty's heart, we are all proud of RIGSS and its engaging initiatives. You brought us together to think, understand and share ideas and subjects of binding national interests.

The milestone comes at a significant time when the nation is seeking the best of leaders, and leadership of self, to take the nation forward. His Majesty turned the wheel of national transformation and the sacred spokes of responsibility fall on each one of us to push boundaries, think beyond and act ever more selflessly.

Which calls for organisations like RIGSS to write a new chapter, infused with new standards and purpose. We will look towards you to churn the best of ideas and thoughts, and the best of leaders and professionals, to make the transformation works see fruition.

I am also reminded of the extraordinary days when RIGSS became the critical nerve center as the Southern COVID-19 Taskforce unit. Numerous Royal audiences transpired at the venue that rippled across the country to save the Bhutanese lives.

While that was immediate and visible, we see RIGSS making similar critical interventions in the life of our nation through development of leaders and professionals who contribute in all spheres.

As much as last ten years was a remarkable achievement and a testament to the hard work and dedication of everyone involved, we look forward to the next ten years of RIGSS with boundless possibilities. On my part, in all capacities, I will happily engage and support your efforts.



Lyonchhen Dr Lotay Tshering, Prime Minister

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE CHAIR

As a young fledging institute founded in 2013, the Royal Institute of Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS) has undeniably come a long way and established itself as a premier institute building capacity for leaders and managers in the country. It has been a trail blazer, introducing for the first time many pioneering and innovative knowledge programmes and products.

Its Friday Forums, RIGSS flagship public lecture series as well as the RIGSS dialogue, has successfully hosted a diversity of eminent international experts and renowned academics promoting discourse and new perspectives across the spectrum of topics. Such programmes have seen great turnouts and generated anticipation for the next session given the eminence of the speakers and currency of the topics. The RIGSS Blog and RIGSS Podcast have provided a platform for individuals to showcase their research and ideas, expanding access and reach in a meaningful manner while contributing to the wealth of documentation.

Its leadership trainings for leaders from a cross section of organisations including the public sector, the armed forces, parliamentarians and private sectors have

generated remarkable interest and demand for its programmes demonstrating its value and impact.

While the COVID-19 pandemic stalled its functions for two years, it also gave the institute the opportune moment to reflect and repurpose itself aligned to the significant and dynamic changes that were occurring in the public sector. As part of revamping of its programmes and activities, it launched the EXCEL programme for officers at P1, a capacity building programme that tapped into the proficiency of senior bureaucrats fully grounded in industry experience and knowledge. The knowledge, delivery and duration of lessons have changed significantly incorporating elements of the blended learning with emphasis on reflection by the individual on his/her role and attitudes and how to reframe and look at challenges.

The second version of the EXCEL programme has introduced assessments for the first time. This is a noteworthy change as leadership programmes going forward will have this component to help spot talent and ensure data from these programmes are looped into HR decisions in the agencies. These changes in content



Karma Hamu Dorjee, Vice Chair, RIGSS Governing Board

and delivery reflect RIGSS agility to keep its training current with international best practices.

It's been a privilege for me to have been a part of the Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies in the last four and half years. I am truly honoured for the opportunity to work with its very hardworking and dedicated team.

I wish RIGSS the very best as it continues to strive for excellence and inspire the next generation of leaders that will play an important role in fulfilling His Majesty The King's aspiration of a "developed country".

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



Chewang Rinzin, Director, RIGSS

As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS), it is indeed a momentous occasion to reflect on our journey, our achievements, and most importantly, our purpose. Since its founding, the institute has been relentlessly pursuing its mission of being a beacon of excellence in leadership development, research and strategic thinking, guided by its purpose of strengthening democracy and governance for our continued success as a sovereign nation.

The institute has launched 12 different leadership training courses over the decade and trained 1595 incumbent and potential future leaders from various sectors including the civil service, judiciary, parliamentarians, armed forces, and corporations. Over 30 research studies were conducted by the researchers at the institute as well as by course participants and alumni research fellows, some of which had profound implication on policy formulation, management of the COVID-19 pandemic and strengthening national security. The

institute hosted close to 40 eminent scholars and distinguished personalities from around the world in its Friday Forum Eminent Speaker Series and The RIGSS Dialogues. To enhance knowledge sharing and contribute to the larger discourse on democracy, governance and development, the RIGSS Podcast and the RIGSS Blog were also launched. In partnership with the Centre for Escalation of Peace in India, the institute organized 10 rounds of the India-Bhutan Dialogue, a Track-II process aimed at further strengthening the close relations between the two countries.

Under the benevolent and far-sighted leadership of His Majesty The King, the institute served as the southern COVID-19 control centre for almost the entire duration of the pandemic, providing the decision nerve-centre for the effective control and management of the pandemic.

Today, as we celebrate this important milestone of our 10th anniversary, we pay our deepest respects and profound gratitude to our visionary founder and patron, His Majesty The King.

While so much was accomplished in the decade since our birth, so much more remains to be done in the decade ahead. Our country is under transformation like never before, and the only option we have is to make it work. This is the time that every individual and institution in the country must come together, with resolve and fortitude, as though we are fighting a war for our nation's survival. If not now, when?

We have numerous challenges at hand to contend with, some that could even threaten our very existence as a nation-state. But this is not the first time that our country is going through a challenging phase, we have survived more demanding periods in our history. One reason that makes our country unique is the unprecedented manner in which we are able to surmount seemingly indomitable challenges despite all the constraints of geography, size and



His Majesty The Fourth King with the members of the Southern COVID-19 Task Force at RIGSS, 2020

resources. The fact that we have never been colonised by any foreign power is not merely a matter of luck.

Juxtaposed against the multipronged and intimidating challenges we face today are the towering visions for a brighter future. Time has put before us an opportunity like no other - an opportunity to serve our country to the best of our abilities and be a part of the generation that transformed Bhutan into a developed nation.

On the part of RIGSS, we are excited at the prospects of contributing in a more focused and impactful manner to the cause of promoting effective and dynamic governance in the country. Effective governance is key to propel our nation forward on the path of

progress and prosperity with people at the centre, as envisioned by His Majesty The King. And at the heart of effective governance are strong leaders, sound policies and smart institutions the strengthening of which is at the core of the RIGSS mandate.

As we know, effective governance transcends administrative efficiency; it encompasses fostering a culture of empathy, inclusivity and responsiveness guided by the values of integrity, excellence and service. It is about listening to the voices of our citizens, understanding their needs and aligning our policies and actions accordingly. Effective governance entails informed decision-making and strategic implementation. It is about being agile and nimble to adapt in the face of evolving challenges and

seizing opportunities for growth and progress.

Our governance system must suit our context and needs as a country and remain ever dynamic and resilient to overcome challenges and enable the pursuit of our higher goals. Ultimately our governance system will determine the pace and manner in which we become a developed and a trust-worthy country as envisioned by His Majesty The King. Building that model of governance that serves Bhutan's interests well will be a profound responsibility that will require a whole-of-nation approach, and institutions such as RIGSS has a world of opportunity to contribute meaningfully to this process.

Inspired by the transformation, the institute is committed to constantly innovate more effective methods of training and assessing our leaders - leveraging technology, building cutting-edge research and know-how into our curriculum, and collaborating with the best in the field. While we anticipate expansion in the scope for our programmes and audience, our trainings henceforth will be more focused and targeted. This approach will enable us to identify and nurture high-potential candidates across the leadership pipeline. Concurrently, the institute plans to provide assessment and development services for entire organisations to help them bring about rapid and substantial improvements in the workplace.



RIGSS staff with faculty members Professor Robert Klitgaard and Dr. Hamid Rashid, 2023



His Majesty The King with RIGSS founding members, Professor Kishore Mahbubani and DASHO Tshering Tobgay, 2014

Our research mandate and capacity will also continue to grow thereby allowing us to specialise and play a more pivotal role in the country's development and policy processes. The institute shall aggressively pursue its mission of serving as an incubator of new ideas, conducting in-depth research and providing policy inputs in the field of data analysis, technology, national security, finance, and foreign policy. And finally, RIGSS shall continue to engage the wider audience in the larger discourse on democracy and development as viewed through the lens of transformation through its various other programmes and platforms.

On this joyous occasion, we would like to express our heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to all those who have supported us in making our journey of this past decade purposeful and enriching. And we solicit your continued involvement and collaboration as we stride into another decade of higher pursuits and bigger accomplishments.

Tashi Delek.

The Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS) is an autonomous, not-for-profit leadership institute and a think tank in Bhutan, established by His Majesty The King in 2013. As the first of its kind in the country, RIGSS works to promote excellence in leadership, governance and strategic studies to effect positive change in policies and systems within a vibrant democracy.

Striving for the highest standards in training and research, RIGSS engages national and international experts to provide high-quality training courses that are both Bhutan-centric and globally relevant to keep abreast with the changes and challenges of the 21st century.

RIGSS also conducts research on various topics of national importance to influence governance and public policy. An intellectual movement in its own right, RIGSS constantly aims to create a platform for higher learning, development and discourse to study emerging issues and trends as well as generate new ideas and knowledge.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING AND ASSESSMENTS

Leadership courses at RIGSS have catered to a wide range of audience including civil servants, corporate employees, military officers, parliamentarians, judges and so on. Over the last 10 years, the institute has launched 12 different leadership courses tailored to the needs of different target audiences, and trained a total of 1595 professionals across the country from various fields.

A hallmark of RIGSS leadership courses is the blend of national and international faculty, and scholars and practitioners teaching the courses. While the international faculty bring with them a wealth of knowledge, experience and exposure, the national faculty provides the context and make teaching-learning relevant and relatable to the ground realities at home. Another notable feature of RIGSS training is that they are mostly residential though since the COVID-19 pandemic, many training programmes have also shifted to virtual or hybrid modes.

With major transformational reforms underway in the country, RIGSS has also seized the opportunity to reimagine the role of training and development that can bring tangible and lasting impact in the workplace benefitting the country at large. RIGSS is redesigning its entire training programmes to better meet the demands of a new administrative structure for improved governance and public service delivery. The training modules are shifting from a solely development-centric approach to incorporate leadership assessment

ROYAL INSTITUTE FOR GOVERNANCE
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TRAINING AND EDUCATION | THINK-TANK | CREATIVE PLATFORM



His Majesty The King with the founding Governing Board of RIGSS, 2013

components to make learning more serious and the impacts more measurable. In 2022, the institute in collaboration with the Royal Civil Service Commission conducted leadership assessments for some 230 chiefs in the civil service.

RESEARCH

One of RIGSS's mission is to carry out research and serve as an incubator of new ideas to strengthen public policy, governance and national security. RIGSS has identified five broad areas of research that include data analytics, finance, emerging technologies, foreign policy and national security.

In the last 10 years, the institute has carried over thirty different studies. These studies are carried out by the course participants, in-house researchers and alumni research fellows. Some of these studies had profound impact on economic policies, national security and management of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the transformation that Bhutan has embarked, the mandate and capacity for research at RIGSS will only continue to grow. This provides the institute with immense opportunities to conduct more in-depth studies and contribute new ideas, data, and insights to help the government achieve its new goals in the social, economic, governance and security sectors.

THE FRIDAY FORUM AND RIGSS DIALOGUE

Besides the formal training programmes, RIGSS organises two prominent public events called the Friday Forum Eminent Speaker Series and The RIGSS Dialogue. Over the last 10 years, RIGSS has brought in about 40 eminent scholars, intellectuals, and distinguished personalities from around the world to engage with the Bhutanese audience to share their knowledge, experiences and insights on a wide range of subjects. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the institute launched the virtual format of the above events enabling us to reach to a wider audience and save costs.

The RIGSS Policy Seminars and the RIGSS Debates are other platforms to engage in intellectual discourse on topical subjects that matter to the country. These are mostly held in-house among the course participants.

THE RIGSS PODCAST AND BLOG

The institute also has its own Podcast series and Blog. These platforms allow the wider dissemination of knowledge, ideas and insights on a host of subjects that has bearing on our development and nation-building. Both international and national experts, including the RIGSS alumni, faculty and staff are invited to share their research, experiences and opinions through these platforms which are accessible to the public.

INDIA-BHUTAN DIALOGUE

Under the visionary leadership of His Majesty The King, the India-Bhutan Dialogue (IBD) was launched in 2013, the year RIGSS was founded. The IBD is a Track-II process aimed at further strengthening the close relations between Bhutan and India and it is co-organised by RIGSS and Centre for Escalation of Peace (CEP) in India.

In the last 10 years, ten rounds of the IBD had been held, alternatively in the two countries. Subjects of mutual interests are discussed in these dialogues participated by government officials, retired public servants, influential minds, members of the media, youth, academia, CSOs and so forth.



His Majesty The King and Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen with SELP-1, the first batch of the first course of RIGSS, 2013



Their Majesties with Their Royal Highnesses The Gyalseys

In 2018, when the two countries celebrated the Golden Jubilee of our diplomatic relations, IBD launched the India-Bhutan Youth Summit (IBYS). Outstanding youth from both countries were selected to participate in the IBYS which aims to nurture future ambassadors of India-Bhutan friendship. Two rounds of the Summit were held.

BHUTAN ECONOMIC FORUM FOR INNOVATIVE TRANSFORMATION (BEFIT)

RIGSS and the Royal Monetary Authority (RMA) jointly launched Bhutan the biennial “Bhutan Economic Forum for Innovative Transformation (BEFIT)” in 2017. BEFIT was conceptualised and designed to celebrate the birth of His Royal Highness The Gyalsey, and inspired by His Majesty the King’s vision to ensure

that Bhutan’s successful democratic transition is accompanied by corresponding economic transformation necessary to attain our goal of building a prosperous nation.

BEFIT is a national platform that seeks to build partnerships between key domestic institutions and reputed international agencies to engage in meaningful dialogues, find innovative solutions, and deliver sustainable results to address contemporary economic challenges with the overarching objective of improving people’s lives.

FOCAL POINT FOR BNPTT

RIGSS is the focal point for the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT) since 2015. BNPTT is a grouping of seven

prominent think tanks from member countries working together on its primary objective of promoting people to people contact in the BIMSTEC region.

RIGSS in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs hosted the fourth meeting of the BNPTT in Thimphu in December 2018.

OUR ALUMNI

RIGSS boasts of its alumni network as one of its greatest assets, nurturing camaraderie, collaboration and a community of dedicated leaders and lifelong learners contributing in different capacities and at different levels to nation-building. The alumni have contributed immensely to the success of institute’s programmes and initiatives through their participation and support. During the pandemic, hundreds of our alumni volunteered to serve in different projects, the most notable ones being the Druk Gyalpo’s Relief Kidu (DGRK) and the RIGSS Alumni Research. Our alumni are also our greatest ambassadors.

MOVING FORWARD

As a premier leadership institute and think tank under the leadership of a farsighted King, RIGSS has always aligned its mandates with the national vision and the evolving realities. For a small landlocked, and developing country like Bhutan, standing at the cusp of development in a fast-changing world with drastic technological advancements, RIGSS is well-poised to play a vital role in ensuring the success of the country’s fledgling democracy and in accomplishing the noble transformation objectives through its efforts in leadership development, research and citizenship education. Institutions such as RIGSS help the country leverage its many blessings and unleash the potential it truly has to realise His Majesty The King’s vision for Bhutan of “**becoming a self-reliant and fully developed country within our lifetime**” to enhance prosperity, well-being and happiness of its people.



Inaugural IBD, April 2013



BEFIT, July 2019



4th BNPTT meeting, December 2018

OUR LOGO



At the heart of the logo is the depiction of a Bhutanese Dzong, the seat of governance, and symbolising durability and reliability. The four pillars of the central structure represent the four pillars of Gross National Happiness, Bhutan's over-arching development philosophy. The white colour symbolises purity and perfection.

The main frame of the logo is a trophy-like shield to symbolise the success and accomplishment of the Bhutanese nation-state since its founding, and its unwavering continuity. The blend of yellow and orange shades draws from the colours of our national flag. The ribbon adorning the shield depicts a Tashi Khadhar, the silky scarf associated with anything auspicious. Its blue colour symbolises wisdom, trust and loyalty.

The green lotus at the base of the shield signifies purity of the body, speech and mind of the being from which should emanate great leadership and good governance.



CORE VALUES

TEAM



Chewang Rinzin
Director
(Dy. Chamberlain to His Majesty The King)



Sigay Dem
Senior Programme Officer



Sonam Lhamo
Programme Officer



Lilly Yangchen
Research Officer



Kinley Zam
Programme Officer



Tandin Pem
Technology Officer

RIGSS



Hasta Bahadur Rai
Librarian / ADM Officer



Sonam Yangdon
Media & Public Relations Officer



Yeshey Ohm Dhendup
Research Officer



Shedha Bir Rai
Assistant Technology Officer



Karma Wangmo
PA to Director / Accounts Assistant



Choden
Front Desk / ADM Assistant

MILESTONES

RIGSS
POLICY **SEMINAR**

2015

- » Launched Bhutan Executive Services Training (BEST)
- » Launched RIGSS Policy Seminar
- » Became focal point for BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks



2014

- » Launched Military Leaders Strategic Studies Seminar (MLS)

RIGSS
POLICY
DEBATE

2013

- » Consecration and Inauguration of the institute
- » Launched Senior Executive Leadership Programme (SELP)
- » Launched Friday Forum Eminent Speakers Series
- » Launched India-Bhutan Dialogue (IBD) in collaboration with CEP, India
- » Launched RIGSS Policy Debate

RIGSS
FRIDAY FORUM
EMINENT SPEAKER SERIES

ACHIEVED



2017

- » Launched Foundational Leadership Programme (FLP)
- » Launched Bhutan Foreign Service Programme (BFSP)
- » Launched Bhutan Economic Forum for Innovative Transformation (BEFIT) in collaboration with RMA



2018

- » Launched India-Bhutan Youth Summit (IBYS)
- » Launched Leadership Programme for Judiciary (LPJ)

2016

- » Launched Leadership Programme for Parliamentarians (LPP)
- » Launched Young Professionals Leadership Programme (YPLP)
- » Launched Senior Executive Development Programme (SEDP)
- » Launched The RIGSS Dialogue

THE RIGSS
DIALOGUE

OVER

2019

- » Signed MoU with RCSC on Human Resource Development and Management

2020

- » Served as Southern COVID-19 Control Centre
- » RIGSS Hostel converted into COVID-19 Isolation Hospital
- » Launched Alumni Research Projects
- » Launched RIGSS Podcast



2021

- » Launched School Leaders Development Programme (SLDP)
- » Published research paper “Professionalising Domestic Help in Bhutan”
- » Launched the RIGSS Blog

The RIGSS Blog

2022

- » Launched Executive Eligibility Assessment (EEA)
- » Published report “Comprehensive Household Census of Phuentsholing Thromde and Peri-urban Areas”
- » Published research paper “What Motivates Young Civil Servants in Bhutan”
- » Published research paper “Driving Behavioral Change in Public Service”

2023

- » Launched Leadership Course for Executive Candidates (EXCEL)
- » Published book “Bold & Humble”
- » Published research paper “Towards Promoting a Corruption-free Country”
- » Launched Macroeconomic Analysis and Policy Design Course (MAPD)

THE DECADE

RIGSS AN INTELLECTUAL MOVEMENT

DASHO DR. SONAM KINGA, RIGSS FACULTY

When RIGSS was inaugurated ten years ago, I was excited, believing that His Majesty had set in motion the process of establishing a landmark academic institution devoted to governance and strategic studies. Little did I comprehend the profundity of the Royal Vision, which has sunk in a decade later. Today, I realise that what His Majesty had initiated then was not merely an academic institution defined by its structurally complex, robust academic programmes, research and seminars. It has become a movement, however modest, for a modern public intellectual life.

I do not suggest that such public discourse and intellectual life started only with RIGSS. It is important to recognise the roles of other academic institutions in the country through their academic programmes, research seminars and publications which precede RIGSS. They continue to make meaningful contributions to public policies and development programmes. Each has their niche areas of interest and expertise, which they must pursue and broaden.

Nonetheless, what RIGSS brought in was the much-needed focus on governance and strategic studies, diversity of short-term programmes customised for various groups, creating a mix of national and international faculty active in the industry or in their respective fields and, indeed, the flexibility of their engagement to accommodate multiple obligations. Nonetheless, it is the opportunity extended to and availed by a wide array of public and private officials at various levels of leadership that fed into defining it as an intellectual movement. We have not seen the scale, diversity and, indeed, the participation and regularity of programmes as offered by RIGSS.

As batches of its trainees constituting young and senior leaders in the bureaucracy, parliament, judiciary, military, academia and the larger society graduate from its programmes, a few notable impacts could be observed. The first and the basic is acquiring new knowledge and skills offered through various programmes. The second and unique outcome is the transformative experience most participants feel after a whole new level of exposure they never had in their lives. This experience has been heightened by the intensity of the programmes. Then, there is the crystallisation of shared understanding and appreciation of key national issues, particularly governance and geo-strategic matters. This is indeed

one of the most important results. The process of nation-building in the 21st century must be founded on such shared understanding of a common national agenda. Finally, the programmes enable participants to understand the nation in ways most had not known earlier. Further, they recognise the need to denote legislations, public policies, development programmes, business initiatives and undertakings, as well as other ventures to the overarching national priorities of security, survival and prosperity.

RIGSS programmes have thus provided an intellectual frame for extended and continued conversations in workplaces and beyond. They have become a point of reference in public discourse concerning national issues, particularly among those in leadership positions. A stellar event is the RIGSS Dialogue and Friday Forum, which provides a regular platform beyond its physical premise in Phuntsholing for Bhutanese to engage with eminent personalities such as political leaders, diplomats, spiritual luminaries and renowned academics. The choice of themes or framing of issues for conversations in these dialogues broadens public intellectual life. This has been possible by the frequency of such events as well as the profile of speakers that have either been missing or slow-paced in our public intellectual landscape.

The RIGSS Podcast has been an admirable online initiative. In the seventeen episodes published thus far, Bhutanese and foreign intellectuals with diverse backgrounds have spoken on a range of themes. These podcasts constitute a repertoire of perspectives and analyses on contemporary or historical events and developments. They are freely available and accessed by both Bhutanese and foreigners alike. Similarly, RIGSS launched its Blog in 2021, providing an online space for its staff, alumni and faculty to share opinion pieces on different aspects of public life. The institute's Director is a regular contributor. With both textual and audio versions published, it has immense scope to become a lively platform for public discourse.

A significant contribution has been that of RIGSS research outcomes influencing important public policies. Research works, either undisclosed or published, have enabled those in leadership positions to make bold decisions on critical national issues. For the first time, we saw important research focus on cross-border issues that have implications for Bhutan's security interests.

