

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji

The King's Aide and Diplomat Par Excellence

Tshering Tashi

Edited by Dendup Chopel



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Gongzim Ugyen Dorji

The King's Aide and Diplomat Par Excellence

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Research

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PREFACE

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji (1855-1916) played a great supporting role in establishing the monarchy. The Gongzim was a simple man who shared the dream of his master, the first King of Bhutan, Ugyen Wangchuck. His story is an example and a tribute to all the Bhutanese who served and continue to serve their monarchs with complete dedication. This story is also about people's trust in each other which in the modern world seems to be fading.

Although Gongzim was a highly decorated officer, he was a simple man who lived in an interesting time, thus making his story of historic importance. As a staunch Buddhist, his life was constantly intertwined with monks and prayer. His calmness and deep faith in Buddhism helped him avoid bloodshed and forge healthy relationships with the imperialist British India and the wary Tibetans.

The Gongzim would have been particularly happy to know the success of education in Bhutan because it was in large parts the result of his vision and dedication. He would have also been proud to know that he played an important role in supporting his master to turn a dream of a strong nation into reality.

Through the journey of this simple man is unfurled the story of a nation's transition from civil strife to peace, and the ingenious foreign policy that helped preserve the jewel of the Himalayas. Bhutan's youth can draw inspiration from the story of this remarkable servant to serve the King and the country with peerless diligence and unwavering faith.

1

Background and Early Life

Introduction

The first known European visitors to Bhutan were two Portuguese Jesuit priests who travelled to Bhutan in 1627 and met the founder of the country, Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyel (1594-1651). However, their diaries were buried in the archives of the Vatican in Italy for over three centuries,¹ so they were of no help to the early British travelers who followed in their footsteps.

In May 1774, the British Government deputed George Bogle (1746-1781) to open up trade with Bhutan and Tibet. At that time, it was assumed that he was the first European visitor to Bhutan. Since then, many British travelers have visited Bhutan, among them Bogle's assistant, Alexander Hamilton, who returned to Bhutan on his visits of 1775 and 1777, and the astronomer and Director of the East India Company, Captain Samuel Turner who visited Bhutan and had a friendly reception in 1783.

But after 1784, Bhutan's contact with the British started to decline. The next contact with the British was not until eight years later in 1792 when the British encouraged Bhutan to appoint a ruler in Bijnee state which came under the nominal protection of both governments, though at that time trade between Bhutan and India was non-existent since neither government promoted it.

In 1815, an Indian official Kishenkant Bose visited Bhutan to discuss border problems with no success. In 1828, the Government of India occupied Assam, thus

taking over the relationship between Assam and Bhutan. Then in 1837, Captain Pemberton visited Bhutan to address difficulties on the Assamese borders. In the following years, from 1841 to 1864, more problems occurred, culminating in the visit of Ashley Eden (1831-1887) to Bhutan in 1863, and his subsequent humiliation which resulted in the 1864-65 Anglo-Bhutan war. Twenty years later in 1885, the Trongsa Penlop Ugyen Wangchuck (1862-1926) achieved overall control of the country.

All these visitors kept records of their visits which are now important primary sources for the study of the history of Bhutan. But most of these early written records describe Bhutan before 1885 as a long interlude of revolution and internecine struggles which are not surprising since every British Mission which entered the country, with the exception of Mr. Claude White, experienced some hostilities.

In 1774, when Bogle passed through Thimphu on his way to Tibet, a successful revolution "headed by the Dharma Gongzim, one Deb Jeedah and his party, was in full swing."² Similarly, nine years later, in 1783, Captain Turner witnessed an unsuccessful insurrection headed by the Wangdue Phodrang Dzongpon that had just broken out.

In 1837-38, Captain Pemberton trekked from east to west Bhutan and saw much rebellion brewing. When Eden visited Punakha in 1864, a successful insurrection had only just placed the Trongsa Penlop, Jigme Namgyel (1825-1881) in power. The mission reported that the Paro Penlop was rebelling against the Trongsa Penlop. But after the Battle of Changlimithang in 1885, the country calmed down and was consolidated under the rule of Ugyen Wangchuck, the Trongsa Penlop who started to pave the way to monarchy. The people saw the folly of recurring

rebellions and wanted radical change in the form of government.

“The Tongsa [Trongsa] Penlop, who commanded the services of the largest body of fighting men in Bhutan, numbering about 4000, was appointed Prime Minister. Any measures receiving the imprimatur of his and the Deb Gongzim’s assent were bound to be carried through without opposition or bloodshed. If the Bhutanese could now devise some laws to regulate the succession to the Penlopship of Tongsa without bloodshed, Bhutan might conceivably enjoy a lengthy period of peace and prosperity.”³ It is against this tumultuous historical background that the story of Gongzim Ugyen Dorji (1855-1916) is unfurled.

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji came from a trading background and his life was interwoven with religion, which made him a popular man of his time. His sharp business acumen, refined manners, and diplomatic and personnel skills make him arguably the greatest diplomat Bhutan has ever produced. His dedication to serve his master, the first King and the great supporting role that he played in the establishment of the Wangchuck Dynasty makes him a timeless Bhutanese icon whose life deserves to be told in whole as his existence so far has only been known to the Bhutanese people in fragments of official records.

Family Background and Parentage

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji was born in 1855⁴ to Kazi Shaba Punchedung and Tsherim,⁵ a farmer’s daughter from Tsento in upper Paro. The village is just a day’s walk from Phari, the Tibetan border town frequented by Bhutanese traders. In those days, the Tsentops’ free spirit was often held in awe by the Tibetan and Bhutanese traders alike. The Tsentops resided on a

lucrative trade route and were known to make easy living off unsuspecting caravans.

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji's father Shaba Punchedung was from Shabisa, which is in the lower reaches of Paro valley. Today Shaba is one of the richest villages in Bhutan. Shaba Punchedung was a pioneering trader with strong entrepreneurial skills. He was a strong man who lived the most part of his life on the road in hostile terrains. He was also a courageous man who not only risked encounters with robbers, but also faced extremes of the Himalaya's unpredictable weather and inhospitable terrains. The high passes, the mountain climate and long arduous walks through forest infested with wild animals enhanced his tolerance for pain and capacity for hard work, and continuously honed his negotiating skills (a trait that his son would inherit).

While there is little written trace of the life of Shaba Punchedung, it is most likely that he was a romantic soul who dared to love. While most people would have avoided crossing paths with Tsentops for their supposed notoriety, he chose a Tsentop as his life partner. Given the fact that he was a trader, it is likely that he met his wife on one of his trade missions to Phari.

But what is clear is that Shaba Punchedung and Tshirim married, and made a formidable duo. Together they traded in various parts of Tibet, India and Bhutan. Their business grew and soon Shaba Punchedung developed the reputation of being a successful trader. The pair would often travel to Calcutta port in India to buy corals to sell in landlocked Tibet. They would sell their wares in the local markets of Lhasa, among various other trade marts in Tibet. From Tibet, they would buy bricks of tea, woolen quilts, and load their mules with rock salts to sell in the Bhutanese frontier towns of Kalimpong, Darjeeling and also in the heartland of

Bhutan. With growing wealth, Shaba Pungchung's influence in the court of Bhutan continued to grow.

Their trading business flourished and soon they built a two storied wooden house (Kota Ghar) in Kalimpong and used it as their base. In the 1800s, the Kalimpong hill station was one of the biggest trading towns in the North-East Himalayas. As a successful businessman, Shaba Pungchung soon earned the title Kazi of Jungtse, Sibsoo, southern Bhutan. In Kalimpong, Shaba Pungchung and Tsherim raised their family consisting of son Ugyen Dorji and daughter Wangmo.

In the mid 1800s, Bhutan was living in medieval times. There were very few people who knew the ways of the outside world. The concept of nationhood was poorly understood and there was always civil strife and constant rifts with the neighboring states. But the Trongsa Penlop⁶ Jigme Namgyel was emerging as a strongman and he had a vision for this tiny country. Over several decades, he and his family slowly consolidated power and became the symbol of the unity of Bhutan. It may be noted that the rule of the Penlop provided the very first occasion for the Bhutanese to be united after Zhabdrung's theocratic establishment saw an irreversible wane nearly two centuries after its establishment. English military intelligence reports⁷ have stated this fact, "But judging from the past history of Bhutan, which tells us that from the first establishment of their power to the present time, there has not been a single occasion on which they were a united people."

At this time, the Bhutanese were highly territorial and regionalized, and subject to heavy taxes. The common people spent a lot of time struggling to pay their taxes and avoid being raided by their local leader. An average Bhutanese neither had time nor energy to travel. But Jigme Namgyel was an exception and his travels took him

to various provinces of Bhutan. Jigme Namgyel knew the existence of other states and also acknowledged the presence of the British in India. But he continued to maintain his suspicion about their motives. It is highly likely that his confidential advisor planted this suspicion, an Indian gentleman who to this day is remembered as 'Padshah Raja' in Bumthang and Trongsa.

The 'Padshah Raja' was infact the Peshwa Raja Nana Saheb, one of the main leaders of the Indian Mutiny 1857 - 1858. The Peshwa Rajas were the hereditary Prime Ministers of the Maratha Kings who were the descendants of Sivaji. But they lost power to their Prime Ministers who became the virtual rulers of the Maratha Confederacy who before the British came had ruled the greater part of India. The Peshwa Raja Nana Saheb had been adopted by the Peshwa Bajirao II, the Peshwa at Poona whom the British deposed and banished to Bithoor in 1818. The British hated Nana Saheb but to the Indians, he was a hero and a memorial to him at Bithoor bears this inscription:

Knowing the Dangers,
He Embraced a Revolt,
His Sacrifice Shall Light our Path
Like an Eternal Flame.

In Bhutan, the Raja wore Bhutanese dress and spoke the local language. Of particular interest is the story behind the Raja's reason for coming to Bhutan. He slipped into Bhutan through Nepal after the mutiny of the Indian army in 1857 when there was a universal revolt against the British rule in India that lasted for two years. In 1864, when the British Government showed interest in visiting Bhutan, Jigme Namgyel warned them not to come. Bhutanese historians believe that Jigme Namgyel deputed Shaba Pungchung to meet the Envoy's mission headed by Sir Ashley Eden at Teesta, India. However, no western records have shown this.

To understand the Eden Bhutan mission, a little background is important. From 1852, there were many disputes on the boundary between Bengal and the Duars. This arose because of the weak Bhutanese government that could not prevent raids over the border into Bengal. So ten years earlier, at the request of the Bhutanese, the British had taken over the management of Ambree Fallacottah in Bengal. As the Bhutanese failed to gain control of the region, the British agreed to exercise control and forward portions of the revenues to Bhutan.

But the Bhutanese continued to raid these villages and did not heed the British warnings. Hence, in 1860, Ambree Fallacottah was annexed and the British ceased to forward the revenue to Bhutan. This did not help resolve the border disputes as raids were being made from Bengal into Bhutan as well as the reverse. Having had enough, the British decided to send Ashley Eden to Bhutan in 1863 to persuade Bhutan to sign a treaty.

The British envoy's mission to persuade the weak Bhutanese Government to sign a treaty favorable to the British interest was far from successful. The treaty was designed to regularize future relations with Bhutan. The Bhutanese were already not happy with the British occupying the Assam Duars, which are the flood plains south of Bhutan that separated it from British India. Eleven districts bordered on Bengal and were subject to Bhutan while seven bordered on Assam. Captain Pemberton's mission in 1837 to address the joint authority in the Assam Duars that led to constant disputes was not successful. Therefore, in 1841, the British annexed the seven duars and only agreed to pay annual compensation of Rupees 10,000 which was later raised to Rupees 12,000 in 1856.

Ashley Eden was fully aware of the history and the possibility of the Bhutanese being hostile. In addition to

the poor history of relationship with the British, the Bhutanese were preoccupied by internal strife and were already in a hostile mood. In all fairness, the British envoy was pre-warned not to visit. But, Eden being an imperialist forced his way to Punakha to meet Jigme Namgyel. In the Punakha Dzong, the imperialist suffered a humiliating treatment. Eden and his envoy were insulted beyond their wildest imagination. Eden personally suffered humiliation when the Penlop rubbed wet dough on his face, then pulled his hair and finally slapped him on the back. Similarly, another member of the mission, Dr. Simpson suffered similar humiliation. He had the residues of chewed betel nut thrown at his face. Eventually, Eden signed a treaty drawn up by the Bhutanese under duress and made a hurried retreat to India.

On this occasion, Eden and his team availed themselves of the service of Shaba Punchung to retreat from Bhutan and return safely to Darjeeling. Some historians also believe that Shaba Punchung saved Eden's life and considered him a friend; "Ugyen's father [Shaba Punchung] proved a good friend to Sir Ashley Eden, and on one occasion, probably saved his life."⁸

Bhutanese historians believe that it was during the Eden mission that Shaba Punchung introduced his nine year old son Ugyen Dorji to the British. In the words of one historian, "During the Ashley Eden Bhutan mission, Shaba Punchung recommended the service of his son Ugyen Dorji to the British. He explained that Ugyen could speak Hindi⁹ and being a Bhutanese, he would be the perfect man to liaise between the two countries." It is also believed that Ugyen Dorji accompanied his father to meet the Trade Mission in Teesta.

