



# SHES-RIG PAGES

The Annual Newsletter of Samtse College of Education

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# SHES-RIG PAGES

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# Welcome



Dear Reader,

Samtse College of Education (SCoE) is pleased to present to you the 2019 and 2020 edition of SHES-RIG PAGES, published together as a single edition due to logistic inconveniences imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

SCoE was established and inaugurated on May 29, 1968 as a Teacher Training Institute (TTI) by our beloved Late His Majesty Druk Gyalpo Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. The launching of this premier teacher education institution then marked a significant epoch and milestone in Bhutan's history of educational development and more particularly, in the history of teacher preparation. From a fledgling Institute that initially ran a primary teaching certificate programme with a meagre enrollment of only 41 students, SCoE today has a total student enrollment of close to a thousand students including both full-time pre-service and in-service teacher candidates.

To align teacher education programmes offered in the College with the actual needs and demands of teachers in the school system and to address the concerns and issues related to quality and professional standards of teachers in the country's education system, SCoE has stopped the intake of Bachelor of Education students since the beginning of 2017. By 2024, all undergraduate students currently enrolled would graduate and the College, thereafter, shall only cater for postgraduate study programmes mainly Postgraduate Diploma in Education; Postgraduate Diploma in Contemplative Counseling; and Master of Education Programmes with specialisation in all secondary school subjects.

In the last 53 years of teacher education, SCoE has educated close to 7000 school teachers, who represent almost two thirds of the overall teaching population. In fulfilling our mandate of educating teachers for the Bhutanese school system, we consciously seek inspiration in the wish and trust Late His Majesty Third Druk Gyalpo had entrusted on this College to produce not only teachers that are professionally competent and dedicated, but also immersed in our rich culture and heritage so that these timeless values can be transmitted to our younger generation.

SHES-RIG PAGES is a special tribute to the most sacred gift and the precious legacy our beloved Late His Majesty has left for the overall education system in the country. This newsletter provides a snapshot of the variety of activities the College initiates as part of learning and teaching; research and other events; guest lectures by academics, scholars, and eminent personalities; student experiences of campus life; creative literary compositions; and conversation with distinguished alumnus.

We hope you will find this edition of SHES-RIG PAGES interesting and read worthy. We will appreciate your feedback and comments on it for future improvement. The e-copy of the newsletter can be accessed at [www.sce.edu.bt](http://www.sce.edu.bt).

With warmest wishes.

(Rinchen Dorji, PhD)  
President

**SHES-RIG PAGES**

# 2019

## **In this issue**

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## His Excellency, Honorable Thrizin of the National Council visits the College

**H**is Excellency, Tashi Dorji, the Chairman of the National Council of Bhutan visited the College on 19<sup>th</sup> of April. The visit was mainly to advocate on the roles and responsibilities of National Council and National Assembly. His Excellency emphasised the importance of being able to understand and critique the work of the law-making body.

His Excellency talked on some of the important points such as, what constitutes the Parliament of Bhutan, the law-making and reviewing process, and procedure in passing of Bills. He also reiterated on how the National Council and National Assembly function differently. The occasion, besides, clarifying most of the doubts, provided opportunity to ask questions, share thoughts and make suggestions regarding issues in the country. His Excellency, with patience and humility, aptly responded the queries the students and faculty sought.

His Excellency also pointed out that the students of the College should rather invest time and build themselves to be competitive and employable and not be disappointed regarding the limited intake of graduates by the Royal Civil Service Commission annually. At the same time, His Excellency was pleased to know that the youths of the country are worried of the future of the country. He also shared some thoughtful ideas on it such as instilling good etiquettes in life.

The session ended with His Excellency leaving a ray of hope for the students. He said that, on completing of the training, the students' opportunity is not limited to teaching only. There is a wide range of opportunities they can serve the nation. The first year and second year Bachelor of Education students and the College faculty members attended the programme. Dasho Dzongda also attended the session.



*His Excellency responding to the questions from the audience*

## Value Education Programme



*The Guest Speaker inspiring and touching the hearts of the audience to become the "Best Versions" of their own selves*

The College Management, faculty and students were honoured to have Zimpon Wongm Dasho Chewang Rinzin, Director of Royal Institute of Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS) on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2019. Dasho was invited to the College to give a talk to the faculty and students as part of the Value Education.

In his session with the student teachers in the morning, Dasho talked about **"ROAD TO SUCCESS"**, highlighting what the student teachers as future teachers could do to pave their own successes in life. Dasho reminded the students that each one of them as future teachers and young adults are a tremendous and invaluable asset to take our country forward and make it a better place for our future generations than what is now.

Dasho's talk to the student teachers primarily centered on the following EIGHT key themes:

1. Being knowledgeable
2. Staying up-to-date
3. Learning to embrace failure
4. Being responsible
5. Living simply and frugally
6. Being a good human being
7. Striving for excellence
8. Making the best of college life

Dasho concluded his address to the student teachers by asking them to be a different class of teachers of a different caliber – a new generation of teachers so that they are able to ***"Incubate the best version of themselves"***.



In the afternoon session with the teaching faculty, Dasho talked about **“Professionalism and Leadership in Public Service”**. Dasho started his talk with a citation from His Majesty the Fifth Druk Gyalpo’s Royal Address at the Madhavrao Scindhia Memorial Lecture, New Delhi in 2009, where His majesty highlighted ***“What each one of us do makes an impact on the bigger things – small parts of BIG VISIONS”***.

Dasho’s talk to the faculty mainly touched on the need to develop:

1. Specialised knowledge
2. Competency as teacher educators/public servants
3. Honesty and integrity
4. Accountability
5. Self-regulation
6. Looking the part
7. Awareness of the larger goals

Dasho reminded the teacher educators that everybody is a leader and each one of us paints our own life’s journey, which stays behind as a personal legacy, that we leave behind. He stated that to paint a perfect portrait, you do not necessarily have to occupy a high-ranking position with highly paid job nor do we have to occupy a highly influential position to be a leader. Dasho concluded his session by emphasising on the need to develop a sense of ***“leadership of the self”*** and not a leader that leads the masses, which is the key catchphrase His Majesty the Fifth Druk Gyalpo is emphatic of when talking about leadership.





## Consultative Workshop on the Integration of Inclusive Education principles and ideas in the PgDE Curriculum (8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2019)

In preparation to launch the new 18 months PgDE programme at Samtse College of Education (SCoE) in 2020, a four days Consultative Workshop on the Integration of Inclusive Education Principles and Ideas in the PgDE Curriculum concluded today. Along with the 32 module writers from the College, the participants consisted of participants from key stakeholder agencies such as the ECCD and SEN Division from the Ministry of Education (MoE), Royal Education Council (REC), Bhutan Council for School Examination and Assessment (BCSEA), teachers from mainstream secondary school teachers, teachers from schools with SEN programmes, special institutes, Civil Society Organisations, and educationists from private institutions and UNICEF Bhutan.

On the opening day of the Workshop on May 8<sup>th</sup> 2019, the President of the College, Dr. Rinchen Dorji highlighted that this workshop also provides a very good platform to help SCoE develop a pre-service teacher education programme that has gone through a rigorous vetting processes that would contribute towards not only building professionally competent teachers but teachers who possesses the right caliber to create a positive image of teachers in the system – teachers who are proud of being teachers; teachers who carry the heart and soul of teaching; teachers who demonstrates empathetic understanding of not just the students' learning and developmental needs but who are sensitive and responsive to our young children's psychological and emotional needs.



Similarly, Dr. Kinzang Dorji, the PgDE Programme Leader said that the consultative workshop is very important for the college because it will help the college in producing the next generation of secondary school teachers who are well grounded on the pedagogical principles and practices, subject contents and as well as other emerging themes of education such as inclusive education.

In his closing remarks of the workshop today, Dr. Rinchen Dorji stated that it is the moral duty and institutional obligation of Samtse College of Education as a key stakeholder in education to partner with all stakeholder agencies to address the pressing issues that are cancerous to the growth of our education system.

He also stated that this consultative workshop is a classic initiative considering the success of the College in bringing together representatives from many key stakeholder agencies to help the College in developing the new PgDE curriculum. He thanked all the participants of the undying energy and enthusiasm that each one of them brought to the proceedings and deliberations of the workshop, thus making the workshop highly engaging, interactive, and enriching.

The workshop was conducted in collaboration with UNICEF Bhutan.

## SCE marks Diwali, the festival of lights

**O**n 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2019, Diwali was celebrated at Samtse College of Education. Faculty members and students partook in the celebration. Mr. Basudev Upadhyaya, a class xii student of Samtse Higher Secondary School, son of the pundit at the Samtse Shivalaya Mandir was invited as a guest speaker and to preside over the ceremony. Diwali, commonly known as 'Tihar' signifies triumph and glories of good over evil. Diwali is celebrated for five days which is also known as Yamapanchak. The five days of celebration involves worship of five different deities for peace and prosperity.

The first day of Diwali is the 'Kag Tihar'. 'Kag' (crow) considered the messenger of Yama (Lord of Death) is worshiped on this day. People offer food on the roofs of their houses or sprinkle rice grains on the ground. They feed crows with the belief that they will prevent misfortunes in the family and protect them from evil.

The second day of Diwali known as 'Kukur Tihar' is dedicated to dogs. Dogs are considered guardians to the gates of heaven. In the end of Mahabharata, the king of righteousness Yudhishtira,

loses his brothers and wife but the loyal dog follows him till the gates of heaven and he refuses to enter it without his devoted dog. Dogs are worshipped for their love, protection and loyalty to people. People often put 'Tika' (red/ white) on their foreheads, a garland of marigold flowers around their necks and offer them a grand feast for dinner.

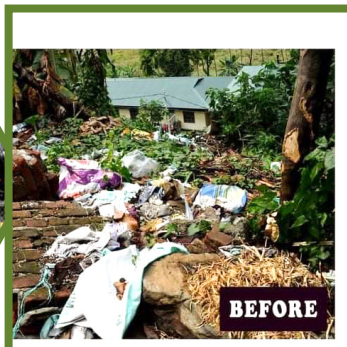
The third day of Dewali is the "Gow Tihar," which literally means the Day of Cows. In Hinduism, cows have been referred to as Goddess Laxmi, who has been sent to earth in the form of a mother. Cows are worshiped in the morning by putting tika on their foreheads and a marigold garland around their necks. People worship Goddess Laxmi and welcome her by lighting oil lamps and lanterns in the house. Colorful 'Rangolis' (freehand designs) are painted on the floor using sand colors and flowers. It is believed that on this day she visits her devotees and blesses them. Groups of small children and young girls visit every house in their neighborhood and dance and sing Tihar songs like Bhailo and receive blessings from the elders in the family.



*President of the College taking part in the Deepawali ceremony*



## The Trash Tag Challenge

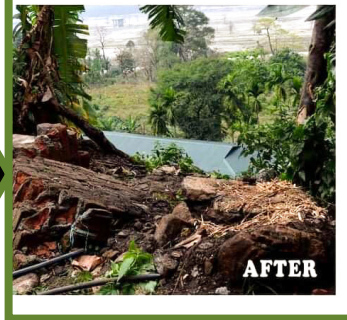


*Trash Tag Challenge*

Waste management is one of the greatest challenges these days. With plastic bottles, containers and untold amount of trash increasing in our environment, it is a challenge across the country. Government, organizations, colleges and schools have been coming up with different ways of getting rid of trash over the past few decades. Consequently, on social media, an effective way of cleaning has been initiated which is called 'The Trash Tag Challenge.'

In this challenge, a person or a group of people identify a littered area and click photo in the beginning so that they can click another one after cleaning the area and show the transformation on social forums. The challenge has gone viral in Bhutan starting from March 2019. Many people have embraced this challenge and contributed to the promotion of waste management and social responsibility towards such issue.