In this context, the India-Bhutan Dialogue has become a meaningful platform to discuss bilateral issues. This is co-organised by RIGSS with the Centre for Escalation of Peace based in New Delhi. It has provided an alternative space for more informal and less official conversations between experts from the two countries to understand issues concerning India and Bhutan. Their recommendations



Dasho Dr. Sonam Kinga with LPP-1, 2016

to the respective governments have enabled a better appreciation of issues and confidence in resolving them. Unbridled by political compulsions or bureaucratic bottlenecks, this second-track engagement has immense potential as a unique diplomatic space to address critical bilateral matters. The India-Bhutan Youth Summit has emerged from this Dialogue and is being seen as a platform to train youths from the two countries who can further the bilateral relations in the future.

This scan of diverse academic and intellectual activities at RIGSS and its various forums stands testimony to its development within a decade as an intellectual movement. The experiences and lessons of the first decade of its existence can be used to build a promising future. What we recognise today is that RIGSS matters in public life as an intellectual fount for governance and strategic studies. It has built itself up with an admirable and respectable profile and presence.

Moving forward, I see some critical areas for RIGSS to focus its academic and intellectual lens. It can consider developing a dedicated research and teaching faculty. This does not mean the present approach of engaging visiting faculty members must be discontinued. In fact, it must constitute a core strategy in building the mix and profile of the faculty. The identification of a research agenda over a period of time based on national priorities can serve both as a guide and pulse of its academic and intellectual life. They must continue to feed into and inform public policies and governance. The in-house research activities and commissioning of research studies to other scholars can culminate in an annual RIGSS symposium. The diversity of training programmes offered thus far can be reviewed and consolidated into a few important

flagship programmes. A significant consideration in this regard will be the formulation of a more extended programme compared to the short-term intensive ones administered. Building institutional linkages and partnerships with reputed institutes in the region and beyond has numerous benefits which can be explored.

It has been my honour and privilege to be associated with RIGSS since its establishment. On the occasion of the successful completion of the first RIGSS decade, I would like to congratulate Director Chewang Rinzin and his dedicated staff.

Launched on 3rd January, 2016, the two-week LPP is designed to provide parliamentarians a platform for discussion on important national goals and challenges, reinforce importance of values and to impart some of the key skills needed for effective leadership and governance.



I believe, given our scale, Bhutan has the opportunity to lead the world in going electric. You have 2000 electric vehicles come in at the same time or over a year. And, you plonk those 2000 vehicles in Kolkata. Who will notice them? Or in New York or Tokyo or Israel, where they have tried it - nobody would bat an eyelid. You put 2,000 electric vehicles in Thimphu, remove 2,000 existing vehicles, convert them to electric vehicles and send them to other parts of the country. Suddenly, overnight, Thimphu would be seen as a zero-emission city. Everywhere, you'd see electric vehicles. Because of this scale, distance, electricity, and because of our collective will, we have the opportunity of grabbing the world's attention and investment. We can easily become a hot spot for electric vehicles, and with that, we can easily become the leading centre for research and development for the production of electric vehicles. We can also start, if not manufacturing, at least assembling our own electric vehicles both for domestic consumption and export to India and the world.

Dasho Tshering Tobgay, Former Prime Minister of Bhutan
1st RIGSS Friday Forum
Bhutan: Changes and Challenges
25th October, 2013



The Friday Forum is the institute's flagship public lecture series. Under this banner the institute brings eminent speakers from around the world that include great thinkers, change-makers, spiritual masters, scholars, politicians and the like to deliver talks in Bhutan. Organised usually on Friday evenings, the Friday Forum is a public lecture and interaction forum that lasts for an hour and a half including Q&A session.

A DECADE
IN NUMBERS

COURSE	SELP	MLS	BEST	LPP	YPLP
BATCHES	10	07	08	03	08
PEOPLE	272	131	163	103	240

SEDP	FLP	BFSP	LPJ	SLDP	EXCEL	MAPD
04	05	02	02	08	02	01
95	150	50	48	230	73	40

1595

PEOPLE
TRAINED

60

BATCHES
TRAINED

12

COURSES
INTRODUCED

30

RESEARCH/
STUDIES
CONDUCTED

17

PODCAST
RELEASED

20

BLOG
ARTICLES
PUBLISHED

27

FRIDAY
FORUM
LECTURES
ORGANISED

06

RIGSS
DIALOGUES
ORGANISED

08

RIGSS
POLICY
DEBATES
ORGANISED

08

RIGSS
POLICY
SEMINARS
ORGANISED

10

INDIA-
BHUTAN
DIALOGUES
ORGANISED

THROUGH THE YEARS



SLDP-2 in Tsirang, 2021



RIGSS Faculty Amb. V Namgyel during the closing of MLS-6, 2018



Honourable Prime Minister with EXCEL-2, 2023



LPP-1, 2016



YPLP-5, 2017



Dasho Penjore in conversation with Prof. Ricardo Hausmann, 2nd RIGSS Dialogue, 2017



FLP-2 at the RIGSS Coronation Hostel, 2017

LEADERSHIP OF THE SELF

TRANSCRIPT FROM THE RIGSS PODCAST WITH DASHO KARMA TSHITEEM *(edited for clarity)*

Please kindly explain your understanding and interpretation of leadership of the self.

Well, my understanding of the idea of leadership of the self is drawn from the Royal address His Majesty The King gave at the Calcutta University convocation. His Majesty first spoke about this idea, one about doing what needs to be done instead of waiting for some great leaders or genius who may or may not emerge, and that you could do so by becoming a better human being. I found in this most empowering outlook on leadership that stood in sharp contrast to the conventional notion of leadership, which basically defines leadership as a noun and equates it with positions. And indeed, when we speak about leadership, most people instinctively think about people in leadership positions, such as kings, generals in the army, presidents, prime ministers, CEOs, etc. His Majesty's idea of leadership of the self, however, sees leadership as a verb about action and, thus, an empowering perspective that allows anyone to become a leader by engaging in acts of leadership, irrespective of who and where they are. For a Bhutanese, any action consistent with protecting and promoting the security, sovereignty and self-reliance of a small country is an act of leadership. Also implicit in this perspective is that leadership must be seen as a lifelong journey of personal growth, development and fulfilment, powered by a growth mindset of lifelong learning. And, of course, the ideal situation would be one in which you are in a leadership position. And you also continuously engage in acts of leadership because, in that manner, you can amplify your impact, as all great leaders do. However, this requires that you first develop self-mastery. That is, before you try to rule the world, you must rule yourself. That also comes clearly through and rings true from the idea of leadership of the self. Now, as to why I use this as the title for my talk, it is to pay

homage to the leadership of our monarchs. Indeed, when it comes to the subject of leadership, in form or function by any name or frame, there could be no better example.

For instance, the singular reason behind our success in combating COVID-19 thus far is the leadership of His Majesty The King. As is common knowledge, His Majesty's leadership has brought about the much-needed clarity, commitment, and cohesion among all sections of Bhutanese society in dealing with this deadly pandemic. His Majesty's foresight has ensured that youth, including those who are unemployed and who could potentially be a source of problems during such difficult times, are now as DeSuups, playing a pivotal role in dealing with the challenges wrought by the pandemic - from working as frontline workers patrolling the porous borders to implementing important development projects like water supply. Also, His Majesty's leadership has ensured a coherent response to the deadly pandemic by helping the Bhutanese return home while ensuring we are protected through the strict enforcement of quarantine requirements. Seeing that there were thousands of Bhutanese living across the border from Phuentsholing but who wanted to come back during this difficult time, upon royal command, the Royal Bhutan army built 1000 housing units in 28 days on the left banks of Amochu that provides shelter to this day. It was also upon royal command that the Druk Gyalpo's Relief Kidu was launched to help individuals and businesses tide over these difficult times by sacrificing the Sungchob funds that have been built up over decades to boost the immunity of our senior citizens, His Majesty commanded the distribution of vitamins supplements, and so on. The actions Bhutan has taken during this deadly pandemic, under His Majesty's leadership, ensuring that no one is left behind, has given new meaning to nationhood and citizenry.



His Majesty The King during the Royal Tour to the south in May, 2021

So, what would you say are the key attributes of a person who exercises or practices leadership of the self?

Well, in my experience, the main attribute of a person who cultivates leadership of the self will be a person who has a growth mindset, seeking to learn and thus grow continuously, and in the process, engage in acts that not only benefit themselves and their loved ones but also benefit the Tsa-Wa-Sum. This is the single aspect that should set them apart. Other attributes will be those consistent with being, as His Majesty stated, a good human being. Both these are absolutely necessary. I can think of many good people who, unfortunately, have a fixed mindset and thus have not grown, limiting the good they can and should do with their lives. However, just learning and growing is necessary but not sufficient, as ultimately, one should strive to make a difference, no matter how big or small. For instance, I can also think of many

people who are good human beings but don't make much of their lives or contribute in any meaningful way to the greater cause of securing the future of our country.

Thank you. If Dasho could kindly share what your sessions on the leadership of the self actually cover.

Well, the talk on leadership of the self comprises three components that also draw on Buddhist wisdom and life experiences. First, leadership of the self is a lifelong journey with a growth mindset to fulfil yourself in all the

roles that are important to one's life and, in particular, protecting and promoting the security, sovereignty and self-reliance of our country. In doing so, an important and critical building block is to know yourself as one of the three Delphic maxims from ancient Greece. Second, recognition that one can make the most of this lifelong journey when one has greater mindfulness that can be cultivated through various activities such as meditation, journaling, seeking and receiving feedback, etc. Why do you need mindfulness? So that you can know and tap the full power of your mind. Thirdly, we recognise that life and its outcomes are the results of choices we make from moment to moment. This part is about enhancing metacognition, that is, understanding how thinking works and its relation to one's feelings, actions and results. This part clearly shows how we are separate from our thoughts and emotions and, thus, how we can make better choices to help us in our leadership of the self-journey. This knowledge and the

resulting ability that can be developed with practice helps us deal better with the circumstances of life so that the ups and downs of life cannot divert us from what it is we seek to achieve.

Please kindly elaborate on the three components for better understanding.

Well, the first component is to look at leadership of the self as a lifelong journey of growth, development and fulfilment - something for which you need a growth mindset, as I already said earlier, and not only that, but to live life consciously striving to fulfil yourself in all the roles that are important to you, and which we simultaneously play in our lives - at work, as a parent, brother, sister, son, daughter, friend, colleague, citizen, etc. This is about making a difference and making your life matter. As a Bhutanese, always striving to do things that protect and promote the interest of our country, consciously striving to live life in such a way, also imbues it with meaning, which in turn is the biggest source of motivation. Among other things, I encourage lifelong learning, in particular by reading useful materials, watching Good TED talks, sharing knowledge and experiences, etc. The most important step in this lifelong journey is to know yourself in terms of strengths, weaknesses, who you are, where you are, what you are, how you are, your temperament, and your personality, as measured by psychometric tests like ocean also known as the Big Five, etc. Getting to know oneself intimately is important so one is better placed to actualise whatever potential one has. And how do you do this? By firstly, getting to know yourself at the level of your mind. This brings us to the second part of the talk. Knowing your mind is important because it is the processing Centre for your life's experiences and the source of everything you say and do, as all these start with a thought in your head. To do so, you need to enhance mindfulness, and then slowly but surely, you can begin to tame it and tap its full power to help you make the most of life. As Lord Buddha said, the mind matters most - developments in

neuroscience revealed this very fact. That's also the reason why there is a booming mindfulness industry, as can be seen from a Google search, as more people around the world realise that mental health and mental strength come from mindfulness. In fact, since 2013, several British parliamentarians have undertaken eight-week meditation courses to get the benefits of mindfulness. This is key to a healthy mind, as physical exercise is key to a healthy body. It's a tragedy that so few Bhutanese meditate, even though we are all aware of his benefits. In fact, we even introduced meditation in our schools in 2010. While there are a number of ways to enhance mindfulness, meditation is by far the best way, as it is an activity where you are directly getting to know your mind and beginning to tame it. You are truly getting to know yourself in this way.

Dasho mentioned that the third component of your session is about metacognition. And you also mentioned something about the thought model. Please enlighten us more on these widely heard but poorly understood concepts.

Well, in a nutshell, the thought model explains the interaction between what happens around us in life from moment to moment, to what happens inside us, and why we do what we do. For instance, there is an objective reality like whether, like facts about one's past, called a circumstance, which triggers thoughts in our heads, and thoughts, whatever they are, are our interpretation of what's happening and define our reality. These thoughts lead to feelings, happy or sad, which then drive us to commensurate action. And finally, we get results, which are nothing but the inevitable consequences of our actions. This model explains how things outside affect what happens inside of us, which then leads to the choices we make. The knowledge of this model is powerful because it shows not only how things work but also a clear recognition that all thoughts are up to us and totally optional. In fact, we all have the thoughts we have chosen to believe, consciously or unconsciously. But the powerful takeaway is that

since all thoughts are optional, and up to us, we can have different thoughts about the same circumstance. How do how do we know this to be true? For instance, people listening to this podcast will hear the same thing I'm saying, but I can confidently predict that it will trigger different thoughts in different people, which is simply their interpretation of what they think they are hearing. Based on their interpretation of what they think they are hearing, attendant feelings will flow. For instance, if they think what they're hearing is something useful, feelings of interest will arise, which will prompt them to listen more closely. And the result is that they will have the benefit of hearing something they find interesting and maybe even useful. The converse can also be true. If someone listening interprets what I'm saying to be useless gibberish, then attendant feelings of this interest will arise, and this may lead to actions of distraction. The result is that all that is shared is lost to them.

As you can see, this knowledge of the way thoughts are triggered in our heads and its subsequent linkages to feelings, actions, and results helps to improve not only one's quality of thinking but, thereby, the very choices we make. This knowledge also reveals

to us clearly that all sorts of happiness, sadness, or any other feelings and emotions are not the outcome of circumstances but the thoughts triggered by the circumstances in our heads. This explains why poor people in the favelas of Brazil can be pleased in spite of their desperate circumstances, while rich people in the 20-budget mansions of Beverly Hills may be miserable. In fact, armed with this knowledge, we will quickly find that most of the problems people face are simply faulty thinking and not real problems. This knowledge can also be used to deal with people who have mindset issues since, ultimately, all mindset issues boil down to wrong thoughts. Therefore, this knowledge can be used to powerful effect. I've shared the thought model with literally 1000s of people, and many have found it to be extremely useful in dealing with problems, changing mindsets, and making better decisions. I came across this in a coaching skill for managers training that I undertook on Coursera as part of an effort to create more engaging workplaces in the civil service when I was the chair of RCSE. Later, I found that Lord Buddha also taught this in his teachings on the four parts of the mind, where it says that consciousness through the five sense doors leads to perceptions that are taught, which leads to



Dasho Karma Tshiteem with BEST-2

Launched on 26th July 2015, BEST is a two-week training programme on leadership competency development, exclusively designed for executives in the civil service. The course is based on RCSC's Leadership Capability Framework.

sensations or feelings, and the sensations lead to action and results. This is extremely useful knowledge that one can verify with one's life experiences and can really help to improve one's ability to make better choices. All of you start with a thought in your head. It will also help you deal better with the many thoughts that fill your head every day, estimated, on average, to be around 60,000. Most arise seemingly out of nowhere, which can cause much misery if you do not know how to deal with it.

Thank you for the simple yet profound elaboration on metacognition and thought model. But are these attributes cultivable by anyone? How can we really do that?

Yes, absolutely. These are cultivatable. And indeed, a large part of education and growing up has been doing that. But what is important is to keep doing this throughout our lives. And those who truly imbibe the idea of leadership of the self as shared above and make it a lifelong journey. A journey of self-mastery and mindfulness and, in particular, making good choices by practising what I shared earlier, one can cultivate these attributes.

Is leadership of the self more necessary or applicable in specific contexts or situations than others, or is it something universal?

Well, I see the leadership of the self, as shared above, as a mode of being and thus applicable to anyone who wants to make the most of life. As a mode of being in this world, it is about how you show up every day, in all the rules we simultaneously play and important in our lives. It is also a particularly important mode when one faces the many challenges that also makeup life. After all, even the luckiest among us have to pass through the four gates of birth, sickness, old age and death. There, the specific abilities cultivated, such as mindfulness and metacognition, can be even more useful in dealing with problems and still being able to carry on.

And I'm sure our readers are curious, just as I am, to know some of the things Dasho personally does to develop leadership of yourself in yourself.

Well, I do try to practice what I preach. So, if I were to highlight three things that are part of my daily regimen that helped me on my leadership of the self-journey, they are meditation for at least 12 to 15 minutes daily, reading good books, and taking good materials from the internet. And, of course, daily physical exercises, like biking. There's also plenty of good stuff on TED talks, YouTube, and Coursera that can be helpful and used purposefully with whatever you are working on or want to do in life. And most importantly, using these knowledge and skills to keep doing things better, as well as sharing them with other people and learning from such interactions.

As the former chair of the Royal Civil Service Commission, how do we think we fare in the civil service in terms of leadership of the self?

Well, if we hold up His Majesty as the epitome of the leadership of the self, and we have all seen His Majesty in action in the most challenging period in our country and in the world, then clearly, not only civil servants but all of us have much to work towards in our leadership of the self journey.

TRANSCRIBED BY RIGSS

Dasho Karma Tshiteem's podcast is available on the RIGSS website. Dedicated to the 40th birth anniversary of His Majesty The King, the RIGSS Podcast was launched on 21st February, 2020. It is a series of engaging and intellectual odysseys with the luminaries of leadership, governance, democracy and public policy.



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Young nations need democratic institutions to respond to their populations, weed out corruption, have access to the lower sections of society to understand their problems and formulate policies which can counter them. While these measures actively lay the foundation of human development, these will come to nothing if a nation does not make its institutions accountable to the people through a free press and judiciary. In democratic systems, development and prosperity fuel further growth through a virtuous cycle. Historical experience tells us that development in a democratic society creates an educated and enlightened middle class, which creates for itself additional opportunities to explore and expand the political arena. Empowered people articulate their needs better while they press for social and political freedoms. In fact, there is no question that democracies can create an open line of discourse between the government and the public so that their voices are heard and priorities noted. Democracy is also a necessity to allow people to become creative in pursuing their goals. Democracy fosters an environment of openness, giving opportunities to people to take risks. It permits citizens access to information and assures them the right to express themselves freely without fear of repercussions. The ability to think and debate freely without censorship frees the imagination, leading to innovative practices, which are the cornerstone of development. We live in a time where the challenges we face can be tackled only with creative and innovative practices. Democracies have historically been better at innovation than authoritarian systems, which stifle and suppress original thought.

Dr. Shashi Tharoor
2nd RIGSS Friday Forum on
Democracy and Development
1st November, 2013

FROM THE ALUMNI...



"The RIGSS programmes are a vital and unique platform that gives access to numerous resources, allowing for individual introspection, self-growth, exchange of ideas and an acute awareness of national priorities. RIGSS continues to stay adaptive, relevant and responsive to the changing times and needs of the country and must continue to inspire and shape future leaders."

Sonam Tshering Dorji
EXCEL-1



"RIGSS has been instrumental in shaping my leadership journey. The comprehensive training programmes honed my leadership skills and provided me with a profound understanding of strategic leadership principles. This invaluable knowledge has greatly benefitted my professional growth, allowing me to navigate complex challenges with confidence and vision. RIGSS, as envisioned by His Majesty the King, is undoubtedly a beacon of leadership excellence in Bhutan. Tashi Delek on the 10th Anniversary."
Tenzin Chopel
SELP-6 | BEST-6



"I am truly grateful for the invaluable lesson I've learned from RIGSS about the essence of leadership. It's not about grand gestures or dramatic displays; instead, it's the embodiment of everyday actions. Leadership, as exemplified by RIGSS, is about carrying out mundane tasks with unwavering righteousness and boundless compassion. Happy 10 years of being the torchbearer of this profound understanding of leadership."

Dessang Dorji
FLP-1



"The RIGSS programme at Tsirang has been a transformative experience. The curriculum's depth and faculty's expertise have enriched my understanding of governance and sustainability. The interactive sessions and diverse compatriots have broadened my perspective. This programme not only equips you with knowledge but also fosters leadership skills. I'm grateful for this opportunity and highly recommend RIGSS to anyone passionate about positively impacting Bhutan and beyond."
Lekhi Wangdue
SLDP-5



"After four remarkable years since attending the Foundational Leadership Programme at RIGSS, I have witnessed profound personal growth. My reading and public speaking skills have greatly improved, enabling me to enact positive changes in everyday life. RIGSS has nurtured a deeper appreciation for our nation and facilitated meaningful connections outside my professional sphere. It has been a life-changing experience."

Lekhi Wangmo
FLP-5



"The RIGSS Institute has been more than a training institute; in less than a month, it has nurtured personal and professional bonds of friendship, leadership, and nationhood. For me, not only did RIGSS enrich my knowledge, but it also deepened my sense of camaraderie with fellow participants. Both the leadership and RIGSS has left an indelible mark on my heart."

Ugyen Lhendup
YPLP -6

THROUGH THE YEARS



Former Indian Amb. to Bhutan Jaideep Sarkar with IBYS-1 participants, 2018



Outdoor Learning Expedition (OLE) & Team Building Camp , YPLP-2, 2016



RIGSS faculty Dr. Adrian Chan and RIGSS Director with FLP-2, 2017



SELP-4, Closing ceremony, 2015



FLP-4, Sports day, 2019



IBYS, 2018



Dale Carnegie, Singapore with YPLP-2, 2016

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD AND HOW DO WE PREPARE AS A NATION TO SUCCEED?

YUVAL NOAH HARARI IN CONVERSATION WITH DASHO KARMA TSHITEEM, 6TH RIGSS DIALOGUE,
4TH APRIL 2023 *(edited for clarity)*

Moderator: Professor Harari, it's such a pleasure to have you here in Bhutan and to be able to host this conversation. As a thought leader of our times, I would like to begin by asking you to make some opening remarks that could touch upon the big ideas in your books as well as what you see as your personal mission now that you have the attention of millions of people around the world.

Speaker: My basic mission is to try and focus the global conversation on the most important challenges that we face because unfortunately, we see that humanity is not paying enough attention to these challenges. We are now facing three major challenges: the first one is the ecological crisis (climate change and so forth), the second is technological disruption and the third is threat of global war, a nuclear war.

The ecological threat, we understand it, we know what we should be doing but we don't do it. With the technological threat, it is even more complicated because we don't understand what we are facing and what we should be doing. The pace of technological development is such that most people around the world, including even senior politicians and business people, they don't understand what we are facing. Just over the last few months we have seen a tremendous leap in the abilities of artificial intelligence, which our mind struggles to comprehend, what is happening and what are the implications. We will talk about it and think more extensively later on but I will just say that what really makes artificial intelligence (AI) unique is that it is the first technology in history that can make decisions by itself, and therefore, takes power away from us. We

are losing power as humans, as humanity; we are losing power in a way which never happened before. Every previous invention in history, you invent a stone knife or you invent an atom bomb, in essence, it gives humans more power because neither the knife nor the bomb can decide how to use it; a knife cannot decide whether it is used to murder somebody or to save their life in surgery.

