

“Cleanliness is next to Godliness” – The Bhutan Perspective

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Abstract

Primarily the paper seeks to find out the whys and wherefores in which a landlocked country such as the Kingdom of Bhutan wanting to adopt or is being able to be green as well as maintaining a clean natural environment. And secondarily, the paper too finds out the various ways in which the Kingdom is able to be green in terms of recycling, reducing and reusing its plastics. Environmental cleanliness in Bhutan too can be taken as being green and up-keeping a clean or unpolluted natural environment as well as ensuring and/ or upping Bhutan's Gross National Happiness (GNH). Some key challenges faced and solutions adopted in the Bhutanese context are also discussed.

Keywords: Cleanliness, environmentally clean, green, Gross National Happiness (GNH), Buddhism; value-based happiness; wisdom.

Introduction

A reference is made to the English proverbial saying, “Cleanliness is next to Godliness”. Collinsdictionary.com (2018) indicated that, “If someone says that ‘cleanliness is next to godliness’, they are referring to the idea that people have a moral duty to keep themselves and their homes clean”. Thus when a nation and people, including businesses, have moral obligations to keep themselves and their homes (nature and the environment) clean, social responsibility must be borne by all of them.

After all, being environmentally clean helps one to be healthy and happy. And a nation, as a whole, being environmentally clean can indeed be a healthy and happy nation. Moreover, when translated to the Mother Earth context, taking care of nature and be environmentally clean can indeed lead us to be healthy and happy earthlings.

Cleanliness here can thus be taken as being green and up-keeping a clean or unpolluted natural environment as well as ensuring or raising Bhutan's Gross National Happiness.

Paper's Aims & Objectives

The aim and purpose of the paper is primarily, one, to find out the whys and the wherefores in which a landlocked country such as the Kingdom of Bhutan wanting to adopt or is being able to be green as well as up-keeping a clean natural environment.

And secondarily, two, the paper also seeks to find out the various ways in which the Kingdom is able to be green in terms of recycling and reusing its plastic (wastes).

Research Methodology

This paper is primarily based on secondary literature reviews, and the researcher's observations as well as his talking or interviews with the local Bhutanese; he spoke to four (4) tourist guides and locals who were involved in the tourist industry in Bhutan. Here, observational research is a method of data collection that has become associated with qualitative research (Richie and Lewis, 2003). The key advantage of observational research is flexibility.

What is done is the triangulation of data from the three (3) sources: secondary literature reviews, observations and inputs/ comments of the interviewees. [Triangulation means using more than one method to collect data on the same topic. This is a way of assuring the validity of research through the use of various or a variety of methods to collect data on the same topic, which involves different types of samples as well as methods of data collection. Triangulation of data strengthens your research (write.com, 2018).]

The study was made during the whole month of June with the Bhutan trip from 7 June to 13 June 2018. It included visits to the four (4) towns: Thimphu (Bhutan's modern capital), Haa Town (Haa Valley), Punakha (Bhutan's historic or ancient capital) and Paro as well as Bhutanese places of interest including the Punakha Dzong (fort) visit, the Paro Dzong visit, Chele La Peak visit and the various temples or Lhakhang visits as well as others. And the interviews conducted with the four (4) interviewees were intermittently carried out (each time, about 10 to 15 minutes, the longest consisting of 20 minutes) before, during and while in the Bhutanese towns as well as the post-town visit times.

Interviews are a far more personal form of research than questionnaires, and the interviewer works directly with the interviewees. It is the interviewer's job to strike a balance between ambiguity and specificity in their question asking (Seidman, 1998). And these questions were asked in the interviews:

1. What, in your views, are the reasons for Bhutanese wanting to be clean and green?
2. What values help to contribute to maintain Bhutan being clean and green?
3. In what ways can the use of plastics be reduced (recycled)? And why?
4. What do you think about Buddhism in Bhutan?
5. What roles do Buddhism plays in ensuring a clean and green environment?
6. How do cleanliness and being green contribute to Bhutan's Gross National Happiness?

Literature Survey

Bhutan is one of the few countries – especially in the boomtown otherwise known as Asia – where up-keeping the environment and eco-responsibility is studied and measured even more important than growing the economy. Tourists too are led and (consequently) focused on the snow-capped mountains, rice paddy fields, natural waterfalls, rivers, miles of bike-friendly trails and roads, temples and monasteries that make you wonder how ancient societies ever got the building materials up to their mountain perches (Schwab, 2018).