On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019, Mr. Tashi Dawa from B.Ed final year and Ms. Pema Euden a post graduate student and two student leaders from Samtse College of Education coordinated the challenge in Samtse Dzongkhag.



People from the dzongkhag administration, municipality, desuups, Samtse Higher Secondary School and SCE cleaned the trash in the town area.

The challenge was planned for the morning hours, however, owing to unfavourable weather condition, it took place in the afternoon. The team was able to gather a huge number of volunteers and complete the challenge. As an appreciation, Samtse Business Community served refreshment to the entire team.

The coordinators stated that one of the greatest achievements from initiating the event was being able to bring people together and work as a team to provide service to the community. Following this, the trash tag challenge was carried out in other parts of the town by respective coordinators. Such challenge contributes to the promotion of waste management and plastic ban in the country.

## KUZUZANGPO 2 Version- Kezang Dorji

**K**ezang Dorji, a Bhutanese rapper and social worker visited the College on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2019 to stage Kuzuzangpo 2<sup>nd</sup> version to the college staff and students. He is one of the first artists to tour the country with an objective to support independence of Bhutanese music industry and to encourage Bhutanese pop music. He is known for his social commentary lyrics. Among numerous lyrics with social values, "Loksho" a pop music aimed on advocating rural urban migration imparted intense message.

He said that with passage of time, a sense of belonging to one own community is fading among youth and they hardly think of going back to their villages after studies.

He created awareness on themes focused on Bhutanese youths such as drugs and alcohol abuse, media literacy, emotional intelligence, preservation of culture, helping local economy, participating in democratic process and financial literacy. Kinzang Dorji is one of the Bhutanese artistes who aims to educate and create awareness in the Bhutanese youths of their role in nation building and preservation of rich cultural heritage and traditional values through a pop music culture, which is a medium that the youths can easily associate themselves.



*Artist Kezang Dorji rapping with the audience*



## International Conference on Emerging Social Work Practices and Education (ICESWPE)



*His Excellency the Prime Minister, Dr. Lotey Tshering declares open the conference*

**S**amtse College of Education, in collaboration with UNICEF Bhutan, organised the International Conference on Emerging Social work Practices and Education from May 2 to 4, 2019. The Prime Minister of Bhutan, His Excellency Dr. Lotay Tshering, graced the conference opening. The keynote speakers, UNICEF representatives, social work practitioners, researchers, college faculty members and students attended the opening ceremony.

The conference aimed to act as a guide for the new Bachelor's Degree in Social Work that the College launched in the beginning of the fall semester. The conference was conducted to inculcate Bhutanese cultural values with global social work contemporary knowledge, skills, ethics and values. The conference also had some of the special highlights by keynote speakers of globally renowned social work academics and practitioners. The conference drew like-minded scholars and professionals from a wide range of areas such as academics, researchers, professionals, parliamentarians, policy makers and social work activists

The conference coincided with the Birth Anniversary of the Third Druk Gyalpo, His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, who is remembered for opening Bhutan to a new era of modernisation. The day is celebrated as Teachers Day in Bhutan. The day started with the lighting of butter lamps by the Vice Chancellor of Royal University of Bhutan, the President of the College, and the student councilors.

The conference for the first day was organised into two sessions. In the first session, there were two keynote addresses. Professor Cathy Humphreys from the University of Melbourne spoke on Contemporary Challenges to Social Work Education in South Asia. The second keynote speaker Professor Vishanthie Sewpaul from the University of Kwazulu Natal, South Africa spoke on The Global Social Work definition and the Social Work statement of ethical principles: Towards a delocalized ethics. She underlined the misconception of people defining Social Work as 'work FOR the people' but rather social work is 'work WITH the people'. The second session was conducted simultaneously at two different locations, Namgay Khangzang and Rigpa Hall.





*Officiating UNICEF country representative addresses the conference*

In Namgay Khangzang, three speakers made their presentations. Karen Anderson from Edith Cowan University of Perth, Australia, started the session on 'The presence of Death, Loss and Grief in the Counseling Room: The therapist's grief'. She highlighted on the need to have self-awareness and reflective practices while counseling. Paul Ban from the University of Melbourne, Australia presented on the relevance of the international practice of family group conference to Bhutan. He emphasised the role of independent facilitators. He also discussed about the five stages of family group conference: Preparation, Information, Private time, Implementation of plan and Follow up.

In Rigpa Hall, the presentations included pioneering supervision training for school guidance counselors in Bhutan by Sonam Pelden, ECU, Australia, and kNowVAWdata: Improving national and regional capacities to measure and monitor violence against women in Asia and the Pacific by Kristin Diemer of the University of Melbourne, Australia.

The afternoon session consisted of three more speakers. Vicki Banham from Edith Cowan University presented on the right to be listened to where she highlighted the issue relating to why children

remain unheard and excluded from participating. The next presenter, Yeshey Khandu from MoHLR, Thimphu presented on design thinking as an empathetic approach to improving social service. The final speaker of the day was Prateeti Barman from Assam Royal Global University. She presented on reproductive health rights and social work. She stressed on one of the India's stereotypical societal issue where it is always the male or family to decide about the birth of child even though it is women's body and women who suffer.

Natalie Long from Curtin University presented on International social work fieldwork followed by Karen Anderson's presentation on Social work and palliative care. The last presentation for the day was by Ganeshman Gurung of Samtse College. He presented on alternative model of social work education.

Two keynotes and a number of presentations were made in the two morning sessions and one afternoon session of the third day. In the last session of the day, there was panel discussion with the Bhutan Broadcasting Service. The three-day international conference was officially closed with the closing remark by the guest of honour.

## Edith Cowan University Academics and Students Visit Samtse College of Education

**T**wo faculty members and fifteen students from Edith Cowan University (ECU) in Perth, Western Australia, visited Samtse College of Education from 30<sup>th</sup> September to 12<sup>th</sup> October, 2019. The team, led by Associate Professor Vicki Banham and Dr. Sonam Pelden, were on study abroad programme.

Dr. Rinchen Dorji, the President of the College, welcomed the group on the morning of October 3<sup>rd</sup> 2019. He highlighted some of the key milestones the College achieved since its establishment on May 29, 1968. In his presentation, he stated that

the College is at a crossroads with opportunities and challenges ahead. However, the College views the challenges as opportunities to be more creative and innovative in designing teacher education programmes of national and international relevance.

The President emphasised the importance of maintaining such active institutional linkages with academic institutions abroad to fulfill the College's aspiration of becoming "A centre of excellence committed to research and innovation in education" and in achieving the national educational goal of building an educated and enlightened society of GNH. Associate professor Dr. Vicki Banham shared

her delight and presented the College with books related to counselling contributed by academics and students of ECU.

During their stay in the College, the students attended mindfulness practice sessions facilitated by the academics at the Department of Contemplative Counselling Psychology.



*SCE formally welcomes faculty and students from ECU*

They also attended class room teaching with the Bachelor of Arts in Social Work and Post-graduate Diploma in Contemplative Counselling Psychology students. This enabled experiencing and fostering cross-cultural interaction and knowledge exchange in terms of teaching and learning in tertiary education classrooms in Bhutan.

Beside their academic engagement, the team visited some of the places such as Sipsu Lake and Hindu Shivalaya temple in Samtse. Staff representative of SCE led the team to Kuensel Phodrang in Thimphu, attended Thimphu tsechu and trekked to Taktsang in Paro. The team expressed their gratitude for hospitality, kindness and friendship rendered to them.



## Visiting Scholars from University of Technology Sydney (UTS), Australia



*SCE formally welcomes the visitor from UTS, Australia*

Dr. Nick Hopwood, Dr. Kimberly Pressick-Kilborn and Dr. Nina Burnridge from the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS), Australia were on a four-day visit to the College from 20<sup>th</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 2019. The three faculty members came to work on the ongoing joint research project with a team of researchers from the College on “quality and equity in science and mathematics education”. The Australian Award 2017 on Change-Lab funds the project. During their stay in the College, they provided a session on 'differentiated instruction' as part of Professional Learning Series (PLS) to the College faculty members. They also provided the same

session to the M.Ed 1<sup>st</sup> year students. They met the College management to discuss on areas of mutual interests for collaboration between SCE and UTS.

During their stay in the college, they visited mathematics and science classes and participated in various class presentations. They also visited place of religious importance.

## A Team from Malmo University visits Samtse College

Two lecturers and four students from Malmo University, Sweden visited Samtse College of Education on 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2019. The exchange programme was part of a contract signed between the two Universities in the field of Mathematics and IT Education for a term of eight years. While Mr. Jonas Dahl and Mr. Joakin Olofsson, lecturers from Malmo University, stayed for three weeks the four students studied in the College for three months.

The objective of the exchange programme was to establish long-term collaboration between the two universities. The project also aims to jointly

develop masters programme, conduct research, develop courses in Mathematics and increase capacity of teachers and students to work on global issues. The project will also enhance culturally responsive teaching and develop teaching materials in the fields.

During their stay in Samtse College, the team co-taught lessons, organised seminars and Mathematic fair for all the students of the college. As part of the exchange programme, two faculty members and four students from Samtse College visited Malmo University.



## University of New England Academics and Students visit Samtse College of Education

**F**our students and three faculty members from the University of New England (UNE), in Armidale, New South Wales Australia visited Samtse College of Education (SCoE) from 12<sup>th</sup> September – 17<sup>th</sup> October 2019.

The President of the College officially welcomed the group on the morning of October 14<sup>th</sup> 2019 with a brief introduction of the College by highlighting some of its key milestones ever since its establishment on May 29<sup>th</sup> 1968. In his welcome address and presentation, he stated that Samtse College of Education is at a critical juncture where it views future challenges as opportunities to be more

creative and innovative in designing teacher education programmes of national and international relevance.

The President emphasized the importance of maintaining active working institutional linkages with academic institutions abroad such as UNE to fulfill its aspiration of becoming “A centre of excellence committed to research and innovation in education” in achieving the national educational goal of building an educated and enlightened society of Gross National Happiness (GNH). Associate Professor Judith A. Miller expressed that there is a wide range of areas for SCoE and UNE to work together.



*A group photo of faculty and students from UNE with the President and faculty of SCE*

## Launching of Bachelors of Arts in Social Work



*The Guest of Honour, Director of Academic Affairs of RUB with other guests, faculty and first cohort BA in Social Work students*

**S**amtse College of Education (SCE) launched the Bachelor of Arts in Social Work on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2019. The Venerable Lam Neten, Samtse Dratshang and representatives from the Office of the Vice Chancellor, Royal University of Bhutan, CSO, UNICEF Bhutan, and academics from Assam Don Bosco University, Guwahati, India, attended the launching ceremony.

The introduction of the four-year course, the first of its kind in the country, comes after the college carried out market study for the programme and curriculum development in consultation with the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and other relevant government agencies within the country and selected universities outside the country since 2016. The programme was developed with technical support from the UNICEF Bhutan. The College has enrolled 37 students for the programme.



## Samtse College of Education Celebrates 51<sup>st</sup> Foundation Day

**S**amtse College of Education celebrated its 51<sup>st</sup> Foundation Day on May 29<sup>th</sup>, the day when Late His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck inaugurated the College as a Teacher Training Institute in 1968. Zimpon Wongm Dasho Chewang Rinzin, Director of Royal Institute for Governance and Strategic Studies (RIGSS) graced the occasion as the guest of honour. The celebration was attended by Venerable Lam Neten of Samtse Dratshang, heads of government and non-government sectors in Samtse, retired faculty and staff, alumni, staff and students of SCE. The first half of the programme was held at the College Heritage Centre that included Marchang Ceremony, Lighting of Butter Lamps, Marmay Moenlam, Photo exhibition of Late His Majesty the Third King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, and launching of Bougainvillea Plantation Project for 2019.

