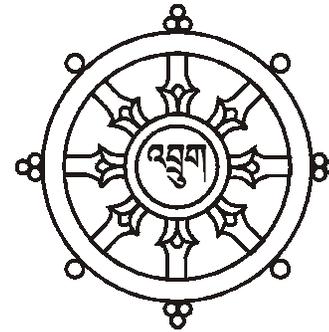


**THE MAIN POINTS BEHIND THE  
UNHEALTHY POLITICS BEING PLAYED  
IN THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS THAT  
IS UNFOLDING IN BHUTAN**

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All our countrymen, I need to share and clearly put forward some main points about the current democratic process unfolding in Bhutan. I think all of us have to strongly support the establishment of a true Constitutional Monarchical system, only then I am sure that peace, prosperity, happiness and harmony will prevail in our country, for the people as well as for the King. Therefore, for the better future of Bhutan, I sincerely request all of you to kindly analyze the facts mentioned below.

Just to show that the King's Government has been transformed into a peoples' government, the present administration is hell bent on playing unhealthy politics in various ways. In this regard, I have honestly put forward some of the main points for everyone's clarification and justification. As saying goes, "If words or expression of introduction is not exchanged, then it is not possible even to recognize the relation between the father and a son".

In fact, I, Rongthong Kunley Dorji, have been branded as a Ngolop by the Royal Government of Bhutan. Ngolop essentially means a person who has rebelled or revolted, but the Royal Government defines those who are anti-administration as anti-national. Yes, I accept that I am a democratic Ngolop, fighting against an undemocratic system and the dictatorship in Bhutan. The Druk National Congress has, since its inception, been campaigning and demanding for democratic rights for all Bhutanese, but never has the party demanded or appealed for my benefit or welfare at a personal level.

Bhutan today is governed as per the King's wishes, and the day to day official activities of the administration varies according to his personal interests. It is not only the general public, but also government servants who are affected by the King's nepotism and favoritism. For decades, such biased practices have been creating unfavorable situations for the general public and between the rich and poor. This is quite clear to all Bhutanese. From now onwards, it would be impossible for the Bhutanese to accept the Royal Government's old system of governance that is despotic, inefficient and irresponsible.

The Royal Government's policies are guided by no basic principles, and the implementation and application of the law changes from day to day. This undoubtedly is of great threat to all the citizens of Bhutan and its consequences could spiral into a volatile political situation. Given that process of establishing democracy has already been initiated, it makes no sense to play unnecessary politics to preserve the King's prerogative and authority. If His Majesty himself can pave the way for a peaceful and harmonious environment in our society and religion, without any discrimination or biasness, it then becomes the responsibility and obligation of all Bhutanese to vow a strong allegiance to the throne, even more than before, and to preserve and safeguard the Constitutional Monarchical system. On the other hand, if His Majesty doesn't take into consideration the wishes of the entire spectrum of the Bhutanese populace, then there is threat of disharmony and political instability, which could ultimately prove disadvantageous to the Monarchy as

well. As an old proverb goes - "at first there is the possibility of confrontation between the "us"s and "them"s, and ultimately there is the possibility of confrontation among us". We can expect peace, prosperity and harmony in Bhutan only if the process of democratization is undertaken according to accepted international norms.

All the Bhutanese are aware of the Royal Government's activities of discrimination and partiality in granting benefits, such as official appointments and promotions, development activities, granting of businesses and establishment of industries. Not only this, the Royal Government has forcefully converted several Nyingmapa monasteries that were established over thousand years ago, into Drukpa Kagyu monasteries. The unfavorable situation created by the infusion of dispute and ill-will between the Ka-Nying traditions, which always existed in harmony for thousands of years and was the silent prop of the of the monarchy, is an unforgettable "gift" of an ungrateful regime.

After abusing and exploiting peoples' rights and freedom for decades, His Majesty, King Jigme Singye Wangchuk, on the occasion of Bhutan's national day celebrations at Tashi Yangtse district on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2005, proclaimed that Bhutan would transform into a Constitutional Monarchial system and unveiled a Draft Constitution on the occasion. The King's farsighted move came as a great surprise to the Bhutanese who considered this a precious gift of the regime to the people. All the Bhutanese came together, forgetting all his past misdeeds, and expressed their gratitude and offered him good wishes.