Similarly, nuclear energy cannot decide by itself whether you use it to build a bomb or produce electricity. And even if you build a bomb, still the bomb is not so powerful. You are powerful because the bomb can't decide when and where and whether to blow, to kill people, it's always human decision. AI is different, it can make decisions by itself, not only about how to use it but increasingly, about our own lives. It's not the future, it's not science-fiction, it's already happening now, increasingly more and more crucial decisions about our lives – we apply to a bank to get a loan, it's an AI making the decision, not a human being; we apply to university to get a place or scholarship, increasingly it's an AI making the decision. In the global markets, decisions about prices, about buying stocks or commodities, are increasingly made by AI. And what we just saw in the last few months, with the appearance of ChatGPT, is the ability to tell stories that for all of human history, only humans were able to tell stories. Humans never experience the reality as it is, we always experience reality through a curtain, through a prism, through glass of culture, through text and music and images, and all through history, the only thing that could create text and stories and images and music was your other human beings. And now we have a non-human intelligence that may be better than us at



Yuval Noah Harari in conversation with Dasho Karma Tshiteem

creating this curtain, this prism, between us and reality. So, you know the fear of AI is very new in history, it's a couple of decades old, you go back to the middle of the 20th century, you find first movies and books about AI, the dangers of AI.

What happens if computers try to take over the world? But the threat of being entrapped by a curtain of illusion that stands between us and reality, this is as old as human culture. Humans are always very afraid because they know the power of stories, that stories create nations and also create wars, the entire economy is built on stories. Money is just a story, corporations like Facebook, like Google, they are just stories in our mind. People knew thousands of years ago the power of stories; religion, and you have for instance in Buddhist tradition the concept of Maya (illusion) and you know the fear of being trapped in Maya, trapped in illusion. We may now be entering the age of Maya, the age of illusion, because we now have a non-human intelligence which is able to kind of place a curtain before our eyes. Look at United States today, it's a country which has the

best information technology in history, people can no longer agree who won the last elections. There are lots of political arguments in human history, in American history. It's not new but despite political arguments in previous decades, Americans – democrats, republicans in the 1960s had huge conflicts – they still agreed who won the last elections. No longer, because again there is this curtain of illusion that descends and separates us from reality and this is now a danger, not to specific individuals or specific nations, this is now a danger for humanity as a whole. If we are not careful, we will find ourselves entrapped behind this curtain of illusion and just lose touch with reality.

So, we have huge challenges from the technological front, which we will explore in the coming hour and a half, and you would expect that facing these unprecedented, tremendous challenges, humanity will unite, but the exact opposite is happening. Over the last few years, we have seen a frightening rise in international tension, certainly with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and also

with increasing tensions in East Asia around the South China Sea and Taiwan and the prospect of a Third World War, a new global war, which five years ago seemed unthinkable. People felt, I felt as a historian, that this was the 20th century, we learned our lesson in the 20th century, we won't repeat the same mistake. No, we are repeating the same mistake and this time, we have no margin for error. In the 20th century, humanity made a terrible mistake, learning how to use technology of the industrial age and falling into this abyss of the World Wars but it didn't destroy us because the technology was not powerful enough to destroy humanity completely. Then when nuclear weapons came, for the first-time humanity had the ability to destroy ourselves but we were very careful and the Cold War never erupted into a hot war, at least not on the global level, the regional conflicts like in Vietnam, in Korea and other places, but we avoided the third world war. Now we are on the verge of it and with the type of technology that we now command, if we fall into it again, this could be the end of human civilisation.

So, these are three main challenges that we face, and the social impact company, Sapienship that I established with my husband, our mission is to simply focus on conversation on that.

Moderator: Thank you very much. The opening remarks really covered all the issues you speak about in your four books and actually, it is already provoking so many thoughts. I would like to let you know that the questions that I am going to be asking you today, to not be so selfish, I have had the benefit of conducting a survey and getting some questions from RIGSS alumni, about a hundred and fifty of them, and majority of them had read your books, but I am sure like me, most forget except for a few things, and Sapiens in particular, but most of them had watched you online. So, in the course of my questions, and I am definitely going to touch the areas you touched upon. I will try to also, where relevant, in line with the theme of our talk, try and bring your wisdom to bear on Bhutan

but otherwise, I will just get you to share thoughts which can help to make everyone wiser and the world hopefully a better place.

So, my first question, happiness. I am going to come to all the potential dystopian, utopian scenarios that you point about but I would like to start with happiness. Bhutan's development philosophy and development vision and guiding philosophy is captured by a phrase, I don't know if you have heard about it, “Gross National Happiness” and basically, we are talking about development and progress that should enhance the well-being of the people and thus should be holistic. That it should enhance both our living standards as well as the quality of our lives and then no one should be left behind in the course of development. And these very ideas are captured in a very progressive constitution that we enacted for our country in 2008. And in your book "Homo Deus" you have identified happiness as one of the three targets for humanity alongside immortality and divinity. Can you elaborate why and can Bhutan do something on this as a country that can be an example?

Speaker: Basically, almost everything that human beings do, they do it ultimately to liberate themselves from suffering and to be happy. In my books, in my talks, I often focus on suffering than on happiness because it's easier; I mean there are a lot of discussions about what happiness is, but suffering – when you suffer, you know it, it's easier to grasp. But it's two sides of the same coin and everything people do ultimately is for that. I mean people, they start entire wars and they fly to the moon ultimately because they want to be happy and they just don't know how. The big tragedy of humankind for tens of thousands of years is that as a species – of course individuals are different, and you have individuals like the Buddha which seems that they had a good grasp of what is suffering, where is it coming from, and how to be liberated from it. But even Buddha found it very difficult to explain it to his own disciples and to the people who follow him, and certainly when you

look at the humankind as a whole, as a species we are extremely good in acquiring power, we have no idea how to translate power into happiness.

If you look again at tens of thousands of years of history, if you compare us sitting here in this hall in 2023 to people in the stone age, forty thousand, fifty thousand years ago, without question we are far more powerful. Just think of the power in the hands, not of prime ministers and presidents and kings, but of ordinary civilians. Now anybody who has a smartphone has powers which traditionally were thought to be divine abilities. Like you are reading ancient mythologies, about gods being able to see things that happen now at the other side of the world. Now anybody with the smartphone can do it, or a god or goddess can talk to somebody who is in another country right now but that's not special, anybody can do it now. We can talk with the people on the other side of the world and we have access through this to immense amount of information and knowledge. Like average person today have easier access to global knowledge than the biggest emperors a hundred or two hundred years ago with so much power. And if you think collectively, of course, you can fly to the moon, we can split the atom, we can read DNA and start to change the code of life, to rewrite the code of life.

So, we have immense power but then if the trajectory of power along history is like this [hand gesture], you look at the trajectory of happiness and you don't see any correspondent increase in either collective or individual happiness. If you look collectively then humankind is as prone to act of collective madness in the modern age as in any previous time. You look at movements like, again not just the world wars, you look at movements like Naziism, like Stalinism in the Soviet Union, so you had the most powerful and advanced societies in the world and they are basically completely insane in how they behave and the amount of misery that they inflict, not just on others but also on themselves. They just had no

idea what to do with all their power and also you look at the level of individuals, you look at the most powerful people today in the world, they don't seem particularly happy. Like you watch Putin on television, he does not strike me as a very happy person. Like if I ask myself, who do I go to, to learn how to live a better life, I wouldn't go to him. He has all this immense power, and forget about the misery he inflicts on Ukrainians and even forget about the misery he inflicts on his own people, he inflicts so much misery on himself. So, this is a person who just doesn't know how to convert power into happiness. And again, we don't need to go to these personalities, each individual. And it doesn't seem that the big questions of life, that we are able to answer them today any better than we answered them fifty thousand years ago.

I personally think that a person cannot be happy unless you know the truth about yourself, unless you know who you really are, what drives you and this is something philosophers throughout history . . . “know yourself”. This is such an important thing and it doesn't seem that the average person today in the most advanced countries like the United States, or like China, like Britain – it doesn't seem that they understand themselves any better than a hunter-gatherer fifty thousand years ago understood herself or himself. So, something is not working.

Moderator: Can Bhutan do something? That's the question.

Speaker: I hope so. I am not an expert on Bhutan.

Moderator: Are we looking for that kind of a happy story that could capture everyone's imagination and help people become more sensible?

Speaker: Again, just the fact that the government places happiness as a main national target, this in itself is a very important aspect and hopefully, also gives inspiration to other governments and to

other organisations to follow suit because if you are not clear about the goal, you will not get there. Of course, being clear about the goal also doesn't guarantee you get there but it is the first step.

Moderator: Thank you. Professor Harari, culture – you know, Bhutan is a country very rich in culture and traditions. You have been here a couple of days, you must have seen it – clothes we wear, architecture, our social etiquette. And I don't know if you are aware, we have held onto this even as we modernise and our modernisation is relatively recent – first motorable roads in the 1960(s). So, our culture and tradition, it has been a source of our values, our identity, it imbues things we do with meaning. What is likely to be the impact of the technological disruption on culture and traditions of smaller countries and communities?

Speaker: We see all over the world this tension between the need,



RIGSS Director presenting a memento to Prof. Harari

the desire to modernise and the need and the desire to preserve tradition, and in both cases, we need to be wise. We shouldn't modernise blindly, just adopting the latest technology just because it's there. And similarly, we shouldn't preserve traditions just because they are there. The fact that something is old doesn't necessarily mean it is good; every tradition was once new. So, every tradition, when we trace it to the beginning, you find somebody who said for the first time, "Let's wear this kind of cloth or let's do this kind of ritual," and everybody says, "No no no, this is not the way we do it in the past." And they manage to convince, "No, let's do it like this," and then after a couple of generations, then it became a tradition. But every tradition was once new. And again, human beings as we know them today, all the nations, all the culture, it's very new because if we look, the oldest religion today, the oldest nations, they go back may be five thousand years. But five thousand years, when you think about it in terms of our own life, it sounds a long time. If you think about in terms of political events, it's such a long time, five thousand years – we can barely think in five days. But if you look at the real span of history, it's such a short time. Humans have been on the planet for more than two million years, the planet itself is four billion years. When I think about what is really tradition, what is really deep tradition, I think for example, about breathing. That we breathe in, breathe out, we do it all the time, otherwise we don't live. It connects us to all other living beings; elephants also breathe and fish breathe and everybody breathes. There is something very deep in it, because you know you take something from the world, you give back something to the world, you take something from the world, you give back. And it's no coincidence that in many meditation traditions, you start with breathing. The first thing you learn about yourself is that "I am breathing," which sounds ridiculous. Everybody knows we are breathing but no, when you start meditating you realise how little you know about this thing of breathing and this is kind of the oldest tradition. When I think about religion in Israel, Judaism, which many people say is a very old religion. So, again Judaism is, may be, three thousand

years old. In terms of generations, it's a hundred generations. If I think about the key Jewish tradition, so, tomorrow we have the Passover celebration, one of the most important rituals in the Jewish calendar where all the family gathers to commemorate how the Jews came out of slavery in Egypt. And people say this connects us to the previous generations and it's just a hundred generations at most. When I breathe, it connects me to hundreds of millions of generations of breathing entities that came before me. This is such a deep thing.

And again, you look at basic emotions – love, hate, anger, whatever you feel, your breath changes, like you fall in love, your breath immediately changes, you become angry at somebody, your breath changes. So, our deepest emotions, you don't understand them by looking at again Jewish tradition of hundred generations. You want to understand love and hate? You need to think in terms of millions of years and what really strikes me about technology is that it threatens even that, that we are now creating new entities, again like AI – AI doesn't breathe. But when I think about my relation with AI or with new types of beings that might come to dominate the planet, one of the things that I think about is, hey, this is not a breathing entity. So, after hundreds of millions of years of the tradition of breathing, here is something that doesn't breathe. What is the impact on how it understands the world, and again we mentioned earlier now AI can create stories, can create mythologies, can create religions. I think that in a couple of years we will see religions whose scriptures, the holy texts, are written by AI. Now how does the religion look like when its holy text is written by a non-breathing entity?

Moderator: Fascinating! Well, actually I am going to turn to that, the bio-tech and info-tech that you talked about and in fact, from your books, what we can see clearly is that three issues keep you awake at night. The possibility of a nuclear war that you spoke about, climate change and technological disruption and of course,

the first two are well known but technological disruption is the one that perplexes us, I think, most of us the most. And this is also an area that His Majesty The King speaks about quite passionately and indeed even in the National Day address to the nation with the concern that Bhutan must not get left behind with the advancements of technology.

So, in this respect, you earlier mentioned that technology is literally like a tool, like a knife that can be used as a scalper to perform surgery and save lives or as a murder weapon. In your opinion, what is likely to be the biggest benefit from the technological revolution and also what is likely to be the main downside and how can small countries, like Bhutan, be better prepared for it?

Speaker: You know, again, we can use it in so many different ways. So, the worst outcome is simple, the complete annihilation of humanity. A step before that, a dystopia, a situation when AI and other new technological tools are monopolised by a very few powerful countries. We saw it before in the 19th century with the industrial revolution, you know, steam engines and trains and electricity and all that. So, we had a few countries like Britain, France and later United States, Japan, they were the industrial powers and they used their power to basically conquer and exploit the whole world. So, you think this small island on the edge of Europe, how did it come to rule India and much of Asia and Africa, because of the power of industrialisation. And the new technologies we develop now like AI, they are much more powerful than steam engines and rail roads and electricity and these kinds of things.

So, again, if few countries lead the world in the AI revolution, they will be in a position to conquer and exploit everybody else and this time, the type of control they will have could be much tighter and stronger than what we saw in the previous imperial age because one other thing that really concerns me about AI is that it makes it possible for the first time, to survey, to monitor everybody all the

time and monitor even what's happening inside their body.

Like you think about dictators in history and emperors in history, people like Stalin or Mao or Hitler, they always wanted to follow everybody all the time, to know what each citizen is doing and even thinking and feeling but they couldn't do it because it was impossible technically. Like if you are Stalin in the Soviet Union, you have 200 million citizens in the Soviet Union, you don't have 200 million KGB agents that for every person you put a KGB agent and follow that person 24 hours a day, tell me what he is doing. They don't have enough agents and even if they have enough agents, what does the agent do? Like say, there is a KGB agent following me 24 hours every day, never sleeps, just follows me, everything I do, he sees. At the end of the day, he needs to write a paper report, he went there, he met this person, he said that and send these papers to Moscow, to headquarters where they get, every day, a mountain of paper from all over the Soviet Union, 200 million paper reports. Somebody needs to read all that, analyse it, make sense of it. Nobody can do that; they don't have the analysts. So, even Stalin in the Soviet Union could not follow everybody all the time so people had some measure of privacy, some measure of little space of freedom.

Now with technology it can be done. You don't need human agents to follow you around, you have electronical agents, you have digital agents. We carry the agents in our own pockets, we pay for them even, like our smart phones, all these cameras and microphones, they follow us 24 hours a day. They don't need to write a paper report at the end of the day: he went there, he met this person. No, they send all the information not to Moscow, but to the Cloud and in the Cloud, you have the new AI tools. We don't need human analysts to read and analyse all that. You have AI tools, algorithms that can analyse all this ocean of information. And as I mentioned it can even enter inside our own bodies, not just where we go and who we meet but even how we feel and what we think, they might

even reach that level. So, we could be facing the worst totalitarian regimes in history that would be far more extreme than anything we saw in the 20th century.

Moderator: What can we do against it, to avoid that?

Speaker: There are many things, first of all, this is just dystopian scenario. There are also very positive scenarios. We can use all these technologies not in order to create this immense gap between a few imperial powers of very small elites that control everybody but to use all this to benefit everybody. For instance, to easily provide the basic necessities for all human beings, there is a lot of discussion about the job market, what happens when automation makes, for instance, the production of textiles cheaper, to produce textiles automatically than to use textile workers, what would the textile workers do? Ideally, if we do it right, we don't need to protect the jobs, we need to protect the people. I mean it's not necessarily the best thing for human beings to spend eight or ten hours every day just making textile if they don't want to. If we can provide them the basic necessities of life and they can invest their time in building communities, in taking care of family, in developing spirituality, in developing art or sport.

Most people would prefer this type of future and we can do that if we harness the immense power of the new technology for the benefit of everybody and not for the benefit of only a small number of countries or very small number of people in the country and it's the same with surveillance. I mean you can use surveillance for the one big dictator to spy on everybody, you can also use surveillance for instance to make sure there is no government corruption, or to make sure that corporations pay their taxes. It's a choice of what you do with the technology and we need to regulate these technologies, so there are two main things – one is to make sure that you don't get just a few countries or corporations monopolising these immensely powerful technologies, that's one key goal, and here we

need cooperation and of course a small country like Bhutan cannot stand up to a big country like China or the United States by itself or to a big corporation like Google or Tencent or Baidu by itself, but if you unite with a lot of other countries then as a block you can try to regulate these emerging technologies.

The other thing is, again to implement there is a long list of ideas but I'll just give one or two, just to give examples. So, for instance we already have very strict laws about how people who give us service, what they can and cannot do with the information they have on us. Like if I go to my personal physician, I have some disease, a medical condition to get treatment, so I tell my physician very private things about me that may be even my family doesn't know, my neighbours don't know and there is this thing called

fiduciary obligation of the physician to use this very private information only in order to help me. They are not allowed to use it for anything else; with physician, with lawyers, with accountants we have this, it's obvious. My doctor cannot take my information and sell it to some corporation to use against me, that's a crime. But the big tech companies they do it all the time, there we don't have this simple law.

Moderator: We need global cooperation.

Speaker: Yes, you cannot take my private information and just sell it to a third party to make money without my consent but with the big Tech, this is how it happens, it's the business model. And this is something that governments should say no, you can't



Prof. Harari with RIGSS staff

do that, that's illegal and similarly we should have regulations that prevent the over concentration of too much information in one place whether it's a corporation, whether it's a government agency. When there is too much information concentrated in one place, it always leads to a dictatorship, digital dictatorship. So, you know there are entire organisations and think tanks that are working on these regulations but as we talked earlier the problem is that just to understand, just for politicians and lawmakers and citizens to understand what is happening is difficult and without understanding what is happening it's difficult to regulate it. The people who best understand what is happening, they don't go to politics, they go to business.

Moderator: Professor Harari, that's why we need storytellers like you, very compelling storytellers. And I want you to pick up on that one thing you mentioned, that there's going to be this large loss of jobs because you know, self-driving cars so on and so forth with the technological disruption and that's where you promote this idea of a UBI, but UBI a lot of people think instinctively Universal Basic Income, national but you are actually talking about international and I was thinking this is obviously of interest to countries like us. Could you expound a little further?

Speaker: Yes, a lot of people who do think about the problem of automation - what it will do to the job market. One of the ideas you get often, you get people talking about, is UBI (Universal Basic Income), the idea that the government taxes the big corporations who make money, make a lot of profits from automation and uses the proceeds to give basic income or basic services to the people who lost their jobs. Now this could work in some cases but there are big problems with it, one big problem is that people who talk about it they think in national terms, they think in terms of the US government taking taxes from big corporations in California in order to give a basic income to unemployed taxi drivers or coal miners in Pennsylvania but the biggest problems will be on

the international level because there will be a lot of new jobs in the new economy, the real question will be how to retrain people for the new jobs. Now a country like the United States which is already a rich country and will become even richer because of the automation revolution, it will be in a very good position to educate and retrain its workforce so it will be even more successful. It will be able to fill all the new jobs in the new economy. Other countries which are already behind, they are likely to be hit very hard by the automation revolution because if they make, say like Bangladesh making much of its economy depend on the textile industry, what happens to Bangladesh once it's cheaper to produce textiles in the US than in Bangladesh? And then okay, we need to retrain the workforce, but where do you get the money? I mean retraining the workforce is very costly, you have people who are out of jobs, you have to support them during the training course which can last months, maybe years, you need teachers, you need facilities, I mean where do you get the money to do all that. The danger is that some countries, if we don't tackle it on the international level, some countries will become extremely powerful and wealthy because of the automation revolution, other countries will completely collapse so we need a global safety net to make sure that the poorer countries are not left completely behind.

You know in the 20th century the basic economic idea was if you're in a developing country and let's say you don't have oil or some other such resources, so your main resource is manual labour, you start industries like textile which don't require too much, you know like, very professional education and you gradually develop from there. You use the money you make from textile to move on to electronics and move on from there but in the 21st century it's like somebody came and just chopped off the bottom half of the ladder, like the ladder that countries use to climb, so the bottom half which relies mainly on cheap manual labour it's being cut. So how would the developing countries, how can they develop, that's a very big question we need to tackle in the 21st century.

Moderator: And worse still, you mentioned that some of them may be beyond remedy and that's where the useless class and that's another complication, and that's where I think the UBI is going to be critical.

Speaker: If it's on a global level, yes.

Moderator: Yes absolutely, and that's the only way to make it work, I think. Well Professor, turning now to the field of education and in light of now we experiencing artificial intelligence, chat GPT and all that to come. So how should we prepare our children? And in your books, you emphasise general purpose skills, so I was wondering if could you expound further, what the new form of education should be.

Speaker: In education, like in other fields, we face an unprecedented situation, that we now need to educate young people without having any idea of the kind of world that they will inhabit when they are adults. Throughout history, of course you could never predict the future, like you go back a thousand years you don't know what will happen in 20 years, there are so many political events that can happen, somebody can invade the country, there could be a civil war, maybe there is an epidemic, maybe there is an earthquake, so many things you can't predict. But the basic skills of life, they don't change very quickly. A thousand years ago you know it doesn't matter what happens on the political level, people will still need to know how to plant rice or wheat, how to bake bread, how to build a house, how to ride a horse, how to read and write, basic skills, so you know this is good to teach the young people how to do these things.

Now we have no idea what the world would look like in 20 years, we have no idea what the job market will be except it will be very different from what it is now; there will be new jobs, we just don't know what these new jobs will be. You know like in recent years

lots of people said the best bet is to teach young people how to code, how to write computer code, because we don't know how the world would look like in 20 years but we are sure they'll need a lot of coders. Now AI is becoming able to code so all bets are off, maybe we don't need human coders in 20 years because this is something that AI can do by itself. You just give it "Oh, I want to this or that that kind of application, write me the code" and it writes the code. So, we don't know the type of skills that will be necessary and the first field that encounters this problem is education because in business, let's say I have some company today, I don't need to worry so much about what will be in 20 years, I worry about the next few months or maybe one or two years. 20 years is very distant but in education 20 years is not distant, if you now teach kids who are like six or seven years old, 20 years is the name of the game, I mean what do I teach a six-year-old today so that she or he will have the necessary skill in 20 years, that's the whole point and we don't know the answer.