The failure of Eden's 1864 Bhutan mission was manifested in the most forgotten colonial war. First, as punishment for the insults to Eden, the Government of

India annexed Ambree Fallacottah permanently and withheld the annual payments. Then matters got worst when the Bhutanese refused to comply with the British request to release all their subjects who were being held in captivity in Bhutan. Hence, in November 1864, the British waged war against Bhutan and annexed all the Bengal Duars. An army of 10,000 men advanced from Dalimkote to Dewangiri and occupied the hill posts guarding the duars. The Bhutanese counter attacked and captured two guns that are on display in the Paro National Museum today. By March 1865, the British with a reinforcement of 3,300 additional men launched fresh attacks on the Bhutanese militia.

The Bhutanese forces were massacred in Yongla Goenpa in south-east Bhutan. The Bhutanese then sued for peace, and agreed to cede the eleven Bengal Duars. A treaty was negotiated and signed in January 1866. An annual compensation of Rupees 50,000 for the Duars was also agreed upon. But, the British always used the subsidy as a lever to tweak deals and to wield power over the Bhutanese. History shows that the subsidy was often withheld or increased depending on the degree of Bhutanese compliance with the British. In fact, in 1868 and 1880, the subsidy was withheld until they settled minor disputes.

As a token of appreciation to Shaba Punchung for his services, the British Government gave him land in Kalimpong where he and his family continued to live. The land was 13 acres and rent free. "The land was gifted to his wife (of Shaba Punchung) by Sir Ashley Eden in return for services rendered to Eden in connection with the expedition to Bhutan which was followed by the annexation of the Kalimpong district from Bhutan."¹⁰

Early Forays into Life

From a young age, Shaba Puchung's son Ugyen Dorji showed extraordinary skills. In 1865, when Mr. A.W. Paul, I.C.S. started the work of settling the newly annexed Kalimpong district, "He engaged Ugyen Dorji, then a lad (of 10 years) as an interpreter for his survey party."¹¹ Even historian E.C. Dozey was impressed with Ugyen Dorji's skills,¹² "The lad Ugyen Dorji in the capacity of interpreter rendered valuable assistance to Mr. Paul, I.C.S. and Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling who had been deputed to organize the newly acquired District."

Ugyen Dorji inherited his business acumen from his father. From a young age, he saw opportunities. As Sikkim, Kalimpong and Darjeeling fell on the silk route, they became growing trading hubs. Traders from the Bengal and Assam flood plains came to the hill stations to buy their merchandise and frequently returned to replenish their stocks. In the absence of motor roads, all commodities had to be carried by mules, horses or ponies.

Ugyen Dorji traded in horses, which he brought from Bhutan and Tibet. After spending ten years in horse trading, he returned to his family home in Kalimpong in 1888, just before the Tibetan war when for the first time, the British stepped foot in Tibet and already disputes over trading routes arose which eventually culminated in the big 1904 war.

"In 1888, on the outbreak of hostilities between ourselves and the Tibetans, Shaba Puchung, father of Ugyen Kazi, warned the Tibetans of the consequences of refusing to come to terms; and on behalf of Bhutan, refused assistance to the Tibetans."¹³ Furthermore, Shaba Puchung in his wisdom advised the Tibetans to settle the issue through negotiation. He also warned the Tibetan Government of the British army's military superiority.

It is important to bring to attention the probable reason why the Bhutanese did not fear the Tibetans as the Sikkimese did. The 'very confidential' Bell's diary on his mission to Bhutan in 1910 attributes the reason. "It is interesting to note what I have heard, from the Maha Gongzim-Kumar of Sikkim, that the Bhutanese priests are not dependent on the Tibetan hierarchy for instructions, but are taught by their own superiors. It is the dependence of this kind that renders the Maha Gongzim, the Maha Gongzim-Kumar and the monasteries of Sikkim so much afraid of offending the ruling powers of Tibet."

As the war broke out with Tibet, "Mr. Paul (Political Officer) sought the help of his old friend Ugyen, and found him invaluable. In 1898, the British appointed Ugyen Dorji as the Bhutan agent. In 1900, the spiritual and secular leaders of Bhutan appointed Ugyen Dorji as the Bhutanese representative with the title of Kutshab¹⁴ with the responsibility to govern the whole southern borders with the headquarter in Pasakha. The appointment letter is endorsed by the Zhabdrung, Desi, Trongsa Penlop and Wangdue Phodrang Dzongpon (governor).

The edict states, "The representative is to survey and maintain the former demarcation of the southern border from Amartala in the east up to Daga in the west. The representative is responsible for settling Nepali tax-payers and appointing their heads. Unless they pay the annual tax to the Tongsa [Trongsa] Penlop, no activity is allowed in the territory. Nobody except the representative is allowed to settle tax-payers in the territory."¹⁵ The sealed edict empowered Ugyen Dorji as the supreme authority in the southern region. Further, the edict restricted other governors from collecting taxes in these regions.

The edict also ensures the powers that it provided would be hereditary for the Dorji family. But, this hereditary nomination is subjected to termination the

moment the Dorjis cease to bring benefit for religious affairs and is of no service to the Government, in which case the edict empowers the Trongsa Penlop to take appropriate action. So, now Ugyen Dorji had two masters, the British and the Bhutanese governments. But there is enough evidence to suggest that Gongzim Ugyen Dorji was not a trained puppet. He was a clear cut individual with his own convictions and ideas, and was quite capable of dispensing decisions on his own which were invariably in the interest of the Bhutanese statehood under a strong central authority that only his master Ugyen Wangchuck could provide.

“Gongzim Ugyen Dorji was no ordinary man. He was a tall, handsome figure, and was one of the most striking and picturesque personalities in this part of the Himalayas. His manners were kind, graceful and courteous, and he impressed even the casual observers as being a true gentleman.”¹⁶ In addition, Gongzim Ugyen Dorji developed a reputation in Kalimpong for being a generous man. “His donation to public institutions were many and lavish, while his private beneficiaries were numberless and done with a stealth which reflects the injunction – *Let not thy right hand know what thy left hand doeth.*”¹⁷

Ugyen Dorji was familiar with the ways of the British and they were comfortable with him. In 1899, Ugyen Dorji visited Phari, Tibet. On the request of Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, he wrote a letter to the 13th Dalai Lama requesting the opening of a trade market at Phari. As the Dalai Lama was non-committal, Ugyen Dorji wrote another letter to the Dalai Lama with a request to comply with the British. He also subtly warned about the consequences of being non-committal.¹⁸ Another letter was sent, this time through Captain Kennion, the Assistant to the Tibet Resident in Kashmir to the Dalai Lama. But, this letter was returned to

the sender. At that time, the Tibetans were wary and fearful of any contact with the outside world.

It is necessary to give a brief background of the British interest in fostering a relation with Tibet. 'In 1768, the Court of Directors in London instructed her officer in India to trade with the frontiers namely Tibet, Nepal and Western China. At that time, the British had no contact with Bengal's northern neighbors, Tibet and Bhutan. The British were not aware of the exploits of the missionaries who travelled in these regions 150 years ago. Warren Hasting became the new governor of Bengal in 1772 and was keen to comply with the London instructions. So in May 1774, the Governor sent George Bogle to Bhutan and Tibet to open up trade.'¹⁹

In June 1901, at the request of Lord Curzon (r.1899-1905), Ugyen Dorji traveled to Tibet to meet the Dalai Lama and deliver Lord Curzon's letter. 'This trip is interesting as Ugyen Dorji escorts two elephants, two peacocks, and a leopard that the Dalai Lama had purchased in India.'²⁰ But, these animals were not sufficient to change the Dalai Lama's mind. He feared that by accepting the letter, he would provoke the Chinese. It was becoming clearer that Tibet's foreign policy was being conducted through the Chinese intermediaries. Ugyen Dorji returned the unopened letter to Lord Curzon who concluded that he was a Tibetan spy.

Ironically, Ugyen Dorji suffered two blows. 'Like the English, the Tibetans too suspected Ugyen Dorji's intentions and imposed an embargo on his proposed visit in September. In fact in 1902, the Dalai Lama personally wrote a letter to the Trongsa Penlop, Ugyen Wangchuck requesting him not to employ him as he was a British spy. But in 1910, Ugyen Dorji's name was cleared and differences were reconciled. Later in 1912, Ugyen Dorji hosted the Dalai Lama in his house in Kalimpong. The

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji

Dalai Lama had fled from his country following the Chinese invasion of Tibet. In Kalimpong, the Dalai Lama confirmed the attempted delivery of Lord Curzon's letter.²¹ By then, far from being accused as a Tibetan spy, written British records show that Ugyen Dorji was trusted by both the British and the Bhutanese, as well as by the Tibetans.

2

Journey Beyond Frontiers

Under the Wing of Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck

Ugyen Dorji was religious man and used his fortune generously in the pursuit of religion. He was a patron of the Pelden Drukpaï Tenpa Rinpoche and had great reverence for Zhabdrung Jigme Chogyel (1862-1904) who was the religious leader of Bhutan. His generous gifts to the lams and his faith in Buddhism elevated his position in Bhutan. It is obvious that the Zhabdrung held Ugyen Dorji in high esteem and desired him to serve in the court of the Trongsa Penlop as a minister.

According to one source of written history,²² the Zhabdrung encouraged Ugyen Dorji to present himself to Ugyen Wangchuck. But another source²³ records that Ugyen Wangchuck summoned Ugyen Dorji to his court in Bumthang. Penlop Ugyen Wangchuck had learnt of an unusually generous offering that a Bhutanese businessman living in Kalimpong had made to Zhabdrung. Far from having materialistic attachments, he was deeply interested in religion. This quality had a bearing on the Penlop. Ugyen Dorji, although exposed to the British culture, was a Bhutanese not influenced by its grandeurs and finesse. In fact, he received initiations and Buddhist teachings from Zhabdrung, the essence of which was to remove desires.

But both accounts are not clear about the exact dates of this historical meeting of the great architect of Bhutan and his great supporter. What is clear from both records that have details of their meeting is that this meeting took place in 1890 in Bumthang in Kurje monastery. Bumthang is located in central Bhutan and is home to many important monasteries. The 8th century Kurje monastery is one of the oldest and the holiest Buddhist sites in Bhutan.

Various historical records show that in this lengthy meeting, the two greatest Bhutanese minds of the time connected well. They had had many common interests and “in terms of thinking and world view, they were kindred spirits who thought alike and shared the same vision.”²⁴ At the meeting, both were happy to discover they were also related. When Penlop Ugyen Wangchuck asked about the family background of Ugyen Dorji, the latter replied, “My mother is from Tsentong, in Paro. My father Sherab Pungchung was the son of Dungkar Choje Pala Gyeltshen.” Ugyen Wangchuck said, “Then our fathers are brothers and we are of the same blood.”²⁵ At the meeting in Kurje, Ugyen Dorji pledged himself completely to the Trongsa Penlop. “Ugyen had then pledged complete loyalty and *Damtshig*, with body, mind and speech, and said that he would serve the Lord with everything including material and physical resources, and without caring for his own life.”²⁶ Seven years later in 1897, Ugyen Dorji signed his first will which reflects this devotion to his master, the Trongsa Penlop. The will states that in the event he died without any children and his only sister dies before him, he surrenders his property to the Trongsa Penlop. “I give all my property to *Kushoo* Ugyen Wangchuck, the Penlop of Trongsa (Trongsa) in Bhootan (Bhutan).”²⁷

Further up on the Road: The Changlimithang Battle

The Trongsa Penlop was not only a good judge of people's characters, but also knew their potentials. He kept quality people of unequivocal loyalty in his court and promoted them to serve in strategic positions. History shows that this trait of the Penlop would save his life also. The Penlop trusted Ugyen Dorji and used his skills as he immediately sent him on a mission to Tibet. "The first commission the Penlop appears to have entrusted to him was to negotiate the return of the exiles who had fled to Tibet in 1885."²⁸

The exiles were the former Thimphu Dzungpon Alu Dorji and his influential relatives. Currently available written history of Bhutan attributes the exile of this prominent man to his plot to kill the Penlop in conjunction with Phuntsho Dorji, the Punakha Dzungpon. According to one version of history, the problem started in 1884 when the Penlop learnt of their plot to kill him. Ironically, Alu Dorji was one of his two adopted brothers as willed by his late father and hence, was a trusted man of the Penlop serving in a strategic location with an important rank. The problem heightened when Phuntsho Dorji lured the Trongsa Penlop's wife Dechen Wangmo. But the last straw was when these two governors, who controlled central Bhutan, withheld the Trongsa Penlop's share of the annual British subsidy. The British paid this subsidy to Bhutan for their annexation of the Duars.

But recent interviews²⁹ with the descendants of these men raise doubts about the two governors' plot to kill the Trongsa Penlop. The new information reveals that the plot was hatched by the retainers of Zhabdrung who was then the spiritual head. In the absence of any dates, 1885 is assumed to be when this unfortunate incident took place.

It is believed that Alu Dorji was intoxicated and his seal was stolen by a retainer of the Zhabdrung. In those days, seal was used in lieu of signature and so, was closely guarded.

The Zhabdrung's men carefully drafted a letter to the Trongsa Zimpon Chang Chhoelo with four hundred Rupees. The letter simply stated, "Kill the Trongsa Penlop and you will be his successor," and had Alu Dorji's seal. Alu Dorji's fate was sealed. Of relevance is the fact that both Alu Dorji and Zimpon Chang were from the same valley (Chang) in Thimphu. But what the plotter failed to envision was that the Zimpon was a loyal subject of the Penlop. When he received the letter, he immediately rushed to Buli, Bumthang where the Trongsa Penlop was supervising the preparatory works for cultivation of buck wheat. This incident acts as further evidence of the Penlop's people skills.