Being environmentally clean or friendly means having a lifestyle that helps the Earth more than one hurts it, and speaking up when one sees the world around one being harmed (<https://www.wikihow.com/Be-Environmentally-Friendly>). Conserving water, driving less often, gardening, and sticking up for animals are all good ways to start helping.

Ancient hemlocks, cypresses, pines and other trees cloak the Black Mountains east of Pele La. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan dictates the up-keeping of “60 per cent forest cover for all times to come.” (http://www.worldviewofglobalwarming.org/himalaya_5/index.php; Topping, 2014). Because of this health-giving forest, use of hydropower and lack of industry, the Kingdom of Bhutan is one of the few countries in the world with net greenhouse gas sequestration, according to the United Nations. Besides, it has created more than half its area as parks, protected areas and biological corridors. Bhutan's diversity includes more than 5,600 species of plants, nearly 700 species of birds and about 200 species of mammals. The latest reports say that one-third of the of the country's GDP is derived from renewable natural resources – wood, livestock and farm products - which employ 64 percent of the Kingdom's population (http://www.worldviewofglobalwarming.org/himalaya_5/index.php).

Bhutan's national animal is the Takin that is associated with its religious history and mythology. And the Kingdom's national tree is the cypress while its national flower is the Blue Poppy (TashiDelek, 2018: 12-13).

Buddhism is the state religion of Bhutan. Buddhism has positive values and being positive generates happiness in life (Low, 2010; Thich, 1992).

Interestingly too, there are eco-farms in Bhutan. And Bhutan Natural is evidence or a witness of Bhutan's Gross National Happiness (GNH). Bhutan measures prosperity by considering the citizens' happiness levels, and not the gross domestic product (Little Bhutan, 2018). The concept of GNH consists of four pillars: socioeconomic development, conservation and promotion of culture, protection of the environment and good governance (Little Bhutan, 2018).

This development philosophy Gross National Happiness is a term coined by His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the fourth King of Bhutan, in 1972. And these days, the concept of Gross National Happiness (GNH) has become popular in the west. And today, Bhutan is continuously ranked among the top 10 happiest countries in the world (Little Bhutan, 2018a).

In natural Bhutan too, there also exists a cooperation and collaboration of small-scale artisanal farmers that follows a simple code of practice, that is:

- Love Natural Food
- Respect Traditions
- Dedicated to High Quality

Every products are naturally harvested in an eco-friendly and sustainable manner, being dedicated to preserve the heritage while adjusting to the likings of the modern people.

For every product purchased, it contains the hopes, cultures, and beliefs of every Bhutanese farmers (Bhutan Natural, 2018).

Of interest, delicious honey, for example, is nature’s best play for anyone looking for natural antibiotics. Bhutan’s honey is multi-purposeful, and besides, being placed in one’s kitchen, it should also be found in one’s bedtime drawer and in one’s makeup kit (Bhutan Natural, 2018).

The Findings

What are the whys and wherefores in which the Kingdom of Bhutan wants to adopt or is able to be green and up-keep a clean natural environment?

The findings indicate as follows:

Interviewees’ comments	Number of Interviewees (%/ Percentage)
“The importance of inner peace” or “being contented” and “these must coincide with what one can do for one’s surroundings and environment and/ or for the others”	4 (100)
“Many signs and signposts placed are good reminders for us to be environmentally friendly.”	4 (100)
“Much effort must be made to reduce or reuse plastics”; “plastics are to be reused and recycled.”	4 (100)
“The government must lead and show the way”; “they must set the example.”	4 (100)
“No greed”	4 (100)
“Much wisdom exist in cleanliness and being environmentally friendly”	4 (100)
“Money is not everything”; “relationships count”	4 (100)
“Buddhism makes us strong; its values make us resilient.. and happy” ““Buddhism makes us psychologically robust.”	4 (100)
“Our state Buddhism or religion helps”; “Buddhist values are useful; these values help to bring about much happiness”	4 (100)
“We have no or little stress”	4 (100)
“We work hard”; “we move naturally”	4 (100)
“We relate well with each other”; “we enjoy good family lives and good family support”	4 (100)

Analysis and Discussions

Bhutanese seek to be green for these reasons, basically to:

1. Have Inner Peace and Contentment

Buddhism, “with clean, green and virtuous living, wanting to do something for others” (all interviewees’ inputs), is said to give much peace and contentment (Rinpoche, 2015; Venerable Da Shi, 2011, Toula-Breyse, 2001; Thich, 1992) and in Dalai Lama’s (2012: 40; 88) words: “inner contentment”; “the richness of inner happiness” is the main thing. In Buddhism, the approach to happiness is that of understanding the causes of suffering, and that meditation is applied as the means of cultivating calm, peace and insight (Buckingham, 2018; Rinpoche, 2015; Wangdu, 2011). The Dalai Lama (cited in Wangdu, 2011) highlighted that, “Everybody wants a happy life. This goal is entirely dependent on our inner peace... We are trying to seek a joyful, happy life from the outside – that is a mistake.”