The Druk National Congress also welcomed and thanked His Majesty and assured him of full support and solidarity in his efforts to democratize Bhutan. India and other democratic countries around the world too wished him great success and thanked him for initiating a new democratic system in Bhutan. By releasing and distributing the Draft Constitution all over the world, the onus falls on His Majesty to take full responsibility of introducing a true Constitutional Monarchical system in Bhutan. The Bhutanese regime has distributed the Draft Constitution to all the districts in Bhutan. The King repeatedly reiterated that from now onwards all government policies and activities would be implemented as per the Draft Constitution. He visited western districts of Thimphu, Haa, Paro, Wangdi Phodrang and Punakha, where the general public had been ordered to gather for discussions on the Draft Constitution. Similarly, the Trongsa Penlop, Crown Prince Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuk, was sent to the eastern districts, where he delivered his father's similar message.

The Draft Constitution stipulated that the number of Members of Parliament to be elected per Dzongkhag was between 1 to 7 members depending on the population. But now, this has been amended to between 2 to 4 members. And the total number of Members of Parliament has been reduced to 47. His Majesty announced that the Draft Constitution would be discussed and debated with the people of all twenty districts before finalization, but when he visited the districts there was no talk of any finalization. So, the

King himself had decided to stick to the same Constitution that had been written by the members of the Drafting Committee (without any public discussion). Now, the draft seems to be undergoing constant changes from day to day and we still do not know if it is finalized at all.

It was also clearly written in the draft Constitution that the Members of Parliament would be elected from amongst the people depending upon their competence, capability and the benefits they can bring to the people and the nation. Now, all of a sudden, the Bhutanese regime has changed its policy and declared that only degree holders from western (English)-styled educational institutions are eligible to be elected, whereas degree holders from educational institutions and universities imparting education in Dzongkha (the National Language) are not eligible to contest. Further, Bhutanese political parties in exile – the real democratic forces, who have and will continue to struggle for the democratization of Bhutan, are banned from participating in the process. We firmly believe that graduates from educational institutions imparting education in Dzongkha are as qualified and as adept as any other to represent their people and their interests. The Royal Governments' policy of dishonoring of Dzongkha will have a negative impact in future, particularly as Dzongkha is the backbone of our tradition, culture and religion. By such wily policies, the identity of Palden Drukpa's driglam namzha-tradition, religion culture etc will automatically vanish for good. The King himself will have to take all responsibility for this.

The Parliament is the main platform where issues related to the nation's security and peoples' welfare are debated and decided. It is thus important that the people get to freely choose representatives who have earned their confidence and whom they can trust will represent their interests in the Parliament. When issues arise in future regarding amendments to the Constitution, the electorate must be assured that those they have sent to represent them in the Parliament will work in their interests in these matters too.

By now all the Bhutanese know that the present regime's policy viz-a-viz the electoral system is not with the motive of addressing people's welfare, but to make the King's position stronger than before. The regime has forced many civil servants to resign and join politics in order to facilitate a deep-rooted control over the administration in future, and also stifle true democracy. With the King trying to play dirty politics to reinstate his absolute monarchical system, we need to be extra cautious and vigilant in this regard. Now, the crucial time has come for all the citizens of Bhutan, including the military and civilians to think twice before it is too late.

The Druk National Congress has time and again requested the regime for the amendment of the draft Constitution in favor of general public but the King did not pay any heed to our repeated appeals. The Bhutanese people have no true freedom to enjoy even the basic fundamental rights. The King is still ruling the nation in old-fashioned autocratic and despotic manner.

The King issued orders to his henchman, Mr. Sangay Nyedup Dorji, to establish a political party. The Kings' involvement in aiding the PDP is vindicated by Mr. Tshering Tobgay's statement. Mr. Tshering Tobgays, who is the coordinator of the Peoples' Democratic Party, was quoted thus in The New York Times recently -"We are not starting a party because we have an ideology. We are not starting a party because we have a vision for better Bhutan. We are starting a party because the King has ordered us". The Chief Election Commissioner, under the influence of Mr. Sangay Nyedup Dorji, is not following the norms of the Draft Constitution and blindly supporting Mr. Sangay Nyedup Dorji, who is forcefully asking the people of eastern Bhutan to join his party. Persons who declined his offer were arrested and put behind the bars. Mr. Sangay Nyedup Dorji has also warned people in the villages that if it is found that they are not supporting his party's activities, then he would not initiate or support any development activities in their villages after he assumes the post of the Prime Minister. Similarly, Mr. Jigme Thinley has also established a political party, the Druk Phuensum Tshogpa. Mr. Jigme Thinley hails from Punakha Tyoebesa Mendrel Gang. Mr. Sangay Nyedup Dorji and Mr. Jigme Thinley both come from the same block of Punakha. The census record of Mr. Jigme Thinley has been transferred from Punakha to Pema Gatshel, Chungkhar to give a chance to Mr. Sangay Nyedup Dorji to win the elections.