The Penlop's initial disbelief in the betrayal turned into shock when the letter and the money were produced as evidence. Hence, the Penlop instructed his Zimpon to summon the two governors to Sha Ridha in Western Bhutan. Alu Dorji quickly learnt of the letter, and fearing his inability to clarify the case with his powerful adopted brother, chose to send Zimpon Sha Ridhap Sigay with a letter to the Penlop. The Penlop became infuriated because he was not only greeted with a lower ranking officer, but more because of the disobedience of his officer. Hence the Penlop prepared to wage war against the governor. It must be mentioned that the Penlop wielded supreme authority and his word was the law. This was necessary to quash all the internal broils.

Although a second perspective of this important event has just recently emerged, the undisputed fact remains that in 1885, the Trongsa Penlop with 2,140 fully armed men marched from central Bhutan to Punakha. Both the

sources also agree that the Thimphu Dzungpon, Alu Dorji fled to Tibet.

On 14th March 1885, the Penlop captured Simtokha Dzong to engage in the last civil war of Bhutan. First, the Penlop engaged his enemies in Punakha and then in Thimphu. A fortnight later, the contending parties held a meeting in Thimphu to consider the terms, but at that meeting, the Trongsa Penlop's adherents, Paro Penlop Daw Penjor and his followers treacherously attacked the opposite party. The Punakha governor was fatally wounded and many of the Thimphu governor's men died in the bloody battle of Changlimithang. This famous battle ground is the flattest land in Thimphu and today it is used as the national stadium where all national celebrations take place.

In July, shortly after the Changlimithang battle, Alu Dorji fled to Tibet and took political refuge. However, in the process, the Penlop consolidated his power completely, and as a result, Bhutan enjoyed a period of peace and freedom from internal broils.

But it seems that the Penlop was not comfortable with the exiled governor taking political refuge in Tibet. Again recent oral testimony suggests that the exiled governor requested the Tibetans to facilitate a compromise. According to this new testimony, the Tibetans sent three letters to the Penlop in their efforts to reach an agreement. This source also reveals that it was only after repeated pleas that the exiled governor, and his family and supporters were allowed to enter Bhutan.

But available written sources say otherwise, stating that the Penlop sent Ugyen Dorji on his first Tibet mission to bring the governor's party back. It was learnt that in Tibet, Alu Dorji had become associated with the Chinese Amban and the Kalon Lama, the regent of Tibet. Because of the former dissension, another war was about to take

place in Bhutan. Ugyen Dorji then went to Lhasa and made friends with them. He explained to them the background of what had happened and managed to settle the misunderstanding. As a result of his efforts, two Chinese representatives and the Dronyer of the Tibetan government came to Phari where Paro Penlop Dawa Penjor and Zhung Dronyer Tshewang Penjor were deputed from the Bhutanese government to sign an agreement. It was decided to cede to Alu Dorji the regions under the jurisdictions of Haa Dzong, Gasa Dzong and Lingshi Dzong. Thereafter, Gongzim Tandin Ngedrup, the younger brother of Alu Dorji was appointed as Haa Drungpa, Pusola as Gasa Dzongpon and Kawang Dorji as Lingshi Dzongpon. To avoid any further trouble to the Bhutanese government, Tshewang,³⁰ brother of Dechen Zangmo was posted in Kalimpong where he enjoyed his former autonomy under Ugyen Dorji's skilful surveillance.³¹ Ugyen Dorji successfully worked out a deal.

Both sources confirm that the governor returned to Bhutan. Both sources also agree that the governor's former relationship with the Penlop was restored. His estate was returned, but he no longer wielded power in the central government.

Kutshab Ugyen Dorji

Not long after the Kurjey meeting, the Penlop invested Ugyen Dorji as the Kutshab (ambassador) of Pasakha, a bordering town under present day Chukha district. As the Kutshab, one of Ugyen Dorji's responsibilities was to acquaint his master of worldly and state affairs. Formerly, the Gyadrungs had been appointed to govern the southern border areas with India. As these representatives had been responsible for a great deal of troubles and instigations, the Bhutanese and Indian

governments fought repeatedly. As a result, Bhutan lost a large part of its territory in the south.

Penlop Ugyen Wangchuck thought it was extremely important to appoint an honest and reliable representative from a good family background. Kazi Ugyen Dorji, who had for a long time been staying in Kalimpong, knew foreign languages and customs, and was reliable and friendly with everybody, was the best choice. Therefore, on the 15th day of the 8th Lunar month in 1900, Ugyen Dorji was appointed as the Bhutanese representative to govern the southern border areas with India. The order was issued with the seals of Zhabdrung Rinpoche, the Desi, the Trongsa Penlop and Wangdue Phodrang Dzungpon, and it read as follows:

“The representative is to survey and maintain the former demarcation of the southern border from Amartala in the East up to Daga in the west. The representative is responsible for settling Nepali tax payer and appointing their heads. Unless they pay the annual tax to the Trongsa Penlop, no activity is allowed in their territory.

The representative is endowed with the supreme authority over the merchants, thieves, and robbers in the border region. They, Wangdue Phodrang Dzungpon and others, are not authorized to collect taxes like *muri*, *bhanadha* and so on from the residents between Tsirang and Amartala.

Representative Ugyen Dorji and his descendants are entitled to keep the title of the Kutshab as long as their service is judged good for the religious affairs of Zhabdrung Rinpoche and the administration of the Desi. If the representative brings no benefit for the religious affairs and no service to the government, the order of the nomination will be withdrawn by the Trongsa Penlop who will take over the authority.”³²

In addition to being appointed as the Bhutanese ambassador, seven years later in 1897, the British appointed Kutshab Dorji as the Bhutan agent. In the capacity as the Bhutan agent, the British used the services of Kutshab Dorji as a middle man with the Tibetans to negotiate and secure trade concessions.

But the Tibetans refused to negotiate with Kutshab Ugyen Dorji. Then he may have cautioned of possible use of force by the British. The Tibetans were friendly with the Paro Penlop, Daw Penjor and sought his military support in the event of any military clashes. The Tibetans were confident as they had the support of the Paro Penlop who was a loyal adherent of the Trongsa Penlop.

Kutshab Dorji, having lived in the frontier towns and dealing with the British, had gained insight and understanding of the concept of nationhood. Kutshab Dorji's business acumen, developed as a horse trader, enhanced his negotiating skills which became his forte.

The Kutshab enjoyed trust of the Penlop and was trusted with all his correspondence. There is sufficient evidence in the form of British records of regular exchange of letters between the Penlop and the British. So, Kutshab Dorji convinced the Penlop to avoid military confrontations with the British.

Kutshab Dorji's explanation was, "The British are the strongest in the world and the Tibetans can never match them. If we Bhutanese back the Tibetans, Bhutan which is now independent will be under British control in the future." He also explained to the Penlop the importance of Bhutan being on friendly terms with the Imperialist forces.

As Kutshab Dorji and the Penlop were intellectually compatible, the Penlop did not need much convincing of this cordial arrangement with the British. The Penlop consented to the Kutshab's suggestion that he should travel to Tibet to negotiate between the Tibetans and the

British. The Penlop's consent ensured Bhutan's sovereignty and strengthened it further.

The Kutshab faced another problem which was to convince the central monk body and the Bhutan council to allow the Penlop to travel to Tibet. The monk body and council were wary that the proposed trip would put the Penlop's life at risk. It is likely that these influential people dismissed the Tibet problem as an internal matter that did not have any impact on Bhutan. In hindsight, it is likely that they did not understand the implication this would have for Bhutan's sovereignty.

Expecting such opposition, Gongzim Ugyen Dorji had already prepared a rejoinder. To allay their fears, Kutshab Ugyen Dorji arranged a big puja which convinced the council and the monk body to let the Penlop travel to Tibet. The fact that Gongzim Ugyen Dorji was successful in convincing the central monk body is a demonstration of his strong leadership quality, validating the saying, 'Think global but act local.' Gongzim Ugyen Dorji was a practical man who did not build castles in the air and had the ability to get to the bottom of things.

This laid the foundation for a strong relationship between a weak and tiny Kingdom, and the strong and powerful British Government.

The Youngusband Mission

History has recorded the Trongsa Penlop's epic journey to Tibet as the Youngusband mission. A deeper background to this bloody incident is important to understand its complexities. In 1903, Lord Curzon, the viceroy of India suspected that the Russian army was moving into Tibet with Chinese blessings. The British did not like this as it impinged their trade interest in Tibet. It must be made clear that by then, the British

foreign policy of expansion of their colonies had ceased. They were pursuing trade interests. But the Tibetans did not trust any outsiders and were not willing to have any contact with them. Amongst the many reasons for their skepticism to foreigners was their fear of upsetting the Chinese. Later the Tibetans also did not like what the Europeans wrote about their hygiene and all other unpleasant things while ignoring their 2000 years old civilization, religion, culture, medicine, etc.

So, in an unfortunate turn of events, the British sent an imperialist force led by Colonel Younghusband to Tibet to force the Tibetans to sign a treaty to protect the British trade interests. It was against this background of a looming confrontation between the world's greatest superpower, and a hapless and perhaps ignorant neighbour that the Trongsa Penlop went as a negotiator.

In 1905, the Trongsa Penlop traveled to Tibet at the behest of the British to mediate between the British Colonel Younghusband and the Tibetans. Kutshab Dorji was one of the fifty principal servants who accompanied the Penlop to Lhasa. Wangdue Phodrang Dronyer Kunzang Domchung and Tshongpon (merchant) Dargye from Trashigang were also a part of the retinue.

In Lhasa, the Tibetans resisted the British forces and hostilities ensued. Colonel Younghusband had a superior army that was not only well disciplined but was also equipped with modern firepower. Photos with the Royal Geographic Society in London show the ruthless massacre of over 700 Tibetans.

The Trongsa Penlop intervened and mediated peace between the English and the Tibetans. On their way to Lhasa, it is said that Kazi Ugyen Dorji had met Colonel Younghusband, the head of the British Expedition, and used his skills to discuss the matter with him in advance. As a result of this prior discussion, the British

representative agreed to the proposed terms and a treaty was signed between the British and the Tibetan governments. This not only prevented any further Tibetan casualties, but also helped prevent the ancient monasteries from being razed to the ground by the British artillery.

Claude White and Castles in the Air

Hence, eleven months before the coronation of the first King, on 1st January 1907, the British granted Kutshab Dorji the personal title of Rai Bahadur. At that time, Rai was used to refer to the rulers of Sindh and in the major Islamic state of Hyderabad in India. It was one of the ranks for the aristocracy.

In the same year, Claude White became the first British Political Officer to visit Bhutan. Unlike his British compatriots Pemberton and Eden, he was warmly received. White had travelled with Younghusband and was familiar with the Bhutanese. Hence he was successful in conveying his formal appreciation to the Trongsa Penlop and his team. The Penlop was noble enough to accept the insignia of the Knight Commander of the Indian Empire as an acknowledgement of British gratitude for his support in fostering peaceful relations with its neighbors.

It is without a doubt that Rai Bahadur Dorji played a great supporting role to his master in mediating the agreement, which helped the British and the Bhutanese to develop more trust in each other. The Penlop sent Rai Bahadur Dorji to greet the Younghusband team halfway to Paro. The British were awe struck by the Bhutanese capability for hospitality as they were greeted in a grand traditional reception with colours, sounds and splendor. Rai Bahadur Kutshab Dorji greeted the team “with scarves as well as with fresh mules and ponies for all the party.”³³

In 1906, the Trongsa Penlop made the first of only two visits to Calcutta. Rai Bahadur Dorji accompanied his master on this historic trip. In Calcutta, they formally met the Prince of Wales and the Viceroy. A photo shows Rai Bahadur Dorji proudly dressed in national costume with regal head gear standing tall but being protective of his master. The various meetings during the Calcutta trip further cemented and deepened the trust between Britain and Bhutan.

The trip also deepened the personal relationship between the master and the servant. The trip left a lasting impression on the Penlop who conferred on Ugyen Dorji the title of Haa Drungpa. Now the successful horse trader Ugyen Dorji's title grew again. The full title was Haa Drungpa, Rai Bahadur, Kutshab, Bhutan Agent and Kazi (HDRBKBAK).

3

Serving the King

The First King of Bhutan

After the Calcutta trip, on 17th December 1907, Bhutan elected her first hereditary monarchy. The Trongsa Penlop and his father Jigme Namgyel had already paved a peaceful way for the establishment of the new system of hereditary monarchy. The British foreign policy of consolidating their power and their growing interest in trade were in favor of dealing with a stable and peaceful Bhutan. In addition to the vision and statesmanship of the first King, it was also in the interest of the British to see the Trongsa Penlop become the symbol of unity in Bhutan.

The Bhutanese too were ready and comfortable with the Trongsa Penlop. “A final push was however necessary to break with the past and establish a new system of government, and at this crucial juncture, Gongzim Ugyen Dorji stepped in and addressed a letter to the members of the State Council (Zhung Lhengye). The letter was received with joy and acclamation by the members of the State Council. There was country-wide rejoicing and happiness among the common people when they heard about the letter for they realized that the establishment of a hereditary monarchy with a wise and benevolent King would usher in a new era of peace, stability, happiness and prosperity in the country.”³⁴

The letter is as follows:

“At the lotus feet of the Golden Throne and the virtuous and precious councilors, I submit this

petition with three-fold (body, speech and mind) respect and prostration.

You live safe and sound because your bodies radiate like the sun, and the virtues of your deeds for the benefits of the others emit in hundred directions. I express heartily my deep gratitude.

