

(Research Note)
A Study on Transformation of Local Government in Kanglung Geog

Paljor GALAY¹⁾ · Lobzang DORJI²⁾ · Akinobu KAWAI³⁾

ブータン王国における地方行政改革：Kanglung Geogの事例

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ABSTRACT

Before 1980, all socio-economic development plans were done centrally. This however changed in 1981, when Bhutan adopted decentralization to foster effective development. Thus, the Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogchung and Geog Yargay Tshogchung was established in 1981 and 1991 respectively. Subsequently, the enactment of Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogchung and Geog Yargay Tshogchung Chathrim of 2002 has been a process of significant change in governance towards a more democratic process. This acts lay down the basis for a conceptual shift from a technocratic sector-led development approach to a more open-ended block-based system promoting self-organization at the micro-level, deepening people's participation, and spur greater effort of the communities. Further, the Local Government Act of 2009 empowered political, financial and administrative decentralization. Employing a qualitative approach, this study attempts to study the transformation of Local Government after the enactment of Local Government Act of 2009 in Kanglung Geog with special references to the legal framework of political, financial decentralization and administration decentralization.

Key words : Local Government, Political, Financial, Administration & Decentralization, Geog, Chiowg

要 旨

東ヒマラヤ南面に位置し、陸の孤島 (landlocked country) として、長く国際社会から隔絶されていたブータンが、国際社会に登場した1960年代から上院、下院選挙を経て2008年に成文憲法発布、2009年に地方自治法の制定、2011年地区 (Geog) 議会選挙実施に至る半世紀のブータンの地方自治の展開を概観する。先に開始された国家統治体制 (地方行政機構) 整備と一部重なりながら1980年代から始まった住民参加による地方自治が段階的に進化した経緯を述べる。精神遺産、伝統文化及び自然環境保全重視の開発理念 (GNH: Gross National Happiness) とここに至る国王のリーダーシップに注目する。今日、地方自治における住民参加は、県 (Dzongkhag) から基礎自治体であるGeog (地区) 議会 (地区長と5-8名の議員 [Tshgpa]) まで延びている行政サービスを、複数の自然村 (Village) から選出された議員による世帯への普及に依存している。したがって住民参加は、Chiowg内の複数の自然村におけるコミュニティ形成のあり方に大きく左右されると考えられる。自然村には地縁的・血縁的な繋がりに加え、農業協同組合の集荷グループ、酪農家による牛乳集荷グループ、森林組合等の新しい繋がりが生まれている。本稿は、住民参加の基盤とも言えるChiowgを構成する自然村への注目の第一歩である。

Introduction

The process of decentralization of power and au-

thority in Bhutan has taken place under the guidance of visionary monarchs. Successive monarchs of Bhutan have perceived the process of decentralization as being fundamental in ensuring the sovereignty of the

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nation as well as the well being of the people. Decentralization occurred in various stages throughout her history, which was planned to prepare Bhutan's population to accept and perform efficiently. Decentralization and people's participation have been the thrust of major reforms in the political history of Bhutan. The reign of His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck (1952–72), the third king of Bhutan was dedicated to reform and restructuring of the existing political and economic system. Decentralized administration has been initiated as early as 1953 with the creation of the Tshogdu Chhenmo¹. Next to the establishment of the hereditary monarchy in 1907, the establishment of the Tshogdu Chhenmo stands out as a historic landmark in 20th-century Bhutanese history (World Bank, 2014). The institution of the Tshogdu Chhenmo marks the first attempt to the process of decentralization in the subsequent four and half decades. Alongside the democratic processes, reforms in decentralization started with the establishment of Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdu² (now Dzongkhag Tshogdu – DT) and Geog Yargay Tshogchung³ (now Geog Tshogde – GT) governed by the DYT and GYT Chathrim⁴ (Local Government Assessment Study, 2018). These bodies of local government were established to ensure maximum participation from the people in decision making.

The Local Government Act was passed in 2009 becoming a historical milestone by incorporating and updating the DYT and GYT Chathrim and the Thromde⁵ Act of 2009 deepening local governance reforms by providing an overarching legal framework for the Local Governments and reassigning functions and responsibilities from the centre to Dzongkhags and Geogs. After two years of delay in implementation of the Local Government Act of 2009 and the Thromde Act of 2009. It was in 2011, the first Local Government elections for all 205 Gewogs and four Thromdes were conducted under the new form of governance. Therefore, this study attempts to study the political, financial and administration transformation in Kanglung Gewog after the enactment of Local Government Act of 2009.

Paul Smoke (2015) points the importance of Chiwog in local governance. Kanglung Geog in Trashigang Dzongkhag is focused as a case study.