Quite some time back, the Government of Bhutan finalized a proposal to establish a hospital, a college, teacher's training center, cultural school and polytechnic

institute in eastern Bhutan but the Governments' programme was cancelled and the projects finally shifted to the western Bhutan by Mr. Sangay Nyedup Dorji. Every eastern Bhutanese must know how we were deprived of our benefits and rights by Mr. Sangay Nyedup Dorji.

We sincerely ask our western Bhutanese friends to clearly understand and cross-examine facts before deciding whom to cast your vote in favor of. In case of our Lhotshampa friends, there is no chance of casting their vote in free and fair manner because they are subjected to constant vigilance, intimidation and harassment by the regime. For the eastern Bhutanese, it is clear that till now there has been no substantial development activities taken place in the east and many still live a miserable life under duress or poverty. In the current prevailing situation in eastern Bhutan, some of the innocent public from Mangde, Bumthang, Kheng, Lhuntse, Mongar, Yangtse, Tashi Gang Pemagatshal and Samdrup Jongkhar districts have fallen prey to the misguidance and intimidation of the authorities. Some people have even been taking bribes without thinking about their own future and the future of the democratic system we are hoping to establish and without also realizing that such practices are harming the spirit and value of democracy and leading to the path of total autocracy. It is known to all that the draft Constitution stipulates that no one is allowed to criticize or defame anyone and intimidation, harassment, giving and taking bribes are also banned. But if, the party cadres of Mr. Sangay Nyedup Dorji and Mr. Jigme Thinley can bypass these laws and go against the spirit and value of the

Draft constitution and democratic process, then why can't we the main political parties and the true democratic forces of Bhutan campaign and condemn such undemocratic and illegal activities taking place in Bhutan? We firmly stress that all the citizens of Bhutan must think carefully about how we are going to go about establishing a true and vibrant democracy in Bhutan in the coming near future.

For the sake of the interest of a few persons, it is not possible to risk the integrity and independence of Bhutan, and it is only through the establishment of true democratic system that all citizens of Bhutan will have the chance to enjoy fundamental rights, freedom and development in every sphere of life and which will ensure peace, happiness, prosperity and communal harmony in the country. The Druk National Congress would like to remind and appeal to all the citizens of Bhutan to think well about the democratic set up and that every one must know that it is the responsibility of each and every Bhutanese to play a key role to secure your own rights. It is declared that in 2008, Bhutan will transition from absolute Monarchy to Constitutional Monarchy, but if the present regime doesn't give full responsibilities and power to the people in the process of democratization, then it will be nothing but affixing the name of democracy to the King's government. A true democratic set up must emerge from every individual's choice to form or support a political party of his or her preference, and not by blindly listening to the Bhutanese Government's decree to support and vote for parties established under its aegis. It is also the responsibility and sacred duty of the concerned political

parties to create awareness about the real issues, such as equal distribution of development activities, or religion and culture, which should be debated openly based on their ideology and manifesto.

The people being the supreme authority in a democratic set up, every individual has rights to hold a public position as per one's competence and capability and a democratic government must be formed only through general election that reflects public choice. The rights and prerogative of the King and the Royal family viz-a-viz the democratically elected government is not mentioned clearly in the draft Constitution and it is appropriate that the Prime Minister is selected from elected members of the Parliament as per the norms of democratic process. With the regime sanctioning only two parties of its own choice, the Royal Government's intention is surely that if Peoples' Democratic Party wins the election, then Mr. Sangay Nyedup Dorji will be the Prime Minister, and if Druk Phuensum Tshogpa wins the election, then Mr. Jigme Thinley will become Prime Minister. If so, both are not only the King's supporters but are also matrimonially related. Mr. Sangay Nyedup Dorji is elder brother of the present Queens, whereas Mr. Jigme Thinley is the husband of the Queens' cousin. All in the family, so to speak. Can the parties headed by these two persons be called true democratic parties? Every Bhutanese knows that the main agenda of the Royal Government is to give excessive rights and privileges to the King and the royal families. Apart from the Peoples' Democratic Party and Druk Phuensum Tshogpa, is it not justifiable for the general public to

enjoy their right to form as many political parties as they prefer in accordance to democratic norms. It is our contention that these two parties formed under the wing of the regime, and who have already clearly shown what their intentions have no right to form a democratic government.