Our country is without a king. As for the Desi, there is no rule to determine who should ascend this position. Therefore, continuous instability has been prevailing in our country. In the past, the Desis were elected from the Lopens, but it was difficult for them to exercise authority according to the laws, both civil and religious. However, up to now, (there has been) hardly any relation with the other countries. All the affairs have been solely domestic in nature. There has been no need to settle by correspondence the important issues pertaining to Tibet and India. That is why whoever, from among the Penlops of different regions became the Desi, has treated the affairs with indifference.

Now the time has changed. From now on, interactions with other countries will only increase and we will be required to make the perfect correspondence with them by letter.

The Desi will remain as before and he will settle the domestic affair and maintain the Monk Body. In addition to that, the Trongsa Penlop is a person who will be of benefit to both the civil and religious matters under the Zhabdrung Rinpoche and contribute firmly to the development of Dharma.

The Mighty British Empire whose authority is as high as the sky conferred on him the title of K.C.I.E. This title is equivalent to Lord Sahib which is conferred to a person of our country from outside. We should

consider giving him a corresponding title. From long ago, it is the Trongsa Penlop who has been keeping the correspondence by letters with other countries. Therefore, if we elect him as the King of Bhutan for the good of all, it will be beneficial to the family, by appropriate descendants and relatives of the Trongsa Penlop. Also in this way, nobody in the future will do harm to the dual system of Zhabdrung Rinpoche. Even if development of the dharma is not achieved, the allowance from the Government of India and other territory will be maintained. Instead, if we remain idle without taking any measure, although the peace in our country will be maintained as long as the Trongsa Penlop is alive, who knows what will happen once he is no more?

Therefore, now that the (British) Government has conferred on him the title, we have to respond immediately without staying idle. If we elect him as King of Bhutan now, the British Government will assist us as long as his lineage continues and no harm will come to us.

I request the Desi, the Je Khenpo and others to consider and examine my proposition and take decision subsequently. Thinking that, it is appropriate to make an immediate sign to the outside (world) and that this act will result in bringing benefits to our dual system of government, I have made this petition and there is no second thought. For the time being, we master and servant, are here and assume the well being of the Monk Body, Council and Penlops of different regions. However, neither of us has the immutable body and we are anxious about the future of the country. I do not present this petition simply because I want to give a

higher title to the Trongsa Penlop. I swear this before the protective deities of the Zhabdrung Rinpoche.

If the title is granted with pride from a big country, then it is high. But if we do it alone, it cannot be high. Now, other small principalities in India are astonished that Bhutan, among others, received such a high title from the British Empire. So, we should act. While we are independent, we can do what we want to do, but once we become dependent, it will be difficult to do so.

You are more knowledgeable and thoughtful than me, and I humbly request you to discuss with each other and decide the matter. I, the Haa Drungpa, present my petition for perusal of the assembly with un-obscured wisdom, on this 10th day of the 7th Lunar month in 1906 A.D.”³⁵

Another interesting background is that after the death of the religious head Zhabdrung Jigme Chogyel, there was no successor. The last civil regent Chogley Trulku Yeshey Ngedrup (1851-1917) also retired around the same time. It became clear that a potentially debilitating political vacuum was beginning to emerge. It is likely that this prompted Kazi Ugyen Dorji, “most probably with the agreement of Penlop Ugyen Wangchuck, to write a petition to the State Council asking them to consider making Ugyen Wangchuck the King of Bhutan.”³⁶

So, on 17th December 1907, the Bhutanese people elected Trongsa Penlop Ugyen Wangchuck as the first hereditary King of the Wangchuck Dynasty. Gongzim Dorji can again be seen pictured standing tall between John Claude White and his master.

Deb Zimpon Ugyen Dorji

What Ugyen Dorji may not have realized at that moment was that with the change of political situation in Bhutan, his official title would grow further. The British Political Officer referred to him as Rai Ugyen Kazi Bahadur.

In 1910, the British Political Officer Charles Bell visited Bhutan. On 7th January, the first King hosted a lunch in Punakha for the Bell party. After lunch, the King ordered all his councilors to retire along with the visiting Captain Kennedy. The King discussed with Bell various matters and the future of Bhutan.

An important factor for the development of Bhutan that the two men discussed that day was the appointment of Ugyen Dorji as the Deb Zimpon, an important post that carries a seat in the Bhutan Council. This discussion not only had a personal bearing for the Dorji family, but also had a big impact on Bhutan. The King told Bell of his intention of “appointing Ugyen Dorji as Deb Zimpon,” and transferring the present Deb Zimpon to the post of Zhung Dronyer.³⁷

Bell’s diary reports the details of the discussion. “He told me that he thought of appointing Rai Ugyen Kazi Bahadur as Deb Zimpon.” Bell’s notes also record the duties of the new Deb Zimpon. “As Deb Zimpon, Rai Ugyen Kazi’s duties would be to look after the Bhutan frontiers, and whenever I or any other important officials whether British, Chinese or Tibetans come to Bhutan, to conduct them before the Maha Gongzim.”

The notes further confirm the King’s trust in Ugyen Dorji as a loyal subject. “He said that of all his subordinates, he found Rai Ugyen Kazi Bahadur to be the most trust worthy.” During that era, it was the tradition and custom for the secular leader, the Deb Gongzim to

appoint a brother as the Deb Zimpon. When the Deb did not have a brother, the most faithful servant was given the post.

Bhutanese protocols do not allow subjects to hold a conversation with their rulers unless directed. So, this may be why the King felt more comfortable holding frank and lengthy discussions with Bell. The King sought the views of Bell while maintaining that he had not discussed nor informed anyone of this appointment. Bell was supportive of this appointment but wanted to know whether Ugyen Dorji would have to move to Bhutan. The King assured him that Ugyen Dorji would continue to remain in Kalimpong and his duties would be the same. The only change would be his title. Bell noted in his diary, "It may be noted that Rai Ugyen Kazi Bahadur is already in charge of Bhutan's Foreign Affairs generally." There is no mention whether or who the interpreter for this discussion was.

Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck wished to give a higher rank to the Haa Drungpa Ugyen Dorji in view of his incomparable service rendered to Bhutan and to the King himself. At that time, there was no post higher than a member of the Lhengye Zhungtshog (Council of Ministers). Among the four minister level members, the Gongzim was the one who worked closest to the Head of State. So, Ugyen Wangchuck decided to appoint him as the Gongzim. The appointment order read as follows:

To the very knowledgeable Haa Drunpga.

From long ago, you have rendered excellent services as agent between the government of India and Bhutan. Further, you worked honestly for the benefit of the Drukpa School of Buddhism in Bhutan, and in particular you rendered unparallel services to me. In view of this, it is more natural that you deserve a higher rank. Yet, in the system of the present institution, there is no title higher than the Gongzim.

Now that I have accepted the role of a King, the principal pillar of the state, and the Zimpon being the closest person to the (King), the title of the Gongzim is conferred on you. Since you have to represent me in various places and congregations, this title is more appropriate. Therefore, you are asked to accept this title for which the auspicious date and time have been decided by me. This order is enclosed with the following ceremonial gifts from me, the King.

Twenty one pieces of dyed ceremonial gift items of merchandise.

- One load of *Thare* (textile)
- One load of *Pangkhen majam gyenma* (textile)
- One load of cotton
- One box of *Drugnyipa* tea
- Sixty Rupees as substitute for butter
- Two hundred Rupees as substitute for horse
- One *Aikapore gho* made of *bura* (raw silk)
- One *Lungserma gho* made of *bura* (raw silk)
- One cloth of white *bura* as substitute for innerwear
- One *Kabne* made of *drutsi* (fine silk)

The letter of appointment, together with the above ceremonial gift items was issued in 1908.

The present were topped with five categories of clothing pieces including a *Khamar Kabne* (traditional scarf with red stripes over white background) and a note that said “I wish that your descendants will continuously retain this rank from now on.”³⁸

The annual report on the relations between the British Government and Bhutan during the year 1910-11 confirms the intention of the first King. “During the year under report, the pay of Rai Ugyen Kazi Bahadur was raised from

Rs 200 to Rs 350 and the Maha Gongzim (First King) of Bhutan conferred on him (Ugyen Kazi Bahadur) the title and position of Deb Zimpon for arranging friendly relations between the British Government and the Bhutan Durbar. The formal scarf of appointment was sent by the King on the 2nd Bhutanese month corresponding to March - April. It may be noted here that after Ugyen Dorji became the Gongzim, his son Sonam Tobgye was made the Haa Drungpa at the tender age of 13. By now, Ugyen Dorji's full list of titles was: Deb Zimpon, Haa Drungpa, Rai Bahadur, Kutshab, Bhutan Agent and Kazi (DZHDRBKBKAK).

The first King in his meeting with Bell took the opportunity to thank him for granting land in Kalimpong and then requested his assistance in building the Bhutan House. "His Highness (First King) and I discussed certain matters. He thanked the Government of India for the grant of land at Kalimpong for the official residence of the Bhutan Agent and asked that the wood required for the building might be given free of royalty from the Government forest."³⁹

On 25th January 1910, Bell and his party were given a grand farewell. Bell was particularly elated as he received one of the five gold medals struck to commemorate the coronation of the first King. The other four were sent to Mr A.W. Paul, C.I.E, Claude White, Colonel Francis Younghusband and General Sir J.R.L. Macdonald. Bell's happiness was further heightened when he received three scarves of different color instead of the usual single white scarf. This observation was made in his diary.

Bell was escorted by Deb Zimpon. While leaving Punakha, the party met the ex-Druk Desi (rulers of Bhutan before monarchy) Chogley Trulku Yeshey Ngedrup on the road. During an informal chat, Bell learnt that the former ruler was on his way to request the King to restore him as the Deb Gongzim. It seemed that the ex-ruler had no idea

of the Trongsa Penlop's vision for Bhutan. Ignorantly, the ex-ruler offered Ugyen Dorji the post of Deb Zimpon with a condition that he would use his influence to secure his post as the ruler again. What he did not realize was that the King had already decided to end the rule of the Desi. Hence, the 57th Desi, Chogley Trulku Yeshey Ngedrup became the last in line of the civil regents. Historical records indicate that till 1906, Bhutan had fifty seven Desis (secular rulers) and that twenty two of them were either assassinated or deposed by rivals. Another interesting fact is that in 1864 alone, there were four Desis.

Bell met Bhutan's civil regent twice. When the regent died in 1917, Bell in his confidential diary recollected him as 'a simple man of saintly disposition' who died six years after he retired in 1911 as the spiritual head, to which he was appointed. It is likely that after his meeting with the first King, the ex-Deb Gongzim was convinced that the institution of Deb Gongzim was redundant, hence ending the rule of these Deb Gongzims.

On Bell's exit from Bhutan on 7th February 1910, he called on the Paro Penlop who he learnt was not only a staunch Buddhist, but a curious one. In the meeting, Bell was put in an embarrassing position when the Penlop informed him of the breach of an agreement for exchange of captives that was signed by Claude White, the Penlop himself, the Deputy Commissioner of Jalapaiguri district and Kazi Ugyen.

Delhi Coronation Durbar

In 1911, the first King attended the Delhi Coronation Durbar of His Majesty the King-Emperor. The Deb Zimpon Ugyen Dorji was one of the 13 notable Bhutanese who formed the entourage. There they met with

members of the British Government with whom they were able to strengthen the friendship between the two countries. In this way, the two Ugyens, King and Minister, ensured that Bhutan made its appearance on the international scene and thus, the name of Bhutan became known to other nations. At the Durbar, the Deb Zimpon also attended all the receptions hosted by the King Emperor and the Viceroy. In a special event on 12th December 1911, the King-Emperor invested Deb Zimpon Ugyen Dorji with the title of Raja as a personal distinction for his services to the British.

Ugyen Dorji received titles on both his visits to Calcutta. Ugyen Dorji's complete title was now Gongzim, Raja, Rai Bahadur, Kutshab, Haa Drungpa and Kazi (GDZRBKHDK). This trip, which was the last for the first King, helped further consolidate the relationship between the two neighbours. This meeting is historic as it was Bhutan's maiden appearance on the international stage. As a result of this trip, other nations started to know and acknowledge Bhutan as an independent and sovereign nation.

PHOTOGRAPHS

4

The Legacy

Kundun and ‘The Palace of Unchanging Supreme Happiness’

After the Delhi Durbar, Gongzim Ugyen Dorji continued to work towards promoting the interest of Bhutan from Kalimpong. He took his job as the official Bhutan Agent seriously. As Bhutan started enjoying peace with little or no border skirmishes, and with no threat from her neighbours, the Gongzim had more time at hand. He built the lovely Bhutan House which became the official residence of the successive Bhutan Agents and an architectural marvel in Kalimpong. On seeing Bhutan House, Heinrich Harrer said, “It was the first time I had seen the colorful fabrics, wood carvings and cultural artifacts of Bhutan.” Today, Bhutan House in Kalimpong is a historical site with lots of significance to the Buddhist. The “Gongzim’s house in Kalimpong has sacred association for the followers of Northern Buddhism, as in it the Dalai Lama lived for about five months when he fled from Tibet some years ago, and it contains many precious relics and gifts of the Dalai Lama.”⁴⁰

In 1912, the 13th Dalai Lama, Ngawang Lobsang Thubten Gyamtsho had to flee Tibet. Ironically, it was the Chinese (whom he trusted) who now caused him to take refuge in a country that he once refused adamantly to negotiate with. We may recall the Dalai Lama’s letter to the Trongsa Penlop branding Ugyen Dorji as a British spy. All the history was cleared as Gongzim Ugyen Dorji played

host to the Dalai Lama. It is edifying to learn that Dalai Lama in Mongolian means “Wide Ocean,” and as the Austrian explorer Heinrich Harrer pointed out, he was properly known as Gyalpo Rinpoche which means the “Precious King.” An intimate form of address used by people very close to him was “Kundun,” which means ‘Presence.’