Bhutan's development agenda is built on the pillars of GNH, which is based on “non-material wellbeing, happiness and cultural values.” Yet modernization has resulted in some weakening of community vitality. The government's cultural protection strategy has done little to protect Bhutan's non-monumental assets like villages and other cultural structures that are central to community life. As a result, the government has been working on inclusive policies to institutionalize development that is people centered and culturally sensitive (World Bank 2014). Decentralized bodies like *chiwogs* could play a significant role in being stewards and preserving traditional community links that form the basis of Bhutanese lifestyle and heritage.

Study Area

Bhutan is a landlocked country in South Asia and is located in the eastern Himalayas, it is bordered by the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China in the north and India in the south. Bhutan has twenty Dzongkhags⁶ out of which, Trashigang is the largest Dzongkhag in the country (Fig. 1a.). Trashigang is located in the eastern part of Bhutan and is 551 km away from Thimphu, the capital. Trashigang Dzongkhag has three Dungkhags⁷ namely Sakten, Wamrong and Thrimshing. It has fifteen Geogs⁸ namely Bartsham, Bidung, Kanglung, Kangpara, Khaling, Lumang, Merak, Phongmey, Radhi, Sakten, Samkhar, Shongphu, Thrimshing, Uzorong and Yangneer (Fig. 1b), with a population 45,527 and 10,720 regular households (PHCB, 2017).

Out of fifteen Geogs, Kanglung Geog is located at an altitude ranging 1930 m above the sea level. The Geog has a size of 63.32 sq. km. and has a total population of 5,459 of which the male population is 2290 and the female population is 3169. The Geog has a total of 781

¹ National Assembly

² District Assembly

³ Block council

⁴ Acts

⁵ Municipal

⁶ Districts

⁷ Sub districts

⁸ Administrative blocks believed to have been formed during the 12th Century formed under a Gup (Village head man)

⁹ Cluster of villages believed to have been formed during the 12th Century under the reach of a Chipoen (village messenger) to render labour force and pay tax

households with five chiwogs⁹, namely Rongthong, Ritshangdung, Yonphula, Mertsham and Manthong. The chiwogs are made up of ten villages namely, Rongthong, Shingchen Goenpa, Ritshangdung, Panthang, Yonphupam, Yonphula, Mertsham, Thragom, Manthong and Serthi (Local Government Portal, 2019). Each Chiwog is represented by a Tshogpa¹⁰. The settlement pattern of the villages in Kanglung is scattered and semi-nucleated. The Geog has accessibility to electricity, health facilities and educational insti-

tutes. There are three outreach clinics (ORC) and one Basic Health Unit (BHU). There are two primary schools, three community schools, one middle secondary school, one lower secondary school, one higher secondary school and two colleges in Kanglung. The Geog also has six non-formal education centres, which provide basic education to the community (BOIC, 2015). The Gewog has a total of 310.66 acres of fallow land (BB, 2018).