The second half of the programme was held at Namgay Khangzang (college auditorium) that comprised of a welcome address by the College President and the Guest of Honour, speeches by retired faculty, alumni representative, and student representative, followed by cultural programme and quiz on the history of the College. In his opening welcome address, Dr. Rinchen Dorji, President of the College expressed his heartfelt gratitude to our beloved Third Druk Gyalpo Jigme Dorji Wangchuck for having established this college in 1968 as a Teacher Training Institute in the country. He said, “In our last 51 years of service to the nation in preparing teachers, Samtse College of Education has trained close to 7000 teachers, who serve selflessly under trying conditions in the nooks and corners of the country.



*Guest of Honour Opening the 51<sup>st</sup> College Foundation Day at the Heritage Building*

As a College of Education that has the mandate to educate and train secondary school teachers for the Bhutanese education system, we are consciously cognizant of the persistent challenges that we face in terms of producing teacher graduates who are not just motivated and competent but who also possess the personal and professional qualities to inspire the young Bhutanese children to pursue knowledge and learning as a life-long endeavor”.

The Guest of Honor Dasho Chewang Rinzin talked about the importance of education for the socio-economic development of the country. He applauded the College for being the premier teacher education institute in the country and producing quality teachers. He also wished the College to strive and achieve excellence in producing professional teachers. The faculty and staff of the College had a friendly football match with the alumni teachers from a nearby school in the afternoon as part of the final activity for the 51<sup>st</sup> College Foundation Day.

## SCE Observed Menstrual Hygiene Day

**S**amtse College of Education observed Menstrual Hygiene Day on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2019. To mark the day, women wore red tegos and men wore red bands around their arms. The day was observed with the aim to advocate menstrual cycle as a natural and biological process which will help in combating social stigma and taboos associated with menstruation. The program was organized by Global Citizenship and Education Club (GCED) led by coordinator Mr. Karma Wangchuk.

The coordinator shared the importance of recognizing this day and emphasized that it is time to break the myths and stigmas that people have on menstruation. The theme for Menstrual Hygiene Day 2019 was “It’s Time for Action”. The faculty and students pledged not to stay silent and help erase the stigma that the society has on menstruation.



*Women wore red tego and men tied red ribbons on their left arm to mark the day*

The organizers also showed video clips of people advocating to stand for issues women go through in their daily lives owing to mensuration. The participants also watched a video in which the Prime Minister of Bhutan, Dr. Lotey Tshering spoke on societal acceptance of menstruation and importance of maintaining menstrual hygiene. The session concluded with a speech by Mr. Ugyen Wangchuk (PG councilor) reminding on the importance of removing stigmas on menstruation from our society. Furthermore Dr. Rinchen Dorji, President of SCE emphasized how men and society should be openly accepting menstruation and the significance of creating awareness among men, women and society as whole on menstrual hygiene.



## Tarayana Foundation Day

**T**arayana Foundation Day was marked on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2019 in Namgay Khangzang (auditorium) with a night show organized by Tarayana club. The day was marked to recognize the importance of every individual and provide them with equal opportunities and space in the society. Dr. Vicki Banham from the School of Arts and Humanities, Edith Cowan University Australia chaired the programme. All club members participated in the programme to make the participants and audience realize the importance of services that need to be carried out from within. At the end of the celebration, there was a photo session with the item presenters, President, Dr. Vicki Banham, club adviser and club coordinators.

Tarayana Foundation was founded by Her Majesty the Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck and formally launched by His Majesty King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2003. It aims to provide equal opportunities and happiness to all Bhutanese citizens. It believes in the importance of serving others and hence its motto “service from heart”.



## Conversation with Alexander Sivitskis



Alexander Sivitskis taught students of Social Science Education for the autumn semester of 2019 in Samtse College of Education. Shes-Rig PAGES (SP) team interacted with him to understand his experience and purpose of his attachment to the

College.

**Shes-Rig PAGES (SP):** What made you or who inspired you to come as a visiting scholar to Samtse College of Education?

Alexander Sivitskis (**AS**): I was inspired to come to Samtse College of Education and Bhutan after I heard about the country's initiative to "re-Bhutanise" its curriculum. I work with an education organization in the United States called Teton Science Schools (TSS). Our tagline at TSS is that Learning is in our Nature, and our mission is to inspire curiosity, engagement, and leadership through transformative place-based education. This approach, commonly known by its acronym of PBE, is rooted in connecting learners to their local communities through investigation of ecology, economy, and culture. Over 10 years ago, educators in Bhutan and TSS recognized that deep connections between PBE and Bhutan's desired educational trajectory. And since then, leaders from both sides have been working hard to build Bhutan's capacity for implementation of PBE across its educational institutions.

I heard about the SCE and TSS partnership while I was still a graduate student in the United States. My mentors at TSS described how SCE was striving to develop its practice of PBE in attempts to re-align its teaching and curriculum to the goals of the Educating for GNH initiative.

The idea of exploring how place-based education could support the goals of GNH truly fascinated me. I had been so fortunate to learn the craft of PBE through my past teaching experiences, and I was looking for a way to share this authentic educational approach back to the world. When I heard that SCE was striving to learn more about place-based education, I was inspired to help however I could.

**SP:** What did you teach? Was it interesting to teach? Were there some challenges that encountered?

**AS:** As a place-based education "expert in residence," I had the opportunity to work across multiple departments at SCE. I was able to co-plan, co-teach, and even guest lecture in multiple modules ranging in scope from science, geography, history, language, educational development, and economics, to name a few. That is the beauty about PBE, it is truly an educational approach that can happen anytime, anywhere, and with any subject. By grounding educational experiences within local community exploration, and understanding how to investigate your surroundings by pursuing meaningful questions, engaging student-driven experiences can develop authentically within any discipline of study.

One extended teaching opportunity I was fortunate to be a part of was a seminar on Place-Based Education for B.Ed Primary IV year. Witnessing as these future teachers critically grappled with the challenges of executing place-based lessons in a Bhutanese context was eye opening for me. At the end of course, these students reflected that they felt confident and empowered to connect their future students with local communities through PBE. Although these students said they gained a lot from this seminar, I am confident that I learned as much (if not more) from them about educating in the Bhutanese system. And for that I am deeply grateful.



Some challenges I encountered: struggling to talk over loud fans during lectures, learning how to correctly put on a gho in the morning, and trying to keep leaches out of my classroom. But in all seriousness, one of the primary challenges I faced was learning how to share my western educational experience and teaching style in a manner that was critically balanced and recognized the local Bhutanese context. Finding that middle path was not always easy, but through open conversations with students and lecturers across the college, I hope I was able to share my learnings in a culturally relevant way.

**SP:** What are your most memorable and positive college experiences during your stay at SCE?

**AS:** My most memorable experiences from my stay at SCE is the inspiring conversations that I had with faculty and students who are driven to make their teaching practice more meaningful. Often these conversations would be deep and philosophical, but sometimes the most impactful ideas were shared in simple and brief discussions. It happened when I spoke with a history lecturer who sought to make his module more than just a comparison between the past and the present, but an engaging experience that connected students to a sense of deeper historical awareness. It happened when I got to hear from a B.Ed student who wanted to reimagine her approach to language education by shifting away from teacher-centered lectures and instead towards student-driven investigations of personal poetry and local Bhutanese folklore. These conversations make me excited to see the future horizons that Bhutan's educational leaders are looking towards. With these driving sentiments, I am confident that the country will witness the results in students who embody the qualities of GNH school graduates.

Besides the work, my most memorable moments in Samtse stem from my time getting to experience the surrounding natural environment with good friends:

from watching bright red sunsets glow across the Indian plains, exploring local jungle ecology with my students in the stream behind campus, watching as the monsoon rains transition into rainbows, and catching a glimpse of some of the most colorful birds I've ever seen (green bee eaters, black hooded orioles, and blue throated barbets to name a few).

**SP:** It has been a months since you have arrived in SCE, so how was your stay in the college?

**AS:** My stay at the college has been wonderful. I felt immersed into the culture and was always invited to local community events. I had a core group of special people who took great care of me, but without fail every person I met in Bhutan always shared the utmost hospitality. I am forever grateful for all the kindness that has been shared my way.

**SP:** Would you have any specific advice/suggestions for the college for positive progression?

**AS:** I believe that the college is headed on a promising path in developing and revitalizing its approach to teaching and learning. One opportunity for growth that I notice within the current framework is the potential to support more interdisciplinary collaboration and partnerships. This could potentially be achieved through inter-module student projects, guest lecturing across departments, or interdepartmental research for all faculty who are interested in place-based education. I could foresee Samtse's educational achievements reaching to the next level if more interdisciplinary opportunities are facilitated and supported.

Furthermore, I could also see an opportunity for growth in SCE developing stronger project-based connections within the local community. This will be a vital step as the college continues to expand its practice of place-based education. I witnessed some excellent examples of community collaboration during my time here, including a PGDE financial management class that partnered with the local Community Forest for an inquiry project.

Students from this course were able to dive into a research project exploring the complexities surrounding the forestry non-profit, and their work resulted in developing recommendations that could help this organization improve its operations and economic sustainability. Continuing to build relationships like this example with the local institutions and experts will help expand Samtse's classrooms beyond the traditional four walls of campus and into the wider community. If fostered, authentic opportunities where student projects can turn into meaningful

community contributions will follow. This practice will pave the way for the college both in becoming the premiere teacher training institute it strives to be, as well as enhancing its position as a source of beneficial community impact.

**SP:** Would you consider coming back to SCE again?

**AS:** I would absolutely consider returning to SCE again. If my knowledge and presence to the college would be beneficial, I would love to offer help wherever I can.

## Visiting Faculty from the University of Technology, Sydney



*Prof. Nick Hopwood*

**P**rofessor Nick Hopwood said: "I was very humbled to learn of all the efforts and accomplishments of the SCE fellows in anxiety study (thousands of survey responses, interviews across the country). To spend time listening to first year mathematics and fourth year biology students talking about their learning was fantastic.

I also found our joint work in preparing and delivering the PL session to be very fulfilling and a fruit of our effective collaboration. Our time at SCE has been incredibly fulfilling and stimulating – academically and personally. We have reconnected with our existing colleagues and friends, and made strong new connections that will enrich our collaboration. I was humbled and very grateful to be received by the President and other Faculty, and excited to learn that SCE wishes to continue and extend its collaboration with us. It was very important for me to learn what the priorities and strategic directions for the College are. Nami sami kadrinche la".





*Dr. Kimberly Pressick-Kilborn*

**D**r. Kimberley Pressick-Kilborn said: "It has been a professional highlight to have many conversations with SCE Faculty members about particular issues facing teachers and teacher educators in Bhutan. I also found it interesting to visit the poster presentations given by Biology and Mathematics Education students from their project-based learning activities this semester. The opportunity to speak with student teachers about their learning was a real highlight. The authentic nature of these projects left a strong impression on me, with ideas for my own primary science teacher education subject that I will take back to UTS. It has been a professional highlight to have many conversations with SCE Faculty members about particular issues facing teachers and teacher educators in Bhutan. I also found it interesting to visit the poster presentations given by Biology and Mathematics Education

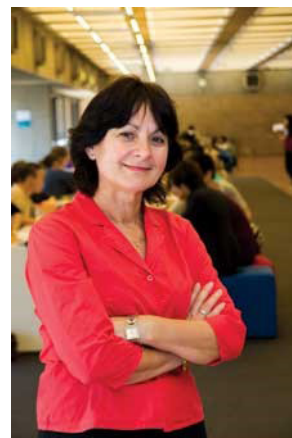
students from their project-based learning activities this semester. The opportunity to speak with student teachers about their learning was a real highlight. The authentic nature of these projects left a strong impression on me, with ideas for my own primary science teacher education subject that I will take back to UTS."