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji’s only sibling, Wangmo hosted Gyalpo Rinpoche in the newly built Bhutan House for eight months. At the end of the eight months, Rinpoche administered the vow of celibacy to Wangmo and also gave her the name Thubten after his own name. Hence, Gongzim Dorji’s sister became a nun and as *Ane* (nun), Thubten Wangmo helped her brother maintain his efforts in the pursuit of religion.

Rinpoche’s influence had a big impact on Gongzim Ugyen Dorji’s life. The relationship was intimate and hence, Rinpoche for the Gongzim and his sister became Kundun. Kundun named the newly built Bhutan House as Mingyur Ngonpar Gawai Phodrang, “The Palace of Unchanging Supreme Happiness.” The name reflected Rinpoche’s mood in the house even though his own country was in turmoil.

Kundun was so impressed with Gongzim Ugyen Dorji’s generous hospitality that he gifted many precious relics. Amongst the gifts were a beautifully carved and gilded wooden altar, two small carved and gilded wooden altars filled with precious and sacred gilded statues, religious brocade robes and many personal robes. After Kundun returned to Lhasa, he sent a large and exquisite gilded bronze statue of himself with instructions that it be kept on the throne in the Lhakhang (temple) in Bhutan House where he stayed. The Lhakhang had also been named by Kundun as Dedan Gatshel, ‘The Happy Garden’ and a silver Chenrezi statue made by the Dalai Lama on behest of Ane Thubten Wangmo is now the main central image on

the altar in the Lhakhang. Today, these gifts of Kundun are the pride of Bhutan House. In the Buddhist kingdoms, it is believed that those in power have special relationship with gods and saints.

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji as a Person

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji was not only a doting father, but also a very committed brother. His sister Ane Wangmo lived with him and they looked after each other's welfare. The Gongzim provided material comforts of life to his sister, while he drew his spiritual inspiration from her. In all the chaos, both in Bhutan and on its frontiers, Gongzim Ugyen Dorji found time to pursue his religious commitments. He received elaborate Buddhist teachings from not only Kundun but various great lams; the more notable being Zhabdrung Jigme Chogyel. Gongzim Ugyen Dorji was also generous with his donations to religious institutions. Of particular interest were his donations to the Punakha and Thimphu Dzongs. "They were ritual objects such as sacrificial vases made of gold and silver, large horns made of pure copper, kitchen utensils of cast metal, ceremonial items such as canopies, pendants and banners of victory, all made of fine silk brocades."⁴¹

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji also owned and cherished several guns and horses. Amongst his favourite guns were a .450 Martini-Henry rifle, .275 Mauser rifle, 44/40 Winchester Carbine and a 12 bore gun.⁴² He loved horses and understood them well. His favorite photograph is one riding his favorite pony.⁴³ When he died, his procession was headed by his favorite Bhutanese pony. "The procession was headed by the dead chief's favorite Bhutea ponies."⁴⁴

Throughout his distinguished career, Gongzim Ugyen Dorji worked closely with all the British Political Agents. He escorted all of them over the mountain passes and while looking after them, he provided them insight into the Bhutanese culture, tradition and values. This is personal diplomacy at its best. He helped Mr. John Claude White and became very good friends with Mr. C.A Bell. But his life long and trusted friend was Dr. J. Graham. Over the 27 years of friendship between Gongzim Ugyen Dorji and Dr. Graham, they had a lot of common interests and discussed many things. Both the friends believed in the power of education and pursued it vigorously.

The First School in Bhutan

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji wanted to see his country modernize and helped with its gradual modernization process. In the early 1900s, Bhutan was deeply immune to development. Nonetheless, Gongzim Ugyen Dorji slowly began to initiate the process of development. He had strong convictions in the power of education. It is also likely that he was influenced by his lifelong and trusted friend, Dr. J. Graham who set up a school in Kalimpong.

Even in 1921, Bhutan was a backward country. This fact was admitted by the first King in a letter dated 5th September, 1921 to the Viceroy of India. The Bhutanese were a content people with little curiosity to learn any foreign language. Although they traded with Indians, they did not speak a word of Hindi. So, Gongzim Ugyen Dorji with the support of the King set up the first secular western school in Bumthang in 1915. Gongzim Ugyen Dorji took the responsibility of imparting English education.

“A school has been opened at Bumthang (in Bhutan), the residence of His Highness the Maha Gongzim, where

English is taught to the Bhutanese boys besides their mother language. Having only recently opened, this school is at present attended by but 18 students.”⁴⁵ A Sikkimese teacher Phento was appointed to teach Hindi to the Crown Prince Jigme Wangchuck, and his 17 friends.

A year earlier in 1914, the first King sent 45 boys to be taught in Kalimpong with summer sessions in Haa. In Kalimpong, Gongzim Ugyen Dorji took complete responsibility of the students. The students in the first batch were from eastern Bhutan and Haa in the west.

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji employed teachers from schools in Kalimpong such as Dr. Sutherland of the Scotch Mission. British records⁴⁶ show that the initial resistance and animosity of the parents of the boys and the religious institutions were overcome only after the intervention of the King himself. At that time, Bhutanese scholars strongly believed that the earth was a flat disc. But it is also reported that those who had opposed western education also eventually acknowledged that it was good for the country. The fact that Gongzim Ugyen Dorji stressed on the importance of teaching English is remarkable. As a result of this foresight, English is used as a medium of instruction even today in Bhutanese schools. Tourists visiting the country have been impressed with the Bhutanese students’ proficiency in the English language and lauded the government’s education policy.

Foreign Affairs

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji shared the same vision for Bhutan as his master the first King. As the man in-charge of the external affairs,⁴⁷ he was cautious with foreign policy, and constantly advised and consulted his master who trusted and respected his judgment.

Although Gongzim Ugyen Dorji worked for the British also, he always kept the interest of his nation in his mind. "His great ambition for Bhutan was to see Bhutan develop into a strong state, and he realized that its only hope for the future was absolute co-operation with the British Government."⁴⁸ He was mindful of Bhutan's status as a country, and worked with his master to carefully navigate relations with the Chinese, Tibetans and the British while maintaining relations with smaller kingdoms like Nepal and Sikkim.

By 1907, the Chinese had regained their authority in Tibet and tried to extend it to Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. It was at this time that the Chinese Amban (Governor) in Lhasa wrote, "Tibet, Nepal and Druk Yul [Bhutan] are side by side like the molar teeth in a man's mouth and the subjects of all three are those of one kingdom." The Chinese claims on Bhutan had no substance even though they were pressed, so they had little effect except to alarm the British.

On 8th April 1908, Captain W.L. Campbell, British Agent at Yatung, reported the visit of a Chinese delegation to Bhutan. The report mentions that Mr. Ma Chi Fu, the late Popon of Chumbi, with twenty Chinese soldiers had started for Bhutan. In addition, the Tibetan physician to the Phari Dzongpon was part of the entourage. This report was communicated on 11 April to the Secretary of State. But C.A. Bell, Officiating Political Officer in Sikkim, did not consider it desirable to take any action in the matter until it was known how the Mission was received by the Bhutanese.⁴⁹

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji's position was, to use the parlance of the modern world, the foreign minister of Bhutan. Maintaining a calm composure and using his diplomatic skills, he discussed the visit of the Chinese with his friend Mr. Bell. He also showed Bell the copies of two of

the letters received by the King. The first letter was from the Amban at Lhasa. The second one was from the Chinese Popon at Pi-pi-tang in the Chumbi valley.

Both these letters challenged the sovereign status of Bhutan. The Amban's letter stated that because Bhutan was under Chinese suzerainty, he was sending an officer to Bhutan. The officer was to prepare a report on the condition of the country, its climate, its crops and the people. The second letter from the Chinese Popon was an edict that used language normally used to address village headmen. The letter ordered the Trongsa Penlop and other Bhutanese governors to receive the Chinese officer at their respective boundaries.

As in all such moments, the Trongsa Penlop had already consulted Gongzim Ugyen Dorji. The King maintained that "it was now more than 240 years since Bhutan had belonged to the Dharma Gongzims, and that he had never heard that during this time, any Chinese officials ever came to Bhutan to make enquiries, that he hoped the Mission would return from Paro, but that he could not prevent them coming further in, if they wished to do so."

On 17th April, during the consultation of Gongzim Dorji with Mr. Bell, he informed that he advised the Trongsa Penlop to say that "forty years ago, when Bhutan was at war with the British, China never offered her any assistance. Furthermore, Bhutan had never given tribute to China, nor had any of her officials ever been paid by China."

To avoid any trouble, Gongzim Dorji then suggested that the King should inform the Chinese that "he would on this occasion overlook the rudeness of the Popon's letter." It was also suggested to the King that in his letter to the Popon, he specify that he was convinced that the letter was drafted by a clerk who made the mistake.

At that time, the King was at Trongsa, his provincial capital. Gongzim Ugyen Dorji was of the opinion that the Penlop should not go to either of the capitals of Bhutan (Punakha or Thimphu) to receive the Chinese Mission. He further informed Mr. Bell that Bhutan had never acknowledged the suzerainty of China and then offered his assurance that there was no fear of the King committing himself in any way to the Chinese.

Consequently, the British decided to revise the 1866 Treaty. To accomplish this, British again used the subsidy as a lever, doubling it to Rupees 100,000. Then the Bhutanese also agreed to be guided by Britain in her foreign affairs. The British Foreign Office in London assured Bhutan that this consent did not compromise the status of Bhutanese sovereignty. This important fact was further reinforced in 1924 when the Government of India confirmed that Bhutan was not a native state of India.

Charles Bell's Visit to Bhutan and a Treaty

Historical records show that Gongzim Ugyen Dorji was multilingual and could speak Tibetan, Hindi, English and Dzongkha. With his knowledge in languages, he would accompany the Political Officers on their missions to Bhutan. "Ugyen Kazi accompanied us," wrote Captain R.S. Kennedy in his diary.⁵⁰ Kennedy accompanied Charles Bell in 1909-10. "Maha Gongzim exchanged some complimentary remarks with Bell through the medium of Ugyen Kazi as interpreter."⁵¹

On 8th January 1910, Gongzim Ugyen Dorji witnessed the signing of the revision of the 1866 treaty between the first King and Charles Bell. We learn through the records of Bell's visit to Bhutan that Gongzim Ugyen Dorji had an immense knowledge on the country. On 15th January, Captain Kennedy made this observation on Gongzim Ugyen

Dorji in his diary; “Ugyen Kazi told me that ‘Takin’ (National Animal of Bhutan) are quite plentiful in the neighborhood of ‘Ghassa’ (Gasa) and they live in the jungle on the hills above it. On 21st, Kennedy records in his diary an explanation of the Bhutanese mask dancers; “In the middle of the performance, Ugyen Kazi remarked to me that he had seen Roman Catholic pardis wearing clothes like those of the dancers and indeed there are many similarities, which must be more than coincidence between the ritual of Roman Catholicism and of the Buddhism of these parts.” Even today, a career-educated Bhutanese guide can learn from Gongzim Ugyen Dorji’s talent to draw such comparisons in order to make their guests feel completely at ease and at home.

In addition to his other responsibilities, the ruler of Bhutan trusted Gongzim Ugyen Dorji with finance. “The Sub-treasury Officer at Kalimpong paid the annual subsidy of one Lakh (one hundred thousand) rupees to Gongzim Ugyen Dorji, the Bhutan Agent, on 13th January, 1916.” This record is one of the testimonies of the trust that he enjoyed with his master.

The Phari Incident

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji was a diplomat with powerful negotiations skills. He never saw violence as an option and always chose to mediate and make compromises. This personality is a reflection of his faith in Buddhism that encourages the middle path and strongly discourages violence.

With this in mind, we will now study an incident in Phari, Tibet which will help us understand the psyche of Gongzim Ugyen Dorji and the state of Bhutan. In addition, the Phari incident has a hitherto unspecified significance for Bhutanese history that is being revealed for the first

time. As such, this letter (dated 26th July, 1908) of the first King to Charles Bell is directly reproduced below.

My friend,

I beg to inform you that on the 6th day of the 5th month (4th July, 1908), one Nyima, a trader from Shigatse, committed adultery with Puti, wife of one Tse-chu, a trader of the Thimbu Jongpen (Dzongpon)⁵² in Phari. According to our custom, Tse-chu engaged some arbitrators to settle the case amicably, and Nyima agreed to pay Tse-chu 100 ngu-sangs, thus compromising the case. But in the meantime, all the Tibetan residents of Phari raised an objection to the effect that compensation in such a case should be only a box of brick tea and a kata⁵³, and not so large an amount as 100 ngu-sangs.

They told Tse-chu that unless he accepted this offer, the case would go before the Chinese Popon and the Tibetan Depon at Chumbi. On this, Tse-chu arrested Nyima and locked him up in his house. In the evening, Nyima under the pretext of satisfying a call of nature ran away. During his flight, he happened to meet Tse-chu's son in the street. Nyima caught hold of this boy in order to beat him, and when they both were dragging each other, all the Tibetans of Phari town began to throw stones at the boy. Thereupon Tse-chu, who also happened to be on the spot, fired a gun at random in the air.