Maize, paddy and potatoes are common crops culti-

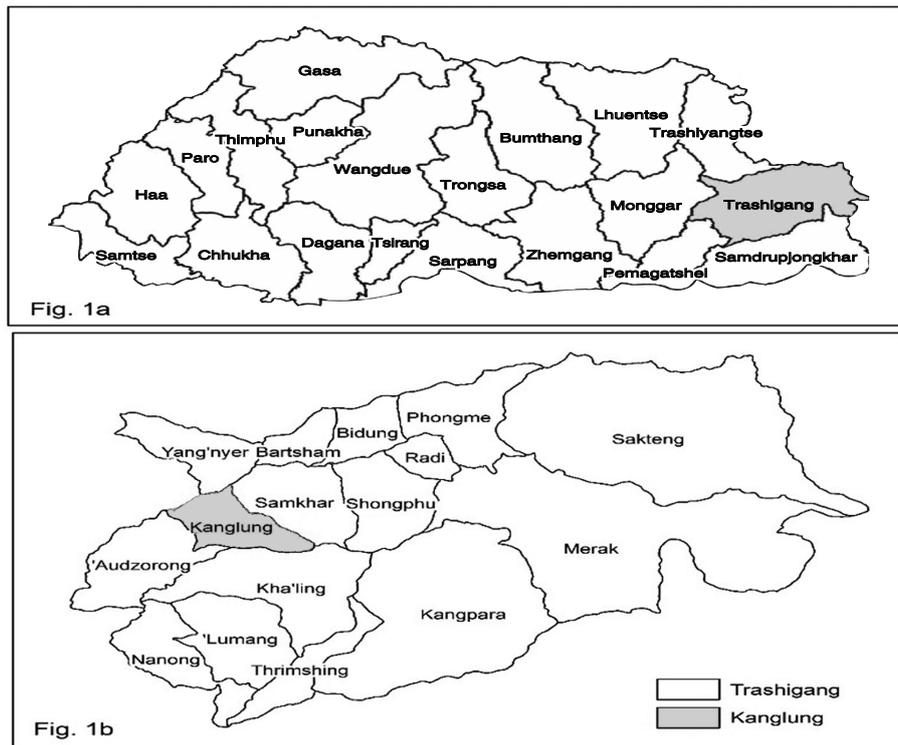


Fig. 1a. Administrative Map of Bhutan
Fig. 1b. Study Area

Fig. 1 Location Map of Study Area

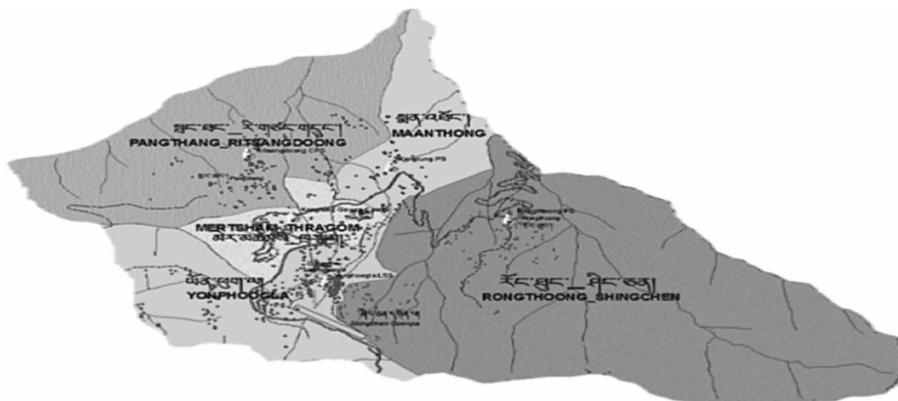
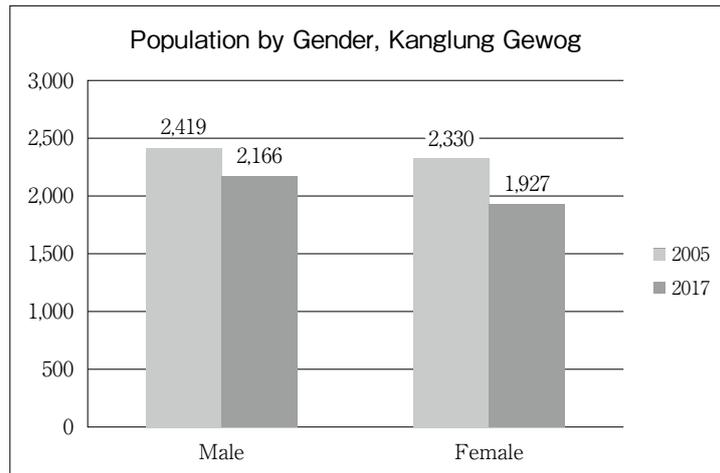


Fig. 2 Administrative Map of Kanglung Geog

¹⁰ Chiwog representative



Source : RGOB National Statistics Bureau of Bhutan (2018) *2017 POPULATION & HOUSING CENSUS OF BHUTAN NATIONAL REPORT*

Fig. 3 Population of Kanglung Gewog

vated in Kanglung Geog. Cultivated areas for potato are double of primary cereal crops, maize and paddy.

Common livestock reared in the Geog is dairy and poultry. Dairy population is dominated by cross breed jersey (62%) and Nublang Thrabum (31%). A third of the poultry population is local breed. At least 70% of the dairy produce (butter and cheese) is used for domestic consumption, and only less than 30% being sold. On the contrary, 70% of the poultry produce is sold. The Geog boasts of having successfully run dairy cooperatives in the chiwogs of Rongthong and Manthong.

Discussion

Strengthening the Local Government has always been the foci of the visionary monarchs of Bhutan. The success of the local government has always been equated as the foundation of strengthening democracy. Peoples active participation at the grass-root level is viewed as being pivotal in decision making and no stones have been left unturned to encourage peoples' participation. Local Governments holds a special place and is looked at as an integral institution of achieving inclusive decision making. It is not viewed as the lowest level of the government rather viewed as the government closest to the people. Thus, the institution and strengthening of Local Government have been guided by visions of Bhutan's monarchs. The importance of Local Government and the responsibilities of

the head of Geogs have also been affirmed through Royal recognition. All Gups¹¹ receive Dhar¹² from His Majesty the King and Thridzins¹³ of Dzongkhag Tshogdu are awarded Pata¹⁴ by His Majesty the King since December 2016. These are more than symbolic gestures, it is a proof of His Majesty's firm conviction in the capabilities of the Gups and Thrizins to make decisions for the development and serve their communities and the country. The Gup of Kanglung was also elected as the Thridzin of Trashigang Dzongkhag. For him, receiving Dhar and Pata has made him realize how much His Majesty the king values Local Government and His Majesty's effort in making people actively participate in decision making.