**D**r. Nina Burrridge said: "I have thoroughly enjoyed my visit to SCE. It has provided me with the opportunity to gain insights into the education system in Bhutan as well as the everyday lives of families in Bhutan. As someone who is engaged in the social sciences, I am interested in how education is

education young people about global issues – such as sustainability. I have been really impressed with how Bhutan is dealing with issues of recycling and sustainability. I loved seeing sculptures made from bottles, tyres being used as pots for plants, and the introduction of laws banning plastic bags. I also very much enjoyed the beautiful mountains and serene landscapes. The visit to the limestone cave Bukey Dham was amazing. I appreciated how much nature is part of Buddhist traditions and ways of being."

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*Dr. Nina Burrridge*

## Inclusivity and Loving Kindness: The Only Educational Technology to Drive the Engine of Wellbeing



*The Guest Speaker: A Repository of Wisdom and Insight on Inclusivity and Loving Kindness*

The President of College of Language and Culture Studies, Lopen Lungtaen Gyatsho gave a talk titled 'Inclusivity and Loving Kindness: The Only Educational Technology to Drive the Engine of Wellbeing' to the students and staff of Samtse College of Education on 8<sup>th</sup> November, 2019. Lopen started off with a very inspiring and practical statement where he said "If you are sensible, conscious and inclusive, you will always be loving, both within yourself as well as for the people around you." He highlighted that wellbeing is not an idea but it means a life, being well to its fullest level in mind, emotion, love and compassion. Unless that is an experience, wellbeing will remain only as an idea, added the President. Grounded on the holistic preaching of Buddhism supported by modern concepts and realistic examples, Lopen said that humans have the choice to be miserable with unlimited desire or to be good since humans are

gifted with the ability to think at higher dimension. Lopen explained that pain and suffering are not caused by life but by the inability to manage the body and mind, which is called self-centred problem. He said that the suffering is not about survival but is about the mind that poison the system with non-virtuous anxiety, anger, agitation and grudge. "When people suffer we are the first victim. Every thought and emotion generated in the mind is constantly changing the chemical composition of our body," said the president. The President stated that the primordial state of mind is pure consciousness and state of bliss. Human body is programmed for health and designed for a lifetime but people create disharmony and create poison within the system.



# Body-Mind Harmony

SHES-RIG PAGES

2019

Lopen remarked that happiness is not because of one individual self but dependent on external factors. He added that if one trains his or her mind to be inclusive and loving kindness, both health and happiness is ensured. However, the understanding of 'love' is limited by the idea of exclusivity. He also reminded that the society today is built on exclusivity be it economy or religion. "Inclusivity is not about enhancing good or morality in people; it is about stirring up humanity and bringing sense and consciousness," said Lopen. He further commented that without inclusivity, love is limited, selective and exclusive, which is called 'attachment' or 'don't care' attitude.

Lopen reminded the gathering of the basics of humanity and importance of being inclusive and making inclusiveness an integral part of life. The talk session was closed with the following remark

"If we are inclusive, we will be able to handle everything lovingly and focus to do only what is necessary and what is important to ourselves, for everybody and everything around us. This is not morality, it is sensibility."



*A group photo with SCE family after the talk*

## Online Study of Educational Research Methods and Hardships amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic

The world feels paralyzed. The only sound that can be heard are the occasional chirping of birds, the soft drops of the spring rain, and the winds whistling through the trees. Despite the crystal-clear blue skies from lack of traffic, the future cannot be more obscured and fogged as everyone anxiously waits in isolation in hopes of sailing through the sea of Covid-19 pandemic. On the other hand, enclosed in a room, I found myself battling the online assignments and meeting online task deadlines. It has almost been three months of online learning; however, time alone cannot tell the tale of how much knowledge I have gained. As I reflect on the progress I have made in different modules and particularly in the Educational Research Methods module, I also remember the difficult times I have experienced.

Home study is confronted with household disturbances. The role of being a father has always been a challenge with the shift to online teaching and learning. As I help my children with the online classes, I lose time for my assignments. However, I have found that strategic planning can relieve stress for both children and parents. I check my children's plans and help them develop a written schedule for a week. I prioritize and learn to create goals, tasks, and deadlines as the tutors are not going to constantly remind us of the tasks. I have found that I have to be self-disciplined and able to work well on my own to be an efficient online learner.

Inadequate resources and knowledge pose a barrier to home-based learning. When online classes finally started, my ICT incompetency began to surface. Insufficient reading materials affected my first research proposal. The little knowledge I have on action research acquired during my B.Ed training was forgotten because of lack of practice. Also, the craft of academic writing was not as easy as I thought.

Hence, I came to realize that knowing alone is not sufficient. In the College, I have free access to library resources but was robbed of this facility at home. Nevertheless, the library staff, lecturers, and friends were supportive and provided guidance while I continued to work hard. After writing the first research proposal and navigating through the feedback, I have significantly developed my skills in academic writing and ICT.

There were times when internet connectivity was a problem. Sometimes, when I work under pressure with several assignment submissions at the same time and when I consider if any contribution I make to the project is worth it, I feel like giving up occasionally. I am concerned if the final results of the research will have an impact on the transformation of learning culture in schools. However, I stood firm in fighting the situation with support from my family and friends. In addition, the tutors understood the situation during poor internet connectivity and accommodated some adjustments. The tutors were always available to guide and support us. Their unwavering support and guidance bolstered my confidence and propelled and motivated me to complete my mission.

Finally, to effectively complete the online courses, I have realized that I need to strictly adhere to the schedule, stay in contact with the lecturers, and connect with fellow-classmates. Now that I have experienced the challenges of online learning, I have reminded myself to treat online learning seriously. While I wait for the pandemic to end, I have realized the necessity of the knowledge of Educational Research in the 21<sup>st</sup> teaching learning process and life beyond teaching in schools. Our tutors have been innovative in providing online lessons since its journey. All in all, the online learning of research module was engaging, effective and experiential.

*Namgay Rinchen, M.Ed physics first year*



## **Samtse- The Womb for Great Souls**

Distantly persisted, least bothered if you dare  
Never did we expect to be in thy womb,  
If a fabric of love is to interweave,  
It might call for industrious hands to toil  
Time and means are what come into question.

The hustle and bustle of life,  
A jolt of fear that reined firm in us, rein  
She did close it half-heartedly,  
Through the twists of ways she steered us,  
To the place where we all have begun.

Scarcely did the eyes see she sobbed her heart out,  
Though vessels are not even half filled,  
Yet one can't imagine the pangs deep in her  
The year still has journey to embark on,  
To groom and mould her children of love.

Alas! She let out cries and strained nerves,  
In quest for wisdom that she has to bequeath,  
Stood the test of time that marched by,  
For souls, the denizens of her great womb,  
To cradle and prepare all on all fours-learning.

Amongst Gods and Goddesses she lives,  
The fount where she gained wisdom from,  
The mount where she garnered forte from,  
Against all odds, she did brave the weather,  
For her children to bring to the fore.

Perplexed, she calls her children,  
Those drowned in the marine of uncertainty,  
But through the fabric of wisdom she is woven,  
Dispelled all those clouded the clearness of wits,  
Behind her fervent calls and wishes,  
The God comes and attends her heart's demands.

Oh! Almighty, have mercy on us,  
With utmost fondness, we stand at your feet,  
As Pandemic swells, thy shall hold us at bay,  
Never shall such woes bar her will of ways,  
To let she suckle and enthuse us the ray of hope,  
Thus, she shall forever be the bastion of our life.

**Tempa Wangchuk, M.Ed Biology**

## **Bones to Her Child**

A filthy white-haired woman in her late forties with a child locked up in her basement, always walked towards the meat shop to collect the remains of the meat which have been already sold to the customers. People never talked to her, neither did she look at them. She was always in haste.

I had heard a lot about her from the people around but I always wanted to see her in person and I did one day. The day I saw her, I could not ignore her as the other normal people did. This was my problem.

I have a disorder, if it can be called one. I really want to know people and their stories. If they are mysterious, it interests me more. So, I made up my mind. I had to talk to this mysterious woman who never talked to anyone except her child.

Drinking tea by the stall near the meat shop, I waited for the woman to come around. Punctually as always, she came with a black plastic bag in her left hand while her right hand clutched her ragged dress hanging loosely down her old limbs.

# Kalapinka - The Voice

"Good morning granny" I called out. No one knew her name. No one had seen her child. People had just heard laughter from the old ruins of the house. They heard her talking. So, they said she had a child. No one knew whether the child was a son or daughter.

She turned around, her weary eyes observing me from top to toe. She didn't say a word. She turned around and went on with her business. Her eyes seemed to have been drained out by sorrow. This interested me further. I did not give up.

"Hello granny, I am Kalpana." She spoke no word. By then, she was collecting the bones lying in the drain of the meat shop. She quickly filled up the plastic bag and ran across the road to the old ruins of the building.

I followed her. She did not look back. The long grasses seemed to be untended for more than a decade. The trail was hidden by the long grasses, which made the cloths of the woman wet as she hurried through. I kept up with her pace. She never looked back. When she entered the house and turned around to close the door, she saw me. She shut the door on my face without a word. I heard a howl, a laugh and complete silence. I was in daze. It took me few minutes to realize that I was standing all alone in front of the house.

I did not give up. I called out, "Hello granny. I am not here to harm you. I want to help you. Please let me in." Silence. It was just like talking to myself. I waited. Again, I shouted. This time the door creaked. I pushed. No one was around. May be the door was not locked at all. There was nothing inside the house, which showed any sign of people staying. I walked into the house. The only sound I heard was the echo of my sandals on the dusty floor. There was a small door, half opened. I walked towards it. I just touched the door knob but the door flew open. There she stood. I could see her clearly then.

Her bloodshot eyes seemed to be more weary and beaten by sorrow. Her shoulder blades were cutting through her torn shirt. Her long dirty nails were clutching the shreds of her dress. The skin of her face seemed to be hanging down her chin, heavy with wrinkles.

"I am sorry. I wanted to know you." I stammered. "Know? About what?" Her voice sounded hoarse. She was breathing fast. This made me realise that she did not like the intrusion. "I want to know you, I want to know your family, your story." "Why?" "I am a writer. I write real stories of real human beings" I said. "No one ever tried to speak to me for these twenty years. And I am talking to you just because you are the first one." Said the old woman in her hoarse voice.

She closed that door behind her. She led me to another room. Surprisingly, this one was neat and clean. A small bed, a bed lamp, few books neatly arranged on the table and an old cradle

"Tea or water?" She looked at me questioningly. "No, thank you." I said. She sat beside me on the bed. "I won't be able to pour out all the emotions which is locked in this chest. Yet, I will tell you a part of my life. I will just narrate to you the five beautiful years of my life." Then she narrated her story. I was trapped in the trance of her story. I don't know whether I can give justice to her story by putting into words. Yet, I will try.

Moni was 22 when she met Harry. She left her studies after 12<sup>th</sup> standard as she could not qualify for tertiary education and her aging mother could not afford to send her to a private college. She was a sales girl in a shopping mall. One day, as she was doing her usual work, she heard a customer calling out, "Hey, how much for this shirt?" She turned around to see a handsome young lad staring at her. They talked, all business talk but Moni saw that her eyes were glued to him.



Mysteriously, she fell in love at first sight. Harry's visit to the shopping mall became more frequent. They started seeing each other. Within a month's encounter, they could not live without each other.

With due permission from her old mother, Moni tied knots with Harry. She never asked about his family. They were happily settled in her house. Soon, she became pregnant. They were happy. The family was finally being complete with a new found joy of having a baby soon. But she miscarried in the fourth month. This filled both of them with remorse. The doctors were also taken aback when they knew that the foetus was missing. Only the shredded walls of the uterus were left when she was rushed to the hospital.

