

May 20, 2011

His Majesty's address to the 7th session of parliament today

It is now almost three years and three months since the start of democracy. Our nation has so much to be proud of. The first years of democracy have been a great success, made possible by the blessings of the Dharma and our Guardian Deities and the foundations laid through the selfless efforts of our forefathers and Kings and the good fortune and karma of the People of Bhutan. Our generation embarked on a profound process of democratization, with little experience but armed with the strength of our unity of vision and aspirations. Our people, government, religious institutions and bodies, private sector, media, legislature, constitutional bodies, judiciary and the armed forces have all served the country well under this new system, and have worked to slowly shape a strong and effective democracy. Through your hard work, it has been possible in the midst of such a dramatic transition to oversee the vast socio-economic development plans and projects we had in the 10th 5-year plan.

The government has worked tirelessly in all sectors such as hydropower, tourism, agriculture and industries. Remote villages are being connected with roads and electricity is being made accessible to villages while education and health facilities are being broadened or improved. Our traditions and cultural values continue to be strengthened and rural lhakangs are being renovated. The government has moved with intensified efforts to renew foreign relations according to the changing times. I am happy that our relations with India are as strong as ever. The people of Bhutan must appreciate all these efforts being made by the government.

In spite of all our achievements and the peace and prosperity we have experienced for so long – in fact because of this success – we must remember to never be complacent. If even a small fraction of the problems that plague other nations appear in Bhutan, our small society will be forever afflicted and we may never regain our jewel of a nation.

As we move forward, we must be guided by the most sacred and unchanging national goals – the security and sovereignty of our Nation and the peace, unity and harmony of our People. Today, as I have said before, our immediate and foremost duty is the success of democracy. That is our foundation for the future success of Bhutan. But democracy can only flourish if all Bhutanese uphold the rule of law; if there is good governance; if corruption is eradicated and if the delivery of public services is fair and effective.

As a small landlocked nation, the only way for us to fulfill these is to carry out our duties through cooperation, sharing and consultation. I know that each ministry, government institution, parliamentary body or public agencies has its own mandate. Still, you must work together, not in competition. Henceforth, I ask all of you to establish the practice of meeting regularly, sitting face to face every now and then, so that you will always be in collaboration as you carry out your separate responsibilities. And all problems may be resolved without being allowed to fester and grow. Such shared effort will be in the true spirit of Gross National Happiness. Today, at this auspicious gathering, I would like to make a short announcement to all the people of the 20 Dzongkhags.

As King, it is now time for me to marry. After much thought I have decided that the wedding shall be later this year.

Now, many will have their own idea of what a Queen should be like – that she should be uniquely beautiful, intelligent and graceful. I think with experience and time, one can grow into a dynamic person in any walk of life with the right effort. For the Queen, what is most important is that at all times, as an individual she must be a good human being, and as Queen, she must be unwavering in her commitment to serve the People and Country.

As my queen, I have found such a person and her name is Jetsun Pema. While she is young, she is warm and kind in heart and character. These qualities together with the wisdom that will come with age and experience will make her a great servant to the nation.

This union does not mean that I am starting my own family. From the very day I received the Dhar Ngay-Nga from the sacred Machhen, the people of the 20 Dzongkhags became my family. Such is the duty and privilege of all Kings of Bhutan. It is through this union, that I shall have a Queen who will support, and work with me, as I serve the People and Country.

The wedding will be in accordance with age-old tradition, to seek the blessings of our Guardian Deities. I ask the government not to make any plans for a grand celebration. The happiness of my beloved father and the blessings of our People will give me the greatest joy and happiness.