All four interviewees spoke of “the importance of inner peace” or “being contented”, this is, to this author, the prime factor contributing to greenness and cleanliness of the environment” (all interviewees’ inputs); one projects, extends out and acts or fleshes out one’s intentions. “If one is at peace with oneself, one would be at peace with one’s surroundings” These match with Thich Nhat Hanh’s sayings, “As we cultivate peace and happiness in ourselves, we also nourish peace and happiness in those we love.” (<http://www.spiritual-experiences.com/spiritual-quotes/quote.php?teacher=47>).

“These must coincide with what one can do for one’s surroundings and environment and/ or for the others”; “one feels a sense of duty to keep the environment clean and green” (interviewees’ inputs). Everyone is involved; and in this aspect, many are trained. These also coincide with what Cheki (2018) wrote, that is, women too are empowered to recycle waste. During the training, the women learn the process and the making of various products from plastic waste (Cheki, 2018).

2. Have Good Reminders and Practices

It is suitable to have mindful reminders (<http://leftbrainbuddha.com/creating-reminders-for-mindfulness/>). And “in all activities, train with slogans” Atisa (cited in De Fabianis, 2015).

“Many signs placed are good reminders for us to be environmentally friendly” (interviewees’ inputs). Besides, such signposts and notices can be seen in many trails such as, for example, from Sansaygang to Wangdytse. These also coincide with the researcher’s observations that there are many recycled kerosene cans (tied to trees) being used as dustbins that are being marked as “Use Me” on the way the Fertility Temple or Chimi Lhakhang in Punakha.

The above pointer harmonizes with the Dalai Lama’s saying of “Happiness is not something that comes readymade. It comes from your own actions.” (<https://www.reference.com/world-view/good-quotes-dalai-lama-4d61d6e0b7f4ff29?aq=dalai+lama+quotes&qo=cdpArticles>).

One signpost spoke of “Let’s celebrate Environment Day every day.”

Another signpost indicated John Keats’ quote, speaking of “Nature never did betray a heart that loved her”, “Plastics take 10 years to decompose, please RECYCLE” and “Our pristine environment is our priceless gift. Preserve it forever.” (see Photo/ diagram # 1).

Photo/ diagram # 1: The signpost showing the saying of John Keats’ “Nature never did betray a heart that loved her”/“Plastics take 10 years to decompose, please RECYCLE” and “Our pristine environment is our priceless gift. Preserve it forever.”



And of significance, another signpost also showed this saying by Drukgyel HSS, and that is, “preserve our rich heritage, do not pollute the surroundings. Remember nature is the source of all happiness” (see Photo/ diagram # 2 below).

Photo/ diagram # 2: The signpost showing the saying of Drukgyel HSS; such nature or green sayings are located in many places along nature trails in Bhutan.



“Being constantly reminded” (three interviewees’ comments), many other signposts exist, and further examples include: “God gave us green nature, so let us keep it clean. Help us to keep this area clean.” And “‘Birds are indicators of the environment. If they are in trouble, we know we’ll be in trouble’ by Roger Story”.

3 Institute the 3Rs in the Use of the Plastics

In order to have a clean and green environment, “efforts are made to recycle, reuse and/ or reduce plastics in the Kingdom.” “Pampers, plastic bottles are dirtying the environment.” (all interviewees’ inputs).

Even though Bhutan has a small population, Bhutan’s economic growth has led to increasing urbanisation and problems associated with biodegradable waste, which threatens the beauty of one of the most pristine environments in the world. Despite its tiny population, Bhutan’s economic growth has led to increasing urbanisation and problems associated with biodegradable waste, which threatens the beauty of one of the most pristine environments in the world (Thethirdpole.net 2018).