Slowly, both the physical and the mental wounds healed. After six months, she was pregnant again. She lost it this time in six months. The same thing happened. All were shocked. Where did the foetus go? The third, fourth, fifth and sixth child were also lost in the same way.

When she was pregnant for the seventh time, she decided not to tell anyone. She didn't even tell the news to Harry as he seemed more devastated than her. She felt she will again lose that child. Her body did not show much as she was a short chubby woman.

One cold night, on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month, she had a severe pain. She locked herself in her guest room. She had no idea what to do. There in the dim light, with not much pain as she imagined, she delivered her child. Her child! She had imagined a thousand faces how he or she would be. And now there it was in front of her eyes. She looked. She watched. Speechless. The life in front of her was not like the pictures in her mind. A body of human with four pink paws. A human head with the snout of what it seemed to be a dog. There it was lying in front of her, drenched in the amniotic fluid. Everything became clear to her then. Who was Harry? Why did she lose six babies from her womb? She did not have time to answer the questions. Limping, she covered her baby with a cloth and fled from home. Her body was weak but her mind was strong. An old cart helped her to reach to the place where she was living now.

She never heard what happened to her mother or Harry. Yet, every time she came across a dog, or a wolf, she saw a little bit of Harry in it.

Her baby is 20 years old now. I also saw her, or him or it. A beautiful human body with giant paws. A big snout, howling when it sees its mother.

*Kalpna sharma, M.Ed in English*

## Conversation with our alumni

### Sonam Wangyel, Dzongda, Samtse



**S**hes-Rig PAGES (SP): You started your career as a teacher and then progressively moved into different positions in the civil service. Please tell us about yourself and some of the salient milestones of your professional journey.

**Sonam Wangyel (SW):** My name is Sonam Wangyel and completed my B.Ed in 1993 from the erstwhile National Institute of Education (NIE), now known as Samtse College of Education (SCoE). I worked as a teacher, headmaster, principal, DEO and as Chief Human Resource Officer (HRO) before I was appointed as Dzongdag in 2013. This is my 11<sup>th</sup> transfer and although it is financially challenging, I enjoyed working in whichever place I was transferred and in various capacities. However, I realised raising a family in rural settings taught my children more and learned human values and culture more easily. Rather, they managed to assimilate those values naturally making a positive difference in their lives. We could give quality time to our family on a daily basis and we cherish those times in the rural communities as our best moments.

**SP:** Unveiling your memories, tell us briefly about your experience as a student teacher at Samtse College of Education, the erstwhile National Institute of Education (NIE) during your time.

**SW:** As a student teacher, I thoroughly enjoyed my three years (1990-93) study at NIE under Dasho Pema Thinley and Madam Principal CK Gurung, both of whom were regarded as our role models. I was intrigued particularly by video lessons in the Language Lab and learned a lot about teaching styles. I was also fortunate to have been taught by lecturers who were passionate about teaching. We were few those days and the little that was there made every day of our stay in NIE memorable. I still cherish those beautiful moments I learned with my friends in the class, playground and social gatherings.

**SP:** How is your current post as the Dzongdag today different from being a teacher and how do you make use of the knowledge and skills acquired during your teacher training in performing your duties as the Dzongdag?

**SW:** It is different, as the approaches need to be different. One thing I learned is to coordinate and organize events and activities effectively as a teacher and I still practice this today. Teachers must play multiple roles in schools with fairness and my three years of training at NIE groomed us to be role models. Teaching requires lot of planning and preparation. I realize this is essential and applicable to any sector. For the 111<sup>th</sup> National Day celebration in Samtse, we started planning about 10 months ahead, something I believe I picked up from my teaching. However, we owe a lot to Samtse CoE for their role and contribution in making our 2018 National Day a grand success.



**SP:** Your views on Samtse College of Education then and today?

**SW:** Samtse College of Education was initially started as the Teacher Training Institute to meet the teacher requirement and set up more schools in Bhutan. We were few but do not remember having teacher shortages in schools. Today a lot has changed and so must be the challenges. One challenge I see is the College continuously trying to live up to its motto, “center of excellence committed to research and innovation in education”. Teaching pedagogy and curriculum have changed. As an alumnus of the College, I have seen lots of development in the college including the various programmes offered by the College in diverse field of teacher education to meet the demands of 21<sup>st</sup> century education. One outstanding feature about Samtse CoE is it is well known for its aesthetic surroundings and provides a congenial atmosphere for learning and professional growth of every individual including the faculty.

**SP:** How do you see the role of Samtse College of Education in the overall development of Bhutan’s education system?

**SW:** Very important role, as stated by His Majesty Druk Gyalpo Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck during the 112<sup>th</sup> National Day that we must look at the present youth to understand our future and the youths need to be taught properly by the teachers in schools. Therefore, teachers have a sacred role and likewise the role Samtse College of Education is central to the growth of the nation.

**SP:** What is your advice to the Bhutanese youths who aspire to become teachers?

**SW:** Disagree with all who say teaching is an easy job. If you wish to have a fulfilling and a satisfied life join teaching and you will not regret. Do not take it as a burden to join teaching.

As written by educationist Thakur Singh Powdyel in his book ‘As I am so is my Nation’, teachers must know and understand that teachers have a high stake in nation building. Do not get disillusioned that everything in towns and urban places are better. No! Raising a family, learning, respect, job satisfaction, bonding is much greater in the rural settings. We also need teachers more in the rural and not in the urban.

**SP:** Our society is changing and we are becoming a knowledge-based society. From your wide experience as an educator and administrator, how should our teaching learning in the Bhutanese education system be designed to address this fast-changing Bhutanese society.

**SW:** We have to keep on updating our approaches and use technology. Syllabus must be made relevant to the changing need of the society. We still need more primary teachers and I feel we have lost considerable amount of time waiting to meet the requirement. Teachers must learn and read to acquire more content knowledge and substance. If they do this, they are bound to enjoy teaching and working with children.

**SP:** What aspects of the Bhutanese education system concerns you as a parent and a Bhutanese citizen who has a stake in education? What opportunities and challenges do you see for Samtse College of Education in addressing these concerns?

**SW:** Unprofessionalism and distancing from the children. I may be wrong but the general feeling is that most teachers today are exploring to leave teaching and this makes the school very difficult in grooming our young minds. Student teachers must understand and try to be genuinely interested in teaching. If we can induct such candidates into teaching the rest of the challenges can be well taken care.

**SP:** Samtse College of Education is 51 years old this year – an opportunity for all of us to reflect on the milestones achieved as envisioned by His Majesty the third Druk Gyalpo, when the College was established in 1968. How do you feel as an alumnus of this College that has served the nation for 51 years in the field of teacher preparation for the Bhutanese education system?

**SW:** Very happy and proud to be a part of its celebration. I learned many things apart from my formal training. I learned to raise a family, truth and devotion in my service to the nation, be responsible for your acts and above all, I learned a lot about my Kings who have been always selfless and is today the epitome of our very being. As teachers, you need not look far to follow the footsteps of great teachers. Our Kings are our greatest teachers!

**Note:** *Dasho Sonam Wangyel is now serving as the Honorable Secretary of the Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs.*



# 2020

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## 3-Minute Book Talk held in the College

**D**rop Everything and Read (D.E.A.R) Club members under the guidance of the College President and Ms. Dorji Yangzom, Asst. Lecturer organised the book talk to improve the reading habits of students in the College. The Book Talk also aimed at providing platform for reading enthusiasts to share and exchange their thoughts of the books read and inculcate positive regard for books as a rich repository of knowledge and wisdom. A total of 19 students, one participant from each class participated in this literary activity to share about a book they have read recently.

The Club had invited three teachers who teach English at Samtse Higher Secondary School to judge the programme. Mr. Nima Dorji of MEd Science and Maths Year I took first place followed by Ms. Kalpana Sharma of MEd English Year I with Ms. Karma Choden BEd Year III taking the third place.

DEAR Club plans to make this program an annual event.



*Group photo of the participants and the coordinators of the event*

## Finals of the Inter-class Extempore Speech Competition



*Students delivering speeches in the competition*



On 30<sup>th</sup> October 2020, the grand finale of the Inter-class Extempore Speech Competition in English was held in the College. A total of 15 finalists from different classes battled to win the competition by employing their oratory skills and intellectual abilities to organise their thoughts logically and communicate their thoughts instantly on the spur of the moment.

The programme was initiated by the Department of Language Education and the finale was coordinated Ms. Wangmo, one of the lecturers from the Department of Language Education. She stated that the programme was organised to enhance students' English communication skills, provide public exposure and build their confidence.

Ms. Sonam Choki Lhamo, a student from PgDE 'B' was judged the best speaker of the grand finale, followed by Ms. Lhaki Choezang from the same PgDE class and Mr. Dechen Wangchuk from B.Ed IV Arts 'B' in the second and third positions respectively.

The winner of the competition stated that it was her first time participating in such competition and getting an opportunity to participate itself was a reward. She also expressed her happiness and joy for winning and also thanked the Language Education Department for providing such a platform to showcase public speaking skills.

Towards the end of the programme, the emcee Ms. Selden Lhamo, IV Arts 'A' presented the audience with two sisters Ms. Kezang Choden and Damtsig Dema, students of Samtse HSS who volunteered to speak when the judges were compiling the result. The sisters spoke so well and won appreciation and accolades from the audience.

The President of the College along with faculty members attended the programme.



## Convenience Store and Salon in the Campus

The College now has a convenience store and a hair-cutting salon in the campus. These facilities were opened in a small “Tendrel” ceremony in presence of the college management, staff, faculty members and student representatives on 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2020.

The facilities were established to ease some of the difficulties faced because of the COVID-19 pandemic protocols put in place for all staff and students residing in the self-contained campus. Mr. Karma Gayphel, Dean of Student Affairs shared, “the main motive of opening these facilities is to provide accessibility to all staff and students to basic needs within the campus as the movement outside the campus is restricted to contain the possible chance COVID-19 pandemic transmission in the campus”.

The College Management will ensure that all items are sold at the Market Rate Price (MRP) and it will be monitored on a regular basis. Karma Tshering, B.Ed 4<sup>th</sup> year English and History student said, it is a wonderful initiative by the College as they can now purchase their basic necessities in the campus only. Another student, also from the same class and year, Mr. Sonam Gyeltshen said, “it is a wonderful solution for everyone in the campus to minimize the risk from pandemic.”

The convenience store is contracted to a license holder for its operation and the salon is solely operated by the students. The proceeds from the operation of the hair-cutting salon shall be used to improve and expand the quality of range of services provided and certain percentage of the proceeds will go to the students’ welfare account.



*College President and a lecturer with their inaugural purchase from the convenience store*



*A student barber giving an inaugural hair-cut*

## Faculty-Student Research Convention Held



*Academics engaged in a day long convention presenting various research proposals*

**A**ligned with the university's aspirations of promoting research led teaching and learning, research is one of the priority areas of the Royal University of Bhutan. In an effort to contribute towards achieving RUB's goal of promoting research led educational practices in higher education in the country and also to live by the ideals of the College to become a centre of excellence committed to research and innovation in education, Samtse College of Education organised the 2020 Autumn 'Faculty-Student Research Convention' on 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2020.

Dr. Ganeshman Gurung, Acting Dean of Research and Industrial Linkages, in his introduction said that unlike in the past, this convention is little unique because only research proposals awarded with research grants from the Annual University Research Grant (AURG) and Research Endowment Fund (REF) are being presented in the convention along with research proposals that have been submitted for the College Research Stimulus Fund (CRSF).

The President of the College in his opening remark shared that the 'Faculty-Student Research Convention' is aimed at building a robust research culture in the College. He also emphasised that SCE as one of the oldest education institutions in the country, the image of the College is hinged to a large extent on the quality of research determined by soundness in proposal development, methodology, depth of knowledge of the phenomenon researched, high standards of academic writing and generating outputs that are of high impact. Speaking on quality research, the President stated that through such conventions, the College aims to discourage sub-standard and superficial quality of research. Furthermore, the President highlighted that as higher education academics, research has manifold benefits and opens the floodgates to knowledge for creative and innovative education practices.