We do know that the world will be extremely hectic, fluid; things will change very very rapidly, not only in the economy even our bodies will change in ways which were previously unthinkable, with the new technologies, with biotechnology, with again connecting brains and computers there will be major changes even to the body. So, what people will need is the ability to keep changing and keep learning throughout their lives, they will have to constantly learn new skills, they will have to constantly reinvent themselves and for this they will need a lot of mental resilience and emotional flexibility. It's very difficult to change, even young people don't find it easy to change and the older you get the harder it gets. Like by the time you are 40 or 50, you don't want to change but this will be essential so how do you build a new type of human that is able to keep learning and changing and here again I think the emphasis should be on psychological, mental, emotional skills.

Moderator: Thank you, that's a lot to unpack. Let me turn to that

actually, you talk about this idea of hacking humans and it is in that context you mentioned know thyself and that's the way to retain some control and not seed all authority to the algorithms but then you raise this most troubling aspect about free will. We all like to believe that we are the masters of our own destiny and with free will and that with education and now the internet that this is even more so, this is what we like to believe, but you paint a very different picture and in fact the picture you paint challenges the whole notion of free will as commonly understood, so let me quote you Professor Harari, you write that "if free will is freedom to do what you desire, you humans have free will but if free will means the freedom to choose what you desire, then we don't have free will". Please explain.

Speaker: Yes, I mean it's when people hear we have no free will they say but I feel that I'm doing what I want and yes this obviously this is true and this is true of humans, this is true of chimpanzees, this is true of elephants, this is true of rats. Rats want to run somewhere she or he feels yes, I want to run there, I run there. If this is what is meant by free will there is no argument but the idea that I can choose my own desires, like I have freedom over my will, I can tell myself now you want this, no now you want that, it doesn't work.

From our own experience, we know that what we like to eat, the people we like, our sexual attraction, we have no control over it or very little control over it. My main issue with the idea of free will is, it makes people uncurious about themselves, like one of the biggest questions in life is "What is the source of my desires? What is the source of my decisions? Why do I want these things? Why did I make this decision?" Now if you believe in free will, it makes you lose curiosity – "Why did I choose this?" Because this is my free will, end of story, there is nothing to investigate. If you don't believe in free will, or you are willing to kind of withhold judgment, I don't know, let's investigate what really caused me to desire this particular thing, then you start investigating and when

you start investigating you realise that there are so many things that manipulate my desires, other people manipulate my desires, religious and cultural ideas influence my desires.

And things that happen within my body influence my desires, like as we study in depth the human body, the human brain, the DNA, we realise so many biological processes that we know nothing about, like 99 percent of the processes in your body happen without our understanding and knowledge, as you're now sitting listening to me so many things happen in your brain, in your body that you have no idea they are happening. So, we know very little about what really shapes our emotions, our feelings, our desires. If you make, and again the key to that is to realise maybe I don't know why I made this decision, let's investigate. If after a long investigation you find that there is some type of freedom in yourself then okay, if that is the result of your investigation then fine, but these decisions should not be taken just because I have free will. I think that real freedom for humans is not something they have, it's something they have to struggle for.

Moderator: Yes, you make that point in the book.

Speaker: You have to turn it to struggle for your whole life and then maybe you have some real freedom and often real freedom is not the freedom to exercise your will or to choose your will, it's the freedom from your will, that okay, I want this but this desire doesn't necessarily control my life and this is something that needs a lot of work to do.

Moderator: True, true. Professor, I think it's slightly related, this is my personal pet peeve and my personal pet peeve is the fact that in our schools we teach our children everything but we don't teach them the most important thing which is thinking, which is so critical like what you just mentioned in making good choices and in this regard, I wanted to draw upon one of the teachings of the

Buddha. This is a little long, please indulge me, one of the teachings as a framework that can be used to enhance thinking so that you improve the choices you make and thereby assert whatever free will is possible as a human being.

And when I say I'm taking recourse to the Buddha's teaching I'm talking about a particular teaching where he speaks about the five parts of the mind. You might recall this from the Vipassana discourse where he says that everything we human beings experience, our existence, we experience through consciousness, through the sense of sight, sound, taste, touch etc. and through these senses, consciousness is triggered and that in turn triggers perception or thoughts in our mind, that these thoughts are what drives our sensations, our feelings which lead to our action - you're angry you shout, whatever, and those actions lead to result and that in this chain the thinking is optional and is up to you which is why same facts you can have different perspectives, what do you think?

Speaker: Yes, the mind is actually really like a factory which is constantly working, at least when we are awake, constantly producing thoughts and interpretations and stories about the world and like we said earlier very often again we don't really experience reality, we experience all these stories and interpretations and this makes the mind a very critical place because most of the conflict in the world for instance, they are not about objective things like food or like territory, they are about the thoughts in the mind, about the stories that our own mind produce, like I think about my own country so in Israel we have a very long conflict with the Palestinians and many people think this is a conflict about territory, that you know like chimpanzees or wolves, they fight over territory so also human beings fight over territory but this is not the case, there is no objective lack of territory, of just ground, place to build houses and schools and hospitals, there is enough territory. There is also enough food, it's not like there is not enough

food so people are fighting over the last piece of bread, who will get it, there is enough food. They have conflicting stories in their minds, conflicting thoughts and because of that there is a war, the war is about something in the mind not about something in the outside world, like you go to Jerusalem, the most holy city that both sides wants it, so I still teach at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem so every week I'm there and it's a completely ordinary place, it's a completely ordinary place like any other place in the world, you have stones, you have trees, you have dogs, you have birds, you have humans, it's like any other place but in their minds people create a story about the place and they imagine that this place is full of gods and angels and then holiness and instead of this holiness making them peaceful and compassionate, it makes them hateful and angry because they all want to have this holy place to themselves, they don't fight about the stones, nobody cares about the stones, they fight about the story that they hold in their mind about "Oh this is the holy stone, I must have it, you can't have it, this is mine" and the real tragedy about it I think is that, again I mean the meaning of a holy place I think in most traditions is that this is a place that brings peacefulness to your mind and brings compassion to your relations with others.

So, if you have a so-called holy place which creates discord and violence and hatred it's obviously a dysfunctional holy place, like you have a factory for cars that instead of producing cars it produces broken cars, so who wants such a factory? But still again people fight over it and it all comes from the mind, so this is again like also in Buddhist tradition that Buddha said that mind matters most, mind comes first.

If we could clear our minds, there would be no wars in the world because the wars are not really, they are never about the territory. You look at the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it's not about territory, if it was about territory Russia is the largest country in the world, it has more territories than anybody else, it doesn't need more

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So, one of the biggest questions about the future is what happens when increasingly the world is dominated by these super intelligent but non-conscious beings, and I think that the first thing is to slow down because we don't understand the consequences of such a new power taking over the world, the safest thing is to slow down and wait until we understand it better. You know, like drug companies producing a new medicine, they can't just release the medicine to the public before they go through a long process. It can take many years of testing this medicine, making sure they understand it, and making sure it's safe, but tech companies now create things which are much more powerful than medicines, these new AI tools, and they just release them to the public sphere without any understanding of what the consequences will be. So, I think the first step is to slow down, you have to first check for safety and then see if we can release it to the public.

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territory but it has a story, Putin has a story in the mind, and because of the story in his mind there is this terrible war, so we need to invest a lot of effort in cleaning our minds.

Moderator: Thank you. Let me turn to consciousness and the reason I raise this is you mentioned that in the AI Revolution, AI has intelligence but no consciousness. Is that a good thing or a bad thing?

Speaker: I'm not sure, I mean it depends what we do with it or what it does with us. Intelligence and consciousness are concepts that people often mix together because in human beings they are mixed together. Intelligence is the ability to solve problems, any type of problems, how to navigate the room, how to cure cancer, that's intelligence, solving problems. Consciousness is the ability to feel things, like pain or pleasure or joy or anger. Now humans and also other mammals, also chimpanzees, also elephants, also pigs, they solve problems through their feelings and we see it in rare cases when people have, like they shut down their emotional part, they also find it very difficult to solve any problems.

Now AI works in a very different way, as far as we know AI has no feelings at all, it never feels anything – no pain, no pleasure, no joy, no anger but it has very high intelligence, at least in certain fields, and in certain fields it's more intelligent than us, like in certain games like chess we already know it no human being can beat a computer with chess. So, what happens if the world is increasingly dominated by entities, by beings who are more intelligent than us but they have no feelings, they are never sad, they are never joyful, they don't have hatred, they don't have love, we don't know. Because we don't know, again it goes back to the breathing that we talked about earlier, also we are not familiar with any animals that don't have feelings, like all the animals we interact with are like us, they have feelings.

So, one of the biggest questions about the future is what happens when increasingly the world is dominated by these super intelligent but non-conscious beings and I think that the first thing is to slow down because we don't understand the consequences of such a new power taking over the world, the safest thing is to slow down and wait until we understand it better. You know like drug companies producing a new medicine, they can't just release the medicine to the public before they go through a long process, can take many years of testing this medicine, making sure they understand it, making sure it's safe but tech companies, they create now things which are much more powerful than medicines, these new AI tools and they just release them to the public sphere without any understanding of what the consequences will be. So, I think the first step is to slow down, you have to first check for safety then see if we can release it to the public.

Moderator: Like what the Luddites did, you have to be a little measured, I guess.

Speaker: Yeah, it's not stopping the development, it's not kind of completely giving up technology, no. But just do it a bit more slowly and more carefully.

Moderator: Thank you very much, Professor Harari.

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The RIGSS Dialogue is a platform for engagement with eminent and distinguished personalities from across the world on a wide range of topics. The Dialogue entails a 45-minute conversation between the Anchor and the Speaker followed by a 45-minute moderated Q&A session with the audience.





BEST-3, 2016



SELP-3, Cross-country Learning Journey, 2014



FLP-2, 2017



SLDP-6, 2021



YPLP-1, Druk path trek (OLE), 2016



RIGSS faculty Dasho Karma Ura



SELP-9, 2018

MEDIA MATTERS

UGYEN PENJOR, RIGSS ALUMNUS, SELP-9

“What is your job? You are a phung-dze¹”

My late mother made a remark on my job one day when I started my career as a junior reporter with Kuensel, the national newspaper, in 2002. She would often inquire about what I or my office gained from reporting accidents, crime, poor services, and so on – a beat I started with as a rookie.

As time passed and she gained a better understanding of my job, she began to suggest what journalists call story ideas. It covered everyday issues she faced – from bad roads to water shortages and, as a farmer living on the outskirts of the expanding capital city, even urban planning. She saw me or my job as a platform, a vehicle for her voice to question authorities on service delivery, even if she didn't fully grasp the importance of media.

Last week, at a conference in Thimphu, I chose to sit with a college mate, an auditor. As we caught up on our jobs and lives, he jokingly remarked, "They might think the media and audit are ganging up." I sensed his discomfort. Just a week before, Kuensel

had covered an audit issue alleging two former ministers of misusing power. It created an uproar, with the political party questioning the timing of the story, and the Royal Audit Authority (RAA), not surprisingly, received a few complaints.

Towards Openness

Even if the RAA and media worked together, it should not be construed as "ganging up" but as complementing each other in enhancing our goals of accountability, efficiency, and transparency.

The Bhutanese media is expected to do so, if possible, in collaboration with other institutions. That the media will play a crucial role in the functioning of the society was long recognised. In 1992, by Royal Command, the government-owned Kuensel and BBS were established as independent enterprises to enable them to grow professionally. Private newspapers were encouraged in 2006, on the advice of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo, making it a significant step in the development of the Bhutanese media.

There are public expectations from the media beyond informing, entertaining, and educating. The expectation is for the

media to play the role of the watchdog. The Bhutanese media, too, have made progress over the years. However, if the media is to fulfil its mandate, it needs strong support from society and institutions. Support, not just in terms of finance, but access to information, data, and answers to questions. In fact, many of the institutions could collaborate with the media to fulfil respective mandates and the goal of a free and fair society.

Is this Happening?

Today, the media is viewed as a sensitive sector, unfortunately, not because of its influence on the populace or its role, but because what all that media is after is considered sensitive. Quite often, much of the time and energy is spent hunting down sources of leaked information or public documents and reports rather than finding solutions to the issues covered. Journalists waiting in the corridors of those who hold crucial information are seen as nosy people or troublemakers.

The Constitution guarantees freedom of expression, freedom of the media, and the right to information. Freedom of media is not a privilege for journalists; the freedom of expression places responsibility on

those working in the media. The right to information is a fundamental right given to the entire population, and the media serves as the medium.

It is still challenging to accept that it is the job of journalists to uncover what is going wrong beyond reporting events and incidents. That is the essence of the media's responsibility, popularly known as the fourth estate.

Gagging the Media?

On the 2023 global press freedom ranking, Bhutan dropped its place by 57 places to 90 from 33 last year. Despite the drop, it still fares better compared to many countries in the region.

The ranking considers many factors like safety for journalists, the legal framework, economic and political context, etc. Press freedom indices are, however, crude measures that conceal significant details. Bhutan may be the safest place for journalists, but when it comes to other important parameters like access to information, it could fall behind.

While media freedom is not constrained by repressive laws, other forms of control exist, especially through restricted access to information. For many, public information in the form of notifications and announcements is seen as a tool to

control the media. This is why we often hear newsmakers saying they will "give" or not give advertisements or information, which actually is public information.

However, like elsewhere in the world, an emerging trend poses the biggest threat to legacy media, such as newspapers and television. While the media is grappling with older issues and struggling to stay afloat, the new reality is a media undergoing structural transition even as audiences migrate to an increasingly vast digital media space.

Options presented by the changing media landscape have complicated the development of free, independent, and plural media, as commercialisation, profit-making, and dominance of digital platforms take priority. For media owners and managers, this commercial orientation is the main threat to media independence as the financial bottom line becomes the priority, and risks commitment to protect journalism's public service mission in the face of market pressures.

Unlike in most countries, Bhutanese media are not owned or run by multinational companies for whom the media wing is camouflaged as publicity or interest vehicles. All Bhutanese media function on a shoestring budget, and sustainability is a concern. This could jeopardise their

mandate. The latest trend across all media in the country is cutting human resource budgets, if not compromising, to become more advertiser-friendly. Editorial decision-making, quite often, is influenced to become consumer-oriented and advertiser-friendly at the expense of journalism or news and information required for the country's civic health.

On a positive note, if the digital revolution has been disruptive with traditional media, especially newspapers, losing attention, influence, audience, and profit, it has encouraged convergence. Newspapers are now into producing video, while television news channels also publish text. The digital transformation, although still in its infancy, has also enabled new players to challenge mainstream media. Blogs and social media, being less capital-intensive and not entirely regulated, provide alternatives without authorities clamping down. New media could play a significant role if publishers take them more seriously and go beyond occasional outbursts and complaints.

Still Relevant

At a recent panel discussion on "Emerging trends in the media in South Asia," a repetitive question was about the need for mainstream media and journalists in a fast-changing world of digital technology and artificial intelligence. The answer was

¹ A Bhutanese term that roughly translates to being nosy or intrusive

a resounding yes. One editor summed up the importance of the media, "It is as important as the air we breathe."

The advent of the internet and new media led many to believe that anyone

could become a publisher or content creator, seemingly diminishing the need for traditional media. However, the significance of mainstream media has only grown stronger as people have come to realise that not everything published on

the internet is accurate or verified.

If mainstream media is the air we breathe, how do we ensure that it is free and not polluted?



Former Chief Justice Lyonpo Sonam Tobgye with SELP-9 and MLS-6 during the 3rd Friday Forum Lecture on "A Perspective on the Philosophical Basis of the Bhutanese Constitution" by Lyonpo, 21st March, 2014

Launched on 28th October 2014, MLS is a course designed for senior military officers to provide a cross-disciplinary perspective by integrating aspects of security, geopolitics and economics in understanding and analysing security threats, and threat perceptions in the 21st century.



"I think we have to work very seriously now. This is not just a project on pushing tourism within our region. Our children and college students must be encouraged to learn more about the neighbours that they live amongst. We've had different ways of trying to push this that haven't worked so far— get people-to-people ties, have journalists come together; I think the obvious thing is to now look to the next generation and ensure that when I stand in front of an audience may be 20 years from now, everyone will pull up their hands and say I have been to every region of South Asia. A journey of thousand miles, as they say, begins with one step and the journey to salvation unity, I definitely believe, can be ensured by each of its citizens making that one step over a border; of course, you can't do it with Sri Lanka and Maldives, but you get the power of the idea. The truth is, my friends, to fight the idea of SAARC is, in fact, to fight geography and, history and mother nature in the region. The obvious thing that I always say is the sum of our parts is greater than the whole, and we have a voice far stronger if we are able to speak as one."



Suhasini Haidar
8th RIGSS Friday Forum
SAARC Beyond India & Pakistan
14th November 2014

FROM THE FACULTY...

“



CHRIS LOBELLO

"It should be no surprise that Bhutan, the country at the forefront of quantifying and considering its people's happiness, has also led the way in the training and education of its politicians, business leaders, and bureaucrats for the advancement of the nation. The Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS) is a truly unique, world-class institution working to further Bhutan's young yet flourishing democracy.."



AMB. SHYAM SARAN

"Since it's inception a decade ago RIGSS has grown from strength to strength and earned a reputation as a centre of excellence not only in Bhutan but in the region as well. Best wishes to RIGSS@10 and many more successes ahead."



ANGELA CHEUNG

"Congratulations on this major milestone! What sets RIGSS apart is the collective embrace of a beginner's mindset, approaching each day with a humble thirst for growth. The dedicated staff, known for their warmth and dedication, ensure smooth operations and make the institute thrive. The knowledge shared, friendships forged, and cherished memories created will always hold a special place in my heart."



ALVIN UNG

"RIGSS' purpose-led leaders walk a life-giving path in a world that is increasingly divided and disconnected. This path calls us to grow people, lead teams and choose what's good and true. At the center, we are called to lead self. This perspective is RIGSS' gift to the world."

”

LEADERSHIP OF THE SELF INSPIRING ROYAL VISIONS

DORJI DRADHUL, RIGSS ALUMNUS, SELP-8 | BEST-4

Between 2015 and 2018, Gasa Dzongkhag had the profound honour of hosting five Royal visits, which served as transformative moments during which numerous Royal visions were translated into reality. This article hopes to shed light on four of these remarkable initiatives, emphasising the boundless nature of His Majesty The King’s aspirations and their intrinsic connection to the leadership paradigm known as the “Leadership of the Self”. The profound essence of this philosophy is deeply ingrained in the ethos of the Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS), as exemplified by the powerful Royal wisdom displayed prominently at the entrance of the RIGSS Prajna Auditorium: **“What we need is not a Leader to lead the Masses – we need Leadership of the Self”**

These four initiatives are presented here as compelling illustrations of His Majesty’s extraordinary capacity to catalyse positive change at every level, from the grassroots level in a gewog in Bhutan to the global stage. This commitment to global leadership aligns seamlessly with the following resounding Royal quote: **“I pray that while I am but King of a small**

Himalayan Nation, I may in my time be able to do much to promote the greater well-being and happiness of all people in this world - of all sentient beings.” – His Majesty The King, November 7, 2008.

At the Gewog level – Lhakhang in Lunana

On July 6, 2018, the lhakhang¹ at Toenchoe, Lunana, was consecrated in the presence of His Majesty, presided by the Venerable Dorji Lopen. Perched at 4,100 meters on a gentle ridge, it is unquestionably the world’s highest lhakhang dedicated to Palden Lhamo². The lhakhang was built from an abandoned, dilapidated village house. This house was a landmark due to its size as it claimed that it could be seen from as far as Gangjula (5,100 m), a three-day walk from Toenchoe towards Punakha.

In 2016, His Majesty revisited this house, which had first captured His Majesty’s attention in 2008 while still in use. His Majesty’s command to transform this abandoned house into a community lhakhang set in motion its renovation.

¹ Lhakhang - Temple

² Palden Lhamo is one of the three guardian deities of Bhutan

Without this Royal intervention, this house, abandoned due to a series of misfortunes, would have languished in dereliction.

Today, this lhakhang serves as a community temple with a dedicated Lam appointed by the monastic body of Gasa Dzongkhag. The lhakhang has become a community centre, benefiting around 190 households and approximately 700 people. It now serves a multitude of purposes beyond worship, bolstering protection against natural disasters from the north and heightening the Lunana people’s overall well-being. In a telephone interview, the Gup expressed that as early as 2019, just a year after its consecration, the frequency of natural disturbances, such as windstorms, had notably diminished.

At Dzongkhag Level – Silver Jubilee of Gasa Dzongkhag

On October 14, 1992, His Majesty The Fourth Druk Gyalpo inaugurated Gasa as a separate Dzongkhag. Prior to this, Gasa had been a part of Punakha Dzongkhag. Twenty-five years later, in October 2017, His Majesty The King, en route to Laya for the second Royal Highland Festival, commanded the Dzongkhag to celebrate

the Silver Jubilee of its founding day.

The celebration, held on December 28, 2017, was graced by His Majesty The King, Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen, and His Royal Highness (HRH) the Gyalsey Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck. HRH the Gyalsey’s inaugural visit to Gasa marked a remarkable highlight of the celebration, attracting the largest crowd ever witnessed in Gasa Dzongkhag.

The celebration included the installation of a statue of Gasa’s guardian deity, Ap Gomo, in the Goenkhang of the renovated Utse of Gasa Tashi Thongmoen Dzong. His Majesty personally partook in the installation, assisting in carrying the 150 kg statue up two levels of steep ladders. This statue, originally gifted by His Majesty in 2011, had been temporarily housed in another lhakhang during the Utse’s reconstruction.

At the National Level – The Royal Highland Festival

Over the years, particularly after the emergence of *Cordyceps sinensis*, the highly coveted highland fungus caterpillar, as a more lucrative source of revenue since 2004, traditional yak-based pastoral farming in the highlands faced a steady decline. This was further compounded by the migration of rural populations to urban centres due to the challenges of living in

the highlands.

The symbiotic relationship between the pastoral lifestyle and the fragile highland ecosystem was evident, with any alteration in lifestyle directly impacting the ecosystem and vice versa. This shift not only contributed to climate change but also endangered the unique highland culture and its traditional ecological knowledge. Recognising the gravity of this emerging national concern, His Majesty envisioned the Royal Highland Festival as a potential solution.

The inaugural Royal Highland Festival, which unfolded in October 2016, saw the participation of highland communities

from ten dzongkhags. The festival was guided by several Royal visions, including:

- Reviving the highland lifestyle by creating economic opportunities.
- Promoting the highlands and their unique way of life as a tourism attraction.
- Integrating the highlands into the mainstream development of the nation.

Media reports and the experiences of highlanders themselves indicate that these Royal visions are taking tangible form. Economic activities are on the rise, leading to increased revenues, and the highlands’ agenda is gaining prominence within the national development framework.