The King is attempting to reinstate his absolute Monarchical system by forcing many senior civil servants to resign and join the two government sanctioned political parties and also nominating some of them as members in the Election Commission so that they obey his command and he can continue ruling the nation at his will with an iron fist. This is a matter of great concern and we urge everyone to scrutinize the democratic process that is taking place in Bhutan.

In keeping with the effort to establish a truly democratic system in Bhutan, the time may be coming not only to change the regimes' draconian policies but to amend the entire draft Constitution for the benefit of the people, nation and the Monarchy. The Druk National Congress has time and again appealed to the Royal Government to consider and change their policy regarding the democratization of Bhutan. It has urged the Royal Government to follow the true norms of a democratic process. But the Royal Government has not heeded any of our appeals. The people are surely and saddened by such policies. Bhutan is not the private domain of the King. It belongs to all Bhutanese, who have shed their sweat and blood to preserve and protect its integrity and from which the Monarchy also derives its existence and authority. It is the responsibility and right of every citizen of Bhutan to speak out about the nation's independence, security, peace and the institutionalization of democracy.

Therefore, we strongly demand the following :

1. Freedom of speech and expression;
2. The release all the political prisoners;
3. The right to work as per the democratic norms;
4. The right to engage in political discussion;
5. The right to participate in the democratic process;
6. The right to form political parties and declaration of a date to do so.

The process of democratization of Bhutan has been acknowledged by India and all democratic countries around the globe but in true sense it is a farce and just to eye wash for the benefit of the international community.

I would also like to explain precisely and clarify about the traditional system of wearing the orange, red and blue color scarf, which are used by ex-ministers, ex-councilors and ex-senior bureaucrats respectively. This tradition was introduced in the old capital of Bhutan, Pungthang Dewa-Chenpoe Phodrang. Those in the administration, such as Deb Rajas, Dzungpon Namsums, Chila Namsums and senior bureaucrats were allowed to wear the scarf even after their retirement from their official positions, but wearing or hanging of the sword, which was also worn as a part of the official attire, was not permitted after retirement. This tradition and culture existed and was prevalent till the time of the fourth King. Now, during the time of fifth King, and with the country at the threshold of transforming into a Constitutional Monarchy, persons who have resigned from the council of ministers,

councilors and senior bureaucrats are appearing in front of the mass wearing the same scarf. But as per the new system and the democratic set up, this custom seems to be contradictory, particularly because everyone is equal under the law of democracy and any person who retires from a public position automatically become a normal citizen, hence it would be appropriate for all to wear the white scarf, which is used by the general public. We sincerely appeal to the King to kindly change his policies for the better future of Bhutan, when he has the power in his hands at this point of time.

India, being the main donor and supporter of all development programs and activities in Bhutan, the Druk National Congress has time and again appealed to the Government of India to provide political guidance to the Government of Bhutan to undo the undemocratic process being put into practice in the country.

The propaganda and news of the democratization of Bhutan has been spread everywhere and all democratic countries around the globe are of the opinion that a true democratic institution will be established in Bhutan, but it is a farce and being undertaken to fool the international community. We appeal to the United Nations and other countries and organizations to kindly conduct an investigation and see what is right and wrong.

The Druk National Congress stresses that every Bhutanese must play a key role in Bhutanese politics for the benefit and peaceful co-existence of the people and the Constitutional Monarchy. The above policies

and motives of the present regime is surely going to have a negative impact by adversely affecting the nation, the King and the people as a whole. Therefore, we once again appeal to His Majesty the King of Bhutan to kindly think in a very broad spectrum and graciously consider the issue.

Unholy and undemocratic policies have been hatched up by the King himself to fulfill his vested interests under the guise of “democratization of Bhutan”. We strongly condemned such activities and the general public too will not accept such undemocratic activities of the King. The objectives of the Druk National Congress are to safeguard the independence of the nation, ensure peace, happiness and communal harmony, preserve Constitutional Monarchy, empower all citizens to be self-reliant and free, and to make Bhutan politically and economically stable through the establishment of true democracy. Thus, the Druk National Congress is not in a position to accept the current democratic process taking place in Bhutan.

The DNC will continue to advocate against unhealthy initiatives as long as these anti-people policies are intact.

Druk National Congress.  
New Delhi, India.