According to the convention organizers, the theme of this meet is 'Modelling excellence in teaching, learning and assessment across the disciplines'. Some of the objectives of the event were 'to promote original high quality research and scholarly pursuits that will significantly contribute to the enhancement of knowledge base; promote opportunity for researchers to share their work with fellow colleagues and students; provide forum for researchers to come together, critique and learn from each other; and to provide opportunity for students to participate in research event and enhance their research knowledge, skills and awareness.

All faculty members and a few M.Ed students who lives in Samtse attended the convention in person following the COVID-19 safety protocols while the rest of the M.Ed students participated virtually via Zoom. Mr. Tshering Penjore, one of the M.Ed students who attended real time virtually via Zoom shared, "research convention platform gave him immense wisdom and rich information on research components.

Also, it has benefited the beginning researchers like him in terms of building courage, motivation and future scopes". Another M.Ed student, Mr. Tashi Dendup said, they are looking forward to similar events in future as it has helped novices like him to get deeper understanding of research components. "It was a great experience and felt deeply happy to have presented the proposal and without such forum we would not have received valuable feedback and comments", concluded Mr. Ugyen Dorji, a Mathematics faculty who also presented his proposal.

A total of 11 proposals were presented where faculty members and student participants asked questions, sought clarifications, suggested changes with constructive comment to improve the research proposals thus making the research convention a highly engaging, interactive and enriching experience for all.



*Academics actively engaged with question-answer session during the convention*



## The College Organised a National Level Webinar on "Promise of ICTizing Education: Making Online Teaching and Learning Engaging, Interactive and Immersive"

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged all education systems round the globe including Bhutan. Since March 2020, schools across the country had to be closed as precautionary measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in the country. For the colleges of the Royal University of Bhutan, although online teaching and learning is not a completely new practice, the sudden need to transition to a complete online mode of teaching and learning did put some academics off-guard. In schools across the country, school teachers and students were compelled to immediately switch to online teaching and learning without any formal training and experience to handle such unexpected situation. The need to enhance the use of technology-based teaching, learning and assessment has become all the more critical in the wake of challenges presented by the current COVID-19 pandemic. To address the challenges of online teaching and learning, the STEM Education Research Centre of Samtse College of Education organised a webinar titled ***"The Promise of ICTizing Education: Making Online Teaching and Learning Engaging, Interactive and Immersive"*** on the afternoon of 4th November 2020.

The webinar was the first of its kind and was organised with an aim to orient and familiarise higher education academics and school teachers to a variety of interactive digital pedagogy or tools to make online teaching and learning more ***engaging, interactive, and immersive***.

The poster is for a webinar organized by Samtse College of Education, Royal University of Bhutan. It features the college's logo and the text 'Samtse College of Education brings you a Webinar on'. The title of the webinar is 'The Promise of ICTizing Education: Making Online Teaching and Learning Engaging, Interactive and Immersive'. The poster lists four objectives: i. deepen the understanding and importance of digital pedagogy or technology-based teaching, learning, and assessment as the future of educational practices; ii. share good practices of online teaching, learning, and assessment; iii. orient the participants to digital platforms and resources for making e-learning more engaging, interactive, and immersive for the students remotely; and iv. introduce a variety of digital tools to support instruction, learning, grading, collaboration, and assessment in distance mode. The speakers are Mr. Ransingh Tamang (Lecturer) and Mr. Tandin Penjor (Lecturer). The moderator is Ms. Reeta Rai (STEM-Education Research Center Coordinator). The date and time are Wednesday, 4th November 2020, 14:00 - 17:00 BST. The poster also includes icons for Zoom, WhatsApp, and YouTube, and provides registration and contact information.

Samtse College of Education brings you a Webinar on

The Promise of ICTizing Education: Making Online Teaching and Learning Engaging, Interactive and Immersive

The webinar aims to achieve the following objectives:

- i. deepen the understanding and importance of digital pedagogy or technology-based teaching, learning, and assessment as the future of educational practices;
- ii. share good practices of online teaching, learning, and assessment;
- iii. orient the participants to digital platforms and resources for making e-learning more engaging, interactive, and immersive for the students remotely; and
- iv. introduce a variety of digital tools to support instruction, learning, grading, collaboration, and assessment in distance mode

Speaker 1: Mr. Ransingh Tamang, Lecturer

Speaker 2: Mr. Tandin Penjor, Lecturer

Moderator: Ms. Reeta Rai, STEM-Education Research Center Coordinator

Registration: <https://forms.gle/HGa6rpXNE6Lapph9>

Call us: +97517715950 | Email: [reeta.rai.sce@rub.edu.bt](mailto:reeta.rai.sce@rub.edu.bt)

Organized by STEM Education Research Center  
SAMTSE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION  
ROYAL UNIVERSITY OF BHUTAN



Science lecturers organizing and resourcing the STEM webinar



A screenshot of participants

In the opening remark, Dr. Rinchen Dorji, President of the College emphasised the importance of higher education academics teaching in RUB and teachers in the school system to build their capacity to integrate ICT in teaching methods to fulfill the learning needs of the generation exposed to technology. He stated:

*A digital immigrant who do not possess the drive, the passion, the energy to upskill our own knowledge and skills of technology in teaching and learning will certainly fail to become an effective teacher to teach our children – who are all digital natives. Today's generation are born with technology. They breathe, communicate and live with technology. And thus, the need to build our educational practices in or with technology.*

The webinar was a huge success attended by over 500 participants mainly school teachers from across the country as high as Laya and Gasa and as far as Trashiyangtse and Lhuentse. Some of the academics from the colleges of RUB also attended the webinar. In addition, more than 17000 viewers watched the live broadcast on the Facebook page of the college.

The webinar was designed to be interactive and engaging and the participants had enough opportunity to interact with the speakers real-time virtually to seek clarifications related to the theme of the webinar.

This webinar was organised to give an overview of how online teaching and learning can be made more engaging, interactive and immersive by introducing some of the digital tools and platforms available online. Future webinar series will focus on providing a more hands-on knowledge and skills of using some popular digital tools and platforms for online teaching, learning and assessment.

Mr. Ran Singh Tamang and Mr. Tandin Penjor, both lecturers of the College were the speakers for the webinar and Mrs. Reeta Rai, the STEM-Education Research Center Coordinator moderated the webinar.

Post webinar feedback was collected from all the participants to help the College improve the choice and focus of such webinars in future.



## **Samtse 2020 Workshop Commences from 7<sup>th</sup> of March at Samtse College of Education**



*The College community welcoming and receiving blessings from His Eminence Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche*

**T**he Samtse 2020 Workshop on Art, Writing, Film and spirituality was a joint initiative between the Samtse 2020 Initiative and Royal University of Bhutan, under the directives of Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche who was also be one of the speakers and resource person from Buddhist and creativity field. Besides Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche, a number of leading Bhutanese and foreign figures from fields of arts, writing, film making and other creativity also resourced the workshop.

The four day workshop was conducted at Samtse College of education with the view to provide opportunity for teacher educators and teacher trainees to exchange views, gain and experience ideas that can encourage and foster creativity and spirituality in their respective field of interest.



Besides participating in various segments of the workshop, Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche shared insight on value of Education from Buddhist perspective for the future teachers as well as his perception on culture, science and religion. The workshop engaged participants from as early as 7 O' clock in the morning with Yoga session, film screening, creative performances and discussions. The first day sessions were resourced by three different speakers on performance arts, which were based on material performance, Bhutan popular culture and creative writing. The participants were divided into groups of their preferences to attend sessions which went through for an hour or more.

Through numerous activities, the workshop aims to reintroduce and revive the ancient connections between the story tellers and future teachers as well as pass the wisdom of our rich spiritual heritage. The workshop which is first of its kind to be initiated will be an inaugural workshop with way forwards to create a calendar of activities to work towards establishing Samtse as a centre for contemplation and art to nurture and promote spirituality and creativity with a focus on the youth. The inaugural workshop ended on 11th of March.



*A plenary with His Eminence Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche and workshop participants*

## The Vice Chancellor of the University Graces the College Award Ceremony

**O**n 30<sup>th</sup> July 2020, the College organised the Award Ceremony for the graduating Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) students. Dasho Nidup Dorji, the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor of the Royal University of Bhutan graced the ceremony as the Guest of Honour.

In his remark laden with wisdom and vision, Dasho said, you [graduates] have chosen to dedicate your life to the cause of education and there is a greater calling than becoming just a teacher. Dasho advised that working hard in the first years of career will make your life easier. The following were some of the key messages Hon'ble Dasho conveyed to the graduands, who were set to embark on their teaching career:

- There will be a lot of expectations from parents, relatives, society and the government and you all need to work hard to fulfil, if not all, at least some of these expectations.

- There are enormous challenges and one of the biggest challenges is providing relevant education to the youths.
- As beginner teachers, take the responsibility of being change agents in the way teaching-learning happen and should be concerned about how to make youths productive.
- The current practice of textbook-based teaching and learning will become obsolete and less meaningful and soft skills like creativity, problem solving, critical and analytical thinking, and communications skills, interpersonal and intra-personal skills, etc. will become the primary demand of education in future.



*"There is a greater calling than just becoming a teacher" - Said the Guest of Honour*





The highlight of the Guest of Honour's opening address to the graduands was that teachers must impart non-negotiable value systems to enable students to become good human beings. Dasho concluded his address by emphasising that as educators, it is not about what can and cannot be taught but is rather about teaching students about learning and becoming lifelong learners. As teachers themselves, the graduands were reminded that they must have a thirst and hunger to learn and keep learning and to ingrain it in them and teach the same to students.

Ms. Beenu Gurung (B.Ed Sec. Arts 'A'), one of the graduating student valedictorians said that her joining the College was more by fate than by choice and her stay in the College has prepared her to be a responsible person in life. She also expressed to her graduating class that it is time for them to aspire to inspire before they expire.

Mr. Nirmal Subba (B.Ed Sec. Science 'B'), in his valedictory speech, stated that they are going to the field not just as teachers but real teachers. He further shared that to be mature means accepting responsibility and impressed upon his graduating friends to be exemplary as good learners to others. Besides awarding students with academic excellence certificates and presentation of mementoes in recognition of their contributions as student leaders and other services to the College during their four years of education in the College, the evening also witnessed some interesting cultural programme presented primarily by the faculty and staff as a gesture of seeing off the graduating students. A few cultural items were also staged by the graduating students.

A total of 170 B.Ed students comprising of 64 students with B.Ed in Science, 61 students with B.Ed in Arts and 45 students in students with B.Ed in Primary Education were felicitated with Tashi Khadars by the College.



## Welcome Dinner for First Year BA in Social Work Students

With the pandemic closing doors to number of regular practices, a 'Candle Night Dinner' was a new gesture initiated to welcome the first year BA in Social Work students to the family of Samtse College of Education.

Samtse College of Education being the center of grooming future teachers, counselors and social workers, providing the students with the sense of belonging, and providing them social and emotional supports has always been a priority. In doing so, a 'Welcome Night Show' and "Welcome Dinner" were practiced until last semester for the new batch of students. However, owing to the pandemic situation, the college placed a new trend of welcoming the students in a different way.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2020, a 'Welcome Match' was organized for the new students. It included a football match between first year boys and male councilors followed by a basketball match between first year girls and lady councilors. In continuation to that, a 'Candle Light Dinner' was organized on 27<sup>th</sup> October. The dinner was joined by the College President, faculty members and councilors, extending the warmest welcome to the new students.

Dechen Tshomo, a student from first year expressed , "Our gratitude for you all will remain in our heart forever for welcoming us happily to the family of Samtse College of Education."