His Majesty The King at the Royal Highland Festival, 2022

At the Global level – Snowman Race

“Glaciers are melting, polar ice caps are thinning and coral reefs are dying. Climate change threatens the well-being of all mankind. Today our consumption of renewable natural resources is 50% larger than nature’s capacity to regenerate. Every second, rainforests the size of a football field disappear. Water problems affect half of humanity. It is quite clear now, that we will be handing to our children, a world which has been, in so many ways, made worse than when we inherited it.” – His Majesty The King, Keio University, Japan (November 17, 2011)

In a concerted effort to address pressing global concerns, His Majesty conceptualised the Snowman Race (SMR) with climate change as its central theme. The race aims to unite the international community in the fight against climate change. The Snowman Race commences in Gasa along the northern highlands of Bhutan, challenging elite runners from around the world to cover 222 kilometres in under five days, traversing altitudes of up to 5,320 meters and navigating some of the world’s most challenging terrains before concluding in the enchanting valley of Bumthang.

Initially scheduled for 2020, the inaugural edition of the race finally took place from October 13 to 17, 2022. This historic

event featured 20 world-class runners representing countries such as Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, Tanzania, the UK, and the US, alongside nine Bhutanese runners. It demonstrated Bhutan’s commitment to global sustainability and the power of leading by example.

A pivotal moment in this undertaking was the Climate Conclave held on September 18, 2023, in Bumthang. The Snowman Race signifies a steadfast commitment to continue organising such events until the global community effectively addresses and mitigates the impacts of climate change.

The extraordinary journey from a gewog to the global level exemplifies His Majesty’s visionary leadership. His Majesty’s unwavering dedication to enhancing the well-being of Bhutanese citizens at every level and addressing global challenges underscores the profound impact an extraordinary leader can have.

As we reflect on these remarkable initiatives, we echo His Majesty’s call for the “**Leadership of the Self.**” It is our shared responsibility as Bhutanese citizens, each of us assuming a leadership role, to actively contribute to realising the vision of “one nation, one people”.

This commitment has taken on greater urgency with the ongoing transformation to make Bhutan and Bhutanese the most trustworthy and dependable entities in the region, if not the world, within the next 5 to 10 years.

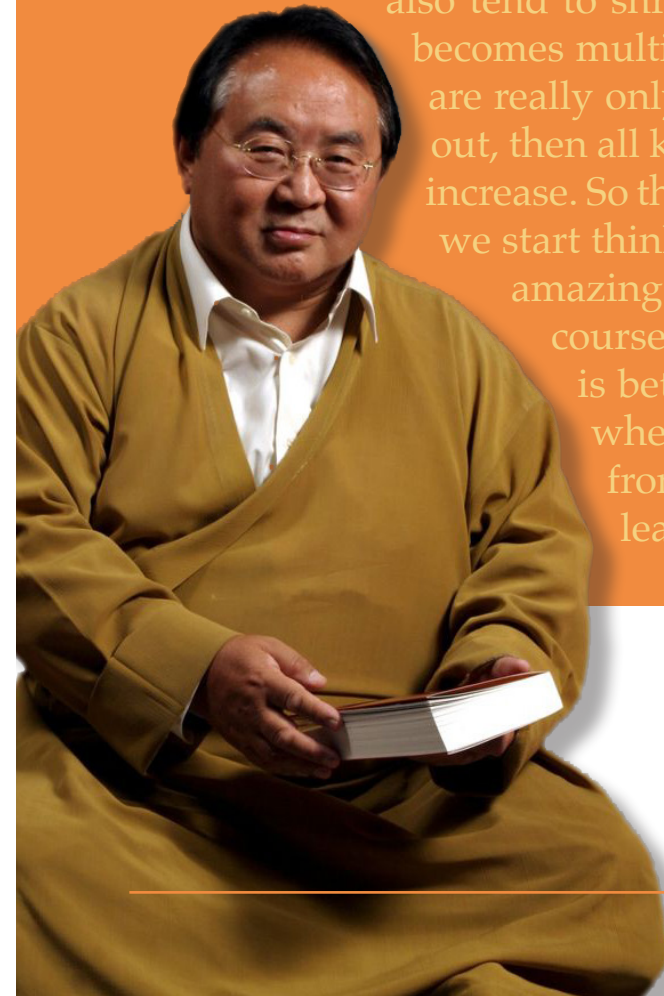
In the spirit of our nation’s brand, Bhutan Believe, I firmly believe that embracing “Leadership of the Self” as the mainstream paradigm of leadership will inspire us to break free from the constraints of the status quo and lead us to the path of His Majesty’s aspiration of enlightened citizenship. The path ahead may present challenges, but with unwavering resolve, collaborative efforts, and a steadfast commitment to excellence, we will fully realise our goals.



Dorji Dradhul during SELP-8's Learning Journey to Sikkim, 2017

Launched on 26th July, 2015, BEST is a two-week training programme on leadership competency development, exclusively designed for executives in the civil service.

“I can, in no way, talk about compassion in the Buddhist teaching, which is so vast, but as we bring compassion more essentially in terms of leadership training, the Buddhist practices of compassion are immensely powerful in transforming the way we are and how we regard and relate to others. Compassion broadens our perspective and strengthens our hearts and minds. And we as leaders need this in order to overcome challenges and truly serve others. In fact, fundamentally, we are here to serve and benefit others. Now, the logic of compassion is that as long as we are solely concerned with ourselves rather selfishly, with short-term thinking – you know, how can I get ahead, what do I need, what should I have – then our scope remains very narrow. We find ourselves imprisoned in a cramped and claustrophobic state of mind in which even the slightest discomfort becomes unbearable. On top of that, we also tend to shrug off our responsibilities and blame others. A tiny problem becomes multiplied into many problems until there’s no end to them. If we are really only concerned with ourselves selfishly like this, day in and day out, then all kinds of misfortunes will occur, and our unhappiness will only increase. So that’s not a good idea. On the other hand, what is amazing when we start thinking of others, working for the welfare of others, then what is amazing is that your own well-being is taken care of, as a matter of course, or you can call it, automatically. As Nelson Mandela said, “It is better to lead from behind and to put others in front, especially when you celebrate victory when nice things occur. You take the front line when there is danger. Then people will appreciate your leadership.”



His Eminence the Late Sogyal Rimpoche
10th RIGSS Friday Forum
Leadership of the Mind
20th March, 2015



YPLP-2, OLE (Punakha), 2016



LPP-1, Trip to Cooch Behar, 2016



RIGSS faculty Dr. Adrian Chan with MLS-4, 2017



RIGSS staff during IBYS-1, 2018



Dale Carnegie, Singapore with YPLP-5, 2017



RIGSS faculty Dasho Karma Ura with IBYS-1 participants, 2018



RIGSS faculty members Mark Erder & Angela Cheung with BEST-3, 2016



Dale Carnegie, Singapore & Indonesia with SELP-10 & MLS-7, 2019

THROUGH THE YEARS

TRANSITIONING INTO A TECH-DRIVEN ECONOMY

UJJWAL DEEP DAHAL (RIGSS ALUMNUS, SEDP-4) AND THE INNOTECH TEAM, DHI

The major advancements in technology have primarily occurred in the last two centuries. With the technological revolution in the 18th century, new technology has served as the engine and a tool of transformation for humanity. The amazing value proposition of technology is that it is iterative, and the exponential growth of computing power continues to build the foundations for the next generation of innovation. The second tech revolution brought mass production and significant advancements in infrastructure like water, electricity, heat and gas. From the late 1970s, the third tech revolution, dubbed the “digital revolution”, saw the rise of computers, information technology and communication. It has been nothing short of transformative. In the span of a few decades, we have witnessed the birth of the Internet, the proliferation of smart devices, and the advent of artificial intelligence (AI). In fact, with the increasing power of computers, blisteringly fast data transfer speeds, and now even more advanced data science techniques, many feel we are on the cusp of a new fourth tech revolution, the “intelligence revolution”.

All of these innovations have redefined industries, unlocked new economic potential, and connected people across the globe. Given the opportunities brought about by these transformations, it is crucial for Bhutan, now more than ever, to embrace a tech-based economy, harnessing the power of innovation and using it as a catalyst for change.

Bhutan is now pivoting from its previous strategy of taking cautious steps and reimagining the traditional sectors that have driven the nation’s economy — from agriculture and mining to hydropower and digital services. Bhutan taking new steps in creating industries leveraging technology means that its traditional limitations associated with topography, geography, demography,

and economies of scale, leading to the high cost of manufacturing, are nowhere as important. It is an interesting time for Bhutan to look at challenges through the lens of opportunity.

Bhutan is taking a multipronged approach, focusing on the following aspects of building a knowledge-based economy:

Innovation: The prioritisation of innovation through research and development will help in fostering an environment where new ideas and technologies can thrive. For example, the Druk Holding and Investments (DHI) is continuously investing in innovative technology that can lead to sustained economic growth. There is already a great commitment from the government to creating a conducive environment for innovation and entrepreneurship by offering tax incentives, grants, and incubators for technology startups as well as established businesses looking to advance technology products/services.

Workforce: Investment in education and training must be done to ensure our workforce is equipped with the skills needed to operate and develop cutting-edge technologies, positioning ourselves at the forefront of global progress. For this, DHI strives to collaborate around the quadruple helix model — *government, academia, society, and industry* — to create a cross-sector foundational platform for an innovation ecosystem in Bhutan.

Digital Infrastructure: The development of a robust digital infrastructure, including easy access to the internet, e-government services, digital finance/microfinance, fintech, security-driven identity systems, digital fabrication solutions, etc., all of which support the growth of technology-based ecosystems. Additionally, Bhutan is carefully looking to strategically redesign established



Ujjwal Dahal during his session with SLDP-4, 2021

Launched on 30th May, 2021, SLDP is a two-week leadership course, tailor-made for school leaders to enhance their leadership capabilities and to offer them a platform to contribute to the larger education reforms as envisioned by His Majesty The King.

structures that can directly improve the quality of life of citizens in healthcare, education, tax, utility, and business.

Global Reach: Attention to building a global outlook, emphasising international partnerships and investments to expand and tap into larger markets. This will also enhance our capability in shaping global standards. For instance, the adoption of the National Digital Identity Act 2023 made Bhutan the first sovereign state to implement a comprehensive decentralised digital identity framework, pioneering governance and regulatory standards in decentralised identity.

As the beginning of Bhutan’s commitment to the development of the tech-based economy through an innovation ecosystem, Bhutan has created and invested in the Department of InnoTech and the

Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck Super Fab Lab (JNWSFL), both under DHI, the investment arm of the country. Additionally, to ensure adequate financing for the national innovation ecosystem, a technology trust has been conceptualised for establishment.

InnoTech conducts research on and develops technology with values. InnoTech has the themes of technology that is sustainable, resilient and affordable. Encompassing these values, the department has implemented applied research projects in the fields of Internet of Things (IoT) for SMART communities, Artificial Intelligence (AI)/Machine Learning (ML) and Drones.

The establishment of the JNWSFL marked a critical point for Bhutan’s technological transformation. The JNWSFL stands as a symbol of Bhutan’s commitment to a technology-and-innovation-based economy. In addition to having the world’s third super fab lab located in the capital, the Fab Lab network in Bhutan has nodes in 5 other locations, with more being planned. The network will ensure that the youth of Bhutan are equipped with skills that enable them to contribute to the tech-based economy.

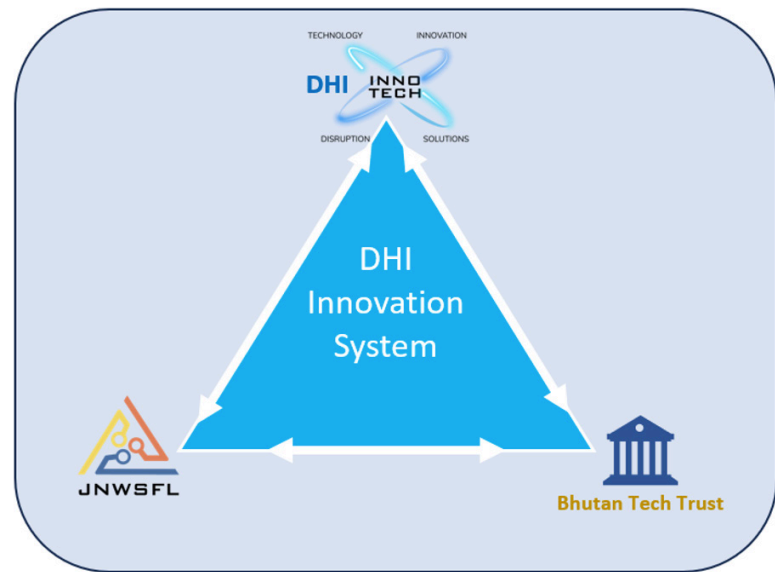
The Bhutan Technology Trust hopes to leverage the unique selling points (USPs) of Bhutan to attract investment to support transformative technological innovation in Bhutan. These USPs include:

1. **Virtually 100% Clean Energy:** Bhutan can boast of being virtually fully powered by hydroelectricity and is actively seeking to invest in green technologies such as solar and wind.
2. **Great Biodiversity:** Bhutan is extremely biodiverse, with over 8,000 species of flora and fauna with considerable bioprospecting potential.
3. **Carbon Negative:** Over 70% of Bhutan is forested and absorbs more carbon dioxide than it produces.
4. **Perfect Test Bed:** Bhutan’s size, geographical variation, and population demographic means it is a location where solutions

and testing can be implemented at a national level rapidly and comprehensively.

5. **Fertile Investment Ecosystem:** The national innovation and technology revolution has begun, and Bhutan is determined to build attractive fiscal and logistic incentives to attract FDI.

The InnoTech Department, JNWSFL and the proposed Bhutan Technology Trust make up the trifecta of the DHI innovation system.



With DHI InnoTech being both the ‘think’ and ‘do’ tank for technology innovation, JNWSFL acting as the digital fabrication and design hub, and the proposed Bhutan Technology Trust operating as the self-sustaining funding for the innovation of DHI and the nation, the DHI innovation system looks forward to being utilised as a tool by the public, government, academia and industrialists of Bhutan. Only when the push for innovation happens proactively at the grassroots level will the potential of the national innovation ecosystem be achieved.

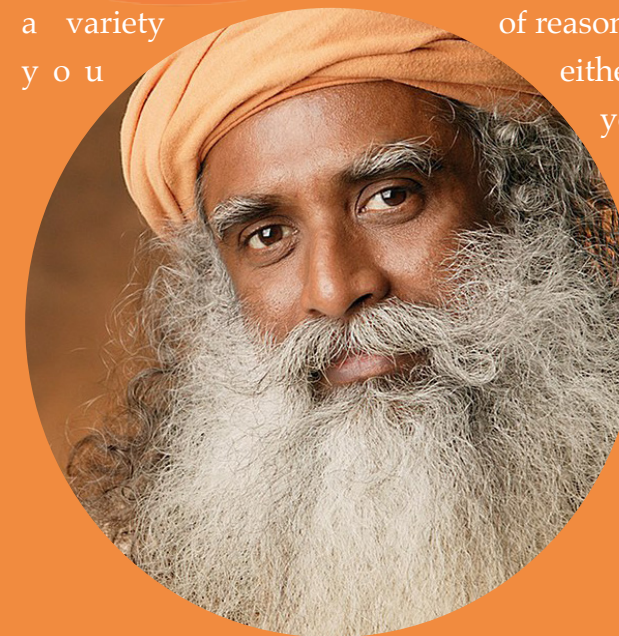
Launched on 17th July, 2016, SEDP is a five-day leadership course on leadership and organisational change for CEOs and senior managers from DHI and its companies.

While DHI strives to build the foundational building blocks of the innovation ecosystem, for Bhutan to evolve as a startup nation and build a tech economy, it will be important for the government, academia, industry and society (the quadruple helix model) to interact closely. This interaction amongst the four actors in Bhutan can largely be envisioned to be incubated at the Royal Institute of Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS). The interaction amongst the actors of the quadruple helix model, facilitated by RIGSS, would bring the synergies in building the policies through the government, talent pipeline through the academia, next-generation startups from the industry and a resilient and entrepreneurial mindset of the next gen-citizens from the society.

Today, Bhutan is uniquely positioned to harness technology for fast-paced and unprecedented economic growth, leveraging natural resources and optimising renewable energy solutions, smart cities, and environmentally conscious practices in mining minerals and digital assets. Transitioning to a technology-based economy while responsibly building on our existing competitive edge will allow Bhutan to achieve sustainable economic growth and reduce dependence on traditional sectors like agriculture and hydropower. While there may be disparities in resources and infrastructure, the right policies and investments can empower Bhutan to compete and thrive in the technology-driven global economy.

As DHI, through its InnoTech Department, pushes to build the innovation ecosystem with an aspiration to build Bhutan as a startup nation, we hope to provide the foundational infrastructure for every passionate innovator in Bhutan and globally to be a part and the partner of this transformative journey we have embarked upon.

The content of the body was gathered from outside. The content of your mind, also gathered from outside, isn't it? Depending upon what you are exposed to, accordingly, the content of your mind. So, what you call as 'my body', you gathered. It is a heap of impressions. This is a heap of food. Between these two heaps, where are you? If you sit on top of these heaps of body and mind, we call you a Buddha. If you are lost in the heap, what to do? If you get trapped below that heap, if you are below the mind, then, at least in India, we call them *budhu*. What do you call them here? Okay, so the choice is this: you can be a *budhu*, or you can be a nonstop suffering human being lost in the heap, or you can sit on top of it and be a Buddha. Now, in some way, you want to become a leader. Being a leader does not mean you have to rule a country or you have to do something. It is just this: in a day, let's say, you're meeting ten people. When ten people come your way, you have a choice: to impact them positively or negatively or let them pass by. If you impact them positively, you're a leader. If you let them pass by, you are a dry leaf which will go whichever way the wind blows. If you impact them negatively, you're a criminal. Yes or no? This is the choice every one of us has every moment of our life. It doesn't matter whether we hold positions or we don't hold positions. Every moment, whoever comes in front of us, we can impact them positively or negatively or let them pass by. It doesn't matter if you're at home and you have just two children. Now, you can still be a leader because raising the future generation of this planet and creating the right kind of future generation for this planet needs a lot of leadership. How small a role you have, how large a role you have depends on where the society wants to put you for a variety of reasons based on competence, situations; many, many things are involved. But you either being a leader or not being a leader, is something within. First of all, are you an accident, or are you a leader? Because if your very experience of life – whether you are joyful or miserable – is decided by somebody else, you're an accident. At least, you must be a leader to this extent: what happens here, I decide. What happens within, I decide. At least, this much leadership you must have. If you have absolute leadership on this, then we call you Buddha.



Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev
15th RIGSS Friday Forum on
The Buddha Within
5th August, 2016





RIGSS faculty Dasho Kinzang Wangdi with LPP-3, 2019



FLP-1, Grassroots Immersion Programme (GRIP) to Chimuna, 2017



YPLP-4, Druk path trek (OLE), 2017



RIGSS Faculty and former Board member Dasho Tashi Penjor with MLS- 7, 2019



YPLP-3, 2016



Dr. Hamid Rashid with MAPD participants, 2023

WHAT IS NEXT BEYOND LEADERSHIP OF THE SELF?

DR. ADRIAN CHAN, RIGSS FACULTY

In 2013, I was granted an audience by His Majesty to discuss this Royal Project, the establishment of RIGSS. He shared his vision for a leadership institute to produce great leaders for the betterment of Bhutan. It was clear that he wanted to democratise leadership identification, development, and deployment. It was also clear that he wanted a brand of leadership that was by Bhutan, for Bhutan. As a leadership scholar, I was invited to help draw out such a leadership philosophy from His Majesty.

So, I started by reviewing and eliminating all the leadership content I was familiar with because most of them came from Western sources and did not reflect an Asian mindset, much less a Bhutanese one. Instead, I put on my researcher hat and endeavoured to examine objectively what a Bhutanese leadership philosophy would look like.

In a way, it helped that I was not Bhutanese. The unique vantage point of being in Bhutan but not of Bhutan allowed me to ask inconvenient questions and clarify underlying assumptions, to experience how leaders in Bhutan are like, and to see how the impact of Bhutanese leaders is experienced in daily life. It made me intimately aware of what it meant to be a Bhutanese leader and how it felt to be led by one. Because it was an explicit inquiry I embarked on, I became more aware of the nuances that percolated beneath the surface, and not just when leadership has inspired one or rubbed one the wrong way.

Aside from interacting with as many Bhutanese as I could, I also consolidated more than a hundred speeches from His Majesty on a

diverse range of topics. I wanted to know the King who embodies and symbolises much of what it meant to be Bhutanese and how he behaved and acted as a leader. To this end, I went through all his speeches, underlining and cross-referencing all the salient themes that underscored his leadership approach and beliefs. Then, I had several more audiences with him to verify what I was discovering. By the time I was done discussing these findings with His Majesty, it became clear what he wanted the leadership philosophy to be. In the end, he came up with the phrase “Leadership of the Self” to encapsulate a foundational leadership approach that was not only scientifically well-researched but also reflected key tenets of what it meant to be both Buddhist and Bhutanese.

Fast forward to 2023, RIGSS is now in its tenth year. Much has been made of how the success of RIGSS is defined by its alumni, from how each of them has (or has not) embodied this leadership approach, to how they individually and collectively have (or have not) seized the opportunities to lend their leadership to the issues of Bhutan. The question on the minds of many is, “How well has RIGSS fared on the evidence of its alumni?”

That is indeed an important question to pose. Yet regardless of how one rates RIGSS, the deeper question to ask is, “What is next for RIGSS?” These two questions are actually separate and ought to be addressed independently of each other. Why do I say so?

One bad Buddhist does not negate the importance of Buddhism. In fact, it justifies a continued need for it. Conversely, one good Buddhist also does not imply that the job is done, that there is no more need for Buddhism. In the same way, RIGSS continues to have an ongoing *raison d’etre*, a lasting symbolism that hopefully inspires more Bhutanese to try harder to be better Bhutanese in ways big and small, regardless of how each of its alumni is actually faring. For those faring not so well, there ought to be a reaching out, a self-examination, a determination to do better. For those who are doing better, more can be asked of them. All these do not detract one from asking the second question of RIGSS, namely, “What is next for RIGSS?”



His Majesty The King with Dr. Adrian Chan and course participants during the launch of BFSP-1 on 16th August, 2017

BFSP is a three-week integrated leadership programme, tailored to suit the professional and organizational needs of Bhutan’s foreign service which offers a combination of knowledge, awareness and skills core to the functions of a Foreign Service Officer (FSO) and an understanding of organizational change management and policy issues. The course aims to deepen the knowledge and understanding of FSOs on pertinent national and international issues, and provide insight into the foreign policy goals and initiatives of countries in the region.

So, how does one approach this second question? Perhaps another way to answer this question is to switch focus from the institution to the philosophy that the institution is founded on. This is also useful to ponder because the originating intent always drives the executing institution. Hence, instead of asking, “What is next for RIGSS,” one could perhaps ask, “What is next beyond Leadership of the Self?”