Interestingly, plastic waste is used to build eco-friendly and durable roads in Bhutan. Borrowing technology first used in neighboring India, a new program in Thimphu, Bhutan, hopes to curb the Kingdom’s growing plastic waste problem by using discarded plastics to pave roads (interviewees’ inputs; <http://www.takepart.com/article/2015/11/23/plastic-paved-roads-bhutan>).

Thus far, Clean Bhutan has conducted 115 cleaning campaigns in towns and villages around 16 districts involving 4,431 volunteers, and 20 clean-up programs along the four rivers of Thimphu-chu, Paro-chu, Punakha-chu (Pochu/Mochu) and Chubachu stream in Thimphu. (“Chu” means water in Dzongkha, and many rivers are named after a prominent place with the chu suffix added.) It has also carried out 44 such clean-up campaigns along trail and trek routes (Thethirdpole.net).

4 Have Good Leaders and They Give their Helpful Examples

And here, “the government must lead and show the way” (interviewees’ inputs); these matched with Cheki’s (2018) point of the housewives of the Royal Bhutan Police undergoing a skill-development training program on plastic waste to use as secondary resources.

The women here are taught to weave various products such as carry bags, laundry baskets, laptop bags, pencil and pen stands and shopping baskets from recycled plastics; they form self-groups to generate additional income. Clean Bhutan is organizing the training with fund from HELVETAS and European Union (Cheki, 2018: 3).

“Plastic wastes are processed more in Southern Bhutan, and then they are exported to India.” (Two interviewees’ comments).

“To ensure a clean environment, recycling also entails or includes reducing the use of plastics; we use organic carry bags” (several interviewees’ comments).

5 Have No Greed But Be Wise – Don’t Lose the Soul

Money is important to happiness, but only to a certain point. Money buys freedom from worry about the basics in life - housing, food, and clothing (Psychology Today, 2018). Yes, money is not the be-all and end-all.

The interviewees’ comments of “no greed” and “wisdom” matched with each other. These strongly correspond with Venerable Da Shi’s (2011: 117) wise words that all of us should not treat money as something substantially real and that “if we have the wisdom, we will know that money is but an illusion unworthy of pursuit”; money or wealth is like “the moon in the water”; sentient beings are disillusioned and trapped by “the moon in the water” in the pursuit of wealth. And there’s a need to avoid the worldly concerns (Rinpoche, 2015).

Interestingly, Bhutan is aware of the shortcomings or sins of rapid modernization (Little Bhutan, 2018a; chiefly, materialism and greed; Low, 2013a). Greed and materialism (Low, 2013a; <https://www.bartleby.com/essay/Materialism-and-Greed-P333MYZTJ>) stand in opposition to any manifestation of true happiness. People are under a false perception that money will solve all of their problems, and as a result, bring them their utmost joy and happiness. Many psychologists, philosophers, and religious figures such as Buddha and Christ throughout the ages have, however, refuted this assertion (<https://www.bartleby.com/essay/Materialism-and-Greed-P333MYZTJ>).

The Dalai Lama (cited in Virtue for Life, 2018; Cutler and Dalai Lama, 2009) spoke of, we **have all that we need (contentment), that is**, “*When you are discontent, you always want more, more, more. Your desire can never be satisfied. But when you practice contentment, you can say to yourself, ‘Oh yes – I already have everything that I really need.’*”

Furthermore, Buddhism stresses on being wise and not greedy but to live well with love and compassion (with little or no sufferings) (<http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/qanda07.htm>). There is this idea of ahimsa or harmlessness is very closely connected with compassion. There is this compassionate desire to cause no harm to all beings, including animals, plants, and the world in general (The Buddhist Society, 2018).

Interestingly, Uplift (2018) also indicated that faith plays a big part in the lives of people living in the Blue Zones. This sense of belonging provides you with social support and can help to alleviate depression and loneliness. One can also infer that the Buddhist faith among the Bhutanese also plays a big beneficial part in the lives of the Bhutanese. Bhutan has thus decided to move cautiously without losing its soul. Happiness is still derived and the Bhutanese smile and laugh. Patient and compassionate (Schwab, 2018), they are happy. As the Dalai Lama (cited in Virtues for Life, 2018) says, “The purpose of our lives is to be happy.” What an uplifting declaration! We are on this earth to be happy - to do things that make us happy and have a mental state that exudes happiness. Sustainable socio-economic development, preservation and promotion of culture and tradition, and preservation, continuation and protection of natural environment are at the front of government policy (Little Bhutan, 2018a).