The Local Government Act of 2009 makes adequate provision for democratic citizen participation in local government, through open meetings and provision of public information. Even the roles and responsibilities of local governments were first set out in the GYT and DYT Chathrims of 2002, and then further accorded in the Constitution of Kingdom of Bhutan. The local government bodies have been decentralized with increasing administrative and financial authority. According to the Gup of Kanglung, the decentralization process has been a great significance as the responsibility of presiding over the DT was transferred from the Dzongkhag administration to the elected head of a Geog. Initially, the Dzongkhag administration had to spearhead the developmental plans for the Geogs. This was taxing for the Dzongkhag administration as

¹¹ Elected leaders of Geog

¹² Ceremonial Scarf

¹³ Chairman

¹⁴ Traditional sword

it had to look at the wellbeing of different Geogs, especially for Trashigang. It would often result in not being able to meet the various needs of the Geogs. Interview participants also point out that the decentralization process and the Local Government Act has helped the development of the Geog as the Geog administration knows what the needs of the people are. It also does not burden the Dzongkhag administration in planning for all the Geogs within it.

“Letting the Geogs decide their development plan has benefited us. It is easier for the Geog administration to know what is needed for Chiwogs or the Geog”. (Dorji¹⁵)

The provision of the Local Government Act enhances local empowerment and ensures that an environment of transparency and accountability in the governance structure of local government. In Kanglung, Geog Administration publishes an annual report which contains a list of revenues received and contracts tendered to ensure transparency, efficiency and accountability.

“Transparency is very important for local governments to function efficiently. These annual reports, notice on the boards of the Geog Office and explanations during the Zomdus¹⁶ lets the people know about the plans and budgets of our Geog” (Karma¹⁷)

The Local Government has also been given the authority to formulate and implement their own annual and five-year plans in line with national goals and objectives mandated to promote holistic and integrated area-based planning. The Local Government Act also empowers political decentralization to elected local government leaders to empower more power in public decision making. According to the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008, it requires the promotion of holistic and integrated area-based development planning, and the participation of citizens in the formulation of annual and five-year plans. According to the Gup of Kanglung, agendas are discussed through a people-centric approach in the formulation of any developmental plans through an elected representative in a gewog. He also added that all Local Government plans are closely aligned to National Key Result Areas of Five Year Plan. Besides, the elected

representative in Geog and Chiwogs serves as the voice of the population in the GT sessions. Further, the need-based priority is incorporated as an agenda to be discussed in the DT session but need to adhere Local Development Planning Manual through participatory approach in the formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of any Local Government plans. The Gup shared that, though the Local Government have been given the autonomy to plan the development of the Geogs, the plans need to be set not just to achieve the well being of only the Geog but should meet and fulfil the national aspirations as well.

Initially, the annual capital grant at gewog level appears to have been conceived as a genuine block grant process, whereby the gewog would get funding released in tranches against an agreed work plan and budget. However, the Local Governments are now entitled to adequate financial resources from the Government in the form of annual grants to make them self-reliant and self-sustaining units (Constitution of Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008). According to the Gup of Kanglung, the financial decentralization to the Geogs came into existence in a gradual process. The amount of fund to the local government have also increased in every five-year plan. Consequently, the Local Government Act also gives fiscal decentralization to transfer the expenditure and revenue responsibilities to the Local Government. Further, it involves giving discretion and autonomy on fiscal decision making power and management responsibilities to the Local Government. Most importantly, the allocation of grants to Local Governments has increased steadily throughout the past Five-Year Plans. The total budget outlay for Kanglung Geog in the 12th Five Year is Nu. 88 million of which 21.732 million was allotted as Resource Allocation Fund and Nu. 3.16 million as Common Minimum Infrastructure for the fiscal year 2019-2020.

Conclusion

Bhutan has witnessed a steady and well-planned process of decentralization under the reigns and guidance of farsighted monarchs. The institution and strengthening of the Local Governments have ushered in maximising civic participation and inclusive decision making. Kanglung Geog is one example among many in Bhutan where people view the change in as an opportunity of being part of decision making and

¹⁵ Interview respondent. Name changed

¹⁶ Meetings

¹⁷ Interview respondent. Name changed

making their opinions heard.

However, there are still challenges that need to be overcome. The Geogs would need designated manpower to tackle the various developmental needs of the Geogs and to carry out works as planned. The Geogs face the difficulty of making people understand priority-based development which often leads to delay in executing works as per plan.

Although, The Local Development Planning Manual (LDPM) requires a participatory approach in the formulation, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the Local Government plans. Poor participation in Zomdus is seen to be a hurdle. Initially, Kanglung Geog administration conducted Zomdus every month to keep itself informed of the views and grievances of the people. This however was not shared in the same light by the people. People viewed it as a burden and began to send the elderly or teenage children as their representatives to the Zomdus. The administration then opted to conduct Zomdus only when there were pressing agendas and issues which brought the total number of Zomdus to be about five or six times a year. However, some households continue to send representatives that are either too old or too young to be able to engage in important discussions.