Accordingly, the same evening, all the male Tibetans of Phari collected, some surrounded the house and others, mounting on the roof, broke it open and set fire to the house. One orderly of the Thimbu Jonpen was hit with a stone and killed. They then arrested Tse-chu and some others, and brought them down to Chumbi and locked them up.

According to a former mutual agreement in writing under seals between the Tibetan and the Bhutanese governments, it was agreed that in case any such dispute arose at the frontier, the matter should be decided in presence of both parties, but in the contravention of this agreement, the Tibetans have burnt our trade building, killed one man, and arrested and imprisoned all the rest of the living persons. These actions, being entirely unlawful, all the Bhutanese officers wished to destroy Phari in retaliation for such high-handedness, but I dissuaded them from doing so, saying that it would not be well to disturb the peace of two Governments (Tibet and Bhutan) simply at the doing of some ignoble men, and that the matter should first be referred to the Tibetan Government and their reply awaited, by which we should ascertain the line taken by them and frame our action accordingly.

I have already referred the matter through a messenger to the Tibetan Government, and I hope that they will so proceed in the matter as to enable us to settle it amicably. But I cannot foretell for certain what decision they will give, so that it is possible the case may assume a serious aspect. I am communicating this to you beforehand as you are my friend. I will communicate to you in due course whatever happens later on. The favour that the British Government has always shown towards us in the past encourages us to hope that consideration will be bestowed on whatever reasonable prayers we shall be obliged to make, and I hope you will also kindly submit all such prayers to the Government with your kind support.

I think that my Agent Kazi Ugyen has submitted to you a detailed report regarding the present

disturbances of the Tibetans and the Bhutanese in Phari, and so I am giving only a brief report.

As the Bhutan Agent, Ugyen Dorji reported the Phari incident to the King. The King sent letters to Tibet that the decision of the Bhutan Durbar would be sent to them. The British records show that the King withheld the Paro Penlop and Thimphu Dzungpon from launching a combined attack on Tibet. However, "The Bhutan Durbar⁵⁴ could not be held immediately as the Trongsa Penlop was grieving the death of his seven month old son and the Thaga (Daga) Penlop."

The growing tension and fear of possible hostilities in the valley was reported by F.M. Bailey who was the officiating British Trade Agent based in Gyantse, Tibet. "I have taken precaution of ordering all our employees at Phari to remain in the dak bungalow at night, and I am also ordering the clerks of the Trade Registration Post, which is three miles from here, to sleep here."⁵⁵

Of particular interest is Bailey's record of his conversation over lunch with three Chinese officials⁵⁶ as it throws light on the status of the sovereignty of Bhutan. At lunch, the Chinese mentioned the Bhutan friction which they said was a matter of small consequence. The Chinese said the culprits would be dealt with accordingly by the Popon. Bailey informed the Chinese that some Bhutanese were coming to enquire about the matter. The senior most Chinese, Mr. Cheung replied that the visit of the Bhutanese would facilitate the Popon's enquiry. Then Mr. Cheung told Bailey: "Bhutan was under the Chinese." Bailey was shocked with this new information. "I told him that I was very surprised to hear this as the Chinese did not aid the Bhutanese in their war against us in 1864 and that this was the first I heard of any Chinese influence in Bhutan."⁵⁷

By 11th July 1908, Bailey was reporting on the fear of an attack by the Bhutanese. The Tibetans migrated with their belongings to Kumba and Tuna regions. Bailey also denied a rumour that he suspected the Chinese were circulating about him and his 25 men taking the sides of the Tibetans and the Chinese in the event of a confrontation. He also ruled out any such option as Ugyen Dorji was already in Phari to negotiate. His comments indicate that in his opinion, the Tibetans were the guilty party. “I do not think that the Tibetans are in a position to refuse any reasonable demands of the Bhutanese.”

In this case, Gongzim Ugyen Dorji’s diplomatic skills and the calmness of his master prevented a Tibetan-Bhutan war which both sides could ill afford. It is possible that the Chinese would have intervened in the conflict and perhaps the history of Bhutan would have been different. Gongzim Ugyen Dorji’s letter to Charles Bell about the decisions made at Phari is directly reproduced below. The letter is written from Pharijong and is dated 16th October, 1908.

- A sum of Rs. 5,500/- (five thousand five hundred) only should be paid to the Bhutan Government as fine.
- Thimphu Jongpen [Dzongpon] will get Rs. 1,000/- (one thousand) only as compensation for the death of his orderly in the assault.
- Parents of the person killed will get Rs. 500/- (five hundred) only as compensation.
- Head mandal [village headman] will receive 500 whippings and one month’s imprisonment, and three other mandals will each receive 200 whippings and one month’s imprisonment.
- Some Jongpens are likely to be dismissed.
- Some others who were engaged in the assault will be fined and the above sum will be realized from them.

In a subsequent letter, Gongzim Ugyen Dorji states the implementation of the decision. In lieu of money, the Bhutanese accepted tea and silk. All the decisions were carried out except the whipping and imprisonment of the village headmen. "I cancelled (these actions) from the list of punishments to be inflicted upon them on grounds of pity and humanity." Gongzim Ugyen Dorji was sick with cold and fever while in Phari. Nonetheless, his brilliant negotiating skills avoided a certain war. His religious nature helped him win the hearts and minds of the Tibetans whose views on the Bhutanese started to change.

Passing Away of the Patriot

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji died on the morning of June 22, 1916 in his house where the 13th Dalai Lama had lived. He was ill for only a brief time. Gongzim Ugyen Dorji was seven years older than his master and he died ten years before his master died.

Knowing his end was drawing near, and in order to set his affairs in order, he called his only son Sonam Tobgay Dorji (1896-1953) who was then studying in St Paul school, Darjeeling to receive his last instructions, which proved beyond doubt that Gongzim Ugyen Dorji was a true patriot and a dedicated servant of the King. His last instruction to his son was for his body to be taken to Thimphu. "In the interval, elaborate preparations have been made for the long trek of ten days over the Jeylap Pass (over 14,000 feet) through Haa (the Gongzim's estate) in Northern Bhutan to Tashicudan, the capital of Bhutan."⁵⁸ Two Indian newspapers, 'The Statesman' and the 'Pioneer Mail' showered the late Gongzim with praises.

In addition, many people grieved his death. Among those who conveyed their sympathy were the Viceroy, Foreign and Political Department of the Government of

India, Lord and Lady Carmichael, and Mr. C.A. Bell. Local organizations such as Mission Hospital, industries and the St Andrew's Colonial Homes also grieved his death.

“In Bhutan, his master King Ugyen Wangchuck deeply grieved the death of his most trusted man. He offered one thousand lamps at Kurjey and Jampa Lhakhang, and performed other rituals pompously.”⁵⁹ The late Gongzim Ugyen Dorji's sister, Ane Thubten Wangmo visited Lhasa where she performed the last rites of her brother by making tens of thousands of offerings in all the temples at the Potola and in Lhasa. She also served tea and distributed money to the monks of the three largest seats of learning; Sera, Drepung and Gaden, which Gongzim Ugyen Dorji and his master had helped save in 1904 during the Younghusband mission. Ane Thubten Wangmo met the Dalai Lama who treated her with much kindness. As an honour, she was transported in a *dandy* right up to the door of the Dalai Lama's summer palace in Norbulingka in Lhasa. Life for Gongzim Ugyen Dorji had a taken a full circle.

Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck promoted Haa Drungpa Sonam Tobgay Dori to the post of Gongzom and treated him with the same affection and consideration that he had shown to the late Gongzim. As the new Gongzim was still young, Wangmo, the sister of the late Gongzim Ugyen Dorji, was acting as his tutor. In a letter addressed to them, Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck wrote:

“To the healthy Zimpon and Wangmo,

I am extremely happy to hear that the knowledgeable Gongzim, Wangmo and others are all in good health. When the Gongzim goes on tour to inspect the southern region, I will arrange to perform here a propitiation ceremony to prevent obstructions. The Gongzim is newly appointed and I think you (Wangmo) should also perform similar propitiation in

order to remove any misfortune which may occur. You report to me confidently without any research. I have been considering and treating the late Gongzim as a member of my own family, never thinking of him as an outsider. Whenever I say my prayers, I also pray for him. As I have already told the Gongzim, my feelings will remain the same towards him. For about two years, Wangmo will take the responsibility of the office of Gongzim. I am confident that the Gongzim will assume the responsibility as he grows up.”

Sent on the 16th day of the 10th month (1916) along with five ceremonial gift items wrapped in *Khamar* (a white scarf with red fringes).⁶⁰

Gongsar Ugyen Wangchuck and the Gongzim shared a close bond, and constantly consulted each other. Here is an anecdote. Once, a man from Haa accidentally burnt down a cattle shed. The shed was under the jurisdiction of the Paro Penlop, Daw Penjor who was not only upset, but pestered the Gongzim and his son, the Haa Drungpa. After some time, they were so fed up that, they petitioned to the King to relieve them of their post in Haa.

The King replied in the following terms:

“To the knowledgeable Gongzim,

You do not need to report to me when you are serving for the general benefit of our country. I know it better than anyone else that from many years ago, you have been helping me with the external affairs which has allowed me to focus on the domestic affairs. Once, we master and servant, went together to Tibet across the vast stretches of deserts in company with the British expedition. Another time, we went together to India during the hot season. Although there are many who live in the comforts of their positions because of the hardships we endure, the master and servant, there

is hardly anyone who feels really grateful. If you retire, the three of us (King Ugyen Wangchuck, Gongzim Ugyen Dorji and Haa Drungpa Sonam Tobgay) should retire together. It is only a shelter for cattle that was burnt down by a man from Haa. If the Paro Penlop were to create so much problems for such a small thing, what about burning down the Paro Dzong which is under his charge? How can he still have a face to remain nonchalant.” (The Copy of Letter Issued by Gonsar Ugyen Wangchuck to Gongzim Ugyen Dorji).⁶¹

Epilogue

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji’s death left a lasting impression of a man whose life was dedicated to his master and his country. In the words of Dr. Graham who was a long standing and trusted friend of Gongzim Ugyen Dorji, “His devotion to and love for the first King was intense.” The intensity is further exemplified by the 13th Dalai Lama’s acknowledgement of “The most faithful Nangzim (Inner Chamberlain) of the King of Bhutan, Gongzim Kazi Ugyen.”

Even though he lived in Kalimpong, Gongzim Ugyen Dorji wore his national dress most of the time. He had a lot of pride in his roots and maintained the traditions of his homeland even in a hill station that had big Western influence. While welcoming the 13th Dalai Lama, “The Gongzim himself and his attendants were attired in Bhutanese style and very elegantly welcomed the Dalai Lama and his entourage in Bhutanese style with great pompous music.”⁶² He was a good ambassador of Bhutan. His height, dashing looks, refined mannerism and his deep faith in Buddhism reflected in his gentleness and patience.

These qualities made him an epitome of a perfect ambassador.

Ten years after Gongzim Ugyen Dorji passed away, the school in Bumthang which he helped establish still had 10 students learning Hindi and English. The King reopened the school in Haa with 18 small boys. But with the death of Gongzim Ugyen Dorji, there were only five boys studying in Kalimpong. Eleven of the 45 boys from the first batch passed the Matriculation (equivalent to class Ten) examination. Four students were already being trained as mining engineers, veterinary assistants and a forest ranger in Calcutta and Dehradun. The British annual report of 1925-26 indicated plans for these boys to be trained as teachers, surgeons and tanners. The path of these students and those who followed them in the modernization of their country is another story, as is the success of other aspects of development of the nation brought about by the Gongzim's initiatives and tireless support for his master, His Majesty the First King of Bhutan.

APPENDIX I

The First Meeting between King Ugyen Wangchuck and Gongzim Ugyen Dorji in Kurjey Lhakhang

(Contributed by Her Majesty the Royal Grandmother of Bhutan, Ashi Kesang Choeden Wangchuck in *Journal of Bhutan Studies* Vol 8, Summer 2003)

The Lord (King Ugyen Wangchuck) had himself taken on his shoulders the activities that would benefit the Tenpa (Buddha's doctrine). The Lord had submitted frequent letters to the 13th Dalai Lama – the Tibetan Government's precious jewel of the monastic communities and the public – that there was no need to proceed to other neighbouring countries. The Lord had given personal assurance in an important message that even if the external aggressors reach the centre of the country (Tibet), the Chamgoen Rinpoche will not be harmed. In the detailed letter sent by the Lord to the two British envoys, including Colonel Sahib, he conveyed that they must not at all have doubts on the Bhutanese. The Lord had also written in the letter that there was no need for any dispute and conflict with the Tibetan Government, for the Bhutanese would mediate. Even though the Lord's envoy; the son of the Trongsa Penlop (*choszhab*) Takdzongpa and his cousin Thimpdzongpa Kuenzang Thinley were sent deliberately, the two British envoys, Lakchi and Colonel Jernel had said that there were several reasons mentioned in the

correspondences found in the offices of the British Government and the Tibetan Government for Britain to fight against Tibet. Moreover, instead of agreeing to mediation, the two British envoys had said ill words that Bhutan would be invaded. The mediation could not succeed and they had to return.