*Kindling the light to dispel ignorance*



*New students of BA in Social Work having dinner in the college mess*



## Samtse College of Education observes the 12<sup>th</sup> Coronation Day



*Prayers for good health and long life of His Majesty on the occasion of 12<sup>th</sup> Coronation Day*

To commemorate the 12<sup>th</sup> Coronation Anniversary of His Majesty Druk Gyalpo Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, Samtse College of Education conducted a special prayer ceremony from 7.30AM until 9.00AM in the Rig-sum Goenpo (Prayer) Hall for the continued good health and long life of our beloved His Majesty.

The ceremony was attended by a select group of students and some teaching and administrative staff based on the accommodation capacity of the prayer hall. The programme commenced with the offering of butter lamps, followed by series of prayers and recitation of Zhabten. The ceremony concluded with suja and shamdrey.

Ms. Januka Dhungyel, a B.Ed final year said, “I personally feel blessed and proud to attend the prayer because today is the 12<sup>th</sup> coronation day of His Majesty. Besides it is the first day of the November month, a fresh month. At least we had an opportunity to pay our gratitude towards our King simply by offering butter lamps and prayers. Long Live His Majesty the King!”

Similarly, Ms. Deki Choden, a first year student shared, “1<sup>st</sup> November is the Coronation Day of His Majesty the Fifth King, which is a very auspicious day for all the Bhutanese. Today on such a great day, I felt so privileged to have such an opportunity to attend a special morning prayer. I offer my heartfelt gratitude and best wishes to our benevolent King. Long live our King!”



## The College celebrates the 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo



*Prayers for the continued good health and long life of His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck on his 65<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary*

**T**he College celebrated the 65<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of His Majesty Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuk by offering butter lamps and prayers for His Majesty's continued good health and long life.

The half day celebration began at 6.30 AM with a special Moenlam and singing of Gyalpoi Zhabten in the College Rigsum Goenpo Hall. After breakfast, different sporting activities were organized where both staff and students participated. The games and sporting events kicked off with an entertaining aerobic dance participated by around a few hundred students and some faculty.

The half-day programme concluded with a sumptuous lunch for all the faculty, staff and students.

On the eve of the 65<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary, the College also organised a quiz competition based on the theme ***“Deepening our knowledge of the LIFE and GLORIOUS REIGN of His Majesty Druk Gyalpo Jigme Singye Wangchuck”*** in the Namgyal Khangzang, the College auditorium. The in-service MEd students coordinated all the activities for this event assisted by the student leaders.

His Majesty's Birth Anniversary is also observed as Children and Constitution day in Bhutan.



## SCE Celebrates the 113<sup>th</sup> National Day

**T**he College joined the nation in celebrating the most momentous and joyous 113<sup>th</sup> National Day of Bhutan.

The celebration began with a lighting of butter lamps in the Rigsum Gonpo Hall (Prayer Hall) of the College for the continuity of the Institution of Monarchy, Wangchuck Dynasty, Peace and Prosperity of the country. It was followed by offering of marching and singing of the Gaylpoi Zhabten for the continued good health and long life of His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, His Majesty Druk Gyal Zhipa and the royal family members. After the marching and zhabten, all faculty, staff and students passionately listened to His Majesty's National Day Address which was live-streamed from Pungthang Dewachengi Phodrang.



*Prayers for the long life of His Majesties and pledging continued dedication and locality*



*Ending the celebration with Tashi Labay (traditional closing ceremony)*

In the afternoon, as part of the 113<sup>th</sup> National Day celebration, the finals of the first ever Champions Cup soccer tournament organised by the BEd Arts IV 'A' was played between the organising Class i.e., BEd IV Arts 'A' and PgDE 'B'. Although both the teams battled hard with a real warrior's spirit to take home the winning trophy and kept the spectators exhilarated and rapturous throughout, the game ultimately ended in favour of BEd IV Arts 'A'.

The faculty, staff and students rejoiced over a variety of cultural items and musical performances which were beautifully choreographed on patriotic songs and dances befitting the occasion.

The faculty and staff also presented a few items in between that added to the jubilation and rejoicement of the occasion. The morning programme concluded with a Tashi Laybay followed by a lunch for all the attendees in the College dining hall.



*Awarding the winners of sport in the celebration*

## Professional Development Series on Building Empathetic Relationship

Faculty members of the College attended an in-house professional development programme on 'Building Empathetic Relationships' on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020. The programme was facilitated by the Department of Contemplative Counselling and Psychology and organised by the College Management as part of the usual Professional Development Series (PDS) planned for the semester.

Mr. Karma Gayphel, one of the PD facilitators said, 'the main aim was to promote students' overall wellbeing through enhancing empathetic relationships between tutor and students'. He also shared, 'tutor-student relationships are the basis for all interactions within and outside the classroom. If we want our students to do well academically or professionally and have personally fulfilling learning experiences while in the college, empathetic relationship is one of the aspects out of many to facilitate both academic and personal growth'.

Mr. Dorji S, a history faculty who attended the PD expressed that the PD was timely and useful as faculties have to be in constant touch with students. Dorji S further added that this PD has given good direction on maintaining an empathetic relationship with students.

Building empathetic relationships is fundamental not just for developing a very conducive and enabling teaching learning environment for both the lecturers students but can contribute immensely in fostering a healthy, collegial and harmonious working environment amongst the faculty and staff in the College.



*"Attentive and empathic listening " - That's what the faculty participants are doing here*



## A Talk on “Leadership of the Self”



*"Know Thyself": The beginning of developing "Leadership of the Self"- Says Dasha Karma Tshiteem*

**O**n 1 December 2020, Dasha Karma Tshiteem, the former Chairperson of the Royal Civil Service Commission, currently serving in His Majesty's Secretariat Office in the Gyalsung Project, delivered a highly engaging talk on "Leadership of the Self" to the faculty, staff and MEd in-service students.

Dasha began his talk citing an example on the role and significance of leadership. He said the success of containing COVID-19 pandemic in Bhutan to a maximum level is not luck rather a vision and heartfelt leadership of our beloved King. "When we think of leadership, it is not power. It is more of individual actions", he further shared.

Dasha dwelled on various aspects of personal attitudes and practices which contribute to the making of "Leadership of the Self" bringing in lots of anecdotes from Buddha's teachings and wisdom. Dasha was emphatic in stating that as an individual, one's life journey is so special that it has the potential in unleashing the benefit not just to oneself but everybody around. And he also highlighted that people should be open to learn, relearn and unlearn.



# Body-Mind Harmony

**SHES-RIG PAGES**

**2020**

Dasho asserted that the knowledge of oneself or 'self-awareness' is the starting point to achieve extraordinary success and achievements in our journey of life of the "Leadership of the Self." He said engaging oneself in mindfulness practice is the beginning or starting point of knowing our own selves or developing self-awareness. Dasho explained that instead of operating our life on an auto-pilot mode or a monkey mind that is untamed and distracted, cultivating mindfulness – a state of being aware of the present moment and living your life on the "here and now" can help an individual know and understand oneself at a more deeper level. He said that meditation is the approach that can help cultivate mindfulness and emphasised the importance of inculcating meditation as a sticky activity in our lives because with meditation, an individual can cultivate mindfulness and with mindfulness, one can enjoy life in a different way as things become better and more beautiful with mindfulness.

Another stimulating idea Dasho passionately talked of was the "Thought Model" derived from Lord Buddha's teachings namely - circumstances, thoughts, feelings, actions and results and their interconnectedness in determining the quality of our lives. Dasho said understanding this model will improve one's quality of thinking or problems of faulty thinking.

Dasho concluded his talk by emphasizing that as teacher educators and teachers, it is not enough to transfer knowledge as education to students but there is a need to do more than just teaching content knowledge. Dasho was on his way back to Thimphu after talking to Desuups undergoing the 43<sup>rd</sup> Specialised Desuung training at Tashicholing and Tendruk under Samtse Dzongkhag on the same subject "Leadership of the Self".



*New insights, new inspiration and questions for more insights and inspiration*

## A Talk on Perspectives on Bhutanese Monarchy: Regional, Global, Historical and Contemporary by Dasho Sonam Kinga



*Dasho Sonam Kinga: Storehouse of knowledge on monarchy and its history*

**D**asho Sonam Kinga, the former chairperson of National Council gave an intriguing talk on “Perspectives on Bhutanese monarchy: Regional and global; historical and contemporary” to the students and faculty of Samtse College of Education on 2 December 2020. The College Management invited Dasho as a guest speaker to talk to the faculty, staff and students on this subject to understand the uniqueness of the Bhutanese Monarchy – the last surviving Buddhist Monarchy in the Himalayan region. The unique characteristics of the Bhutanese Monarchy and its understanding was made clear to the audience through a presentation

style that looked at the Bhutanese Monarchy in comparison to other surviving monarchies round the world and the republics. Dasho said that of about 206 countries in the world today, there are only 44 monarchies of which 15 are under the Queen of England and 29 are Sovereign States with monarchs as the head of states in the form of Kings, Emirs, Sultans and Emperors.

Dasho explained that monarchy is not the same everywhere and likewise all republics are not the same. For instance, he talked about absolute monarchy and constitutional monarchy and said that there are monarchies within monarchy and monarchies within republics like in Malaysia and Indonesia. Dasho further stated that of the 44 monarchies in the world today, there may be around 3 Buddhist Monarchies i.e., Bhutan, Cambodia and Thailand where Bhutan is the only Mahayana Buddhist Kingdom, whereas others are Theravada Buddhist kingdoms. He also described the Bhutanese Monarchy as modern, unique and special surrounded by an ocean of republics that were abolished when the Bhutanese Monarchy was established.

Dasho concluded his talk by highlighting the contractual nature of Kingship in Bhutan where the representatives from the wider sections of the Bhutanese society came together on 17 December 1907 to endorse a contractual agreement to enthrone Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck as the first hereditary monarch, thus making it legendary – a modern idea of Kingship where a king becomes a king through a consensus.



## Thus Fight a Tiny Vain

The current moment of time,  
An unforeseen storm of despair,  
Haunts the earthlings in its rise,  
For the curse has its grasp folded tight.

It spreads at its fastest,  
Engulfing every frail mind,  
Entire domain has fallen into its pool,  
With no hope of its break.

Though small yet presence of a monster,  
Sturdiest nations drain blood dry,  
Amongst sierra wood, fought a tiny vine,  
With just handful hoard but strong wit.

A nation led by a mighty leader,  
With its subject filled with courage,  
Faces the strike of devil,  
Yet their grip unmoved.

With monarch as protective as a shield,  
Every step taken with ease,  
The worries his heart bears,  
Not something ordinary could brace.

With passing hurricane of death,  
Fear every children of dragon,  
For His Majesty flourishes the words of healing,  
No more, the pain feels through vein.

Ministers play front-runners through this war,  
Efforts flow bursting forth,  
Health servers caring less for self,  
Courage to be truly inscribed.

Let your heart be at peace,  
For that's what might keep us strong,  
Let not the fear rip your bravery,  
Remember, our nation is at her best.

*By Ugyel Lekden  
2<sup>nd</sup> year arts B*

## My Reflection – Teacher and Yet Again Back to the Beginning

**T**he New Year heralded with the resolutions to end the year happily, if not for it to end successfully. A jolt of nervousness shivered through my spine. I was worried of how I will brace myself up for my research data collection. Being a novice researcher, a jerk of uneasy feeling kept preying on my mind. The thought of successfully completing all my courseworks amidst other works began to bug me. The greatest of moments, if I have to cherish in my life was when I had to gear up for the first ever admission of my son Rigzang in Samtse Lower Secondary School.