Despite the challenges faced, the Geog administration of Kanglung Geog strives to promote inclusive decision making to achieve holistic development to make Kanglung a self-sufficient Geog through carefully thought out agricultural development. The Geog prioritizes on bringing every individual on board in deciding for the well being of the Geog and the nation as a whole.

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Fig. 4 A Village in Kanglung



Fig. 5 Thragom Village



Fig. 6 Rongthung Village



Fig. 7 Ritsangdung Village



Fig. 8 Mertsham Village

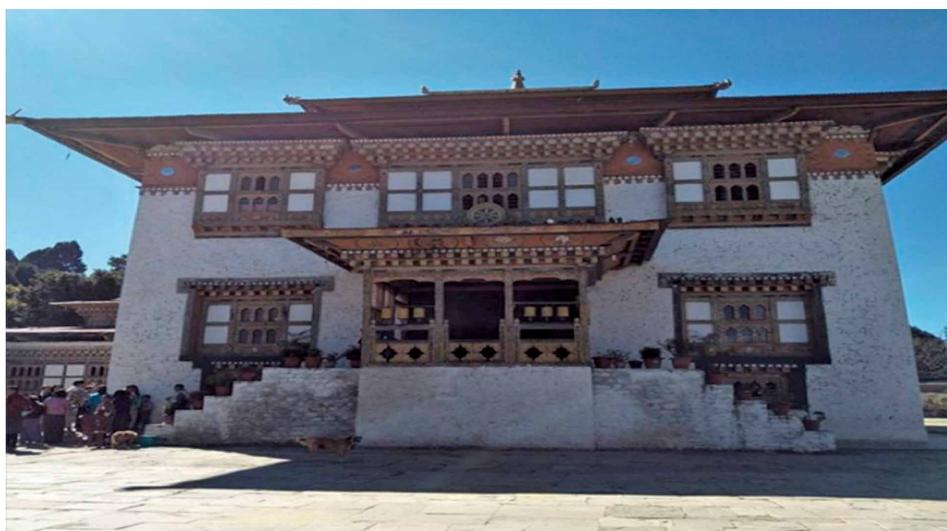


Fig. 9 The Monastery of Yonphula Village



Fig. 10 Pangthang Village



Fig. 11 Paddy Cultivation in Kanglung Gewog



Fig. 12 Kanglung Geog Office

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name : Kinzang Dorji 2. Designation : Gup of Kanglung Gewog and Thridzin of Trashigang Dzongkhag 3. Year elected - 2016 (Elected for two terms 1st being in 2011) 	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name : Kinzang Tobgyel 2. Designation : Mangmi (Elected representative of the Geog) 3. Year elected - 2016 4. Previous Occupation - Farmer 	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name : Ms. Galay Wangmo 2. Designation : Tshogpa (Representative of a Chiwog), Manthoong Chiwog 3. Year elected - 2016 4. Previous Occupation - Farmer 	 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name : Langa Dorji 2. Designation : Tshogpa, Yonphula Chiwog 3. Year elected - 2016 4. Previous Occupation - Farmer
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name : Sangay Dorji 2. Designation : Tshogpa, Rongthung Chiwog 3. Year elected - 2016 4. Previous Occupation - Police 	 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name : Sangay Dorji 2. Designation : Tshogpa, Rongthung Chiwog 3. Year elected - 2016 4. Previous Occupation - Police
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Name : Tashi Namgay 2. Designation : Tshogpa, Ritsangdung Chiwog 3. Year elected - 2016 4. Previous Occupation - Farmer 	

Fig. 13 Elected Members of Kanglung Geog

Appendix 1 Visit to the Open University of Japan



Visit to the Open University of Japan

22 - 26 April 2017

Mr. Tshering Wangdi, President of Sherubtse College (RUB) and Mr. Rinzin Phuntsho, Sr. ICT officer from Sherubtse visited the Open University of Japan from 23rd April to 25th April 2017, This trip was made to meet the President and faculty of OIJ in order to report on the MOU progress between the two universities as well as to further discuss on the next project to develop distance learning courses.

Day 1 (23rd)

The President and ICT officer visited the Gumma Study Centre and paid a courtesy visit to the Director of the centre at 2 pm. We were warmly received at the Centre with the greatest hospitality. We met around 50 students of Gunma study center and had an interactive exchange session with them. The president made a presentation on 'Higher education at the Royal University of Bhutan' for 20 minutes followed by a presentation on the 'Use of ICT tools for teaching and learning purpose'. We stayed at the OIJ Seminar House. We had dinner with the Director and students of Gunma study center. For the second time, we were treated with the warmest and loveliest reception during the entire course of the dinner. We were treated to the best Japanese dishes and had the most enjoyable experience.