To this, I have a point of view – one that builds upon “Leadership of the Self” to invoke “Shared Leadership in Service of Others”. What is the basis for my point of view?

1. The nature and burden of leadership, particularly in Bhutan’s context, remains very person (and personality)-centric. Just as His Majesty the Great Fourth was clear to steer Bhutan from the dangers of such a leadership paradigm, this generation ought to continue to build on what was started, to shift the focus of leadership from individual great leaders to a more potent leadership collective, and in so doing, to truly democratise leadership as per the intent of the People’s King. This will also alleviate the cost and burden of leading because when leadership is shared, the journey is better fared.
2. Shared leadership builds upon “Leadership of the Self”



Dr. Adrian Chan during a session at RIGSS

because one does not know how to share well unless one has first learned to lead oneself well. Shared leadership is not a new thing, nor a discarding of the old for something new. Like Leadership of the Self, it is founded on sound research. More than that, it is a building upon – an invitation to a good progression from Self to Sharing.

3. Finally, and perhaps the most critical, in the hour of Bhutan’s need, the purpose of leadership now needs to be more clearly emphasised. Leadership of the Self was the foreground to establish a firm foundation. Yet, in tilling for a firm foundation in the first decade, the purpose of leadership is sometimes placed in the background. Hence, after a decade of tilling, it is timely to place the purpose of any Bhutanese leadership back into the foreground. And what is this purpose? Nothing less than service to others, no different from what the King has always demonstrated.

The shift from Self to Shared, Shared to Service to Others is an important metamorphosis. It will usher in a shift in focus from individual contributors to teams, from development to harnessing what is developed for expressions in acts of service. It will place demands from leading from silos to sharing leadership in strategic partnerships. And, of course, it will also ask more of RIGSS, from overseeing milestone courses and conversations to catalysing meaningful contributions to the growth of Bhutan.

Whether RIGSS is sufficient or appropriate to birth all these shifts is something to be discerned separately, for what was tooled for one purpose will need to be retooled for another. But one thing is clear. Now more than ever is the opportunity for RIGSS and its alumni to demonstrate Leadership of the Self, to make the first transformation within oneself, and to rise to the challenges that Bhutan is facing. It is time to share the burden of leadership with each other, to serve others, to show how Bhutan manifests hope for an uncertain future. May Bhutan reap a bountiful harvest from RIGSS, and everyone associated with it! Wishing RIGSS a blessed 10th Anniversary!

“

"In the West, many people feel the same way as I do; it's not all darkness. Not everyone is running around mad for consumerism and everything. And, there are things which are coming about, for instance, in London at last they are building cycle lanes like Amsterdam where hundreds of people cycle. There is a big anti-car campaign now, and there are campaigns against supermarkets. There is evidence that more and more people are beginning to question this lifestyle, so it's not all darkness. The other thing which I want to say is that I'm not calling for revolution; revolutions are disastrous, almost inevitably. I'm calling for evolution. If only we could say we have lived through the car era, we must now evolve to a new era; if we have lived through the consumerism era, we must evolve into a new era. So, I'm not talking about a revolution, and I think it's very important to realise that. And, I think those who campaign on these issues as though they could bring about a revolution are doing it wrong."

Sir Mark Tully
14th RIGSS Friday Forum on
**Climate Change: The Need for New Lifestyles in the
South Asian Context**
11th March, 2016



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FROM THE ALUMNI...



The EXCEL-2 program has positively changed how I perceive and understand a leader. I am now confident that I will be more self-aware, enabling me to practice and demonstrate STRONG and GOOD leadership skills. Thank you for making me a better and more positive human being.

Sonam Penjor,
EXCEL-2



"Textend my heartfelt gratitude to you for providing me with a milestone experience. After 26 years of dedicated service to the nation, attending the School Leadership Development Programme fulfilled my lifelong dream. Your institute's commitment to excellence has been a driving force in my career journey."

Sangay Dorji,
SLDP- 5



"Participating in FLP at RIGSS was a transformative journey. The sessions, deeply rooted in the principle of self-leadership, have sculpted my leadership ethos and deeply enriched my personal life. Thank you for the invaluable lessons and enduring memories."

Dorji Wangdi
FLP-4



"While I was the outlier in my cohort, consisting of 29 civil servants, and I came from the private sector, I managed to build meaningful relationships with all of them and the previous captains. RIGSS played a pivotal role in fostering a bond that holds a more profound significance than even my family ties."

Tashi Wangdi
FLP-5



"From our earliest steps in education to the heights of academia, our growth extended both horizontally and vertically. The RIGSS not only broadened my intellectual horizons but also brought about a profound shift in perspective, leaving an enduring mark on my educational journey."

Tenzin Norbu
YPLP-5 | EXCEL-2



"The experience at RIGSS relieved me from numerous social scripts and legacy entrapments that were holding me back from achieving my true potential. The course there made me rebellious in the head and considerate at heart."

Kezang Dukpa
YPLP-3

ADOPTING DATA-DRIVEN DECISION-MAKING AT YOUR WORKPLACE

DR. TSHERING CIGAY DORJ, RIGSS ALUMNUS, SELP-4, SEDP-2

“In God we trust. All others must bring data” is a quote by W. Edwards Deming emphasising the importance of data-driven decision-making.

Data-driven decision-making is using facts, metrics, and data to guide strategic decision-making as opposed to making decisions based on your intuition, emotions, hearsay or blind faith. Many people rely on intuition in making important decisions, but the probability of making better decisions increases manifolds when it is backed by data.

In the past, data collection was a challenging endeavour. But this is no longer the case with the advances in Information Technology. Every organisation already owns large collections of data in their IT systems. ‘Data is the new oil’ has almost become a cliché today. We have been discussing data warehouses, big data and data science for many years. And lately, large collections of data have played an important role in the development of machine learning and AI technologies, taking the use of data to the new frontiers of technology beyond simple statistical

analysis and drawing inferences.

A McKinsey study found that organisations using data to make decisions are more likely to be profitable and can more effectively retain and acquire customers than those who fail to use this approach. Research suggests that 90% of enterprise professionals today report that data and analytics are key to their core transformation initiatives.

Data-driven decision-making offers a multitude of advantages for both organisations and nations as a whole. Here are some benefits of data-driven decision-making:

More informed policy or strategic business decisions

Data-driven decision-making enables organisations to spot trends, forecast accurately, and devise optimal growth strategies. Governments no longer have to rely solely on intuition and limited data; they now access vast structured and unstructured data for evidence-based policy-making. Using advanced data analytics tools, governments can

extract insights from social, economic, and environmental trends, leading to more effective policy formulation and improved outcomes for citizens.

Improve efficiency and productivity, and hence profitability

Utilising data-driven decisions significantly boosts company profitability by offering insights for increased sales and reduced losses. Relying on solid numbers instead of instincts enables logical, confident decision-making. Data uncovers trends, forecasts the future, and reveals opportunities akin to night-vision glasses in the dark.

In government operations, data-driven decision-making enhances efficiency by identifying inefficiencies, optimising resource allocation, reducing waste, and improving services in sectors like healthcare and education. Clear data-driven decisions eliminate uncertainty, thereby ensuring confident choices, fostering team conviction, and enabling faster responses to market changes, which is crucial for staying competitive.

Improve customer experience

Satisfied customers are key to business success. Data-driven decision-making boosts customer satisfaction by regularly measuring it, gathering feedback, spotting trends, identifying issues, and optimising processes and services. With solid data, you can better understand customer sentiments and exceed their expectations.

In government, a data-driven approach enables personalised services based on demographic data, user input, and consumption patterns. This enhances healthcare delivery, predicts disease outbreaks, and optimises resource allocation. Similarly, data-driven decisions in public safety enable pre-emptive crime prevention and focused law enforcement, ensuring community safety and security.

Examples of data-driven decision-making

Google is a company in which fact-based decision-making is part of the DNA and where Googlers (that is what Google calls its employees) speak the language of data as part of their culture. At Google, the aim is that all decisions are based on data, analytics and scientific experimentation. For example, through their “people analytics” initiatives, Google collected data from over 10,000 performance reviews and compared it to employee retention rates. They discovered key behaviours that high-performing managers consistently

exhibited and used this data to create training programmes to develop those competencies.

In Bhutan, the Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies’ (RIGSS) research paper, “Professionalising Domestic Help in Bhutan,” whose data-backed analysis showed the prospects for professionalising domestic services, is an example of collecting data to help evidence-based policy-making.

Adopting data-driven decision-making

Failing to embrace data-driven decision-making in your workplace today can indeed lead to adverse consequences. Whether you are employed in the private sector, a State-Owned Enterprise (SOE), or the public sector, the benefits of being data-driven are evident.

In the private sector and SOEs, not adopting data-driven approaches can put you at a disadvantage compared to your competitors. Your competitors are likely using data to optimise operations, understand customer behaviour, and make informed strategic decisions. Without leveraging data, you may find it challenging to stay competitive, innovate, and meet the evolving demands of the market.

In the public sector, not being data-driven

can have repercussions for citizens. Embracing data-driven decision-making allows governments to allocate resources more efficiently, design effective policies, and enhance public services. Failing to do so may result in suboptimal outcomes, increased costs, and a failure to address the needs of the population effectively.

In both sectors, the value of data-driven decision-making is clear: it leads to better outcomes, improved efficiency, and a competitive edge. Therefore, not adopting data-driven approaches today can indeed be a missed opportunity and potentially detrimental to your organisation or the citizens you serve.

So, how can you adopt data-driven decision-making at your workplace?

Step 1: Make data-driven decision-making the norm

First and foremost, your organisation needs to make data-driven decision-making the norm by ensuring that all decisions are based on data, not intuition alone. The organisation should promote a culture that encourages everyone to think critically and ask questions. This is a mindset shift, and everybody in the organisation should be on the same page and live the slogan “In God we trust. All others must bring data.”

Train your employees in data skills in line

with this norm. There are various tools to master. The kind of training you provide for employees at different levels could differ. The following are some of the data skills that experts suggest job seekers to master in 2023:

- Data cleaning and preparation
- Data analysis and exploration
- Statistical knowledge
- Creating data visualisations
- Creating dashboards and reports
- Writing and communication

Step 2: Collect and prepare data

Before collecting and preparing data for analysis, it is essential to have a clear understanding of the purpose. Are you aiming to enhance your processes, uncover vulnerabilities, or pinpoint your most profitable sales channels? What specific questions do you intend to address with the data?

Consult with your internal teams and decision-makers to understand the questions they seek to answer using data. Identify their current data sources and explore opportunities for enhancement. Based on their input, conduct market research to gain insights into how other companies tackle similar challenges. This will enable you to identify and improve the necessary data sources and market research tools to meet your company’s decision-making requirements.

At the same time, evaluate the data that already exists within your organisation. Many organisations possess substantial data resources, albeit often in disorganised form.

Also note that, in today’s digital landscape, modern consumers leave extensive online data trails, allowing businesses to scrutinise aspects ranging from their interests and behaviour to purchasing preferences and brand associations. By acquiring more comprehensive, reliable, and accurate data, organisations can expedite data-driven decision-making, facilitating quicker adaptations and agility.

To analyse and interpret data effectively, you must identify all existing and potential data sources and establish a centralised data repository. This can be a challenging task if decision-makers currently rely on disparate data sources, posing risks of data duplication and inaccuracies. Therefore, it is imperative to ensure that your data is both credible and pertinent to facilitate efficient decision-making.

Most importantly, you should know how to use the right tools and techniques to perform these tasks.

Step 3: Analyse your results, look for patterns, and explore

Now that you’ve gathered and structured

your data, it is time to analyse it from relevant perspectives to uncover answers to your queries. This is where the importance of data visualisation and dashboarding becomes evident. By utilising various visualisation techniques such as charts, graphs, trend lines, and more, you can present your data in a more accessible and comprehensible manner.

For instance, Google Analytics stands out as a potent tool capable of furnishing businesses with valuable insights regarding their website’s performance. Whether it is tracking website traffic or gaining insights into user behaviour, Google Analytics equips businesses with the data they need to make informed decisions and enhance their online presence.

Additionally, there are several other popular tools available for data analysis, including Microsoft Excel, Python, R, Jupyter Notebook, Apache Spark, SAS, Microsoft Power BI, Tableau, and KNIME. These tools offer diverse functionalities and capabilities, empowering organisations to extract meaningful insights from their data and drive data-driven decision-making.

Step 4: Develop insights and make decisions

Creating data visualisations is important, but it is just one aspect of the process. To truly understand your data, you need to

delve deeper into analysis. This means connecting the dots across different datasets to determine if they collectively address your questions and yield valuable insights for decision-making.

Once you’ve unearthed these insights and have concrete, data-backed answers to your queries, it is crucial to share them effectively with your teams and stakeholders. Employing the technique of data storytelling is instrumental in this regard. It enables you to provide your audience with the necessary context behind the data, helping them grasp both the broader picture and the finer details that underpin your decisions. Moreover, data storytelling facilitates the engagement of key decision-makers within your company, fostering transparency in the data-driven decision-making process.

Data Protection and Privacy Concerns

Embracing data-driven decision-making offers numerous advantages, yet it also presents challenges that governments must effectively address. One significant hurdle involves safeguarding citizens’ privacy while harnessing the power of data. Striking the right balance between data utilisation and privacy protection is essential to maintain public trust.

Stringent regulations, like the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR),

have been implemented to uphold data protection and privacy standards. Companies and organisations handling data of EU citizens are mandated to comply with GDPR. Similarly, in Bhutan, adherence to relevant data protection and privacy provisions in the Information, Communications, and Media Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2018 is mandatory.

Both the GDPR and the ICM Act of Bhutan prohibit sharing personal data and information without the individual’s consent. One effective approach to overcome these restrictions is data anonymisation. This process involves safeguarding private or sensitive information by removing or encrypting identifiers that link an individual to stored data, ensuring privacy while enabling the beneficial use of data for analysis and decision-making.

Data Sharing by Government Agencies

While Europe has one of the strictest privacy laws, it also champions a movement called the Open Data. *data.europa.eu* is a platform that gathers metadata from public data portals across European countries. This metadata includes information about the availability of Public Sector Information (PSI) and the advantages of using this data. Likewise, the United States government’s open data portal, *data.gov*, publicly shares a wide variety of datasets from different

agencies. Besides these, there are many other open data portals.

The Open Data movement is an effort aimed at fostering the accessibility and availability of data to the general public. It encourages governments, organisations, and institutions to share their data in a format that is not only readily accessible but also user-friendly and comprehensible. The overarching objective is to promote increased transparency, facilitate collaborative efforts, and stimulate innovation by granting the public open access to valuable information. This movement seeks to empower individuals, businesses, and communities with data-driven insights, enabling them to make informed decisions and create innovative solutions for various societal challenges.

Public Sector Information, often referred to as Open (Government) Data, encompasses data collected, generated, or funded by public entities. This data (after anonymisation is applied) is made accessible for reuse by the public, without restrictions, under specific licensing terms.

In Bhutan, The Government Technology Agency (GovTech) has put in place a mechanism to enable data sharing between government agencies by using APIs through the Electronic Government

Interoperability Framework (e-GIF)¹.

Conclusion

Data-driven decision-making encompasses the methodical and purposeful utilisation of data to shape business strategies, streamline operations, and improve overall performance. Instead of solely depending on intuition or historical experiences, data-driven organisations make decisions guided by insights derived from data, ensuring a more informed and evidence-based decision-making process.

¹ See: <https://egif.dit.gov.bt/>

As we've discussed earlier, both government and private organisations stand to reap substantial benefits from data-driven decision-making. However, it is not enough to recognise these advantages; fostering a culture of data-driven decision-making requires executive advocacy and a supportive community that actively embraces such practices. When these foundational capabilities are in place, it encourages individuals at all levels of an organisation to routinely question and explore data, uncovering valuable insights that drive actionable outcomes.

Many companies and nations have excelled

in leveraging data for effective business and policy decisions. While there is so much emphasis on data-driven decision-making and data democratisation, Bhutan still has a significant journey ahead in this crucial aspect of governance and business. And with the renewed focus on economic growth and leveraging technology for nation-building, institutions such as RIGSS will assume an even bigger role in promoting a culture of data-driven policy-making and governance in the country. Both our businesses and the government apparatus stand to gain immensely by harnessing the power of data to inform and enhance decision-making processes.



His Majesty The King with SELP-4, 2015

Launched on 20th October, 2013, SELP is the Institute's flagship leadership programme designed for senior public service officials and corporate executives who face the challenges of governance and decision-making on a day-to-day basis. The final week of the course is dedicated to a learning journey that aims to broaden the perspective of the participants on aspects of society, economy and polity beyond classroom lectures and discussions.



We have this faculty to care, to have empathy for others, to do a service for others. Now, of course, if there's too much suffering, then sometimes we're overwhelmed. We may fall into what we call 'empathic distress'. There's too much suffering; what can I do? So, we have been studying that with some neuroscientists. You know, burnout; in the USA, 60% of all medical personnel – nurses, doctors – they are, or they will suffer from burnout in their career. At some point, it's too much, so they have to distance themselves or change jobs because resonating with the suffering of others becomes too much. So, what's the antidote to that? We found, studying with Tania Singer – she's a great neuroscientist at the Max Planck Institute in Leipzig – that you need something more than just resonating with others, like empathy. You need this loving-kindness. And she showed that in the brain, empathy and compassion are different. If you care for others, compassion is a feeling towards others: you want to help others; you have the courage to help others. Empathic distress is the impact it has on you: the more the suffering, the more you crumble under that suffering, so you fall into distress and emotional exhaustion. So, she could show that those are different areas in the brain. And I worked with her for several years, going in the scanner, meditating on empathy, meditating on loving-kindness, showing the big difference. And we found that if you meditate on compassion and loving-kindness, it becomes an antidote to empathic distress. You get more courage. You know, like the doctor on the battlefield. He is not going to cry the moment he sees one wounded person. The more there is to do, the more he has courage, like the Bodhisattva. But if you always think that suffering affects you, then the more suffering, the more you lose your courage. So, we could show it's different in the brain. It is remarkable by just meditating 20 minutes a day on loving-kindness, *jampa ninjey*, it becomes an antidote for those nurses and doctors and social workers to this burnout. So, it's something that could have wonderful a repercussion for the medical world and the other world.

Gelong Matthieu Ricard
16th RIGSS Friday Forum
Towards Caring Leadership and a More Altruistic Society
14th October, 2016



RIGSS faculty Amb. V Namgyel, 2018



FLP-4, 2019



RIGSS faculty Dasha Karma Ura and RIGSS Board members Dasha Karma Hamu and Dasha Nidup Dorji with FLP-5 during the course closing, 2019



RIGSS faculty Dr. Adrian Chan with MLS-6, 2018



SLDP-2, 2021



Professor Klitgaard speaking at the 7th Friday Forum, 2014



YPLP-6, 2018

THROUGH THE YEARS

IN PURSUIT OF A SEEMINGLY IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

DAMCHO RINZIN, RIGSS ALUMNUS, YPLP-5 | EXCEL-2

My dream is to have a nice house, preferably a cottage, with beautiful surroundings and a million-dollar view. It should have some fruit trees and a spacious vegetable garden. There should also be a cosy corner where I can invite my friends and family for barbeque and drinks. And, of course, a nice car and a good source of income. I am pursuing this expensive dream. I want to materialise this dream through my own hard work and in Bhutan only.

Some of my friends in other countries live my dream, and they managed to achieve this in just a few years. Now, if you ask me if I can realise this dream in this lifetime, I would say ‘yes’ because I think I can. But the question is, can I realise this dream by living in Bhutan? The answer cannot be a definite ‘yes’, and for many, the answer will be a definite ‘no’. A more important question is, am I not capable enough to make this dream come true in Bhutan? I would say I am capable. Then what is stopping me from realising my dream in Bhutan? In my own country, where happiness is the goal.

My dream is the same dream for many Bhutanese. Sadly, many Bhutanese feel they must leave Bhutan – leaving their

loved ones behind – to earn this future elsewhere. This is the reality for many Bhutanese in Bhutan now. The scene at the departure area, before you enter the terminal building of the Paro International Airport, is painful and heartbreaking. To see many parents in tears leaving their young children and loved ones behind, to see many parents who are sad to let go of their young loved ones, and worse, to see our senior citizens leave Bhutan with heavy hearts because they have to look after their grandchildren overseas. It is a scene of failure. We are failing to deliver what we have always been saying we can deliver.

“Bhutanese will always belong to Bhutan but Bhutan must belong to the Bhutanese,” this was the Royal Advice from His Majesty The King during a recent Royal Audience. His Majesty often emphasises the importance of adapting and staying relevant to the fast-changing world. What struck me strongly from the above phrase was the second part – ‘*Bhutan must belong to the Bhutanese*’. We tend to assume that we cannot change Bhutan or that Bhutan doesn’t have to change. Some of us say that we cannot stop people from leaving Bhutan. It is true we cannot, but if we fail to make Bhutan relevant to them,

they will never return.

This is why we need the transformation now. This is why we have to believe in the national transformation. Believe in the objective of the national transformation – to ensure that we make Bhutan relevant to the Bhutanese and guarantee good economic opportunities; our culture, tradition and environment are thriving; and the Bhutanese have the choice to stay in Bhutan. We have to make Bhutan relevant so they don’t have to leave Bhutan for better opportunities. Bhutan is an extraordinary country, and every Bhutanese must believe it to be an extraordinary country.

I have asked a few of my friends in Australia how they like Australia. I have not heard a single person say they like it there. It is not because Australia is not a great country – as a multicultural country, Australia is a great place – it is because of better economic opportunities in Australia. There are no similar economic opportunities in Bhutan. We have not created the opportunity for them. Bhutan is irrelevant to them, for now. All of them said they wanted to come back to Bhutan after a few years. This is good news and very comforting. But if we don’t act now, they may never come back, and we will continue to lose many more to

other countries.

This is why transformation is urgent and necessary. This is why we have to believe in what we have to do. This is why we must go beyond catchphrases like ‘happiness is a place’, even if this is easy to sell and fits well for tourism.

Thus, the new national brand, ‘Bhutan Believe’, was developed to encourage the overall vision of the national transformation. It is a national brand and not a tourism brand. But tourism is equally an important stakeholder, just like every Bhutanese. It is to put conscious thoughts in the minds of all Bhutanese so that we act now before it is too late. We must wake up from our false perception that everything is perfect in Bhutan or assume we will get there when we are ready. And we must not fall prey to the delusion that everything has a time.

The vision of the transformation is to make Bhutan a high-income country with a GDP of USD 10 billion and a GDP per capita of USD 12,000 by 2034. It is just ten years from now, and it is possible. We must accept the reality and believe in our capabilities and vision. With this vision, I want to make my dream come true. I believe Bhutan will be in a much better position with a strong economy.