Everyone regards school life as a golden life, indeed a perfect temple of learning for beginners. For a good beginning and to wish him well on his this important educational voyage and endeavour, my family and I visited one of the nearby temples to offer our sincere prayers. The course of action began from the next day onwards. Samtse Lower Secondary School welcomed all newcomers with offering of Tashi Khadar. The Bhutanese believe that offering of Khadars reassures clarity of mind and human bonds.

Days passed and to drop off my son at school was the first order of my day. In the school, usual course of activities unfurled. My heart felt an over spilling excitement when I saw the students attending morning assembly, singing national anthem and praying to seek wisdom. I felt nostalgic when I witnessed the morning assembly; it traced me back to the days when I did the same. Time worn with wings flew effortlessly with hubbub taking some time for me to settle. I almost forgot my duty as a student to knit the fabric of task I was assigned, that was to head towards a few schools under Samtse Dzongkhag for data collection. The sensitisation and advocacy program in the schools on the spread of Covid-19 began sometime during the settled hours of mid of March 2020. In schools, I came across health personnel sensitising staff and students on Covid-19 in the assembly. The Ministry of Health played its part by airing sensitisation programmes on the pandemic although that time, the tittle-tattle on Covid-19 was on the rise and people were least bothered about it.

The sheer excitement over my son's enrolment in school paled into insignificance as I strained with my own share of tasks to complete as a higher education in-service student. The fear of whether or not I would be able to gather rich data for my research concerned me rhythmically. However, overwhelmed by immense joy, I started my journey of data collection. Yet, deep within me, a tinge of awkwardness kept chilling by the thought that I have to interview different people to elicit their views on my research. After two weeks of data collection as scheduled, I reached home safely. It was a success story for me as I could complete the data collection task on time. The next thing that bothered me was when the news about the closure of schools and institutions buzzed like bees across the corridors of the nation.

At that moment, a thought that occupied the minds of the teachers and students was that the closing schools would be provisional. The students seemed confused and perplexed. What is next? The mixed feelings over closure of schools and institutions was my concern. I was worried about how I will cope with the learning of the modules that I was supposed to take for the semester.

Fear and frustration began to gnaw the Bhutanese people when the first positive case of Covid-19 was reported on 6th March 2020. Each day as the Covid-19 cases started to soar and take heavy toll of human lives around the world, it gripped the attention of millions and became an uncompromising subject of concern. Bhutan, despite her best crack-downs, the news of the ravages of pandemic cases that trespassed our frontiers and caught the lives of a few Bhutanese dashed the hopes of our nation. As one might expect, it was a heavy cross for our beloved Majesty to bear and a great burden for our government to go through. In the throes of pandemic, the wellbeing of every single Bhutanese was what His Majesty and the government placed above all. As a major preventive measure, many community centres such as schools, colleges and business centres were closed. Classes for school children were taught through e-learning process and aired on BBS. So frantic and stimulating are the ways, especially when one has to learn as a student and teach your son as a parent.

The heavy packages of modules started surging in constricting the schedule of my life day by day. If it had not been for better internet connectivity and the significant roles of parents at this crucial hour, the online learning and e-learning may not have been as successful as expected. Perhaps, I would not have considered learning as per the demand of the 21st century teaching and learning.



In the course of my 10 years of teaching, the PowerPoint slides shared was the only ICT tool used in teaching students as a means to give a nudge to traditionally teacher-fronted and deductive method of teaching. What is Padlet? Big Blue Button? Zoom? Webinar? And many more to name. Even to do a bit of techno-related vocation like inserting voice on my Google slide, I find it a heck of work as it takes quite a time to brace myself up for it. For some eyes that see me for the first time, may pass me for a kind of old-fashioned teacher who is reluctant to shy away from the orthodox pedagogy and need a break from teaching. Polls Everywhere frustrated me, expecting endless tasks from lecturers. Frustrations knew no bounds. Yet, I empathised myself, sometimes asking myself whether I was doing the assigned tasks under coercion or out of compliance.

The very thought of my friends, the likes of me who might be struggling across the treacherous sea and throwing fits over their technical immaturity made me chuckle and mumble to myself that at least there would be a handful of other “jack of all trades”. The nation-wide professional development program on Transformative Pedagogy tailor-made towards transforming teachers and upscaling the quality of education is seen not as effectual as learning under the compulsion of Covid-19 situation to fine-tune ourselves with the 21st century pedagogical skills and ICT incorporation. Though I feel I am not totally doomed, yet the Covid-19 situation really tested my knowledge and skills in teaching the 21<sup>st</sup> century students.

Amidst the hustle and bustle of Covid-19 tension, some even cautioned me to stock ration and other essential items to economise on for a few months after which I thought I will make my way to the village should there be a need. There are chances of community transmission if robust preventive measures are not taken.

However, as a Bhutanese citizen, one must be strong minded and live by optimistic expectations. Even the whole world knows how indefatigably His Majesty has been working, deprived of proper sleep and precious time with his family to battle against this pandemic that plagued the entire world. Every single deed of His Majesty and the concerted efforts of the government in striving to safeguard our nation against Covid-19 must be borne in the minds of every Bhutanese. Now, with staggeringly increasing numbers of Covid-19 cases in our neighbourhood, and scores of volunteers taking lives in hands to protect our citizens, it is a crucial time for all of us to be on the forefront and be a part of all. As I remain immersed in praying and worrying about the present scenario of Covid-19, let me pose this question.

Do you think we can grapple with the situation in case community transmission lapses into a reality? This calls for everyone to embrace grit and unity to fight Covid-19 and fulfil the vision of His Majesty in containing COVID-19 infection in the country. As a nation, we are one for all and all for one. Concerted efforts do not go waste, it demands a great deal of time but gets paid off sooner or later. That is simple - let us stay home and comply with the dos and don'ts of Covid-19. Graces and blessings are inevitable. Therefore, let us pray to the Triple Gem.

**Tempa Wangchuk**  
**M.Ed II Yr. Biology**

## Short Story - Rare

Out of many insects, bees are said to be the busiest ones. In Mongar, the bumble bees are seen busy buzzing and collecting nectar starting from majestic hollyhocks till spiky little salvia flowers. But this time of the year, people of Mongar were much busier than the busiest insects — the bees. The annual Tshechu festival was yet to begin in Mongar. The chilly winds from the high pristine Himalayas made the environment cold and not very friendly. However, the lively nature of the festival overtook the windy winter. Different kinds of stalls filled the football ground and people flooded from every corner of the dzongkhag.

The time has come for the people to use their saved incomes and have fun with family and friends. But not all people were blessed with a great sum of income. Forget about savings, Zangpo, who was thirty four years old, was striving hard to earn three meals a day. He was blessed with a daughter named Zamin. Life was not ice creams and chocolates for them. Kharang (maize grain) and potatoes were what kept the father and daughter alive. Zamin's mother lived a short life due to an incurable disease. A motherless child and a difficult life may be too much for the father, yet, Zangpo never had the thought of giving up on his daughter and life.

"Apa! I am off to school," said Zamin who was wearing her shoes. Zangpo tilted his head towards the door and said, "Isn't today a holiday, Zamin?" "No Apa. Tshechu starts from tomorrow not today. So, we don't have a holiday today. Besides, exams are nearing and Tshechu days aren't a time to waste. Goodbye Apa!" Off went Zamin, running all the way towards school.

"Okay then. Bye and take care Zamin!" shouted back Zangpo. A smile as wide as an ocean grew on Zangpo's face and he thought to himself that Zamin may be just twelve years old but she was more mature than her age. The clock was striking eight in the morning. It was time for Zangpo to get back to his field. As the proud rooster went, "Cockadooo!" in the first few hours of the morning, Zangpo was up and he did his morning chores of offering water to Kenchosum, praying and taking out their only cow to graze and preparing breakfast.

With a spade in one hand and a bottle of water in another, Zangpo was off to the field. They owned a small land near their cozy little hut. He was digging the field to plant potatoes and peas for their own consumption. Lately, he was without work since Tshechu was very close and people were busy. While he was digging, the warm rays of the sun slowly fell on his face and sweat dripped through his forehead.

He threw the weeds away and on doing so, he came across a young rhododendron tree. It was so tiny that Zangpo almost uprooted it. Luckily for the rhododendron tree, it was sturdy and strong. Unplugging and throwing it away was the least thing Zangpo could do. So, he took it with him at the end of the day, after work. Zamin was already home and washing clothes.

"Zamin! Look here!" called Zangpo. "What is it Apa? What's that?" asked Zamin. The father replied, "It is a rhododendron tree. I saw it growing in our field."

So I brought it home to take care of it.” With some element of surprise and curiosity, Zamin responded “Awo Apa, I thought it was some fruit tree. How would a rhododendron tree benefit us?” Zangpo confidently and optimistically asserted saying “Trees have been benefiting us a lot in many ways.” Then, Zangpo planted the tree near their home. As days moved on, the tree was nurtured very well by Zangpo. More than work, he cared for the tree. Watering the tree every morning was a part of his daily routine now.

The father and daughter were complete opposites in their interests for plants and flowers. Zamin bothered less about them and she was much focused in excelling academically. Every morning, as the father tended the tree, Zamin was irritated and she silently thought to herself that it would be more productive if her father grew some vegetables. Zangpo, unlike Zamin loved flowers and trees. Thus, he landed up planting and nurturing the small flower seedling around the house. He brought home every flower and tree seedlings that were left without care.

After the exams, Zamin and her two friends were on their way home. A quarrel grew between them due to some hurtful conversations. One of the friends shouted, “Come on Zamin! Don’t fool yourself around! You are just a daughter from a poor family! You are good for nothing!” The two friends left her alone on the way after making such derogatory comments. A sudden burst of anger gushed inside Zamin. She went home with hurt, offended and angry.

Upon reaching home, she saw her father nurturing the flowers and trees. Blinded by anger, she shouted at her father, “Apa! Why don’t you just work a little harder instead of nurturing these useless plants and flowers? Why don’t you just plant some useful vegetables instead of useless plants and flowers?” Zangpo was taken aback by Zamin’s words.

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***Karma Yangdon***  
***II Yr. Sci C***



## The College bids farewell to the Chief Librarian



The College organized a modest farewell dinner for the Chief Librarian Mr. Yeshi Dorji who superannuated on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2020. He has served the Tsa Wa Sum for 34 years and 7 months as a school teacher

and a library professional.

In his communication to the College Media Focal Person, he said: “He is little emotional to leave but have no regrets”. This is because he has been quite instrumental in the transformation and systematization of library management system in RUB colleges and across schools in the country. He further highlighted: “He has automated all the RUB library management system and has put in place some policies and procedures in operating the school libraries”. One of his dreams that he has not fulfilled is the automation of libraries in Higher Secondary and Central Schools.

Mr. Yeshi Dorji also expressed that people still need to read a printed version of materials and online is not always a solution. In Bhutan, colleges have to encourage reading and especially to read printed materials at least for the next 20 years, he added.

He also shared, that faculty and staff members need to often visit the library to update themselves of the availability of books and references and be a role model in the use of printed books for academic purposes. It does not mean they do not visit. What I mean is that if their visit frequency is more, it will encourage the university students, he explained. He further conveyed that to enhance the efficiencies of library staff across the schools and colleges, they now should be given some regular training and professional development courses both within and outside the country.

Mr. Yeshi Dorji was one of the students of the first cohort of Bachelors of Education programme that graduated in 1986. He was placed at the then Monggar Junior High School, where he taught for a few years before he received a scholarship to pursue Master of Library Science at Glasgow Strathclyde University in the United Kingdom between 1989 to 1991. Upon return to Bhutan in March 1991, he joined the erstwhile National Institute of Education, now renamed as Samtse College of Education and ever since has served at this institute for the last 29 years and 7 months.

With great remorse, he thanked the President, Administrative Officer, Faculty and all staff for organizing the dinner amidst pandemic risk and also for providing all the necessary support and cooperation during his stay at this premier institution.

# News Research &

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