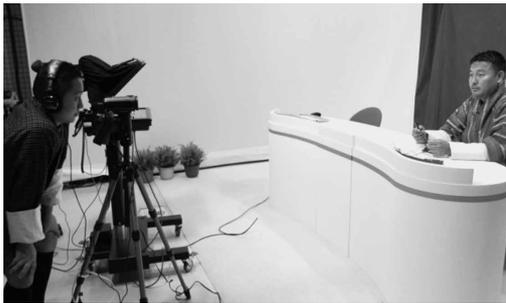




Day 2 (24th)

On the second day from 10 to 10:30 am we visited the office of the International Affairs Section and met with Mr. Jin, Chief of the section and Ms. Togi to sign the necessary documents.

At around 1:30 pm we visited the recording studio at OIJ. Mr. Takahashi gave us a demonstration and explained how to use the equipment and also taught us how to edit the course materials in the studio. A live recording of the President's speech was done by Mr. Takahashi followed by a practical lesson on how to carry out the recording. He also helped edit the sample video lesson developed by us before the visit to Japan.



From 4 pm to 5:30 pm we paid a courtesy visit to the newly appointed President of OIJ, Mr. Kisugi and the new Vice-president, Mr. Ikeda. Sherubtse President offered Khadar (scarf with eight lucky signs) to congratulate the Hon'ble President and the Vice President on their new assignment and to wish them success on their new appointments to the honorable offices. Sherubtse President reported on the progress of our work with the OIJ. The team also presented and discussed on the second phase of the collaboration.



Next, we had a exchange programme with the lifelong learning students (Alumni of Master Course) till 8:30pm. The session was very interactive with exchange of questions, opinions and ideas. That evening was followed by dinner with the new President and Vice-president, Kawai Sensei and the lifelong learning students. The dinner was not only sumptuous but also rich with generosity and an experience of Japanese culture. We stayed at the University's Seminar House.



Day 3 (25th)

The morning began with a courtesy visit to professor Miwa followed by a discussion on distance learning course with her. We discussed the courses to be developed by OIJ counterpart and Sherubtse and which platform to use, MOOCS or Moodle. Prof. Miwa recommend us to meet the International Director of OIJ and to submit a brief report on the progress of MOU between Sherubtse and OIJ.

Then we met with professor Yamada and discussed about the online courses to be developed. He recommended us to use the existing moodle platform rather than MOOCS. We discussed on the possibility of offering online Japanese language courses at Sherubtse and promised to share his lesson on Japanese language that can be used in Sherubtse College as a sample. Prof. Yamada suggested to implement the Chilo server in Sherubtse campus and would follow up by getting in contact with Hori-san.

Next at 4 pm we met with the faculty members and staff of OIJ. Sherubtse President made his presentation

on ‘Higher education at the Royal University of Bhutan’ followed by discussion and the presentation on the ‘Use of ICT tools for teaching and learning purpose’ in Royal University of Bhutan. We stayed at the OIJ Seminar House.

Day 4 (26th)

On the last day at 10:30 am we got the opportunity to observe the live studio shooting courtesy of Prof. Ohnishi. We observed live video recording of Prof. Ohnishi and had a practical session on how to develop a lesson for the distance-learning courses as part of the collaboration.



The four days visit to the numerous campus of OIJ gave us the opportunity to meet the new President and Vice President and to see the advanced facilities and to meet many of the distinguished faculty and students. This visit was enriching for us both in terms of knowledge and also to experience a unique cultural experience. For that we are grateful to the management of OIJ and Professor Kawai Sensei for the opportunity.

Tshering Wangdi
President, Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan

Rinzin Phuntsho
Sr. ICT Officer Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan

**Experiences from Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) and the
Center for Open Distance Education (CODE), The Open University of Japan (OUJ)
Memorandum of Understanding**

Sherubtse College, Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) and the Center for Open Distance Education (CODE), The Open University of Japan (OUJ) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Academic Exchange and Research Cooperation on November 21, 2013.

The MoU between the two institutes witnessed the exchange of faculties and students from Bhutan to Japan and vice versa. Six staffs and one student from Sherubtse and one staff Ms Tshering Choden from the Office of the Vice-Chancellor were invited to visit the Open University of Japan and its various study centres located in Japan and similarly five Japanese students and four professors from the Open University of Japan visited Sherubtse College over the seven years of collaboration.

The Bhutanese members visiting the Open University of Japan got the opportunity to visit and learn about OUJ and its services in detail including its various study centres in parts of Japan. The Bhutanese members from Sherubtse College also got the opportunity to share and converse with the faculties and students in the study centers about our College and the Royal University of Bhutan and about our aspiration of Gross National Happiness. During the visit, the members also visited various rural areas in Japan including Sado Island where we were introduced to the concept of Gross Sado Happiness, a concept that replicated the developmental philosophy of Bhutan. The experience at Sado Island was overwhelming in the sense that the ideals of Gross National Happiness (GNH), a developmental philosophy in Bhutan was lived and practiced by the people of this community. There was as we observed an interesting harmony of the four pillars of GNH. The inspiration that we took from the Sado experience and through the support and initiative of CODE, Open University of Japan and CSEAS, Department of Practice-oriented Area Studies, Kyoto University, Japan - we introduced GNH : Community Engagement Center at Sherubtse College to promote and institute the practice of GNH in our villages and community.