6 Have Values/ Strengths, and be Resilient Makes Us Happy

Here, what Thich (2007: Introduction) said is relevant, “To bring happiness to others, we must be happiness. And this is why we always train ourselves to first take care of our own bodies and minds.”

One can argue that “Buddhism makes us (the Bhutanese) strong; its values make us resilient... and happy.” (all interviewees’ inputs). Here, these coincide with Low (2018, 2013)’s comments, that is Buddha and Buddhism educate us to be resilient. Daily in our lives, there is a need to actively avoid bad thoughts. “Look how he abused me and beat me, how he throw me down and robbed me.’ Live with such thoughts and you live with hate... Abandon such thoughts, live in love.” (*The Dhammapada* translated by Thomas Byrom, cited by Kornfield and Fronsdal 1991; Low 2010a). Bad thoughts are negative and they generate negative energies, and they can, in fact, cause conflicts and unhappy events or pain and sufferings for ourselves and others.

Yet every morning, when we wake up, we have 24 brand new hours to live. What a precious gift! (Thich 1992, also cited in Low, 2018; 2013). We must choose the right attitude. We have the ability and capability to live in a way that these 24 hours will bring peace, joy and happiness to ourselves and others. When we choose the right attitude, we live and live right. We become happy.

7 Have Good Social Responsibility Values

And the above also fits in with the fact that “our state religion, Buddhism helps”; “I love the Buddhist values”, “doing good for others”(all interviewees’ inputs). “Our greatest joy is when we seek to do good for others”, “it is the importance of kindness and compassion, wishing something good for others, or at least to reduce their suffering” (Dalai Lama and Desmond Tutu with Abrams, 2016: 59-64). And besides, “compassion conquers all” (Rinpoche, 2015).

We are “empowered” (Cheki, 2018); “we must do something for others, our society and Mother Earth” (all interviewee’s inputs); or what is referred to as “the community body” (Thich, 2017: 63).

Happiness can be value-based (vshapefit. wordpress, 2018) or wanting to, inspiring to “live virtuously” (Buckingham, 2018). Value-based happiness has “the capacity to permanently satisfy our desire for lasting happiness”. This is an internal or inside feeling that does not wear out for as long as we live a life based on values, regardless of our external circumstances (vshapefit. wordpress, 2018). Purpose and meaning in life, flourishing, growth, and self-actualization are all concepts that are related to, or a part of, this value-based or eudaimonic happiness (The Brain Flux, 2018). Such type of happiness is a reflection of how a person sees their life and longer term outcomes. It is about their values and/ or convictions, pursuits, actions, and the direction in life. Human values such as peace, love, non-violence and good conduct not only lead to happiness, but also to human excellence (Ayudhya, 1997).

On the other hand, feel-good happiness (hedonic happiness, The Brain Flux, 2018; Buckingham, 2018) is a short-term, temporary happiness that does not and, unlike value-based happiness, cannot satisfy our deep need for happiness. Examples are eating, having a massage, drugs, holiday, shopping, etc., all pleasant activities. They all make us happy but only for a while and then, they are gone; and all of us need or crave to either do the same or find something else to satisfy that need (vshapefit. wordpress, 2018).

The Dalai Lama (cited in Ueda, 2013: 110) highlighted that “Buddhism teaches that we must overcome attachment, but people often mistake detachment for indifference.” Believing and teaching non-attachment/ detachment (Toula-Breyse, 2001), “letting go”(TeSonne, 2013) and/ or non-possession (Venerable Da Shi, 2011: 156), Buddhism also holds good social responsibility values; these are good or altruistic values. In Buddhism, there is love for others/ the people, and compassion (<http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/qanda07.htm>).

The Dalai Lama highlighted that, “If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion” (*Virtue for Life*, 2018). And Thich (2017: 144) also spoke of “true happiness depends on our capacity to cultivate compassion and understanding and bring nourishment and healing to ourselves and our loved ones.” Thich (2007: Chapter 6) talked of “boundless love”.

These coincides with what psychologists would agree, happiness is more than simply positive mood, happiness is a state of well-being that encompasses living a good life—that is, with a sense of meaning and deep satisfaction (Psychology Today, 2018). Here, one can indeed attribute this sense of meaning and deep satisfaction, perhaps convictions to the values one subscribes and espouses.