Several years before this event, due to the accumulated merit and fortune of all the people in this country, His Majesty the First King had taken over the entire country into his hands. In order to spread the pre-ordained fame (like summer thunder) in Tibet, India and other bordering countries, and to promote the noble deeds that were being carried out by the Lord, there was a meeting between the Lord and Drukpa Jaboed Ugyen in Kurjey in Bumthang, as recommended by the Great Refuge Zhabdrung Jigme Chogyal. Drukpa Jaboed Ugyen had become a famous man of unlimited wealth accumulated from business through hardship and tirelessness. He had undying faith in the Buddha's activities in general and the Pelden Drukpa Tenpa Rinpoche in particular. In addition to his deep faith and devotion to Zhabdrung Jigme Chogyal, he had offered a great deal of possessions, objects and silk, and gained popularity. Due to Drukpa Jaboed Ugyen's fame, the Zhabdrung felt confident that he should be appointed a minister, desirable and of service to the Lotus Feet of the Lord. After they (the Lord and Jaboed Ugyen) met for the first time in Bumthang Kurjey, the Lord felt happiness beyond description, as though he came across his own son. They had lively discussions at great length without feeling tired. The Lord felt great pleasure. The Lord enquired about his ancestral genealogy. Ugyen said that his maternal pedigree is Tsentongpa and paternal pedigree is the natural son of Dungkar Pala Gyeltshen known as Shangpa Puenchog. The Lord remarked, "We are definitely sons of

brothers.” Since then, the Lord and Ugyen privately maintained intimate relationship of brothers, while in public they were Lord and servant. Ugyen had then pledged his constant loyalty and *damtshig* through his body, mind and speech, and said that he would serve the Lord with everything including material and physical resources, and without caring for his own life. As pledged, he continued his loyalty and dedication to the Lord. Not so long afterwards, the Lord also conferred the post of Pasakha Kutshab on Ugyen.

Thereafter, *Chos-Lyon* Ugyen submitted details regarding the immediate and ultimate trends and situations (of the neighbouring countries) and suggested that it would be constructive if the Lord visited Tibet. Divinations to foretell future were sought from deities and lamas. Accordingly, extensive rituals were performed to overcome obstacles.

In the first month of the Wood Dragon Year (1905), trusted servants of the Lord were selected to accompany him. Among the fifty people, the principle servants were Kazi Ugyen, Wangdue Dronyer Kunzang Domchug and Tshongpon Darjay of Tashigang. Even though they reached Phari, Sa Wang Lhalu of the Government of Tibet, Younger Prince Kushu of Kuentse Lhajarey and Prince of Traling did not agree to settlement. As a result, fight broke out in Jangtse. Tibetan forces failed to resist the external forces that reached Lhasa. The Monasteries of Sera, Drepung and Ganden rose in force. But Drepung was on the verge of being destroyed. The Lord felt greater love and care for Tibet than his own country. With the Lord’s resourcefulness and ingenuity, he discussed in depth with the British envoy, Colonel and stopped the enemy forces. There was no damage to any of the monasteries due to the responsibility shouldered by the Lord for the benefit of the

Tenpa. Hence, until now, there are seven thousand and seven hundred monks in Drepung, five thousand and five hundred in Sera, and three thousand and three hundred in Ganden.

APPENDIX II

His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama and Bhutan House in Kalimpong

(Contributed by Her Majesty the Royal Grandmother of Bhutan, Ashi Kesang Choeden Wangchuck in *Journal of Bhutan Studies* Vol 5, Winter 2001)

His Holiness the Great 13th Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobzang Thubten Gyamtsho stayed in the newly built Bhutan House in Kalimpong for about eight months in 1912 as the guest of my grandfather Raja Ugyen Dorji and his sister *Ayi* Thubten Wangmo.

His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama was most kind, loving and generous to my grandfather and my grandaunt, and before he returned to Tibet from Bhutan House, he gave them his beautiful great gilded carved wooden altar and two smaller gilded carved wooden altars filled with the most precious and sacred gilded statues, each of which he placed on his head and prayed deeply over them before placing them on the altar himself. His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama also left many other treasures, religious brocade robes and many personal robes to my grandfather and grandaunt.

From Lhasa, His Holiness sent to them a large exquisite gilded bronze statue of himself to keep on his throne in the temple (*lhakhang*) in Bhutan House where he stayed. His Holiness named the temple Dechen Gatsal, 'The Happy Garden of Great Bliss.' His Holiness named the

newly built Bhutan House Mingyur Ngonpar Gawai Phodrang, 'The Palace of Unchanging Supreme Joy.'

My grandaunt offered some silver to His Holiness and requested him to have a silver statue of the Thousand-armed and Thousand-eyed Avalokiteshvara (Chenrezi Chagtong Chentong) made for her in Lhasa. His Holiness had a beautiful silver Chenrezi made for my grandaunt which is the main central image on the altar in the temple of Bhutan House.

After Raja Ugyen Dorji passed away on 22nd June 1916, my grandaunt *Ayi* Thubten Wangmo who was herself ailing at the time visited Lhasa in the year of the Fire Snake corresponding to 1918, and had audience with His Holiness the Dalai Lama. She performed rites for Gongzim Ugyen Dorji in Lhasa, making tens of thousands of offerings in all the temples at the Potola and in Lhasa, and made large offerings, served tea and donated cash to the monks of the three large seats of learning (Sera, Drepung and Ganden) as well as to all other monasteries of various sects for the welfare of the state and the spread of the Dharma. At that time, His Holiness the Great 13th Dalai Lama bestowed great loving kindness and high honour upon my grandaunt *Ayi* Thubten Wangmo, allowing her to be carried in her *dandy* right up to the door of his Kalzang Phodrang Palace in Norbu Lingka in Lhasa.

His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama gave to our family a decree (*kashog*) written on yellow silk and with his seal affixed. In the *Kashog*, His Holiness expresses his gratitude to my grandfather and grandaunt for their help and hospitality to His Holiness and his entourage during the time they were residing in Darjeeling (1910-1912), working for the state and well being of Tibet and her people.

Thereafter, on his way back to Tibet, gratitude is also expressed for inviting His Holiness to their home, and

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji

extending excellent hospitality for several months in the newly built Mingyur Ngonpar Gawai Phodrang, 'The Palace of Unchanging Supreme Joy' at Kalimpong. His Holiness expressed thanks to them for their matchless virtuous deeds.

His Holiness writes in the *Kashog* that in future, Sonam Tobgye, the son of Gongzim Ugyen Dorji will be the next Zimpon in succession to his father. His Holiness awarded the young Zimpon Sonam Tobgye the honourable status of nobility and appointed him fourth rank officer (Deputy Minister), and along with presents of promotion, Sonam Tobgye received the title or citation 'eminent and wise' and the square seal with red stamp. The original reads *ching sbi lig zhes pa'i cho lo*, i.e. the title or citation (*cho lo* > Mongolian *`c ola*) and (*ching sbi lig* > Mongolian *`c ing bilig*), meaning 'eminent and wise' (Professor Per K. Sorenson, personal communication).

His Holiness ends the *Kashog* with his prayers and blessings for those who honour this order at present and in the future.

His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama's *Kashog* was issued in the later part of the 12th month of the Fire Snake Year (1918) from the Kalzang Phodrang Palace at the court of the Secular and Religious Seat at Norbulingka where the Dharma victory banner of both teachings and practices of the Three Disciplines is flying high to uphold the Doctrine.

~*~

A translation of the *Kashog* is presented hereafter followed by a transliteration of the same by Prof. Per K. Sorenson.

Translation of the *Kashog* presented by His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama to Raja Ugyen Dorji and his sister *Ayi* Thubten Wangmo:

[Title]

The decree of the one called Ocean Lama (i.e. Dalai Lama), the immutable Vajradhara [Thunderbolt-Holder], the All-knowing One, the sovereign Ruler of the entire [realm of] the Teachings of Buddha, covering all times and places, the Lord of the three worlds, the Sovereign [i.e. Jinendra] reigning [upon the] injunction of the Buddha stemming from the Noble Country [i.e. India].

[Text]

“This decree is dispatched to all people who enjoy the blazing light of the sun with their heads facing towards the sky and in particular, all high and low ranking chiefs, including headmen, elders and general public of the provinces of U and Tsang [Central Tibet] and also the people of Bhutan [lho ‘brug].

Raja Ugyen Dorji, Zimpon, [residing at] Bhutan House [‘brug nang] [in] Kalimpong [ka sbug] and his sister *Ayi* Thubten Wangmo extended their help and hospitality to me [the 13th Dalai Lama] and my entourage while we were residing in Darjeeling, working for the state and well being of Tibet and her people. Thereafter, on our way back to Tibet, they had again invited us and extended excellent hospitality as earlier for several months in the newly built palace Mingyur Ngonpar Gawai Phodrang [‘Palace of Unchangeable Perfect Joy’] at Kalimpong for which I express my thanks to them for their matchless virtuous deeds.

Before her passing away, *Ayi* Thubten Wangmo arrived here in Lhasa in the Fire Snake Year [1918] and called on me. She made offerings surpassing myriads in number in all the temples at the Potola and in Lhasa. They also made large offerings, served tea and donated cash to the monks of the three large seats of learning – Sera, Drepung and

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji

Ganden – as well as to all other monasteries of various sects for several times for the welfare of the state and spread of the Doctrine for which there is no reason for anyone to be jealous and competitive in the same.

In the future, Sonam Tobgye, son of Raja Ugyen Dorji, will be the next Zimpon of Bhutan in succession to his father. I hereby award Zimpon Sonam Tobgye honorary status of nobility and appoint him fourth rank officer of the Government [Deputy Minister] along with the citation ‘eminent and wise’ and the square seal with red stamp. All the above mentioned people should honour this and extend all services without any question. My prayers and blessings for those who honour this order at present and in the future.

Issued in later part of the 12th month of the Fire Snake Year [1918] from the Kalzang Phodrang Palace at the court of the secular and religious seat at Norbulingka where the victorious banner of Dharma, both teachings and practices of the Three Disciplines is flying high to uphold the Doctrine.”

~*~

Transliteration of the *Kashog* presented by His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama to Raja Ugyen Dorji and his sister *Ayi* Thubten Wangmo:

[Title]

‘Phags pa’i yul nas sangs rgyas kyi bka’ lung rgyal dbang ‘jig rten gsum mgon dus kun sa steng gi kun khyab rgyal bstan yongs la mnga’ dbang bsgyur pa thams cad mkhyen pa ‘gyur med rdo rje ‘chang rgya mtsho’i bla mar ‘bod pa’i gtam

[Seal of the 13th Dalai Lama]

[Text of the decree]

rab 'bar nyin mo'i snang bar longs su spyod pa'i skye
 rgu spyi bo gnam bstan yod do chog dang bye brag dbus
 gstang / lho 'brug gi sa'i char 'khod pa'i gnam bskos
 gzhung sa chen po'i mnga' zhabs su gtogs pa'i rdzong gzhis
 sne mo ba / spyir btang dmigs bsal gyi dpon 'go che chung
 / rgan bcu dmangs sogs drag zhan mtha' dag la springs
 pa/ ka sbug 'brug nang gzim ra dza ogyan rdo rje dang /
 spun a yi thub bstan dbang mo de nyid nas ngos ston
 'khor 'phags yul du ljongs bstan 'gro'i bde thabs khra
 tshugs 'du 'god bgyid sgor rdor gling du bskyod sdod ring
 dang / de rjes ka sbug tu mi 'gyur mngon par dga' ba'i pho
 brang gsar bskrun dang 'brel ba'i lta bskyod tshur lam zla
 shas gdan 'dren bkur bsti zhabs tog sogs bsod nams rnam
 par dkar ba gsum gyi lhag bsam dad 'dun che ba zhus rjes
 che zhing / da lam me sbrul lo a yi thub stan dbang
 mo'ang 'das khar lha 'byor thog 'di ga'i mjal phyag dang
 'brel lha ldan rtse shod rten khag la mchod sprin khri ra
 brgal ba dang / gdan sa chen po gsum gyis mtshon ris
 med 'dus sde mchis so cog la bsnyen bkur mang 'gyed
 yang yang snga phyir du zab rgyas bstar ba bcas gang sa
 nas bstan pa chab srid kyi lar rgyar dad 'dun lhag bsam
 snying zhen brtsi su che bar bzos sgo mi dman pa dgos
 nges ma zad / gzhan 'gran yong don med cing / slad kyang
 pha shul bu 'dzin slad la 'tsho skyong gang ci 'brug nang
 gzim bu 'di nyid kyi skabs su babs par brten 'brug nang
 gzim ka sbug ra dza ogyan rdo rje de nyid kyi bu 'brug
 nang gzim bsod nams stobs rgyal 'di par gzhung zhabs mi
 drag rim bzhi spyi 'gro'i go gnas dang / gdan thob gsol ras
 thog shing sbi lig zhes pa'i cho lo dang / tham ka gru skor
 / rtags dam dmar po bcas kyi gzengs bstod bgyis pa yin
 gshis 'di pas 'gro 'dug bgyi pa yin lugs su spyod par khyod
 gong 'khod tshang mas lung dang mthun pa'i phan char
 gang 'gro las / gnod 'gal log par 'gro rigs gtan nas ma byed

Gongzim Ugyen Dorji

/ tshul bzhin sgrub pa rnams la 'phral yun kun tu dge ba'i
skyabs 'jug kyang bgyis pa yin / zhes go bar bya ba'i yi ge
me mo sbrul lo'i rgyal zla'i dmar phyogs kyi gral tshes dge
bar bslab gsum rnam par dkar ba bshad sgrub chos kyi
rgyal mtshan mngon par sgrens shing / lugs gnyis nyin
mor spyod pa'i dge mtshan mchog tu bzhad pa'i bskal
bzang pho brang nas bris /