Similarly, the visits and learning experience at Open University of Japan gave the Bhutanese members a clear idea about the facilities used by OUJ for distance education. It also gave us an insight into the ideas and academic structure needed in offering distance education. Distance education is one of the best alternative in imparting higher education with minimum infrastructural facilities to a growing population. The Bhutanese members who visited OUJ realized the possibility to introduce a distance education system and through its experience and lessons from OUJ has now introduced "Life Long Learning" as one of the core themes in the Sherubtse College's Strategic Plan for 2018 - 2030. Through this Sherubtse College aspires in future to provide higher education through distance mode to people who do not have the time and money to pursue higher education as regular students.

The third study visit to OUJ included the President, IT Officer and the Coordinator of the CODE - Sherubtse collaboration and happened from February 3rd - February 10th 2016. During the visit, a Seminar was conducted by the Open University of Japan and the three Bhutanese members presented papers on Gross National Happiness and Higher Education, Gross National Happiness and ICT in Higher Education and the Role of Community Information Centers in Gross National Happiness. The paper presentations were recorded and were broadcasted by Professor Yamada, OUJ and is being viewed by the students at OUJ. The team also visited Fukui study centre, Fukui University and Fukui Prefectural University to explore the possibilities of collaboration. During the field visit, the team gave several lectures at the study centers including a seminar at Bhutan Museum at Fukui on GNH & Higher Education in Bhutan. The visit also gave Sherubtse College an opportunity to discuss possible collaboration with Fukui University and Fukui Prefecture University and on 14th March, 2019 - Sherubtse College signed a Terms of Reference with School of Global and Community Studies, University of Fukui. As part of the collaboration, we also had a student and faculty exchange initiated by Professor Toshihiro Tsukihara, University of Fukui. The team also got an opportunity to meet and interact with the Governor of Fukui Prefectural Government - thanks to Professor Akinobu Kawai San and Professor Toshihiro Tsukihara San. In 2017 - 2018, the Governor of Fukui Prefectural Government gave a group of students and 2 faculty members from Sherubtse College on a 10 days study tour to Fukui Prefecture, Japan with focus on cultural and academic exchanges.

The collaboration also gave opportunity for a staff from the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB) with a faculty from Sherubtse College from March 23rd – March 30th 2019. Like the previous visits, the members from Bhutan got the opportunity to interact through presentations related to RUB and the issue of 'Rural Development and its Challenges in Bhutan'; visited the OIJ Study Center at Gunma Prefecture at Maebashi; explored Chiba Study Center at Wakaba, Mihama-Ku, Chiba and familiarized with the different facilities at Headquarters, including master control room, library, and the studio. The visit also gave the two parties opportunities to take stock of the activities pursued between OIJ and RUB and where the institutions are headed with this linkage provided through the specific project. The presentations were useful as it helped bridge the two institutions and enabled staff at OIJ to learn about Bhutan, RUB, and the emerging challenges confronted both in Bhutan and Japan related to rural-urban migration and the possibility of joint research potential. The visit to Gunma and Chiba Study Centers offered huge learning exposure to RUB as it is embarking on digitizing its courses and programs online. OIJ's experience as a University focused on online learning with years of experience in conducting online programmes is a lesson that an institution like RUB can learn and collaborate with, as it moves towards technology-based and online learning. The experience, therefore, was a definite value addition to the staff of RUB. The visit to Gunma prefecture offered an opportunity to witness rural revitalization efforts in Japan. The projects and activities pursued by the Japanese in the rural areas and initiatives carried to sustain their livelihoods by pursuing different entrepreneurial activities show how people, both young and old, come together to enhance the quality of lives in the rural areas. At Takumi No Sato in Minakami, Gunma Prefecture, the visitors witnessed workshops and stores making Japanese green tea, noodles, and farmers' market selling local foods and wares, including sauces, and dried goods. This shows how traditional methods are brought to connect people from the cities to rural areas and to value their rich culture and traditional ways. The revitalization exercise in rural Japan was an experience Bhutan can learn from as Bhutan is also grappling with challenges associated with huge rural-urban migration. The experience from Gunma was a valuable experience to the faculty from Sherubtse College to share and educate our younger generations.

One tangible lesson that Sherubtse College learned from the collaboration with OIJ is through the joint project on developing online courses. Some of the online lessons developed were on agriculture, History of Japan and rural development and the experience included from developing lessons, shooting lessons, and editing of the lessons which were mostly done by OIJ. Furthermore, Sherubtse is also exploring the possibility of offering the joint lessons on rural development to be offered as a module within Sherubtse's BA Population and Development Studies programme structure. Discussions were also carried out on the possibility of Joint development of Japanese language course to be offered online. This will be a huge advantage for Bhutanese students opting to study in Japan or working in Tourism Industry.