Gross National Happiness (GNH) is Bhutan’s development/ growth philosophy based on Buddhist values that measures the quality of life based on the spiritual and mental well-being of its people. While it does not reject the conventional method of measuring development – GDP, GNH is followed as an alternative progress philosophy (Little Bhutan, 2018a; please also see Appendix).

8 Shed the Stress

“Peace is what everyone seeks... Peace can alone come only from the fountain of peace within.” Sri Sathya Sai Baba (cited in Ayudhya, 1997: 38).

All the interviewees spoke of, “We have no or little stress”; “when we are at peace, we are less stressed.”

When one loves, appreciates or admires nature, one discards stress. Stress is said to be a key cause of disease and unhappiness in the world today. It leads to continuing or protracted inflammation, associated with every chief age-related disease. Stress is a part of daily life and even people living in the Blue Zones experience stress, but it is how they manage it that makes all the difference (Uplift, 2018).

Inner contentment can be said to reduce stress, not to mention, it generates peace, contentment and happiness (Thich 1992).

9 Move Naturally

“We work hard” and “we move naturally” (all interviewees’ inputs).

There is clearly a need to “move naturally”. Movement is part of the people’s daily life and rituals. They live in environments that nudge them into moving without thinking (Uplift, 2018). For instance, the Bhutanese, to this author, grow paddy fields and don’t have many mechanical conveniences, but instead use their own labor to make things happen.

Villagers pool their resources, and every helping hand is useful to help achieve the paddy-growing task; the villagers join in to help whenever there is work to be done (Kuensel, 2018: 1).

The Bhutanese seek to prevent or avoid addictions or in Buddhist parlance “attachments”. Bhutanese receive free education from the government. And a heavy emphasis is placed on Buddhist teachings; most schools have an English curriculum. Until education reform was passed in the 1990s, only around 30 percent of males and 10 percent of females in Bhutan were literate (Rodgers, 2017).

10 Have Good Relationships

“In the Blue Zones, families are kept close” (Uplift, 2018). Here, in Bhutan, “we relate well with each other”; we enjoy good family lives and good family support”; “the family is also the source of important relationships that take root” (all interviewees’ inputs). Research also showed that maintaining close social ties (Psychology Today, 2018) and Buddhism, finding purpose beyond oneself are all actions that increase life satisfaction (Psychology Today, 2018). Social and family relationships can meanings to one’s life (Uplift, 2018).

Of significance, Low (2010) highlighted that to achieve happiness, one avoids or prevents negative situations and think of other people; positive thinking helps in good living including good leading or harmonious working with each other, and besides, it helps not only in securing but also boosting happiness both in the sense of the other-worldly as well as this world.

Francesca (2017) showed the four elements or ways to deepen one’s relationships with one’s loved ones, and they are:

1. *Maitri* or turning anger into kindness or benevolence - *By understanding the person one loves, one will, in turn, learn how to love them.* Take time to be attentive and observe your love. Listen to their words and ask them about their hopes and ambitions.

* Practical tips include: Finding out or learning more about your loved ones aid to open the door to understanding them, and how to love them in a meaningful and fulfilling way.

2. The second element of true love is *Karuna*, meaning compassion. This is the ability to relieve the pain of others, and the desire to. This is also based on understanding, but the understanding of the suffering of one's loved ones. Only when one truly understands their suffering will one be able to help in alleviating and easing their problems or burdens.

* Practical tips include: Communicate with one's loved one about what troubles them and ask if there is anything that one can do that will help in a direct way. Opening this communication, developing an understanding and the desire to help will strengthen one's relationship with the person.

3. *Mudita* is translated as joy or happiness. This part of true love is one of the most important, and in some ways, it ties all four elements together. If there is no joy or happiness in love, then the love is not true. If your love upsets you or distresses you, then it is, in fact, not love to start with, or the love has been lost. Love must be satisfying and produce joy and happiness to those who feel it.

* Practical tips include: Take time to do the things that bring one joy, both together and as individuals. It is this development of joy in oneself that allows one to share one's joy with one's love. One should be able to find joy within oneself as well as with each other, to have love in its truest form.

The final of the four parts or elements of love is *Upeksha*, meaning freedom. When love is true, both persons within the couple should have freedom, and feel free within the relationship. Each person should feel free to be an individual to let them grow and develop in their own way. This allows one to be oneself and have time alone, safe in the knowledge that one's love is doing the same. Freedom must be within the relationship, with each being able to feel comfortable to share ideas and thoughts without fear of judgment. One has the freedom yet one is also able to be a part of a couple; and that is a mark of the truest love.