As a passionate promoter of tourism and one of the custodians of the new brand, I

regularly get asked about our new national brand tagline, Believe. I tell people that it is believing in our worth, believing in our values, believing in ourselves of what we want, what we can do, and more importantly, believing in what we need to do urgently! At the same time, it is also for our tourists to believe in the journey, to believe in Bhutan’s possibilities and aspirations, and to be inspired by our history and the story of the ongoing transformation.

‘Believe’ is defined as ‘feel sure that someone is capable of doing something’ and ‘accept that (something) is true...’. The definition is very relevant to Bhutanese in the context of transformation. We accept that we are all capable of transforming Bhutan. We also believe that the challenges and struggles of Bhutan are also true. But we make a mistake by accepting it as something we can correct in the future or slowly. The reality is we do not have time. Things are changing so fast around us. If we don’t change and act quickly, we will become irrelevant. Bhutan will never be relevant to many of our citizens, and we will fall behind the rest of the world. We must believe that the time is now, and we are responsible for transforming Bhutan. In my view, this is precisely what His Majesty has been emphasising.

Therefore, ‘Bhutan Believe’ is about believing in our future. It is to believe in ourselves. To believe in our good values,

the values of ‘Tha dam tsi’. To believe in the nation. ‘Bhutan Believe’ provides a sense of responsibility, care, passion, direction, and narrative for the Bhutanese to own our dreams and believe in ourselves. It is a conscious reminder for us to be pragmatic by coming to terms with the reality.

The ‘Bhutan Believe’ visuals convey a bold, confident country with a future-facing ethos. At the same time, it has a warm, responsive and functional design with a tagline that defines possibilities. The brand is an expression of our self and our belief in the potential of what we can be and what we can do. The colour and design exhibit a modern touch, expressing that we are futuristic yet deeply rooted in our traditions, beliefs, and values.

“We see a bright future. And we believe in our ability and responsibility to realise it together and shine as a beacon of possibility in the world”. This is one of the narratives of the new brand, which summarises the essence of what we are trying to achieve through transformation. We must believe that we have a bright future. We must believe that we have the ability and responsibility to make our future bright. And we must believe it is possible if we work together as Bhutanese.

“The Kingdom is steeped in history, but our gaze is fixed on the future. This is our moment of evolution”. This is another narrative of the brand. We must protect, preserve and

promote our rich history, but we must also welcome and celebrate what the future has to offer. We must do this now. We must evolve and grow now.

We have a choice to either let life happen as it happens or take charge of life and craft our future. ‘Believe’ is taking charge of our lives and, believing in the ability to craft our lives in the way we want and being proud of what we leave for our future generation. It is about the leaders and citizens, both taking the role of the agents of change.

In the context of a nation undergoing a dramatic transformation, ‘Believe’ urges us to build a new era. It is designed as an inspiration to steer the country from the past through the present into the future. It is to give a sense of possibility.

We have claimed that we are capable. We have been told that we are capable. We know that we are capable. Now, it is time for us to believe that we are worthy of making an impact, for Bhutan and ourselves. The transformation has started. There is no going back. We must be the stewards and champions of the transformation.

At the moment, it is hard to convince myself that I will be able to make my dream come true in Bhutan. But I have started to believe that it is possible. This is important, and what is equally important is to know

that I am responsible for making it happen. In Bhutan, for Bhutan!

“As a small society, Bhutanese citizens, more than those of larger countries, bear a greater responsibility and role in the success of the nation. Individual success depends on success as a nation - no one succeeds when the nation has failed. There can be no Bhutanese without Bhutan. This is the fundamental truth for a small country like ours.”

In addition to the above, His Majesty also mentioned that our strength is in the agility of a small country where we can achieve great things so fast. We just need the will and courage to make it happen.

We Bhutanese are fortunate to have visionary, selfless, and hardworking monarchs. They have gifted us a beautiful country with rich tradition, culture and nature. We are entrusted as extraordinary citizens with great values who are intelligent and hardworking. So, the task ahead should not be difficult for us. Let *Bhutan Believe* impel us to become who we claim we truly are and what we can truly achieve. Let *Bhutan Believe* provide the conviction, confidence, courage, hope, direction and drive to make Bhutan relevant to us, the Bhutanese.

Launched on 8th February, 2023, EXCEL is a training programme designed in collaboration with RCSC for selected Chiefs in the civil service to prepare them for executive positions.

YPLP-5 during their Outdoor Learning Expedition (OLE), Druk path trek, 2017



FROM THE ALUMNI...



Rudra Chhetri, SLDP-3

"I am profoundly grateful for the exceptional leadership training I received at RIGSS during my School Leadership Development Programme (SLDP 3). I extend my heartfelt appreciation to RIGSS and its dedicated director and faculty for the invaluable leadership training. The guidance and mentorship received have been instrumental in shaping my leadership abilities. The commitment of the institute and its esteemed educators to nurturing future leaders is truly commendable and has had a profound impact on my personal and professional growth. Congratulations on achieving ten years of dedicated service to the Tsa-wa-sum."



Deki Pema, SELP-3

"The 10th anniversary marks a decade of RIGSS's contribution in shaping and cultivating a community of effective and ethical leaders in the nation, dedicated to public service and united by shared values, beliefs and duty to the country. An excellent time indeed to reflect on our individual as well as collective journey and renew commitment to a future of positive change and transformative impact!"



Jigme Dorji, EXCEL- 2

"RIGSS, a beacon of excellence in leadership education, has been the cornerstone of my leadership journey. It has not only honed my leadership skills but also instilled a profound sense of purpose. The mentorship, camaraderie, leadership opportunities, and transformative experiences I encountered there are undeniably remarkable. As an alum, I proudly carry the torch of leadership ignited by RIGSS."



Kesang Wangchuk, SLDP-7

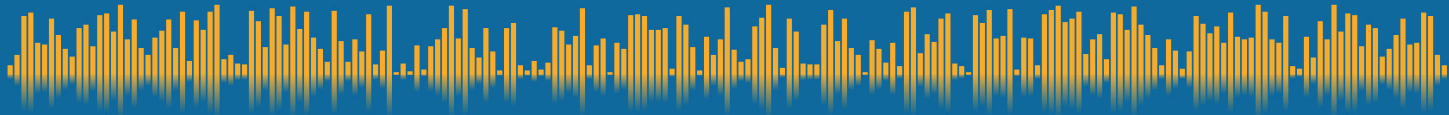
"I am writing to express my heartfelt gratitude for the incredible opportunity to attend the SLDP-7. It was the module on 'Leading and Managing Change' and 'Creating Engaging Work Place' that left an indelible mark on me. As an educator and school principal, I have always been aware of the need for continuous improvement and adaptation in our schools. The programme has not only enhanced my professional abilities but has also inspired me to continue striving for excellence in my role as a school leader. I believe that the impact of this programme will extend far beyond my personal growth, positively influencing our entire school community. Once again, thank you for this life-changing opportunity. I look forward to continuing my journey as a dedicated school leader, armed with the knowledge and inspiration I gained from SLDP-7."



RIGSS Podcast | Episode 15

Lifelong Learning

-Vincent Yip



00:00:00/00:36:13

LIFELONG LEARNING

TRANSCRIPT FROM THE RIGSS PODCAST WITH PROFESSOR VINCENT YIP *(edited for clarity)*

Professor, you are 74 years old and apparently well-established and highly learned. So tell us, what really motivates you to keep learning even at this point in life?

Oh, thank you. As the ancient Greek philosopher Socrates said, I know that I'm intelligent because I know that I know nothing. In that sense, he believed knowledge could only be attained through constant inquiry and self-reflection. He spent his entire life questioning and challenging commonly accepted beliefs and ideas. He lived to be 70, and another famous philosopher, a Chinese philosopher Confucius, he was also a lifelong learner. He once said it doesn't matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop. We have a common saying in Chinese: 'Live and learn'. In other words, it's never too late to learn. So Socrates lived till 70, Confucius till 72 years of age. And remember, this is more than 2000 years ago. This is equivalent to maybe more than 100 years old now because 2000 years ago, the life expectancy was much lower. Speaking of centenarians, Professor CN Young was the first Chinese Nobel Prize winner in physics in 1957, at the age of 35. In the 1980s, I had the great fortune of accompanying him for 10 days each time

he came to Singapore to serve as the chairman of our Technology Advisory Panel. In those eight or 10 days, I was with him basically 24 hours a day, and I could see his drive, energy, teaching, and learning ability were exceptional and legendary. He never retired. And just by the way, he is already 100 and a half years old; he will be 101 soon on October 1, 2023, and he's still attending conferences, writing articles, and giving advice. So, what is 75 years old, or whatever age you are, lifelong learning is a must and is for us to follow these examples.

Thank you, Professor. So, what does it take for you to sustain curiosity and creativity over time and become a lifelong learner?

That's a very good question. I would summarise it with four skills. The first thing is to stay curious. Explore new ideas, and you will know that kids in every culture and race learn languages super-fast. Before the age of eight, they can learn any language. They can learn multiple languages quickly. After I found myself after 18, learning a third or fourth language other than English and Chinese was tough. I want to quote another famous person on

this thing about staying curious. Steve Jobs said in a very famous mention at a commencement speech he gave at Stanford, just four words - he told the graduating class of Stanford, 'Stay hungry, stay foolish'. So, the first part is easy. You have to be hungry for knowledge and hungry to work hard to achieve, but stay foolish. This is interesting. In other words, he wants us to remain always curious and foolish like a kid. The kids learn so well because they have nothing to lose. They learn languages fast because they don't worry about rules. They don't worry about losing face if they say the wrong thing. So, staying foolish is very important. And about learning new skills and knowledge. I will quote another famous person, Bill Gates, who reads voraciously. He has a weekly reading list. I will say not only read, attend courses, watch videos, listen to podcasts, and engage with people from different backgrounds. I want to add something I do a lot - travel as much as possible. Travel is the greatest learning opportunity. Some of you have heard I've been to 88 countries before I came to Bhutan, making it my 89th country now. And, of course, one of the most interesting and amazing countries, so thank you. Then, practice creativity by writing a book - I've written three books - drawing, painting, playing music, etc. Make time for creative pursuits. Don't just lie there and sleep or listen to music or eat. For example, I'm learning cooking now. I'm mixing different cuisines and cultures because my wife and son have always bugged me as oh, you should learn cooking. And finally, I decided that I've been buying cookbooks and trying different things for the last two or three years, and they are my guinea pigs. Lastly, take risks. Try new things. It may not work out; take calculated risks, but learn to lose or stop. There's something that other people don't say. They say oh, don't give up. I don't think so. During times of insurmountable odds, please leave it to a different day. For example, don't die climbing Mount Everest when the weather is obviously bad. But don't be the senior who collapses when trying to run his first marathon in his fifties. My own original hero, Einstein, was my first hero. However, Leonardo da Vinci was probably the most intelligent person who invented

many things in unrelated disciplines. And now Elon Musk is a modern-day Leonardo da Vinci, disrupting different disciplines. Every one or two years, he is managing five or six companies. And this is wonderful. And Ambassador Tommy Koh of Singapore, I met him on March 31 at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He's now aged 85. He just published a new book called 'Small Nations in a Big World' in which Bhutan is one of the chapters. And may I also quote Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, who left us at the age of 91. But he was a strong-willed leader. But little did people know that whenever he travelled inside or outside of Singapore, he was very fond of talking to students, getting to know coworkers, and asking and learning about their personal wants, needs, and stories. So, some top people are lifelong learners; we should admire and learn from them.

Professor, how has becoming a lifelong learner helped enrich your personal and professional life?

As a lifelong learner, you are learning for personal growth and fulfilment. Taking that Masters of Liberal Arts is a big push for me to fill up a vacuum in my knowledge of Western literature and philosophy. Since I was young, I've been known as a smart aleck who knows everything. I actually have five degrees: two degrees in physics, three degrees in engineering, an MBA, and I read voraciously. I travel extensively. So, there is a vacuum in this part about Western literature, history, and philosophy. So now I'm taking this MLA to fulfil my personal growth, and I find it extremely satisfying.

The other thing is professional development; going back to our earlier path, I got my MBA after my early degrees in engineering and physics. Although I worked in the industry for a few years, when I went back to Singapore in the early 1980s to become a technology promoter, my non-technical side came in; of course, my left brain remains very strong, which helps me to promote investments to

promote the science park. But an MBA helped me enormously in marketing and speaking to people. And then, towards the last three years of my career in the Singapore government, or 13 years, I became a diplomat assigned to the EU and the Vatican. So, that has absolutely nothing to do with STEM. And with business. And there I was, using my non-technical side, my EQ, networking, and the business knowledge I learned. So, let's talk about networking; lifelong learning also allows you to build extensive professional relationships. During my stint with the Singapore government, I used my work network in the US, UK, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, and now I'm serving the College of Science and Technology and Gedu College of Business School. And I'm setting up Zoom talks, inviting professors from abroad, setting up internships, etc. This is all using the lifelong network I built up in sixty years. And I'm very proud to say that my contacts on Facebook, LinkedIn, WeChat, and WhatsApp are from diverse cultures - from literally around the world. And that is a very important part of lifelong learning. Thank you.

Professor, given your vast and long learning experience, what are some of the differences you see and experience as a student right and as a student those days? How do you think technology and innovation have changed your learning experience and approach?

That's a very good question. By 1976, I'd already finished my five degrees. By then, there were no PowerPoints, Microsoft Word, or Excel; therefore, our tables were hand-drawn. When I needed to do some calculations, I needed to pay for computer time. There were no digital tools, of course, no internet. But now, my goodness, you are so blessed. You have so many digital tools. And they are very useful - during the three years of COVID, I taught a project management course at Stanford Continuing Studies and the University of San Francisco via Zoom. I had students from more than 30 countries pick my course - as far as from Pakistan, India,

and Portugal; I remember even an American soldier stationed in Saudi Arabia. So, in the 1970s, all I had was a four-function calculator, but later, I had computers the size of refrigerators, personal computers in the 1980s, Apple Computers, then laptops and now smartphones. The most important tool that surfaced recently is open AI, ChatGPT, which I already use every day, and I urge all students to dabble and use such tools. Don't be afraid of it. But I must emphasise that these are still all tools. What you can achieve depends on the user. There, I emphasise the first principle of thinking or design thinking: a person must know how to observe a situation, make insightful analyses and solve problems creatively. So, one final word on technology - I want to remind everyone that Da Vinci and Newton did their mathematics manually. Einstein had no electronic calculators and computers. Alan Turing talked about AI when computers were the size of a big room. Lastly, our current hero, Elon Musk, his disruptive thinking began 15 or 20 years ago when the internet was just beginning. My professional interest outside engineering is photography. Now we have much, much better still and movie cameras, but we don't have greater photographers and movie directors. Remember, technology offers only tools we have used intelligently to produce innovation. Thank you.

Thank you, Professor. I'm curious to know if you think curiosity and creativity are a person's innate nature or if they can be inculcated and influenced by our environments.

This is probably the most important question; it is a \$100,000 question. Human society is complex. We have this function called education, where we try to impart our experience to the next generation. And it depends on how good the educators are and the engineering of the classroom environment, so the results can be different. Well, I am quite familiar with both the educational systems and classrooms, which emphasise instruction and rote memory and the West, which emphasise, if we may be nice to

say, creativity and learning. I'm not so knowledgeable about the classroom situation in Bhutan, but I will learn and adapt when I start teaching a summer course in technology management at CST this summer. Now, I am a product of both systems. Before I was 17, I studied under the Singapore system, which is a British system, and then all my college was done in the USA. But then, in the subsequent 35 years, I taught widely in the US, Europe, China and Singapore. So, I must have taught thousands of adults and dozens of high school students and also mentored them. So, I have ample experience in classrooms in the East and West. So I would like to say that you need to encourage questions for the ideal classroom and learning experiences first. The teacher and the education system have to encourage that. The teacher must always ask open-ended questions. What do you think would happen if? What if we try this? And the answers should not be down to the decimal place. We should change our grading system. I know in Singapore and China, even in Bhutan, you get zero if you got everything right, but if you calculate the answer wrong by one decimal place, in America, if you did everything right but you punched the key wrongly, you can still get total points as the reasoning was correct. So, this is the grading system. Supportive learning environment - facilities are important, but the environment and the teachers are more important. Providing opportunities for exploration gives them the freedom to investigate and experiment. And make learning fun by incorporating games and puzzles. I like to do team projects. Then, use interactive activities, go out to photograph, go out to take surveys, and make the learning process engaging. And number five, connect learning to real-life experiences and make sure it is related to the world. And reward achievers. This is where it's important; we need to reward achievers, not just put up the grades. And I want to emphasise one point: to create, for lack of a better word, a hero-worshipping environment. When I first met them, I often asked students what their idol or hero was. The hero could be from sports, entertainment, politics, technology, and business. It could be Warren Buffett, Steve Jobs, Michael Jordan etc. It could

be anybody. For myself, it was Einstein, Pele, Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, Deng Xiaoping, Steve Jobs and now Elon Musk, and I follow them. I read their biographies, watch videos and look them up for different inspirations. Thank you.

Thank you, Professor. As much as some of us would like to keep learning, it is easy to get derailed from the work at hand in this age of distraction and attention crisis. So, Professor, when you shared your learning experiences so far, I'm sure our readers would be interested to know how you overcame the challenges along the way? So, what were some of the challenges? And how did you overcome them?

Professor Yip: Alright, I would say three challenges. One is distraction, which we all have. Actually, I wrote up my application for the Master's in Liberal Arts when I was aged 70. It was a milestone. However, different events prevented me from applying until 2022. It took a lot of determination. Imagine engaging in a four-year programme that would take a lot of money and time when you're at an advanced age. By the way, I did it secretly. And I only announced it to everyone when I was granted admission. And it was a very selective admission, like all Stanford degrees; some 12 percent or so of the applicants got accepted. I was jubilant that I was accepted. By the way, I think when I graduate in 2026, I should be the oldest graduate of MLA, probably not in the whole history of Stanford; I believe they have one student who graduated in his 80s. The second challenge is money; top universities are not cheap; Stanford comes at US dollar 60,000 per year. Even my MLA degree is about \$70,000 - that's not counting books, travel time, and other investments. I decided to apply in 2022. This information, because ironically, I made a good investment in the Tesla stock the year before, which I believed in. So, Tesla helped me enrol in this MLA course. Thank you.

Thank you, Professor. And advanced congratulations are in order

for your achievement. So you wear multiple hats at the moment, Professor. You are an advisor for important projects, a lecturer at Stanford Continuing Studies and a student pursuing a Masters of Liberal Arts. So, how do you manage your time between pursuing all your professional interests and your personal life in this age of distraction?

That's a super question because I'm not much smarter than others. But time management is very important. In my life, I'm very fortunate to have met many VIPs because of my job and my luck. I've met billionaires like Mr. Li Ka-shing of Hong Kong, top leaders in China, Singapore, and the US, and, of course, in Bhutan, and I've met about 10 Nobel Prize winners, so they don't become Nobel Prize winners for nothing, right. But I realised one thing after meeting all these people: they have one thing equal to me and you they only have 24 hours a day, no more or less. And if you live to be 82 years of healthy and productive life, you know, if you live to be 82, that is only exactly 30,000 days, right? No more, no less. So what you use these 30,000 days, and how you use 24 hours a day, actually is more like 14 hours that you can use, the other 10 hours for sleep, eating, and whatever else. So we have the same amount of time. There are only two words I have to tell you. Time management. And I can tell you from knowing somewhat the lives of people like Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew and reading about Mr Li Ka-shing, they don't burn the midnight oil or go without sleep. They don't drink super coffee all the time to stay awake. And they never complain that they don't have enough time. So, what is time management like? I would say I have five tips if I may say.

First, set goals and prioritise. Identify your short-term and long-term goals, prioritising them on importance and urgency. Focus on what is important, and don't waste time on tasks that don't contribute to your goals.

Secondly, I taught project management extensively. So, plan and schedule - create a schedule and create to-do lists every day, week, or month. Stick to them as much as possible. Stay Organised.

Third, avoid multitasking. This is terrible. In the present day and age, I see so many people getting messed up with social networks, getting distracted here and there; that's terrible. Concentrate on one or two tasks and get them done well. Or minimise distraction, it is the same thing.

And one important thing I invented and like to tell people and my students is to learn how to say no, it can be rude, but your time is most valuable. Say no to things that you don't want to do. Events you don't like to go to, people you don't necessarily want to meet, will not benefit you, or you cannot benefit that you have to learn. Right? Even to the point that you may be unhappy with other people.

Fifth, keep healthy. Take regular breaks, increase productivity, avoid burnout, and do a health check. I am very lucky; I'm a lifelong sportsman. I was a college athlete. I'm 80 percent Vegetarian. I eat only seafood. I'm very careful about my diet. I don't binge drink or eat. I avoid fast food. So always keeping healthy is very important. Thank you. I hope the advice will be of some value. Thank you.

TRANSCRIBED BY RIGSS

“I think the best place for the development of a kind heart is society and family, of course, starting with schools. Schools can do a lot by facilitating that learning so that our children tomorrow are a step better than our ancestors, even in this field of kindness. On the other hand, normally, we see they are very bright, but they are not as kind as our uneducated grandparents. So we could make it into a world where each generation is better not just in the head than the previous generation but also in the skills of the hands and kindness of the heart. So that's the principle that I have been advocating: innovation that we need to bring into our school systems so that our education system doesn't remain just intellectual but has experiential, hands-on, engaging learning and, above all, development of a kind heart to make good human beings for a happy planet now.”

Sonam Wangchuk
RIGSS Virtual Talk
Innovation in Education
4th June, 2021





YPLP-2, Wolathang Primary School, 2016



RIGSS faculty Dasho Tshering Wangchuk



FLP-4, Rikhey (GRIP), 2019



RIGSS faculty members Lyonpo Sonam Tobgye and Prof. Gowher Rizvi with BFSP-1, 2017



Dr. Ang Poon Liat speaking at the 21st RIGSS Friday Forum, 2017



RIGSS Director with YPLP-3, 2016



Dasho Tshering Tobgye with RIGSS faculty members Prof. Ron Ton and Dr. Adrian Chan



RIGSS faculty members Dasho Penjore and Dasho Tashi Wangyal with FLP-2, 2017

THROUGH THE YEARS

REFLECTIONS FROM THE INAUGURAL BATCH OF THE YOUNG PROFESSIONALS LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME (YPLP-1)

WRITTEN BY PARTICIPANTS OF YPLP-1 AFTER THE END OF THEIR PROGRAMME

our kingdom’s supreme law- the constitution.

A weeklong Druk path trek is a reality test for the personal synergy developed during three weeks of lecture and time together at RIGSS. It is extremely amazing to witness how challenges and hardship of the trek take trust and relationship to the next higher level. The pristine nature and clean air facilitate the process of self-awareness and reflections. This reaffirms your responsibility as a trustee of the environment protection and conservation for present and future generations. One step at a time is all we need to take to go forward. This stands true – “if you want to go fast, walk alone. If you want to go far, walk together”.