The collaboration between CODE and Sherubtse has been very successful and has benefitted both the institutes. The visit to OIJ and its various centres in Chiba, Tokyo, Fukui, Sado and Guma has given the members of Sherubtse College a very good knowledge on the open distance learning system of OIJ. OIJ with its thirty-five years of experience in using the broadcasting system to provide education has provided Sherubtse with the idea and determination to search for the best possibility to offer distance education. Furthermore, Sherubtse College can benefit from OIJ's help in developing and enhancing the Media courses related to radio and TV production at Sherubtse College. A recording studio development is underway at Sherubtse College inspired by technical lessons by Mr. Takahashi San from OIJ. OIJ's expertise in broadcasting through radio and TV could be used in forming an idea on broadcasting RUB educational programmes through Bhutan Broad Casting Service and radios for the students during holidays and vacations, a possible future collaborative project between OIJ and RUB.

Similarly, the student and faculty exchange programme visits from OIJ gave us the opportunity to educate and advocate them on the culture, rural and historical aspects of Bhutan including academic life of the Royal University of Bhutan. The cultural exchange and student exchange between OIJ and Sherubtse have promoted cultural awareness and interest among the students from both countries. This has promoted the essence of wholesome education at both universities. Many Japanese students have started opting Bhutan as a destination for a Semester Study Abroad Programs. The Professors from OIJ who visited Bhutan gave interactive guest lectures to our University students in various areas apart from consultative discussions with our faculties on

possible areas of joint research. The joint research projects with Professor Akinobu Kawai San has been very useful for our young faculties in engaging and mentoring them to carry out research activities in the community. This collaboration has also made Sherubtse and the RUB as a whole known to other universities in Japan and may open possible collaboration in future for research and academic ventures.

The students, faculties and staff of Sherubtse College and Royal University of Bhutan remain grateful to the faculties and staff of Open University of Japan for the enriching experience during the exchange programs. We also remain indebted to Professor Akinobu Kawai and President Shin Kisugi for the support and opportunity to work with Open University of Japan.

Appendix 2 Visitors to Royal University of Bhutan and Sherubtse Collage fom OUJ

Length of vsit	Visitor	Places	Purpose
18~31 Dec 2013	Toshio Akimitsu Akinobu Kawai	SC	MOU between Sherubtse Collage and the Open University of Japan to be concluded by the signature
11Aug~30Aug 2014	Akinobu Kawai 5 students	SC	Cultural exchange under the MoU about 80 SC students attended
18Feb~3Mar 2015	Akinobu Kawai	RUB, SC	Mutual Consultation on activities are to be carried
4Aug~14Aug 2015	Makiko Miwa Akinobu Kawai	RUB, SC	Study on internet connectivity and e-learning facilities in Bhutan, Prof. Miwa gave lecture on OUJ system, about 50 SC students attended
11Mar~26Mar 2016	Akinobu Kawai	RUB, SC	Proposal of joint field research on local government
1Sep31~12Sep 2016	Yoishi Okabe	RUB, SC	MOU : RUB and OUJ to be concluded by the signature
20Aug~31Aug 2016	Akinobu Kawai	RUB, SC	
16Mar~25Mar 2017	Hirofumi Takahashi Akinobu Kawai	RUB, SC	Proposal of joint producing of online course material
29Oct~10Nov 2018	Akinobu Kawai	RUB, SC	Field observation on Gewog administration
20Feb~8Mar 2019	Akinobu Kawai	RUB, SC	Meeting on joint producing of online course material
20Feb~6Mar 2020	Akinobu Kawai	RUB, SC	Interview with youth in agricultural programmes

※Royal University of Bhutan (RUB), Sherubtes Collage (SC), The Open University of Japan (OUJ)

Appendix 3 Related articles (交流関連文献)

- Akinobu Kawai, Syngye Namgyel, Akira Nagata (2017) Bhutanese Educated Youths Take Farming to a New Horizon : A Case Study in Agriculture Programme (YiAP in Bhutan, Journal of The Open University of Japan, No. 35, pp. 11-23
- Akinobu Kawai, Tshering Wangdi, Peljor Galay, Chimi Dorji, Makiko Miwa, Tsuneo Yamada (2016) Project Report : ICT-enhanced GNH Society in Bhutan、 Journal of The Open University of Japan, No. 34, pp. 137-151
- Syngye Namgyel, Akinobu Kawai (2013) Role of Teachers in Alleviating Cultural Poverty : GNH begins in the Classroom, Journal of The Open University of Japan, No. 31, pp. 47-54
- Akinobu Kawai (2012) Farming population in Japan : a retrospect, Journal of Agroforestry and Environment 6 (2) pp. 53-60