* Practical tips include: Devote time apart from one's partner without feeling the need to check up on one another. Do the things that one enjoys as an individual and are proud of. Once one comes back together, discuss these things and why they make one happy.

Spend some time talking about different thoughts and ideas one has had. Act on these ideas and plan activities that one person wants to do. Developing a sense of freedom within one's relationship permits both people to grow.

Overall, the Buddha spoke of many things, but love and life were of much focus. His teachings on love illustrate that true love and compassion should be something positive and enlightening, bringing joy and freedom to our lives. Keeping these four elements of love in mind may simply make it a little simpler or calmer to find true love for ourselves.

Key Challenges Faced and Solutions

Many youth are going to the urban areas. And drug use is still not all that common in Bhutan. But as a younger generation grows up with internet and satellite TV, and other influences from the outside world, older Bhutanese ponder what will become of Bhutan's spiritually-based identity (Magistad, 2011).

In an effort to fight globalisation with a form of Bhutanese "glocalisation", the government passed a heritage sites bill, which protects its cultural traditions as well as its monuments. It has its own broadcast channel, the Bhutan Broadcast Service, and insists on national dress in government meetings and in schools. The tourist board is pushing homestays – a Bhutanese version of bed and breakfast - in a go to bring money to rural areas, while boosting value to a traditional way of life (Topping, 2014). In and since 1989, a dress code was enforced across Bhutan. Men are to wear a Gho, a knee-length robe tied at the waist, and women a Kira, an ankle-length sari-like garment accompanied by a light jacket known as a Tego (Newbold, 2016). To counter Western influences, the traditional costumes are mandatory in government office meetings, schools, monasteries and during important functions. This is helpful after all, as explained by Wangchuk (cited in Newbold, 2016), "In a homogeneous world where we are all getting 'McDonald-ised' by cheap, fast fashion, it's nice to stick to our roots and have an identity. When our country is squashed between two giants, like India and China, it's so easy to lose our identity."

With greater development comes greater expectation, cited Sangay Khandu, an MP in Bhutan's national council by Topping (2014). "You promise a road, the next thing people want is a car to drive on that road; you promote telecommunications, the next thing they want is a mobile phone. The reality is that people want comfort, they want the benefit of development," he said. One can infer that there is a strong need to emphasize the Buddhist values to grow value-based happiness while reducing or minimizing wants and desires.

Nonetheless, Bhutan takes pride in the claim that, as they deal with the inevitability of change, they have been able to preserve what is most important to a small nation in a large world: their distinct national identity. This is largely a fact, visible in Bhutan's political and socioeconomic systems and in its cultural heritage as it exists today. The blend of good fortune and wise leadership has truly distinguished their country for its successes in keeping the uninvited aspects of modernisation at bay (The Druk Journal, 2017).

Indeed say what you want, but to this author, this is a great joy or happiness. It is to be noted that the 13 Bhutanese Arts and Crafts known as the Zorig Chusum is symbolic and rooted in Buddhist philosophy. They are woodwork, stonework, carving, painting, sculpting, wood turning, black smithy, ornament making, bamboo work, paper-making, tailoring and weaving. Pema Lingpa, a treasure discoverer, introduced these arts and crafts to Bhutan in the 15th century (Little Bhutan, 2018a). The values embedded in these works are intangible but invaluable and constitute much value-based happiness when one sees, knows, appreciates and enjoys them. Moreover, as the Dalai Lama (2012: 246, *italics author's*) noted, “There is a limit to everything... it is better to fix our own boundaries. (*And we can say that these values help us*) ...reduce our desires and learn to be content”

Key Limitations and Benefits of the Study

Several limitations of the study existed. And these included the key limitations in terms of the small number of interviewees and the limited funds available; it would certainly be better if the study is expanded to include more interviewees or respondents and if funds allowed, it is to be a longer study period.

And another key limitation is also that of the people involved; they are Bhutanese; and there could be an element of ethnocentrism, that is, they are proud of their country and culture, thus saying the best things of their country and culture. Nonetheless, it is to be noted that given the assurance of confidentiality and anonymity, they were open and outright, and much learning were able to be derived from their views, comments and inputs, this researcher certainly valued their invaluable views.

Besides, the Bhutanese interviewees’ clear and crisp comments and wisdom derived can be considered as the chief benefits of this study.