It was not more than ten years ago when our monarchs the great fourth and fifth traversed the length and breadth of the country, laying the foundation for a just and harmonious society forged on the timeless principles of compassion, equality and integrity.

Today we stand at the crossroads.

Yes, we have come far and earned the commendations of the global community. But a wise king once said **“It is one thing to love your country and another thing to love your country intelligently.”** And to love our country intelligently we must never be complacent and we must acknowledge our shortcomings with fortitude.

Yes, we have been found eligible for graduation away from Least Developed Country status, but

hostel, where you share an incident that took place at work with the person sitting next to you, or in the recreation room where you confide in your fellows about how you were the victim of some injustice, you develop an indelible sense of camaraderie. Once such relationships transcend the professional, a personal synergy can take new heights.

The time away from home also provides an ideal setting for reflection. It is an ideal time to assess your own approach to life and work and more importantly the principles and values that underpin your personality. Such contemplation usually raises more questions than answers and this is when the lectures and workshops on leadership or values are critically important in providing some clarity. In most instances they reinforce your convictions but at times they force you to overhaul your perspectives. One of the most powerful approaches to success is comprehending the distinction between a fixed mind-set and a growth mind-set and cultivating the latter.

The final week of formal lectures provide a springboard to dive into national level issues, which every citizen should understand. As we are lost in our narrow sectorial pursuits we tend to overlook the indispensable aspects of our identity and sovereignty or the obstacles towards achieving a just and harmonious society. As we are lost in the waves of the 21st century we tend to overlook the underlying values that make us Bhutanese or the storms that we have weathered through the centuries. As we are lost in the turbulence of politics we tend to overlook the origins and philosophies of

“In the recent past, it has become evident that institutions in our country are all asserting ‘independence’ and seeking greater ‘autonomy’ at the expense of overall harmony. There is limited communication and coordination among agencies and this invariably leads to lack of coherence... I know that each ministry, government institution, parliamentary body or public agencies has its own mandate. Still, you must work together, not in competition.”

- His Majesty’s National Day Address, 2013

political and administrative terrain is one where every person and institution is aware of his or her role in the larger scheme of things. It is indeed the “leadership of the self” that is of paramount importance. A type of leadership that emphasizes action and not position. A type of leadership that can be embraced in any environment, from the diligent sweeper whose day starts at 6:00 am to the Prime Minister whose day ends at 1:00 am.

It is in this context that the Young Professionals Leadership Programme provides the platform for nurturing such an attitude. As young idealistic and malleable minds are cocooned away for a month, they develop an understanding of each person’s professional mandate and the underlying passion behind each other’s pursuits. While we must not discount the importance of the formal lectures and class room sessions, most of the learning takes place after 5 pm. Whether it is the bus ride from the institute to Kharbandi

Today, institutional coordination is the most significant challenge that we need to address to make the ascent to the next stage of development. As a fledgling democracy, there is a tendency for organizations to interpret independence in extreme terms. While such arrangements ensure checks and balances, we must remember that there is an even more important balance that needs to be achieved- the delicate balance between individual institutional mandates and the larger priorities of a nation.

As developing countries we face significant infrastructure and technology deficits, but we must acknowledge that these challenges are more straightforward. It is not the technical issues that require the most dexterity but rather the inter-personal and institutional issues. Often times we approach issues from a silos perspective that can be detrimental to higher level priorities. Hence, the type of leadership that is required in today’s socio-economic,



we continue to depend precariously on hydropower.

Yes, we have achieved universal primary enrolment, but the quality and relevance of our education is a subject of debate.

Yes, we are a nation renowned for our vibrant culture and Buddhist ethos, but how many of us take the time to walk across the hallway to our next door neighbor or return to our ancestral homes once a year.

Yes, we are nation poised to reap the fabled demographic dividends so exemplified by the East Asian Tigers, but of late we have only witnessed the burden of a young and unemployed population.

Yes, we are a nation that has mobilized the goodwill of the international community, but we cannot alter the geopolitics of our country, we can only adapt.

The road ahead appears intimidating and our aspirations may seem utopian or formidable, but somebody once said that if “If your dreams do not scare you, they are not big enough.” Yes, our aspirations are formidable but they are not insurmountable. But they can only

be achieved through perseverance and coherence. Perseverance of actions and a coherence of vision.

A vision that is coherent and encapsulates the aspirations of the people, for the people and by the people. A vision that is untainted by politics or ideology but grounded in the profound philosophy of our great monarchs.

And in order to realise this vision we must acknowledge that we cannot and shall not for even a moment remain complacent. That we cannot and shall not inherit or perpetrate a silos mentality. That we shall resist polarization of objectives but shall indulge in the depths of debate on methods and systems, for a better tomorrow, for a secure tomorrow, for a self-reliant Bhutan. We are a small country, a fledgling democracy. While we do not have the luxury of divergent destinations, we have the luxury of divergent roads. But they must all lead to one common destination. A destination of a nation that has broken free from the strangles of foreign aid. A destination of a nation that does not have to grapple with the gaping distance between the shining mansions sitting comfortably on the hill and the bleak slums that weep

silently.

A destination of a nation with one foot in the past and one foot in the present. A destination of a nation with one foot in the serene villages of the rural hinterlands and one foot in the vibrant but cohesive towns of the urban landscape. A destination of a nation with one foot in the thriving wilderness and one foot in the dynamism of industry. A destination known as Gross National Happiness.

In moving forward we must pay homage to our inspirations. Your Majesty, your visions will guide us when lost in the maze of doubt, and your actions will lead us when faced with the dilemma of decisions. It is through your shining example that you have made us a caring son and daughter, a more responsible father and mother, an accommodating brother and sister, a persevering citizen, and most importantly a better human being.

Such is my king, your king, our king. He is the protector who reigns over the spiritual and secular traditions, he is the precious sovereign, and his being is unchanging.

Launched on 10th April, 2016, YPLP offers an opportunity for the civil service, armed forces, corporate and other sectors to identify and groom potential future leaders so as to train, guide and enable them to realize their full leadership potential. To help participants build self-awareness and skills to work as a team, the course includes a week-long outdoor learning expedition (OLE) and team building camp.

It's very important that a society finds its best people to work in the public services. That has been a cornerstone of Singapore's development. And one reason why, for example, the Singapore government gives out scholarships to the best students in primary school, the best students in secondary school, the best students in universities is to ensure that the best minds in Singapore are developed. And when you're given a scholarship by the Singapore government, you are then obliged to work for the Singapore government for five or eight years, and in the process, the government is able to assess whether the person is suitable for public service and then he or she is nurtured and kept in the public service. So, it is not a natural thing for the best brains to go and work in public service. In fact, in many countries, like, for example, the United States of America, I can assure you the best minds don't go to work in the public service, whereas, in Singapore, the best minds go to work in the public service. A great state like the United States can afford to have public services that don't perform well, and frankly, the public services in the United States and many states are now performing very badly. A great state like the United States can live with that; it doesn't weaken the United States, but for a small state, it is terrible to have weakened public service institutions. And so, a very strong, conscious effort must be made to inject the best people into the public service because if you don't have the best people in public service, then a small state cannot be strong, cannot be resilient and cannot perform well.





FLP-3 during their Grassroots Immersion Programme (GRIP) to Dunga, Chukha, 2018

A FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**SONAM YANGDON, RIGSS MEDIA & PUBLIC
RELATIONS OFFICER, FLP-3**

Three gentlemen were gathered in a cosy corner of a Thimphu café, supposedly catching up after a long time. Their conversation soon turned to a topic that weighed heavily on their minds: the ongoing exodus in the country, including their own loved ones, to far-off destinations like Australia and beyond. Their discussion took an unexpected turn. One of them, perhaps contemplating a brighter future abroad, remarked, "I sometimes wish that the entire Bhutanese population could relocate to Australia, establishing a new, prosperous life there." Taken aback by this proposition, the man seated in the middle asked, "Are you suggesting we abandon Bhutan entirely?" The man then responded, "Well, what if we could secure a piece of land in Australia where all Bhutanese could settle together?" Astonished, the man in the middle chided, "You can't be serious!" In contrast, the third individual, sitting at the end of the table, chimed in with a more open-minded perspective, saying, "I would agree, I find it intriguing—almost ideal." The man in the middle, clearly disbelieving, continued to press, "So, the two of you are really serious? But what about our land, our culture, our identity as Bhutanese? We can't do that; I can't even think of such a wild thought?" The two gentlemen at the ends of the table, seemingly undeterred by such concerns, concurred, "What value does our culture and identity hold here, anyway? It's becoming increasingly difficult to even feel motivated." What transpired at that table was not a mere rant among students; these men held important mid-career positions in the civil service. Their conversation unfolded lightly, but it was neither fuelled by alcohol nor was it in jest.

As I overheard their open conversations, I couldn't help but wonder the underlying reasons for such disconnect in their identity as a Bhutanese and reproach in their declaim. What could have gone wrong to feel so hopeless to the point of not just leaving the country but entirely abandoning their homeland.

While it's important to acknowledge that not all Bhutanese who emigrate share the sentiments expressed by the two gentlemen above, the "Australian Rush" or the mass exodus of the Bhutanese citizens to Australia has become synonymous with the "Bhutanese Dreams." These days, one of the most frequently asked questions is, "When do you plan to leave for Australia?" It can be said the 'dream' transcends age and profession, with even 10th or 12th graders contemplating their Australian aspirations upon completing their high school and college. And, most parents make no qualms about it, in fact, many seem to encourage it. After wading through the cumbersome visa processes, whether for work or education, many are often met with a mix of envious and dubious response, except for their family members, who are mostly overjoyed.

It's important to understand that the decision to leave behind the safety and comforts of home, and likely work in manual jobs in a foreign land, is not made lightly. Those who finally come to such a decision not only leave behind a significant part of their lives, including their families, but also faces the challenge of starting afresh in a foreign country, without familiar ties for many, and with lots of uncertainty. For many, this journey is even more precarious by the substantial debts they owe to financial institutions, family members or friends to cover associated costs of leaving for a foreign land. We are losing our family members, colleagues, and friends to these dreams every day and not very long before, we are losing our young generations who are trailing their parents or guardians in pursuit of a 'better life'. And, this is gravely concerning. The future of any nation is pinned to the youths to lead the country forward and in better ways than the previous generations. However, if our future generations, who emigrate at a formative age or are born abroad, find it challenging to establish a sense of belonging to Bhutan and connect to its cultural identity, it raises serious concerns about our collective future. These kids are often called the 'third-culture kid'. If those who have been born and raised in the country feel such a sense of disconnect as implied by the conversations of the three men, we can only imagine how the kids who are born and raised outside can connect to Bhutanese values.

The Merriam Webster dictionary explains third-culture kid thus: "As advances in technology and transportation make global connection easier, more cultures are intersecting than ever before. And when culture changes, language tends to follow. One related term being seen with increasing frequency is *third-culture kid*, i.e., a child who grows up in a culture different from the one in which his or her parents grew up." Likewise, our Bhutanese children born and raised outside will find it increasingly difficult to connect to the Bhutanese identity or for that matter, the country that they are raised in. Most Bhutanese children living outside cannot speak our national language, finding it more challenging to read and write in Dzongkha. Reportedly, the Bhutanese language schools in Perth, Australia, is yet to see active and keen learners, or rather keen parents from our Bhutanese diaspora there in enrolling their children for such a programme. According to grapevine, parents feel that there is no value addition to learning our national language if they are planning to settle in a foreign land for long.

We are all always Bhutanese at heart and we know the pride that we take in being called one. What if our future generations cannot feel the same sense of belongingness, either for Bhutan or the country they have been raised in? We cannot rob our children of such a feeling just because we convince ourselves that all these sacrifices are for their future. Parents and guardians can play a pivotal role in ensuring that children stay connected to their roots, values and cultures no matter which part of the world they live in. In this regard, born out of the foresight of His Majesty The King, the Gyalsung National Service comes at a critical time to fill such gaps and we must prepare our children for their enrolment when they come of age for the programme. If one wishes to ensure that your children do not have to deal with the dark feeling of not ever belonging in true sense to any culture or a country and connect to our roots easily, we must take that extra step in instilling in them the Bhutanese values and ethos from an impressionable age.

Launched on 4th June, 2017, FLP is specifically designed for young, entry-level professionals from various sectors with the aim to provide them with professional orientation and grooming, skills development, and attitudinal transformation towards becoming future leaders.

THROUGH THE YEARS



Participants of IBYS-1 in Punakha, 2018



11th Friday Forum by Amb. Dalip Mehta, 2015



FLP-4, Rikhey, Samdrup Jongkhar (GRIP), 2019



FLP-2, Dorokha (GRIP), 2017



RIGSS faculty Alvin Ung



FLP-1, 2017



YPLP-5, 2017

A DECADE OF EXCELLENCE IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE OF RIGSS

ROBERT KLITGAARD, RIGSS FACULTY

Professor Klitgaard with course participants



It's an honour to celebrate a decade of RIGSS's transformative impact on governance and executive education in Bhutan. As we note and applaud your past achievements, we also eagerly anticipate your future contributions.

In your first decade, you have taught many cohorts of civil servants and educators about a different kind of leadership, for a different kind of country. Where leadership of the self is the foundation and Gross National Happiness is translated into practice. You have no permanent faculty; instead, you have invited outstanding leaders and lecturers in Bhutan (and some from other countries) to share lessons from their inspiring careers. Your residential executive courses have forged a network of graduates who now occupy key positions throughout the country. There is no place in the world like RIGSS.

Appropriately, as the creation of His Majesty the King, you have implemented his vision of BOTH/AND. The goals of *both* safeguarding Bhutan's uniqueness *and* participating fully in the best of world's learning, technology, and culture. *Both* prioritising Gross National Happiness and growing economically to become a developed country by 2034.

Coming now are transformative changes that will radically affect Bhutan's success in achieving BOTH/AND. They will also deeply impact what RIGSS does and how.

TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGES
GENERATIVE AI, GELEPHU, GYALSUNG, NDI

CHALLENGES FOR GOVERNANCE
IMPACTS ON POLICIES, COLLABORATION,
LEADERSHIP

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RIGSS
RESEARCH, EXECUTIVE EDUCATION,
NEW AUDIENCES

Generative AI

In the Royal Kasho on the Civil Service, His Majesty said: **"The twenty-first century economy will be driven by artificial intelligence, robotics, automation, big data, and blockchain, while digital currency, digital wallet, digital banking, and quantum computing will define the financial landscape. We must pre-empt these profound developments by restructuring the budget process, financial norms and procurement systems to fast-track our transition to a knowledge-based and tech-driven economy."**

Under His Majesty's leadership, Bhutan has pioneered innovations in areas such as digital ID, bitcoin, domestic banking, and the Gyalpozhing College of Information and Technology.

And now comes generative AI, such as ChatGPT and its rivals. Not even a year old, ChatGPT is already affecting business and government around the world. Much more than a search engine, ChatGPT can be a colleague in problem-solving, team building, doing research, coaching improvement, and yes, the leadership of the self. ChatGPT and similar technologies will help make governance inclusive and accountable, reduce red tape, and improve performance.

I am experiencing this revolution as a professor. My astonishment grows weekly. ChatGPT already can provide patient, effective personalised tutors for all levels of students. As educators internalise the fact that our students can have ChatGPT now, and will certainly have it when they graduate, we must rethink what we teach and how. These are new and exciting questions—and the sooner our educational systems take them to heart, the higher the potential "to fast-track our transition to a knowledge-based and tech-driven economy."

All this means that RIGSS also has a new agenda item: helping

leaders and public managers to master ChatGPT as tutor, colleague, designer, data analyst, and coach. What the exact effects will be on the substance and pedagogy of RIGSS's programmes, no one knows—just as we do not yet know in universities around the world. But no doubt the implications will be profound. And exciting.

Three Transformative Initiatives

Ambitious plans are underway for a new jurisdiction in Gelephu. Like "charter cities" around the world, Gelephu will have a separate governance system, perhaps administered jointly with international partners. This remarkable initiative aims to be *both* a hub of Buddhist values and environmental sustainability *and* a 21st-century dynamo that attracts global partners and investors. The plan is to transmit its economic and technological benefits throughout the entire country.

This new jurisdiction presents a unique set of governance challenges and opportunities. It will require a rethinking of policies and budgets not only for Gelephu but throughout the Bhutanese government.

Two other innovations will have cross-cutting impacts. One is the National Digital Identity, launched in 2023. Another is Gyalsung, a year of mandatory national service for 18-year-olds that will begin next year. Experience in other countries with universal IDs and national service programmes shows that they have profound and sometimes surprising reverberations on education, the economy, and governance.

Implications for RIGSS

All these changes open new opportunities for RIGSS. In the short run, RIGSS's research can help the newly elected government in 2024 take these innovations into account in its plans, policies, and priorities.

In its research and executive programmes, RIGSS can give priority to the transformation agenda and its impacts on governance and management. Singapore’s Lee Kuan Yew once said that 70 per cent of his country’s innovations were borrowed and adapted from other countries. In this spirit, in its research and teaching RIGSS can share lessons from international experience:

- Case studies of small countries like Singapore, New Zealand, and Estonia that made big changes in economic strategy and translated them into effective policies and dynamic management.
- Examples of successful charter cities around the world.
- Lessons from national service programmes.
- Examples of how technological transformations, including AI and digital IDs, can catalyse more inclusive and efficient governments.

As the transformation agenda proceeds, the implementation of the new plans and policies will take centre stage. Many efforts will involve public-private partnerships. RIGSS’s existing case studies of successful public-private-citizen collaboration¹ can be augmented with new case studies of agile, performance-driven management in Bhutan.

A final point: given the transformation agenda, RIGSS may have new audiences for its executive training, including leaders from business, civil society, and international partners in Gelephu.

Moving Forward

As Bhutan stands at the cusp of an exciting new era, so does RIGSS. With a decade of accomplishments to build upon, RIGSS is well-

¹ In Bold and Humble, 2023, available open access: <https://rigss.bt/publications/read/10>

positioned to lead Bhutan into a future that honours both its unique heritage and its global aspirations. With His Majesty’s continued support, there’s no doubt that both Bhutan and RIGSS will flourish in new and exciting ways in the years to come.

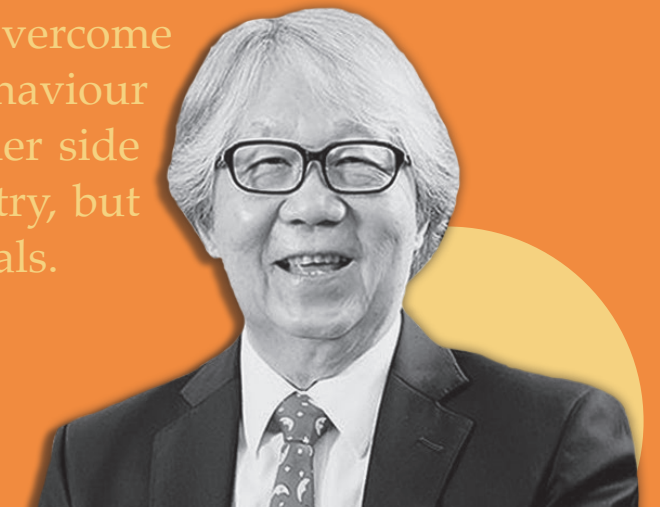


Professor Klitgaard with Home Minister Ugyen Dorji and RIGSS Director during the book launch

Professor Klitgaard’s book ‘Bold and Humble: How to Lead Public-Private-Citizen Collaboration, with Five Success Stories’ was published by RIGSS on 2nd May, 2023. The book covers important aspects of public policy, governance, leadership and collaboration, and provides rich analyses and insights drawn from five case studies-four from Bhutan, written in collaboration with RIGSS and one from the Philippines.



My general advice is that you must represent a small country, but you must maintain your dignity, and you might never allow a bigger country to bully you. This is advice I tell all my younger diplomats because if you're from a small country, there's a natural tendency for a bigger country to bully or disrespect. You must stand firm, defend the dignity of Bhutan, defend Bhutan's national interests and never allow yourself to be bullied. And you can overcome this asymmetrical relationship by behaviour on your part with a signal to the other side that you may be a big or small country, but this is a negotiation between two equals.



Amb. Tommy Koh
25th RIGSS Friday Forum on
**Nation Building:
Learning from Singapore's Success**
14th October, 2022

CONTRIBUTORS



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Ugyen Penjor is the Chief Executive Officer of Kuensel, the national newspaper. Ugyen started his career with Kuensel as a cub reporter in 2001 and became the Managing Editor in 2009. He completed his Master's degree in Media Management from Murdoch University, Perth, WA.



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Dr. Adrian Chan is the Managing Director of Acerpacer Consulting Pte Ltd. Upon retiring from the Singapore Armed Forces as its Chief Psychologist, he served as the Leadership Resource Person in His Majesty's Secretariat and was the Founding Leadership Faculty in RIGSS. In this capacity, Adrian has coached and graduated nearly 1000 of Bhutan's top leaders. Together with his wife Poh Cheng and kids Emma and Christopher, Adrian is deeply grateful to have been part of RIGSS's journey since 2013.



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Damcho Rinzin works as the Chief Tourism Officer heading the Marketing and Tourism Promotion Division of the Department of Tourism. He has bachelor's degree in tourism from the University of New Brunswick, Canada and double master's degree from Australia in international tourism and business. He started his career with the then Department of Tourism and he loves promoting the amazing Kingdom of Bhutan.



Professor Robert Klitgaard is a University Professor at Claremont Graduate University, where he served as President from 2005-9. Formerly Dean of the Pardee RAND Graduate School and a professor at Harvard and Yale, he consults around the world on government reform and economic strategy. His 14 books include *Bold and Humble: How to Lead Public-Private-Citizen Collaboration*, with Five Success Stories (RIGSS, 2023) and *Policy Analysis for Big Issues: Confronting Corruption, Elitism, Inequality, and Despair* (2023). His *Tropical Gangsters* was named one of the New York Times' Books of the Century.

THROUGH THE YEARS



Dale Carnegie, Singapore with FLP-1, 2017



Amb. Shyam Saran, 5th Friday Forum Lecture, 2014



RIGSS faculty Prof. Klitgaard with EXCEL-2, 2023



FLP-4, Rikhey (GRIP), 2019



RIGSS faculty Dasho Karma Ura



YPLP-3, Closing ceremony, 2016



RIGSS Director with the captains and members of FLP cohorts, 10th Oct, 2023

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The Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies, a premier leadership institute and a think tank, was established by His Majesty The King in 2013. The first of its kind in the country, RIGSS is an autonomous, not-for-profit institute to promote excellence in leadership, governance and strategic studies. It conducts executive training programmes and carries out research on the accomplishments and future direction for governance.

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