Seal

~*~

APPENDIX III

Extract from the Biography of His Holiness the 13th Dalai Lama

(Page Nos. 474 from 2nd line onwards including 475, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501: Passages relating exclusively to the His Holiness the Dalai Lama's stay in Kalimpong)

After crossing many mountains and valleys, His Holiness the Great 13th Dalai Lama Ngawang Lobzang Thubten Gyamtsho arrived in Kalimpong via villages like Pipingthang and Rinchengang. He stayed in Kalimpong for seven nights where Raja Ugyen Dorji offered his respectful services. There, he received a telegram stating that his name was struck out from the nobility and that he was now a common man. Many unwarranted criticisms were regularly passed on the most holy person. The Dalai Lama then left for Calcutta after sending a special courier. The Dalai Lama was unable to go to Beijing inspite of his repeated telegraphic requests. The agreement was sent to Beijing for discussions through the English. However, the Chinese decided to send a few thousand soldiers which were stopped by the English Government. This is attributed solely to the good omen and cleverness of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Then the Dalai Lama arrived in Darjeeling after which the English Government extended their hospitality for a duration of seven days. As stated in

the elegant sayings, “For the holy and the common man, even if the actions are the same, the benevolence differs. Even if there is no difference in the seed, the yields are different. If we extend help to the higher ones, the result will spring forth in a moment. The offering of even an Amla, yields result equal to that of a religious King’s son.” Therefore, even if one does a minute favour to a holy one, the result will be overwhelming which is greatly auspicious. It is no wonder that this will result in great happiness and wealth in the next life while, even during this life, he was born like a good fruit-bearing bud. Nangzim Ugyen Dorji, the Chamberlain of the King of Bhutan, invited the Dalai Lama to Kalimpong, and when the time came for his departure, he summoned Acha Yudon and her husband to Zimchung. During this time, he granted audience to them and had tea together talking in gaiety after which he gave them material presents. Further, they were given the special globules that vanquish the sufferings of hell. The husband Namgye was awarded the honour of serving him. The English Agent Mueller also visited the Dalai Lama. Before arriving in Kalimpong, the Dalai Lama visited the five exquisite mountains in Darjeeling. There he performed many religious rites.

The most faithful Nangzim of the King of Bhutan, Ugyen Dorji welcomed the Dalai Lama with pure and great respect. At a distance of about two miles from his residence and the people’s town, he constructed a beautiful palace with all signs of splendour. Along the way at various points, he made beautiful bamboo boxes filled with garlands of colourful flowers and placed them on both sides of the road. The Nangzim himself and his attendants were attired in Bhutanese style and very elegantly welcomed the Dalai Lama and his entourage with great pompous music. Thereafter, he offered all the necessities in

limitless quantities besides repeatedly offering cash in thousands of measures. He became the patron of Long-life blessings to the public comprising tens and hundreds of them thus sowing the seeds of purity in one self and others. The Gongzim also invited the Dalai Lama to his own residence and offered great religious services to him. Thus the Gongzim had strong faith and great compassion which filled His Holiness with great happiness and he conducted many Long-life blessings and also gave material gifts. From this lineage (Gongzim's), budding Sonam Tobgye was showered with praises from the four perceptual stages to work in the Tibetan Government. His aunty *Aye Wangmo* was administered the vow of celibacy and named as *Thubten Wangmo*, thus granting her the opportunity of attaining Buddha-hood. The residence offered by the Gongzim was named 'Mingyur Ngonpar Gawai Phodrang,' a name of splendour, and His Holiness stayed there in great happiness. There, His Holiness conducted affairs for the peace and happiness of the sentient beings, especially for the welfare of Tibet.

As His Holiness was going around the grand Palace, a number of people like tantrics gathered in different directions. When His Holiness asked them what they were doing, one old man answered, "As the adverse effects of this degenerate age is immense, we are conducting 'Mamo Thrukong.' Will there be any adverse effects on us by the new and the old protective deities?" His Holiness replied that there was no such effect. However, they will have to conduct aversion rites against misfortune in general, 'Mamo Thrukong' in particular, especially the 'Dhamsi.' His Holiness was thirty seven years of age, considered an age of adverse effects, and many people of nobility offered him scarves for his long life. Then arrangements were made in front of Mingyur Ngonpar Gawai Phodrang where a tent

was pitched. As His Holiness proceeded to the tent, welcoming musical instruments were pompously played. Immediately upon his arrival in the tent, many ministers including many people from various places of Sikkim and Bhutan, numbering over two thousand, came to see His Holiness and receive his blessings during the first month. During the second month, thousands of Bhutanese came to visit His Holiness to whom he granted audience and gave his blessings. One day while taking a walk on top of the Phodrang, a cuckoo, the King of birds with a turquoise colour, brazenly sat there and made a sweet sound three times and flew away which made the people awestruck. His Holiness conducted a divination which stated, "A news like the sound of a counc shell will be heard. Upon the tree of turquoise, the cuckoo has made a sweet sound. Therefore, this indicates a very good omen." Therefore, His Holiness felt that this was indeed a good omen.

Then in great happiness, His Holiness issued strict command to work together for the welfare of the Dharma and the people of Tibet. Many people led by Drejong Sikyong Trulku and Tsurphu Lam made great offerings of riches to whom His Holiness gave his blessings. He met the Sikkim Agent Bell Sahib's clerk Rai Achuk who received mani instructions. The representatives of three Sera Dratshangs, the store incharge of Tsurphu, Omze Chung Chung, the representatives of Dreloling Dratshang, Kumar Sahib and family from Sikkim, Shaklhowa, and many Bhutanese gathered to whom His Holiness gave tea and material gifts thus fulfilling the desires of the various individuals.

On the 10th of the fifth month, after fulfilling all the requirements, both for Dharma and the sentient beings, His Holiness turned towards Tibet amidst splendid ceremonies. Along the way, the English lined the road and

taking off their hats, shouted 'Victory.' At Attakara, the Sikkimese King made the welcome arrangements. From thence, His Holiness travelled back to Tibet via Tsothang, Lithang, etc.

End Notes

¹ It has now been translated into English.

² Issued by the Intelligence Branch of the Quarter Master General's Department, Simla. A Short Military Report on Bhutan. 1906. Printed at the Government Montotype office. 156 pages.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Sonam Kinga, March 2004. Ugyen Wangchuck and the Younghusband Mission to Lhasa. The book reports that Shaba Punchung was born in 1861.

⁵ Bayep Dorji, 2008, Thimphu. He is a direct and living descendant of Tsherim. All written records have termed the mother of Raja Dorji as the "lady from Tsendong in Paro."

⁶ There has been 16 Trongsa Penlops. The first King, Ugyen Wangchuck was the longest serving Penlop. His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck is concurrently the 16th Trongsa Penlop.

⁷ Lieut. C.M. Macgregor, Military Report, Country of Bhutan, British Library, L/MIL/17/12/54. The author copied the document in 2006 during his visit to the British Library. The document was very old with tattered pages.

⁸ The Statesman, Kalimpong, June 24. The caption of the article, 'The Passing of a Bhutanese Chief.'

⁹ His Majesty Ugyen Wangchuck. A reply to Dr. Graham after the death of Raja Dorji.

¹⁰ Raja Sonam Tobgay's letter to Lord Charmichael, Governor of Bengal. Dated 9th August 1916, Kalimpong.

¹¹ The Statesman, Kalimpong, June 24 1916. 'The Passing of a Bhutanese Chief.'

¹² E.C. Dozey. A concise history of the Darjeeling District since 1835.

- ¹³ J. Claude White. Sikkim and Bhutan, Twenty one Years on the North East Frontier 1887-1908.
- ¹⁴ Françoise Pommaret, 1997. Bhutan Mountain Fortress of the Gods; p.224 writes that Ugyen Dorji was appointed as 'border commissioner' (gyadrung).
- ¹⁵ Lama Pema Tshewang, 1973. A Brief History of the First Hereditary King of Bhutan.
- ¹⁶ The Statesman, Kalimpong, June 24, 1916.
- ¹⁷ E.C. Dozey. A Concise History of Darjeeling District since 1835.
- ¹⁸ Quoted in Kholi, p.151.
- ¹⁹ Markham's Narrative of G. Bogle's Mission to Tibet.
- ²⁰ Michael Aris, 1994. Raven Crown; p.87.
- ²¹ Sonam Kinga. 2004. Ugyen Wangchuk and the Younghusband Mission to Lhasa; p.13.
- ²² Lama Gonpa Dasho Phuntsog Wangdi. Unpublished and unfinished Draft History of Bhutan.
- ²³ Lama Pema Tshewang. A Brief History of the First Hereditary King of Bhutan.
- ²⁴ Late Lyonpo Dawa Tshering. Friday 28, July 2006, Bhutan Observer.
- ²⁵ Lama Pema Tshewang. History of Bhutan, The Luminous Mirror to the Land of the Dragon: A consolidated History of the early period, the Desi period and that of the Monarchy of this medicinal kingdom. Translator, Jagar Dorji, KMT Printers and Publishers. Hereafter abbreviated as The Luminous Mirror of the Land of the Dragon. pp. 314.
- ²⁶ Lama Gonpa Dasho Phuntsog Wangdi. Undated and unfinished Draft History of Bhutan.
- ²⁷ The second will, Dated 6th June 1916, signed eight days before he died showed that he was just another human being who took his paternal and filial responsibility.

²⁸ Michael Aris. *The Raven Crown*.

²⁹ Information extracted from an Interview with Dasho Gaza by the author. Dasho Gaza's grandfather Gongzim Tandin Ngedrup was the Deb Zimpon of Thimphu at that time. Deb Zimpon and Alu Dorji were very close to Jigme Namgyel who willed them to be adopted brothers of Ugyen Wangchuck.

³⁰ According to the personal communications with Ap Thinley (son of Goop Dendu, Phuntsho Dorji's son) and Lyonpo Yeshey Zimba (son of Goop Dhenden, Alu Dorji's son by the same mother as Dendu), their Grand Uncle Tshewang, brother of Dechen Zam, related that it was a treachery of Penlop Daw Penjore who was the sworn brother of Phuntsho Dorji that led to the killing of the Punab at Changlimithang. However, King Ugyen Wangchuck was a magnanimous and noble man, who not only pardoned his misled men, but also reconferred on them much of their original status. Tshewang was infact made the Haa Zimpon upon his return and served Gongzim Ugyen Dorji till his death.

³¹ *The Luminous Mirror of the Land of the Dragon*. pp. 314.

³² *Ibid.* p. 314-15.

³³ J. Claude White, *Sikkim and Bhutan. Twenty one Years on the North East Frontier 1887-1908*.

³⁴ Late Lyonpo Dawa Tshering. 28 July 2006, Bhutan Observer.

³⁵ *The Luminous Mirror of the Land of the Dragon*. pp. 319-20.

³⁶ Francoise Pommaret, 1997. *Bhutan Mountain Fortress of the Gods*, p.226.

³⁷ Charles Bell. *Diary of Charles Bell, during his mission to Bhutan in December 1909 and January 1910*.

- ³⁸ The Luminous Mirror of the Land of the Dragon. pp. 32.
- ³⁹ Charles Bell. The Diary of Bell's Mission to Bhutan for the month of December 1909 and January 1910 noted "Very Confidential."
- ⁴⁰ The Statesman, June 24, 1916. Kalimpong.
- ⁴¹ Lame Gonpa Dasho Phuntshog Wangdi. Undated and unfinished Draft History of Bhutan.
- ⁴² Annual report on Bhutan for the year 1914-15.
- ⁴³ Queen Mother Ashi Kesang Choeden Wangchuck, 2008 in a conversation with the author at Dechencholing Palace.
- ⁴⁴ The Statesman, June 24, 1916. Kalimpong.
- ⁴⁵ Annual Report on the relations between the British Government and Bhutan for the year 1915-16.
- ⁴⁶ Annual Report on the relations between the British Government and Bhutan for the year 1915-16.
- ⁴⁷ His Majesty Ugyen Wangchuck. Undated Letter to Raja Dorji.
- ⁴⁸ The Statesman, June 24, 1916. Kalimpong.
- ⁴⁹ Memorandum of information received during the month of April 1908, regarding the North-East Frontier, Burma, Siam and China.
- ⁵⁰ Kennedy, I.M.S, British Library, MSS EUR F/157/224 B, BHUTAN DIARY 1909-10 CAPT R.S.
- ⁵¹ Ibid.
- ⁵² Bhutanese chief.
- ⁵³ A ceremonial scarf.
- ⁵⁴ Charles Bell's letter, British Library. The confidential letter is addressed to the officiating Political Officer in Sikkim. Dated 27th July, 1908. Simla.
- ⁵⁵ Lieut. F.M Bailey, Offg. British Agent at Gyantse. British Library. Report dated 13th July, 1908 from Camp Yatung.

⁵⁶ The three Chinese officials that Bailey had lunch with were Mr. Cheung (The commissioner of Customs), Mr. Wu (his assistant) and Mr. Cheung.

⁵⁷ Report of Lieut. F.M. Bailey, Offg. British Agent at Gyantse. Report dated 13th July, 1908 from Camp Yatung.

⁵⁸ The Statesman, June 24, 1916. Kalimpong. 'The Passing of a Bhutanese Chief.'

⁵⁹ Lopen Pema Tshewang, 1973. A Brief History of the First Hereditary King of Bhutan.

⁶⁰ The Luminous Mirror of the Land of the Dragon. pp. 328.

⁶¹ The Luminous Mirror of the Land of the Dragon. pp. 327.

⁶² An extract from The Luminous Mirror of the Land of the Dragon. pp 474-501.