Concluding Remarks

In brief, the Bhutanese seek to be clean and green for a variety of reasons (these also contribute to the overall happiness of the Bhutanese), and these can be seen in Figure 1 below.



Overall, Bhutan’s clean environment is the way forward and as Ban Ki-Moon once highlighted, “sustainable development is the pathway to the future we want for all. It offers a framework to generate economic growth, achieve social justice, exercise environmental stewardship and strengthen governance” (Brainyquotes, 2018).

Indeed in Bhutan, Buddhism’s guidance to pick a middle path appears to supply both a guiding principle, and a challenge – develop but don’t lose one’s identity. Modernize, but don’t lose one’s soul. Many cultures have faced this challenge – but few have done it as consciously.

The four pillars of GNH: socioeconomic development, conservation and promotion of culture, protection of the environment and good governance is a balanced pursuit and contribute to the overall, more rounded and intangible, unquantifiable well-being of a citizen. The nine domains of GNH are health, education, time use, cultural diversity and resilience, good governance, community vitality, ecological diversity and resilience, and living standards (OPHI, 2018).

Besides, the GNH measure is said to have been designed to satisfy various criteria which are needed for an official national measure of happiness that is also relevant or applicable to Bhutan's national and district policy. It aims to reveal the happiness and general wellbeing of the Bhutanese population more accurately and profoundly than a monetary measure (OPHI, 2018).

Other countries and the world too can learn much from Bhutan (Magstad, 2011).

Yes, to make economic development and progress (Gross national income or the calculation of income by the location of ownership and residence) is good, but we also need to have a clean and green environment. The stress is on people and our actions with the resultant overall happiness.

And here, the people or we should retrain our minds (after all, "a *disciplined mind leads to happiness, and an undisciplined mind leads to suffering*", *Virtues for Life, 2018*), making a paradigm shift - to re-orientate to be self-disciplined.

The self-discipline comes in by learning to retrain our mind to think more positively for our own sake and, as the Dalai Lama says, for the sake of the world (*Virtues for Life, 2018*; Cutler and Dalai Lama, 2009). We really need to be more compassionate to others including nature and Mother Earth.

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Appendix

Construction of the GNH Index

The Kingdom of Bhutan belongs to a stream of civilization where the exact and clear purpose of the government is to create enabling conditions for our citizens to pursue happiness. Gross National Happiness or GNH is most important for Bhutan mainly because:

- a. His Majesty the Fourth Druk Gyalpo has talented GNH to His people,
- b. GNH is more holistic and important than Gross National Product,
- c. GNH is development with values.
- d. The end objective of GNH is to ensure that we have a just, equal and harmonious society.
- e. Our sacred Constitution states "The State shall strive to promote those conditions that will enable the pursuit of Gross National Happiness: GNH" (Centre for Bhutan Studies & GNH Research, 2016: Foreword)

The concept suggests that sustainable development should take a holistic approach towards notions of progress and give equal importance to non-economic aspects of wellbeing.

The GNH Index includes nine domains (OPHI, 2018)

Psychological wellbeing:

1. Health
2. Education
3. Time use
4. Cultural diversity and resilience
5. Good governance
6. Community vitality
7. Ecological diversity and resilience
8. Living standards

The GNH Index is analysed by any demographic characteristic, meaning it is breakdown by population group, for example, to show the composition of GNH among men and among women, or by district, and by dimension, for example to show which group is lacking in education. The indicators and domains aim to stress different aspects of wellbeing, and different ways of meeting underlying human needs.

The Government of Bhutan's Centre for Bhutan Studies revised and released an updated GNH index in 2011. There are 33 indicators in the 9 domains above and the Index seeks to measure the nation's wellbeing directly by starting with each person's achievements in each indicator. The GNH index is based on the Alkire Foster methodology of multidimensional measurement, which has been adapted for this purpose. It identifies four groups of people – unhappy, narrowly happy, extensively happy, and deeply happy. The analysis explores the happiness people enjoy already, then focuses on how policies can increase happiness and sufficiency among the unhappy and narrowly happy people.

Interestingly, the GNH Survey and the GNH Index created from it are designed to guide actions to advance GNH across Bhutan. The report, called, *A Compass Towards a Just and Harmonious Society*, presents the detailed findings from the survey for use by both experts and the general public. It also supplies strong guidance for action in public policy, by the private sector, and among civil society organisations (<http://www.grossnationalhappiness.com/>).